



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
Elizabethton, Tennessee  
*Arms Open Wide*

# Annual Report 2023

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# Pastor's Report

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Dear Friends,

What a year 2023 has been as we celebrated our seventh year together! For me, that meant a chance to take my first sabbatical in 23 years of ministry--a wonderful and deeply appreciated gift you all gave me. I was so grateful for everyone who stepped up to cover so many things in my absence during July and August. As you'll see in the Worship Team's report, we heard from a number of fascinating speakers over the summer exploring the themes of "living our faith in a complex world" and "exploring God through creativity and nature".



The year was also a difficult one for our church family. We had more funerals than any other year of my tenure here, losing a number of beloved friends. I am so grateful for the care our Deacons provided during these losses and to everyone who stepped up to help fill in the gaps.

A colleague of mine likes to note that simply turning the calendar page from one year to the next does not guarantee a new beginning. I agree with her sentiment, but there is a newness to the year that can remind us of the hope and possibility that lie ahead. Out of curiosity, I took a look at our membership database this morning. Since I arrived in November 2016, we have said "goodbye" to 55 people. 21 have died and the rest have moved or transferred or simply moved on. But in that same amount of time, we have welcomed 45 new people. In a church of around 150 members, that represents a significant change. I don't always notice the effect of small changes from day to day, but those numbers remind me that we are always being renewed, we are changing and growing from who we used to be into something new. And that is a sign of life.

I look forward to seeing what 2024 has in store for us. Joining our ideas, our resources, our enthusiasm, and our energy together, I believe we can make a positive impact on our lives, our church, and our community. I'm excited to be a part of this work, and hope you are, too!

Blessed be,

# Clerk of Session Report

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## Session Meetings

Regularly scheduled meetings continued to be held both in church and on Zoom on January 9, March 5, May 7, June 18, August 3, and November 5.

## Congregational Meetings

A congregational meeting was held in combination of in-person and live online January 29 for the purpose of electing members for the Nominating Committee. Rebecca Nunley, Mike Rose, Carol Landis and Roddy Bird were nominated and duly elected.

On November 19, a congregational meeting was held in combination of in-person and live on-line for the purpose of electing elders and deacons for the class of 2026. Jim Austin, Sue Farthing, Suzanne Moody and Delanna Reed were nominated and duly elected for the elder class of 2026. Rebecca Nunley was nominated and duly elected for the deacon class of 2026 and Lydia Roane was nominated and duly elected for the deacon class of 2024.

## Holston Presbytery Meetings

We were represented at Holston Presbytery Meetings by Thomas Watterson on February 2, Kathy Wing on May 2, Jim Austin on August 5, and Bobbie Connelly on November 7.

## New Members

This year we were pleased to welcome 5 new members. Included were Kathy Grindstaff, Delanna Reed, Virginia Stone and Gregory Watterson by reaffirmation of faith and the baptism of Evie Connelly.

## Transfers

There were no recorded transfers this year.

## Holy Communion

Communion was normally observed on the first Sunday of every month as well as on Baptism of the Lord, Transfiguration, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Easter, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, World Communion Sunday, All Saints' Day, Christ the King Sunday, and our annual Christmas dinner.

## Deaths

Deaths were recorded for Sutton Brown, Dawn Dutka, Julie Wade, Kathy Wing, Jim Wilson and Myrna Hart.



## **Baptisms**

Evie Connelly was baptized on Easter Sunday (April 9).

## **Births**

The births of Evie Connelly and Dawson Armstrong-Watts were recorded.

## **Marriages**

No marriages were recorded.

## **2024 Elected Officers:**

See page 20 for directory of church officers and staff

## **FPCe Members**

As of 31 December 2023 our congregation has 149 members on the active roll.

*Respectfully Submitted, Bobbie Connelly, Clerk of Session*

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# Board of Deacons Report

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The Board of Deacons consisted of nine members serving the congregation. Deacons contacted individuals from care list and were available when help was requested. The Deacons continue to maintain the weekly Prayer List and Joys and Blessings column for the e-news.

This year the Deacons, with the help of others that volunteered, organized and hosted receptions after the memorial services for several in our church family. Seven members of our congregation passed away in 2023. Brenda Wardeska served as the Membership Committee and Nominating Committee representative. Ginger Oaks served as Liaison from the Session for 2023. The Deacons thank the members and friends of FPCe for their continued support in our ministry.

*Respectfully submitted: Melody Faust (moderator), Aubrie Abernethy, Nancy Barrier, Carol Ann McElwee, Lydia Roane, Julia Rogers, Brenda Wardeska, Jane Wyatt, Tristan Armstrong-Watts, and Ginger Oakes (liaison).*

## Music Leadership Team's Report

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The Objective for the Worship Music at First Presbyterian Church of Elizabethton is to enhance the spiritual environment thus support a reverent worshipful experience. Through a thoughtful presentation of a wide range of musical styles, it is the hope that the music reflects the joy, love, care, and hope that God gives each of us on our daily Christian walk.

It is a joyful challenge to prepare and present the music for our congregation. The challenge is evident. Providing /preparing no less than 7 music pieces for each service is ongoing. However, the joy of selecting and presenting the music each Sunday is also evident by the dedication given by all our talented musicians. In addition to the regular weekly services, the choirs lead in the worship for our Easter and Advent/Christmas celebrations. Those services brought the highest attendances for worship 2023.

