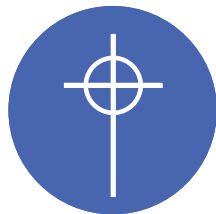




## 2023 Annual Reports



**Christ Church Charlotte**  
CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH



**Christ Church Charlotte**  
CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## Our Mission

To engage, equip, and empower people to love God, care for each other and serve the world in the name of Christ.

## Our Vision

We aspire to be Christ's Church in the world.

## Our Core Values

We are a Christ-centered Episcopal Church rooted in scripture, tradition and reason; respectful of and strengthened by our differences. We are committed to being a loving community of support and spiritual growth; being faithful stewards of God's many blessings; and using God's gifts to serve the needs of our community and world. We are inspired by the belief that with God's help we will accomplish whatever God calls us to do.

*(Adopted by the Vestry, 2007)*

## 2023 VESTRY

Bill Lorenz *Senior Warden*  
Dick Parkhurst, *Treasurer*

Virginia Anderson  
Marks Arnold  
Ginny Cobb  
Laura Copps  
Cindy Costa  
Kathleen Dean  
Fletcher Gregory  
Alison Gugenheim  
Lise Hinton  
Sarah Kain  
Allison Popp  
Carl Showalter  
Wellford Tabor  
John Wickham

# RECTOR'S REPORT

**The Reverend Chip Edens**

Dear Friends,

I am filled with an overwhelming sense of gratitude and excitement for what lies ahead. The year 2023 has been a remarkable journey of prayer, listening, generosity, and action for all of us at Christ Church. It is with immense pleasure that I share with you the progress we have made in bringing the vision of our Transforming Hearts Campaign to life.

First and foremost, I want to express our deepest gratitude to the dedicated members of our visioning and capital campaign committees. Shortly after emerging from the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, they dove headfirst into the task of listening to our congregation. Through surveys and gatherings, they engaged with over 1000 voices within our community. The stories, hopes, and dreams that were shared with us were not only moving but also profoundly inspiring. It was from these conversations that the three central pillars of our future ministry together emerged: Faith, Community, and Well-being.

Throughout this year, we have witnessed our clergy, staff and lay ministry leaders pouring their efforts into refining and strengthening specific ministries for the present and future. These efforts, combined with the generous funding we have and will receive, will enable us to embark on some of the most vital work that our church has undertaken in its illustrious 80-year history. I am confident that in the years to come, we will witness the fruits of our labor as we enhance and expand our capacity to share Christ's love with countless individuals who depend on us.

On a personal note, I want to express that one of the most moving experiences of my life has been to witness what Christ Church means to so many individuals. This generosity has shown up not only in unprecedented financial generosity, but in stories and new commitments our members, new and long-standing, have made to our church. Together, we stand on the precipice of a new chapter in the life of Christ Church, and I am excited to see the transformations that will unfold as we move forward, hand in hand.

With heartfelt gratitude and blessings,



Chip

# VICAR'S REPORT

## **The Reverend Joshua Case**

What an amazing year! Throughout 2023, we've witnessed people returning to worship and community for the first time. We're seeing new individuals connect with us both in person, online, and through our Christ Church app, seeking spiritual inspiration and growth wherever they are. This year has not been a "return to normal," but rather a "return to new." Longtime members, newcomers, and young families have dived headfirst, engaging in the holy work of connecting with each other and with God through our spiritual formation and parish life offerings.

As evidenced in the snapshots and stories of lives engaged, equipped, and empowered within this report, the 2023 Annual Reports of Christ Church's various ministries paint a holistic picture of a community deeply committed to faith, connection, and well-being.

The Adult Spiritual Formation report underscores the importance of continued faith development for adults at all stages of life. The Children & Family Ministry is dedicated to intertwining faith with family activities, fostering children's spiritual growth. The Youth & Family Ministry has impressively adapted to the changing needs of young people, nurturing belonging and faith-based connections. We've also welcomed a new Youth Minister, set to start in January 2024.

Our Music & the Arts and Worship & Liturgy reports reflect a vibrant music program, demonstrating the church's dedication to musical excellence and diverse worship experiences, which enhance spiritual connection to God and community building.