Additional contributors to music for worship include our employed student interns. Cody Shivers (cello and voice), Megan Quillen (assisting with directing congregational singing and voice), Kiley Atkins and Emmaline Grubbs are students in the voice and opera department at East Tennessee State University. Wallace Wyatt (cello, vocal), Jim and Cheri Miller (vocals and instruments), Lori Mongillo (vocal, guitar), Teresa Rose (vocal), Teresa Bowers (vocal), Paul Gabinet (vocal) also contributed their talents to the music program. The Hand Bell Choir (Brian, Wallace and Sarah Wyatt, Joan Denney, Ginger Oaks, Bobbie Connelly, Aubrey Abernathy, Michael Winfield,

Maddison Connelly) and Joan Denney-Director. The Chancel Choir members (Carol Ann McElwee, Bill Kirkwood, Jill Oxendine, Virginia Stone, Kiley Atkins, Delana Reed, Cody Shivers (cello and vocal), Lori Mongillo (vocal and composer), Megan Quillen, Michael Winfield (voice and flute), Merry Miller (flute), Felix Uberbacher (voice and trumpet), Emmaline Grubbs, Joan Denney, Roddy Bird and Paul Gabinet-Director, all contributed to the 2023 worship experience at FPCe.

This year some of our musicians experienced health challenges. This year, Bill Kirkwood relocated to Knoxville with Lee. Bill's love for the choir and our love for him brings him back to the choir once a month. We said goodbye to our dear choir member and cheerleader—Jim Wilson. His contributions to the music at FPCe have been steadfast throughout the decades. Jim loved music. Jim loved singing. We all miss seeing him in that chair “belting out” the songs with enthusiasm and joy! We sincerely miss him.

Our choirs are a close-knit bunch. They work hard and enjoy one another. The Chancel Choir hosted the reception for the ordination of Felix Uberbacher in 2023. We appreciate his dedication to the choir and his commitment to serve the “cause of Christ” through ministry.

Finally, we welcome a new keyboard instrument into Martin Hall. Thanks to all those who made that gift possible. That will be used!

To all who contributed their talents, dedication, and commitment to our worship music during this year, THANK YOU!

*Respectfully submitted, Joan Denney, Roddy Bird, Paul Gabinet (Music Leadership Team Coordinator)*



# 2023 Treasurer's Report

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

TREASURER'S REPORT

DECEMBER 2023

## ACCOUNT BALANCES

(as of 31 December 2023)

### BANK ACCOUNTS

|                      | <b>Balance</b>    |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Checking             | \$ 18,691         |
| Money Market         | \$ 116,004        |
| Cash                 | \$ 282            |
| <b>Total Banking</b> | <b>\$ 134,977</b> |

### INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS

|                           |                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| New Covenant - Nelson     | \$ 25,925         |
| New Covenant - Ruth Johns | \$ 200,318        |
| Edward Jones - Ruth Johns | \$ 40,298         |
| <b>Total Investments</b>  | <b>\$ 266,541</b> |

### TOTAL ASSETS

**\$ 401,518**

### DESIGNATED / RESTRICTED FUNDS

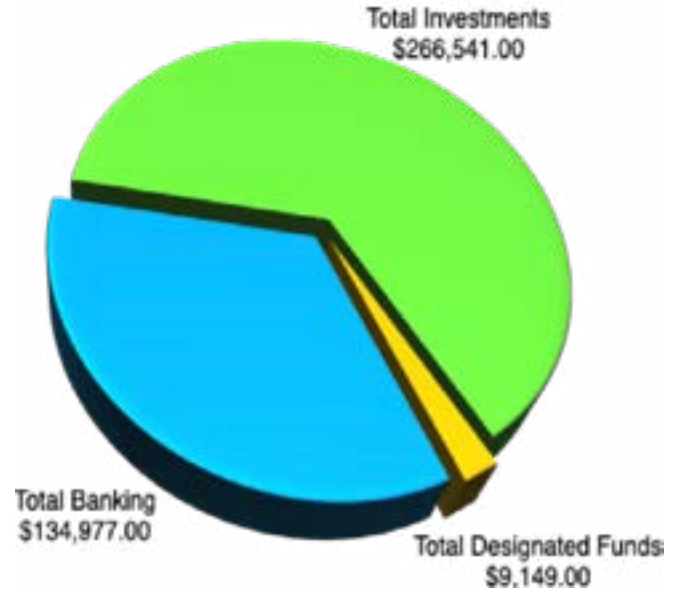
|                                 |          |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| Adult Forum                     | \$ 2,230 |
| Mary Stuart Bowman Library Fund | \$ 561   |
| Memorial Fund                   | \$ 2,962 |
| Flower Fund                     | \$ 1,046 |
| Peacemaking                     | \$ 2,321 |
| Youth Activities Fund           | \$ 29    |

### Total Designated Funds

**\$ 9,149**

### EQUITY (Assets minus Designated Funds)

**\$ 392,369**



### EveryONE Counts

|                                  |                    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Loaves and Fishes                | \$ 744.00          |
| Area Resource Ministry           | \$ 823.00          |
| Shepherd's Inn                   | \$ 756.00          |
| Living Waters for the World      | \$ 785.00          |
| Presbyterian Disaster Assistance | \$ 341.00          |
| <b>Total for 2023:</b>           | <b>\$ 3,449.00</b> |



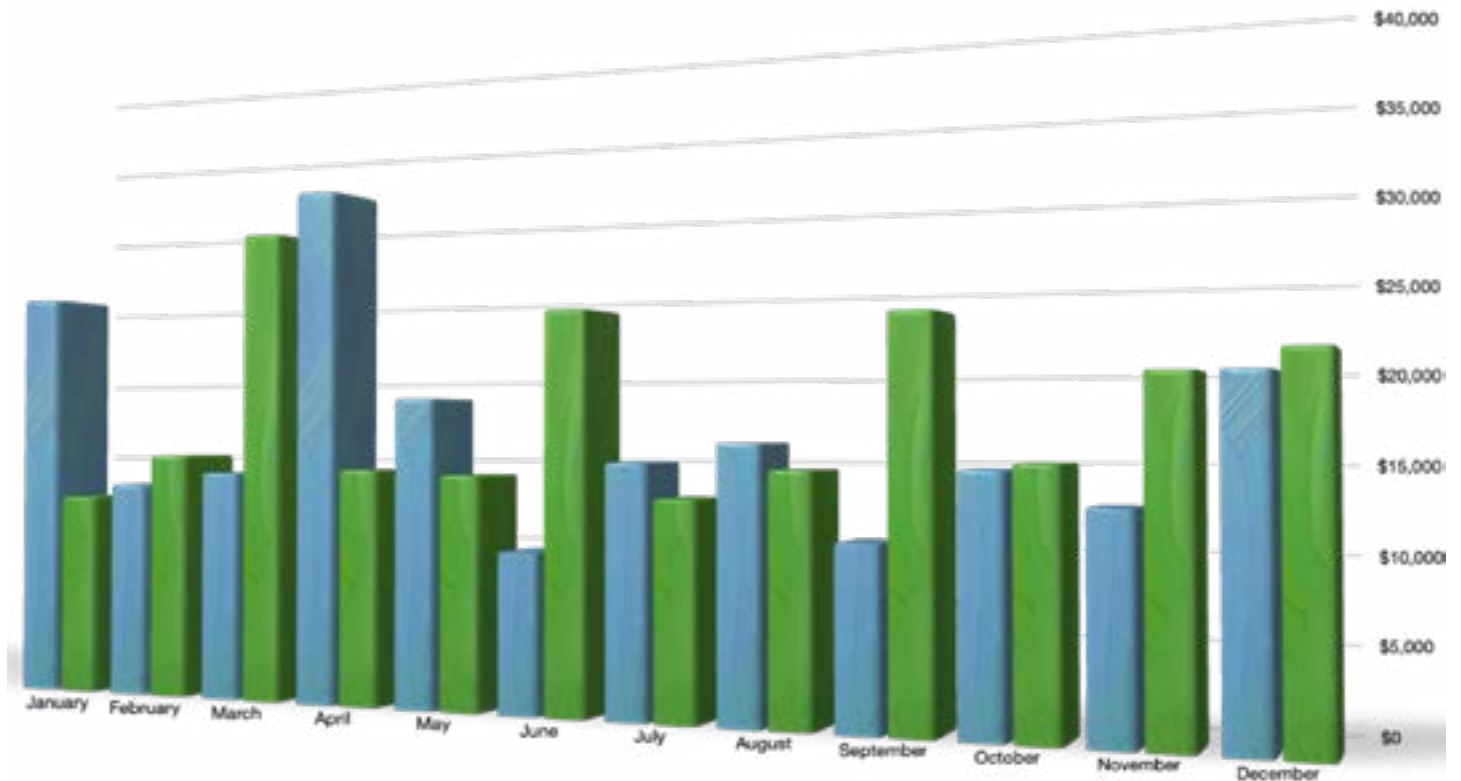
# 2023 Income & Expenses

| GENERAL FUND                   | 2023<br>ANNUAL        | 2022<br>ANNUAL       |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>INCOME</b>                  |                       |                      |
| Contributions                  | \$ 184,881.04         | \$ 178,455.53        |
| Interest income - checking     | \$ 12.63              | \$ 11.71             |
| Interest income - money market | \$ 587.21             | \$ 1,309.67          |
| Ruth Johns dividends           | \$ 861.23             | \$ 1,376.87          |
| Tom Dixon distributions        | \$ 16,863.03          | \$ 15,664.78         |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>            | <b>\$ 203,205.14</b>  | <b>\$ 196,818.56</b> |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>                |                       |                      |
| Difference                     | <b>\$ (14,609.95)</b> | <b>\$ (2,483.57)</b> |

## 2023 Monthly Average

|                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| Contributions: | \$ 15,406.75 |
| Other Income:  | \$ 1,527.01  |
| Expenses       | \$ 18,151.26 |