The Outreach & Mission report illustrates our efforts to extend our values beyond 1412 Providence Road, living our faith through action, impacting the wider community, and reinforcing our purpose in the world.

Additionally, Christ Church Kindergarten (CCK) continues to thrive under Head of School Meredith Sorrell's leadership. The school is expanding to meet the ongoing needs of the parish, shaping the hearts, minds, and imaginations of young children, thanks to our extraordinary team of teachers.

While there are many more reports and stories to explore, the overarching good news is this: they collectively narrate a tale of a community where faith, connection, and well-being are seamlessly interwoven into every facet of life, creating a supportive, engaged, and vibrant spiritual home for all.

I pray that in 2024, as you embrace your faith in new ways, you'll not only engage with the many opportunities for spiritual growth at Christ Church but also bring your vision of "what could be." Together, we can live out and dream of a future of faith in a world searching for meaning.

# ASSOCIATE RECTORS

## **The Reverend Joan Kilian**

Once again, we come full circle in our cadence of the church year. We have had another abundant year of our regular Outreach & Mission ministries (O & M). Please take the time to read that report and see all that we have been up to both within these walls and out in our community and beyond.

I have the opportunity and privilege of working with some amazing people in what I do here at Christ Church. First, there is Team OM (Outreach & Mission). Laura Konitzer, our Director of O & M, and Lesley Peace, the Administrative Assistant for O & M, are dedicated, creative co-workers who make so very much happen. Together, we generate ideas, create and organize programs, educate, coordinate volunteers and help generate change in our city and beyond. Beyond that is our Commission, chaired this year by Mark Landers, who also happens to be our congregational representative for Episcopal Relief and Development. Additionally, there are eleven others who are passionate about building diverse relationships and working towards a more just world. And then, there is the rest of Christ Church's staff, including the clergy, who are amazing and innovate and collaborative. Then, there are all of you who volunteer in so many different ways (the below items are by no means exhaustive!):

- bringing diapers/period products/incontinent products, school supplies, staple food goods, toiletry items, household cleaning supplies, gift cards or other things for the many drives we have
- providing nutritional support to our food-insecure neighbors through Matthew 25 casseroles, serving dinner at the Men's Shelter, gleaning field produce with Society of St. Andrews for food pantries, packing boxes at Loaves & Fishes for home delivery, delivering Friendship Trays (CLT's Meals on Wheels)
- providing a roof over the head of people who are in need of affordable housing and shelter through Habitat and Room In The Inn (RITI)
- helping children develop their math, literacy and leadership skills at Rama Road Elementary
- adopting life-style practices that help better care and sustain God's incredible creation
- working towards the reality of Beloved Community

Outside of this church campus, I get to work with our community partners. Did you know that between our financial support from our annual budget, our volunteer (but non-monetary) support, funds from the proceeds of our Foundation, and the generosity enabled by your support of the GoodNews Shop we partner with NEARLY 70 (!) organizations? Some are components of the Episcopal Church and non-profits in our community or far beyond. The Transforming Hearts Changing Lives Capital and Ministries Campaign will enable us to extend that even further and more deeply!

These concentric circles of connection for me are nurturing and life giving. They bring me hope and they enable me to try to live into the call of both community and service. And they are mutually upbuilding with the more directly 'priestly' things I do: preach, teach, walk with, listen, celebrate, etc., as well as various involvements at the convocation and diocesan levels. Together – the focus on Outreach & Mission and the more 'priestly' aspects – are two hands clapping in joyful praise of God. Thank you for the opportunity of worshiping and serving with you.

If you want to learn more about Outreach, please subscribe to our monthly newsletter at [christchurchcharlotte.org/serve-the-world/](http://christchurchcharlotte.org/serve-the-world/).

### **The Reverend Connor Gwin**

2023 was a wonderful year full of hope and dreams for the future as we launched our Transforming Hearts, Changing Lives Capital and Ministries Campaign. The Well-being and Care team has been hard at work responding to the needs of the congregation while helping to chart a vision for the future of well-being and care at Christ Church.