## 2023 MONTHLY INCOME VS EXPENSES



# 2024 Operating Budget Summary

| INCOME              |                                      | 5300s                 | Committees and Programs       |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>4000s</b>        | <b>Regular Income</b>                | 5310                  | Building & Grounds \$8,500    |
| 4001                | Pledged Income \$153,275             | 5320                  | Christian Ed / Youth \$650    |
| 4002                | Loose Plate \$20,000                 | 5330                  | Community Life \$1,500        |
| 4010                | Reserve Funds \$12,000               | 5331                  | More Light \$200              |
| <b>4100s</b>        | <b>Facilities Income</b>             | 5340                  | Outreach \$500                |
| 4115                | Facility Use \$1,500                 | 5350                  | Finance & Personnel \$800     |
| <b>4200s</b>        | <b>Investment Income</b>             | 5360                  | Welcoming \$350               |
| 4201-02             | Interest Income \$1,320              | <b>5400s</b>          | <b>Worship and Governance</b> |
| 4210                | RJ Dividends \$3,000                 | 5400                  | Worship \$1,000               |
| 4211-12             | Income from Bequests \$35,000        | 5410                  | Music \$1,400                 |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b> | <b>\$226,095</b>                     | 5450                  | Deacons \$1,500               |
|                     |                                      | 5460                  | Session \$250                 |
| EXPENSES            |                                      | 5500s                 | Staff                         |
| <b>5100s</b>        | <b>Benevolences</b>                  | 5511-5545             | Staff Salaries \$59,616       |
| 5110                | Holston Presbytery \$5,000           | 5550                  | Honoraria \$2,000             |
| 5114                | Holston Camp \$5,000                 | 5560                  | Payroll Taxes \$3,150         |
| 5116                | ETSU UKirk \$1,500                   | 5570                  | Workers' Comp \$1,250         |
| 5120                | Discretionary \$1,000                | <b>5600s</b>          | <b>Pastoral Staff</b>         |
| 5130                | Organizational Dues \$200            | 5610                  | Salary (Clergy) \$33,976      |
| <b>5200s</b>        | <b>Facilities and Administration</b> | 5615                  | Housing \$33,976              |
| 5210                | Advertising / Website \$3,000        | 5620-30               | Taxes, BOP, Ret. \$34,640     |
| 5220                | Office Supplies \$10,500             | 5650-70               | Accountable Reimb. \$17,000   |
| 5230                | Technology / AV \$3,000              | <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b> | <b>\$243,709</b>              |
| 5240                | Property Insurance \$3,300           | <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>   | <b>\$226,095</b>              |
| 5250-53             | Utilities \$11,600                   | <b>NET GAIN/LOSS</b>  | <b>(\$17,614)</b>             |

## 2024 Narrative Budget

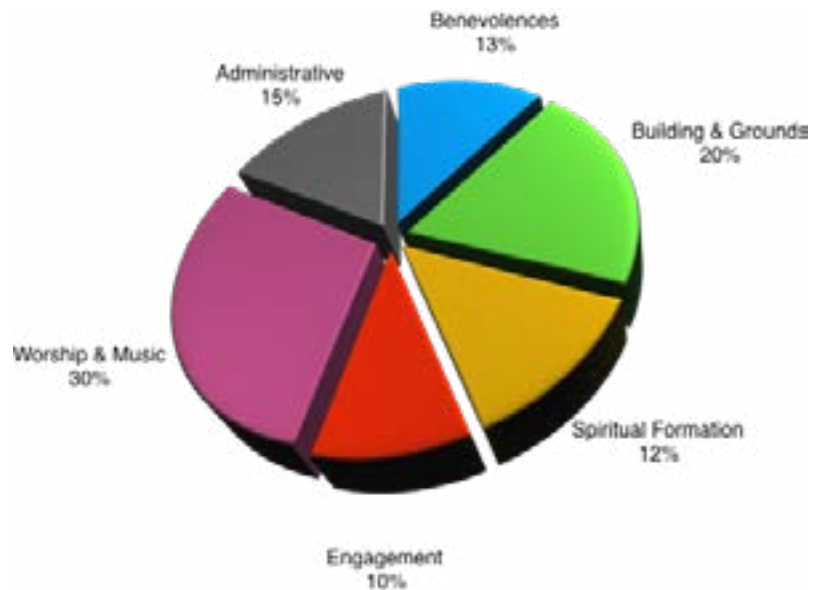
### *Worship and Music*

Worship is at the heart of what we do. It is the event that brings the most of us together at the same time to wrestle thoughtfully with questions of life, calling, and God. We meditate, sing and pray together; we welcome everyone to worship with us just as they are—to love and be loved without exception. Around 30% of our budget supports FPCe's worship and music program including our pastor, music leadership team, and music interns..

### *Spiritual Formation*

We come to FPCe to learn, to grow, to practice together a path of healing and wholeness for our-

selves and our world. Around 12% of our budget is directed toward educational programs and outreach, including events such as: Adult Forum; guest speakers and workshops; our church retreat at Holston Camp; Thursdays with Jesus book discussion group; and Wednesday evening Meditation Gathering. We also dedicate money toward funding a student intern program, giving us the opportunity to support and to learn from a new generation of spiritual leaders.



### ***Service to the Community & World***

Loaves and Fishes...Area Resource Ministry...Shepherd’s Inn...Holston Camp...Boroko Village...Presbyterian Disaster Relief.....Living Waters for the World...ETSU UKirk Campus Ministry. Reaching out beyond our walls is a core part of our identity. About 13% of our budget supports this good work.

### ***Care and Engagement***

Through our Deacons’ ministry of care, through the work of our Community Life team facilitating fellowship opportunities, and through countless acts of love and kindness, FPCe strives to offer love, comfort, and hope to everyone in our church family. And we grow closer through much-loved events in the church calendar, such as Dinner on the Grounds, Progressive Dinner, Gratitude Luncheon, an annual retreat, monthly BEANedictions, and other events, we commit around 10% of the budget to support care and engagement of our members.

### ***Facilities***

About 20% of FPCe’s budget ensures that we have a safe, sound, and beautiful place to worship, study, and celebrate together. But our facility also does so much more! In addition to providing a space for varied congregational activities, the building is also used by numerous community groups, including: the LGBTQIA+ Social Gathering; Catholic worship with Fr. Michael; Friends of Roan Mountain; yoga and exercise classes; Carter Co. Democratic Women’s panel; Shepherd’s Inn; Assistance & Resource Ministry; AA/NA meetings, and East TN Alzheimer’s Support Group.

### ***Administration***

Administration includes all the behind the scenes support that makes everything else we do possible. Around 15% of our budget goes to cover the countless things that need to happen for our church to operate, including all kinds of things like: accounting, bulletins, website and social media presence, live-streaming for Sunday worship, weddings, and funerals, Zoom accounts for meetings, meditation, and Adult Forum, and a support staff to make it all happen.

# Building & Grounds Report

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**B**uilding and Grounds (B&G) held a Beanediction in August with the Peacemaking Committee. The HVAC was serviced in the summer, and the furnace was repaired late Fall. Paul Gabinet coordinated with S. B. White 323-926-8127. We scheduled three (3) work days to maintain the grounds. In addition, Mike Rose, Richard Brosmore, and Charles Faust removed the leaves from the property in the Fall 23, as well as trimmed the hedges and bushes in the front of the church. The gutters and downspouts of the church were cleaned twice, once in the Spring and once in late Fall after most of the leaves were down. This is contracted with O’Healy Services, 423-900-



2929, to be done on a regular, yearly basis. One dead tree was removed and a large limb overhanging a neighboring property was also removed. Lumberjacks Tree Service, 423-895-9658, did both jobs. In addition, the large Elm Tree by the parking lot is infected with Dutch Elm Disease and will be removed by Lumberjacks early this year. Jim Miller has agreed to cut up the trunk for lumber to make an as yet to be determined piece of art/furniture (Charles Faust) for the church. There is also a River Birch tree next to the back porch that is half dead and needs to be removed at the same time the Elm tree is removed. The ceiling light bulbs in the sanctuary have been replaced. Paul Waters, 423-512-0227. A metal cap for the building’s chimney has been prepared and will be installed soon to prevent water damage from rain by Paul Waters. The committee met with a representative from Southern Mutual Church Insurance Company in December for the purpose of establishing our insurance premium for the coming

year. A major issue is the age of the roof. The amount of the premium will, in part, depend on when it was last replaced and documentation is needed. The B & G committee is planning to meet with Steve Sykes in the coming weeks to determine what repairs need to be done of the soffits and fascia boards as well as the Steeple. Paul Gabinet is coordinating this.

*Respectfully Submitted, Jeff Wardeska, Charles Faust, Richard Brosmore, Mike Rose, Paul Gabinet*



# Community Life Report

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**B**enediction: This informal social coffee event is held after church on the second Sunday of most months that do not have a major event going on. Each one is hosted by a different committee moderator and their team. It represents an opportunity to extend our time together in casual fellowship after worship. This is the first full year after Covid that it has been held. There were 8 benedictions this year with all committees participating.

**Dinner For Eight:** Our dinners resumed this year after Covid in May. We had three host families welcome approximately eight guests into their homes for a meal with the hosts providing the entrée and the guests bringing the sides. We had a total of 23 participants and hope to have multiple dinners in 2024.

**Dinner On the Grounds:** The dinner is held in the fall when we can still set up tables outside and enjoy our beautiful trees and fall colors. This year the dinner was held the second Sunday in September and the weather was not at its best so the tables were set up in Martin Hall. The church provided sandwiches and desserts and the congregation brought sides to share. There was around 40 people in attendance.

**Gratitude Dinner:** In appreciation of our church family, our community sponsored a lunch after church on the second Sunday in November. Our committee provided a barbeque with all the trimmings and some vegetarian options. Approximately 40 participants shared what they were grateful for and enjoyed fellowship.

**Christmas Dinner:** Our annual Christmas Dinner was held on December 17th in the evening. At 5:30 we started with our traditional Wassail bowl with dinner following. The committee provided two hams with the congregation bringing sides. We had music performed by Teresa Rose and Paul Gabone led everyone in a rousing Twelve Days of Christmas. The evening ended with a celebration of Holy Communion led by Paster Brian. There were 32 people in attendance.

**Progressive Dinner:** Our progressive dinner returned after the Covid years on Dec 31st, New Years Eve. The date change seemed to be a big hit and we made our way around to our three hosts houses for the Appetizer, Entrée and Dessert portions of the evening. We had 22 in attendance to celebrate the New Year.



**Acknowledgments:** Community Life would like to thank the many church members who helped

with setup, take down and cleanup. This committee could not function with the added loving hands of our church members.

*Respectfully submitted: Suzanne Moody committee chair, Jane Woodside session liaison, Carol Ann McElwee, Mike Rose, Jane Wyatt, Gregory Watterson, Sandra Garrett, and Susan Allen.*

## Community Outreach Report

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The Community Outreach team seeks to encourage and coordinate outreach to the local community. This is done largely through the following local agencies and ministries: ARM (Assistance and Resources Ministry), Loaves and Fishes (formerly known as Food for the Multitude), and the Shepherd's Inn (the community's only safe house / emergency shelter for women and their children escaping from domestic violence settings and temporary homelessness).

Our Loaves and Fishes ministry has continues to get tremendous support from our congregation! We have twenty people who have provided casseroles over the last year. In partnership with Brown's Chapel in Elizabethton, we try to provide 15 to 20 casseroles one Friday each month. The Shepherd's Inn continues to provide safe housing under the leadership of Paul Gabinet. We still currently have just one volunteer from First Presbyterian working with ARM. Our facilities and parking lot were once again used for ARM's yard sale in 2023.