Our amazing therapists continued to offer one-on-one counseling while providing incredible programming and classes throughout the year. It has truly been a gift to work alongside Mollee Reitz, Alex Bacon, and Jennifer Hamm as we responded to the unanticipated pastoral situations that have emerged in the parish and in the wider world in 2023.

I have enjoyed my work to define spiritual well-being as the core of our developing system of well-being. Teaching classes on contemplative practices, self-forgiveness, and grief have been highlights. I am in the process of developing a more comprehensive system for providing pastoral care to our growing congregation.

I am so excited to be a part of this parish at this moment in our history. God is doing big things at Christ Church Charlotte!

### **The Reverend Allen Pruitt**

2023 was an incredible year at Christ Church. I can only begin by saying how grateful I am for the opportunity to offer my gifts here in this place, among so many gifted people. From my clergy colleagues to the incredible staff to the devoted and energetic lay people, Christ Church is blessed and I am blessed to be here.

I am privileged to work alongside Scottie Stamper and Rosalyn Lackey in the Adult Spiritual Formation Office. Their humor, dedication, and thoughtfulness are exceptional. Scottie has submitted a report about all the wonderful things in Adult Formation, but a few highlights stand out to me:

- Working alongside our Scholar in Residence, The Rev. Dr. Suzanne Henderson. Her passion and energy help drive engagement with scripture in ways that are unique to her gifts.
- With Suzanne and Vicar Joshua Case, a pilgrimage to Turkey and Greece, following in the footsteps of Paul. By walking those steps we all gained an appreciation for the world Paul proclaimed the gospel into and a deeper understanding of how we can proclaim that same gospel to our own time.
- Scottie and I collaborated with Dr. Susan Golden to bring a Deep Dive to Christ Church this fall. Following up on her Faith Forum in late 2022, Living the Renaissance Life, was an opportunity for us to begin forming a Renaissance Community at Christ Church for those roughly 55-85 to explore community, purpose, and well-being in the next stage of their life.
- We continue to work with the leaders of those groups to plan for an ongoing Renaissance Community to be rolled out in 2024 and beyond.
- I continued to work closely with Craig Cmiel to help Men's Ministry to thrive at Christ Church. We have so many men, all of whom need a place for community and deeper conversations about vocation, purpose, and the issues that matter most to them, whatever their age or stage. Part of this effort was the formation of men's "Stronger Together" groups, a place for men to do Bible study and fellowship around a topic introduced at the monthly Big Breakfast.
- The School of Faith has continued to be a source of joy, both inviting other program leaders to participate, but also the variety of opportunities that we can make available to parishioners through our resources.

More than anything, I have enjoyed my times of teaching and preaching. These are central to my identity as a priest. I give thanks for CCWBS, the pulpits in the church and All Saints' Hall, School of Faith classrooms, and the Thursday morning Bible study as places where I have been able to live out my vocation most closely and most consistently.

### **The Reverend Emily Parker**

As we move into 2024, I look forward to serving in the Christ Church family, in the city of Charlotte, the region, and Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. Reflecting on this year, I am grateful to have been able to:

- Participate in the January 8 Clergy Panel on Faith in Community and on the January 15 clergy panel on the Power of Prayer.
- Led the January 22 Adult Confirmation Introduction class.
- Be part of the Outreach and Mission Team.
- Help organize a Parish Discernment Committee for someone feeling called to the diaconate.
- Offer e-devotions on February 1, March 29, July 26, and December 27.
- On March 1, I started as Executive Director of Galilee Ministries of East Charlotte.
- Participated in the October 15 panel discussion in All Saints' Hall focused on Galilee Ministries of East Charlotte.
- Participated in the October 17 ECW Friendship Feast and spoke about Galilee.
- Have regular participation in Sunday services.
- Continue to get to know staff and parishioners and build relationships.
- Make pastoral phone calls and take Communion to parishioners in need.
- Serve at a diocesan level.
- Attend the 208th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina (November 17 – 18, 2023).
- Serve as co-leader of Co-Curricular, a program designed to support postulants in the second year of the diocesan diaconal discernment process.