*From: James Sutton and Julia Rogers*

## Christian Education Report

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On Saturday September 30th, Dr. Glynda Ramsey, physician and life coach did a free morning workshop on the Enneagram as a Spiritual Tool as a gift to First Presbyterian Church of Elizabethton and the community. This workshop was planned for 9:30 to 12:30 with a 15 minute break. The Enneagram is being studied in many churches as a tool of personal transformation.

On Saturday October 28th, Dr. Travis Wil-

liams, professor at Tusculum University presented his work on the Dead Sea Scrolls. This program was free to the community and was well attended in person and on zoom. The same hours for the program occurred.

For future programs, a speaker for AI and the Impact on Religions is still in the search process while a speaker for the Fall is in present conversations.

*Respectfully submitted by Ginger Oaks*

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## More Light Report

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**A**ctivities undertaken by the More Light team in 2023 include:

**Minute for Mission.** Niko Watts-Armstrong did a Minute for Mission to introduce the congregation to the work of PRISM, a teen LGBTQIA+ support group for the Tri-Cities.

**Letter Writing Campaign.** In cooperation with the Peacemaking committee, More Light organized a letter writing campaign to encourage congregation members to express their views to state legislators on the anti-LGBTQIA+ bills introduced in the Tennessee Assembly.

**Adult Forum.** Niko Armstrong-Watts and Rebecca Nunley talked about the difference between sexual and gender identity at an Adult Forum in March.

**More Light Sunday.** More Light Committee members conducted the More Light service in addition to organizing a panel on Tennessee's recently passed anti-LGBTQIA+/anti-Trans laws for Adult Forum and hosting the Beanediction reception.

**TriPride.** More Light organized First Presbyterian's participation the annual TriPride parade and shared a booth with Covenant Presbyterian.

**Service Projects.** The committee is currently exploring possible service projects with several community organizations.

*Respectfully Submitted, Jane Woodside*

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## Peacemaking Report

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**T**he Peacemaking Team's goal is to help enable the church to extend God's peace to individuals, communities, and Earth. The following activities were undertaken during the year to work toward this goal:

- Maintained the Peacemaking table in the upstairs hall serves as a center for information and communication (e.g., collections and cards for Alternative Giving);
- Received a grant in the amount of \$979.73 from the Holston Presbytery's International Hunger Fund which supported Boroko Village;
- Posted environmental and peace information on Facebook and in church email;
- Offered excess produce, plants, and gardening tools/supplies throughout the summer at our Green Table, generating monies for Green Congregation projects;
- Collected recyclable materials from church activities;
- Conducted Wheel of the Year meditations with volunteers from the congregation during worship for equinoxes and solstices.
- Wrote postcards protesting local processing of uranium for weapons production and joined a related in-person protest;
- Raised \$737.64 on May 21st, through our Pies for Peace event, for Boroko Village;



- Participated in a Peace Walk on August 6th;
- Co-hosted BEANediction on August 13 with the Building & Grounds committee, raising an additional \$115 for the food crisis around Boroko Village;
- Carol Landis presented to Adult Forum in the new Science & Religion series honoring Julie Wade about permitted releases of radioactive materials into the air and into the Nolichucky River;
- Hosted the NE Tennessee URI (United Religions Initiative) Cooperation Circle's Gratitude Dinner on November 18;
- Conducted our annual Alternative Giving campaign during December, benefiting Boroko Village (\$690) and Shepherd's Inn (\$1325).

*Respectfully Submitted, Patricia Buck and Carol Landis*



# Stewardship, Finance, and Personnel

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The 2023 annual report of the Stewardship, Finance and Personnel (SFP) Committee.

Members: Rebecca Nunley, Jim Austin, Bill Kirkwood, David Roane (Moderator) Brian Wyatt (Ex Offi-cio)

## Stewardship

The SFP conducted the 2024 annual Stewardship campaign this past fall with the goal of 50 pledges in the amount of \$160,000. At the time of this report, there are 50 pledges in the amount of \$153,275. For comparison, we had the same \$160,000 goal for 2023 and received \$157,458 in pledges. A huge shout-out of appreciation to all those who made a pledge.

## Finance

The SFP submitted the 2024 budget to the session. The approved budget is found elsewhere in this report. It is worth noting that the budget is not a plan of expenditure but is rather an aspirational document reflecting what we hope to achieve in the coming year.

Total expenditures for 2023 were \$217,815 against \$207,938 in revenue. The shortfall was covered by savings from previous years.

The SFP was commissioned by the Session in 2022 to work toward moving the Tom Dixon Trust to a new trustee. This effort has required the services of attorneys. The process and its complications are nearly completed.

The church has been named as the beneficiary of a portion of the estate of Julie Wade following her passing this fall. The amount of the bequest will be determined following the settling of the estate and the actions of probate. The proceeds will be used to further the work of the church. We are particularly grateful for Julie's thoughtfulness and generosity.

## Personnel

During the year Elaine Kolp agreed to return to the church to assist with finances on a contractual basis. The Session has named her as the church Treasurer, a position she held in her previous employment. Scott Gurdak's responsibilities have been expanded to include many of the administrative duties in the church office. We are lucky to have these talented individuals on our staff.

*Respectfully submitted, David Roane, moderator*

# Welcoming Report

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The Welcoming Team (formerly the Membership Team) actively welcomes visitors to FPCe and facilitates the joining process. There were two joining Sundays during 2023 during which we welcomed 5 new members!

New members: Everest Connelly, Kathy Grindstaff, Delanna Reed, Virginia Stone, and Gregory Watterson

*Respectfully submitted, Welcoming Team (Tom Watterson, Moderator; Sarah Wyatt, Brenda Wardeska)*

# Worship Report

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The Worship/Sanctuary Team serves as facilitators for Worship... The Worship/Sanctuary Team maintains the ‘elements of worship’ and the proper environment to enhance worship that include providing the means to create and preserve sacred space, providing pulpit supply, meaningful ritual, and an inspiring, creative, reverent experience for all who gather to worship.” (excerpt from Manual of Operation—revised 2022)

During 2023, the Worship/Sanctuary Team provided the regular tasks of changing the paraments in accordance with the “liturgical calendar”, supplying, setting up the monthly and special communion services, facilitating the Advent Soup Supper/Hanging of the Greens, and hosting the October Bean-a-diction.

This past year, the Pastor observed a summer sabbatical as stipulated by the Presbytery. The Worship/Sanctuary Team also has the responsibility of providing pulpit supply. At a luncheon meeting at the home of Paul Gabinet, the Team (Sue Farthing, Carol Ann McElwee, Jill Oxendine, Rebecca Nunley, Joan Denney, Roddy Bird, Bobbie Connelly [Session Liaison], and the Rev. Dr. Brian Wyatt) began the task of planning to meet the needs for pulpit supply.



Following that March 6th and additional meetings, the TEAM did the following:

- Selected the 2 THEMES that the invited pulpit supply would emphasize in the messages:

- July: “LIVING YOUR FAITH IN A COMPLEX WORLD”
- August: “SEEKING GOD THROUGH CREATIVITY AND NATURE”
- Members of the TEAM contacted approved speaker candidates. Upon arrival, each guest speaker was met by a member of the TEAM, a gift provided with a thank you note, and an honorarium was given. The Worship TEAM hosted all the services during the Pastor’s Sabbathical.

Those who provided pulpit supply in 2023 included:

- Dr. Myra Elder (Veterans Administration)
- John Golden (UKIRK)
- The Rev. Karen Russell (Interim Executive Presbyter, Holston Presbytery)
- The Rev. Diana Moore (Interim Stated Clerk, Holston Presbyter)
- Dr. Martin Dotterweich (Professor, King University)
- Dr. Bill Kirkwood
- Gary Mongillo
- Laura Hicks Hardy (Emmanuel Seminary)
- Dr. Rebecca Nunley (facilitated ‘Taize’ Service)
- Melissa Tidwell
- Dr. Delanna Reed

The members of the Worship/Sanctuary Team deserve the gratitude of the congregation for their work throughout the year. Special recognition and thanks go to the “Media Team” who provide the “Live Online” worship to so many congregants at every service. The Media Team, under the coordination of Scott Gurdak, gives the technical and creative skills that bring a professional and personal feel for each online service. Also, appreciation to Jill Oxendine who provided the guidance for the summer theming and for preparing the “news releases” on a regular basis about the worship services.

*Respectfully submitted, Bobbie Connelly (Session Liaison), Joan Denney, Sue Farthing, Carol Ann McElwee, Rebecca Nunley, Jill Oxendine, Brian Wyatt, Roddy Bird/Paul Gabinet, Co-Moderators*

## Digital Outreach Ministry

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2023 was a very busy and exciting year for the Digital Multimedia Outreach Committee. As in-person church services continued to grow, the committee continued to live-stream our Sunday services for those who could not attend. The team also coordinates the audiovisual systems throughout the church facility, and is responsible for set-up and maintenance of those

systems. Streaming utilizes our in-house digital audio & video hardware and software systems. The service is broadcast live via our YouTube channel. Our team works hard to make it look easy, however, it takes a coordinated effort of quite a few volunteers each week to successfully provide this service. This past year we were able to weed-out obsolete or broken equipment, including 3 wireless microphones (so old they no longer were in compliance with FCC radio broadcast frequencies), broken cables, and damaged multimedia devices. We were fortunate enough to have a technology grant to purchase 3 new Sennheiser EWD wireless microphone systems which have proven to work beautifully in our environment, especially with the many vocal talents that we have in our choir. As our existing equipment continues to age out of usability, we will continue to upgrade our systems as possible in 2024. We are always looking for more volunteers to join our team, and will train you to provide this great service! To volunteer, please reach out to [scott@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:scott@fpcelizabethton.org).

In closing, here are a few “fun facts” from 2023:

- \* Our Sunday live-stream services have been viewed 5,251 times in 2023
- \* Our most popular viewed service was from April 23, 2023, with 321 views.
- \* Our online viewers use a variety of devices: 33.4% watch from their computer, 43.3% from their smart phone, 14.1% from their smart TV, and 8.7% on their tablet device.

Current members of the Digital Multimedia Outreach Ministry are: Brian Wyatt, Richard Brosmore, Wallace Wyatt, Scott Gurdak, Tristan Armstrong-Watts, Niko Armstrong-Watts, Dawson Armstrong-Watts (in-training).

*Respectfully Submitted, Scott Gurdak and Wallace Wyatt*

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## 2024 Committee Moderators

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**2024 Officers** were elected by the Session and are as follows:

- Clerk of Session: Bobbie Connelly ([clerk@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:clerk@fpcelizabethton.org))
- Treasurer: Elaine Kolp ([treasurer@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:treasurer@fpcelizabethton.org))

**2024 Moderators** for Committees were elected by the Session, and will be as follows:

- Building and Grounds: Charles Faust ([building@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:building@fpcelizabethton.org))
- Christian Education: Ginger Oaks, Sue Farthing ([ce@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:ce@fpcelizabethton.org))
- Community Life: Suzanne Moody ([communitylife@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:communitylife@fpcelizabethton.org))
- Community Outreach: Jim Sutton ([outreach@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:outreach@fpcelizabethton.org))
- More Light: Jane Woodside, Rebecca Nunley ([morelight@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:morelight@fpcelizabethton.org))
- Peacemaking: Pat Buck, Carol Landis ([peacemaking@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:peacemaking@fpcelizabethton.org))
- Stewardship, Finance, and Personnel: Jim Austin, David Roane ([sfp@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:sfp@fpcelizabethton.org))
- Welcoming: Delanna Reed ([welcome@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:welcome@fpcelizabethton.org))
- Worship: Bobbie Connelly, Roddy Bird, Paul Gabinet ([worship@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:worship@fpcelizabethton.org))
- Deacon Liaison: Ginger Oaks

# 2024 Ministry Groups

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## **Meditation**

Bill Kirkwood ([wgkirkwood607@gmail.com](mailto:wgkirkwood607@gmail.com))

Wednesdays: 7:00-8:15pm via Zoom

## **Handbell Choir**

Joan Denney ([handbells@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:handbells@fpcelizabethton.org))

Thursdays: 6:00-7:00pm in Sanctuary

## **Chancel Choir**

Paul Gabinet ([choir@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:choir@fpcelizabethton.org))

Sundays: 9:45-10:45am in the choir room (plus monthly Thursday evening rehearsal)

## **Thursdays with Jesus**

Brian Wyatt ([twj@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:twj@fpcelizabethton.org))

Thursdays: 10:30-12:00pm via Zoom (in person on first Thursday of each month)

## **Adult Forum**

David Roane ([adultforum@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:adultforum@fpcelizabethton.org))

Sundays: 9:45-10:45am via Zoom / Martin Hall



# 2024 Staff and Officers

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Rev. Dr. Brian Wyatt, Pastor</b><br/> <a href="mailto:brian@fpcelizabethton.org">brian@fpcelizabethton.org</a><br/>           423.543.7737</p>   | <p><b>Scott Gurdak, Administration/Digital Media</b><br/> <a href="mailto:scott@fpcelizabethton.org">scott@fpcelizabethton.org</a><br/> <b>Elaine Kolp, Bookkeeper</b><br/> <a href="mailto:treasurer@fpcelizabethton.org">treasurer@fpcelizabethton.org</a></p>   |
| <p><b>Church Officers' Leadership</b><br/> <b>Melody Faust, Care Coordinator</b><br/> <a href="mailto:deacons@fpcelizabethton.org">deacons@fpcelizabethton.org</a><br/> <b>Bobbie Connelly, Clerk of Session</b><br/> <a href="mailto:clerk@fpcelizabethton.org">clerk@fpcelizabethton.org</a></p> | <p><b>Music Leadership Team</b><br/> <a href="mailto:music@fpcelizabethton.org">music@fpcelizabethton.org</a><br/> <b>Paul Gabinet, Choir Director</b><br/> <a href="mailto:paulggabinet@gmail.com">paulggabinet@gmail.com</a><br/> <b>Joan Denney, Handbell Director, Keyboardist</b><br/> <a href="mailto:joanadenney@gmail.com">joanadenney@gmail.com</a><br/> <b>Roddy Bird, Keyboardist, Organist</b><br/> <a href="mailto:tnflor2@aol.com">tnflor2@aol.com</a></p> |

## Session ([session@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:session@fpcelizabethton.org))

| Class of 2024   | Class of 2025 | Class of 2026 |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Pat Buck        | Charles Faust | Jim Austin    |
| Bobbie Connelly | Ginger Oaks   | Sue Farthing  |
| Jane Woodside   | David Roane   | Suzanne Moody |
|                 | Jim Sutton    | Delanna Reed  |

## Deacons ([deacons@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:deacons@fpcelizabethton.org))

| Class of 2024     | Class of 2025           | Class of 2026  |
|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Aubrie Abernethy  | Tristan Armstrong-Watts | Rebecca Nunley |
| Carol Ann McElwee | Melody Faust            |                |
| Lydia Roane       | Julia Rogers            |                |
| Brenda Wardeska   |                         |                |

\* Session, Deacon, Group, and Committee email addresses go to **all** members of the group.

# First Presbyterian Church

*Established 1782*

119 West F Street  
Elizabethton TN 37643  
[info@fpcelizabethton.org](mailto:info@fpcelizabethton.org)  
[www.fpcelizabethton.org](http://www.fpcelizabethton.org)

## FPCe Mission Statement

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**W**ith joyful hearts and open minds, we welcome all persons as diverse, unique, and individual expressions of the image of God as we:

- Affirm the unconditional love of God for all people as expressed in the life of Jesus Christ.
- Celebrate God's grace and creative work through ritual, sacrament, music, art, movement, and play.
- Honor our Christian heritage while we explore the knowledge and wisdom of multiple religions, science, philosophy, humanities, and psychology to deepen and enrich our spiritual journeys.
- Nurture one another through fellowship and compassion in a community that seeks to offer wholeness.
- Embody our faith through local ministries and in actions that promote environmental sustainability, peace, and justice for all people and Earth.

In awe and gratitude for the Divine Mystery that dwells within each of us and pervades our Universe, we seek to create a Christian community that honors our past, is vitally connected to our present, and looks with hope and vision to the generations after us.



First Presbyterian Church  
Elizabethton

*Arms Open Wide*