### **The Reverend Elizabeth Walker**

Beginning my call at Christ Church last summer meant that I joined already flourishing Children, Youth, Family, and Young Adult and CCK teams as each prepared to begin another program year.

The Children's Ministry team, led by Sarah Ford, expanded its depth with the hiring of LaQuita Lindsay as Assistant Director of Children's Ministry. The Youth Team continued to passionately care for middle schoolers, high schoolers, and their families with engaging offerings, under the leadership of Assistant Director of Youth Ministry Alice DeVries and Lindsay Masi, Director of Spiritual Formation, even with the Director of Youth Ministry position unfilled.

My role as CCK Chaplain has allowed me to get to know families and staff, as I have led chapel services for children and parents and staff prayer times, dedicated the new playground, and assisted in the beginning of a book study small group. These relationships are full of joy and energy.

Finally, our Young Adult ministry continues to thrive under the leadership of Kathryn Saunders, with regular events that are rich in fellowship and formation. I am grateful for the ways that this ministry group has invited me into relationships.

The additional opportunities I have had to teach, to speak, to preach, to sit with commissions and planning teams, and to join in other pastoral relationships have created a Fall of welcome and learning. The time that the Christ Church clergy and staff has given to onboard and mentor me has been invaluable, and the abundant kindness and sincere welcome given to me and to my family makes Christ Church already our spiritual home. Thank you!

# SENIOR WARDEN

**Submitted by Bill Lorenz**

Members of the 2023 Vestry started the year with significant momentum, as Christ Church prepared to celebrate its' 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. It is important to acknowledge that we did so with an excellent team of Clergy, Staff, and Lay Leadership. Thank you for all that you do! We are truly blessed with the talent and commitment that enable and lead our ministries each and every day.

This momentum was also energized with the expectation of implementing our Strategic Direction after listening to 1,000+ voices within our parish. Thank you to Jane Coulter (my co-chair of the Strategic Direction effort), along with committee leads Weston Andress, Kathleen Dean, Fletcher Gregory, Carol Lorenz, Ann Tabor, and Chris Ullrich, and our 55+ volunteers and staff for their expertise and love for our church in developing our Vision for the next decade. In summary, the Strategic Direction Priorities that were presented included:

- Spiritual Growth
- Center for Well-being
- Engagement and Hospitality
- Sacred Spaces
- Digital Ministries
- East Charlotte Community Well-being
- Creation Care
- Faith Community Partnerships

The Vestry met for our Annual Retreat on January 20-22. We started our time together reviewing milestones achieved by Christ Church in the last eight decades. We shared personal family stories about our Christ Church participation in each of these time periods. Many heartfelt and spiritual offerings were shared, and established a good framework for our work the following day. After presentations, discussion, and unanimous approval of a series of motions, we elected to implement the Strategic Direction Plan and to launch a \$25million Capital and Ministries Campaign. These decisions led us to the development of three 2023 Goals:

## **Strategic Priorities Implementation**

Provide leadership, participation, and support to equip, empower and engage the Strategic Implementation teams in executing the eight strategic priorities. With an eye toward –

- Long-term sustainability
- Creating a multi-year implementation plan
- Partnering with existing commissions

## **Generosity**

Strengthen and nurture the spiritual practice of generosity and stewardship at Christ Church, enabling members to experience the joy of giving their first and best fruits to advance our mission to love God, care for each other, and to serve the world. Examine and standardize our approach to comprehensive stewardship, building upon experience and best practices to distinguish our members giving to Christ Church as their central and top charitable giving priority.



## **Capital and Ministries Campaign**

Charge the Capital and Ministries Campaign Committee with including process and structure in the campaign, designed to enhance member engagement in worship, programs, volunteerism, and activities. Promote and educate on church giving, stewardship and generosity as they relate to the capital campaign and the annual stewardship campaign.

These goals were approved and adopted at the February 27, 2023 Vestry meeting. As 2023 comes to a close, these goals are being executed and achieved.

## **In Conclusion**

- Eight Implementation teams and their leadership have been working and planning next steps.
- The Transforming Hearts Changing Lives Campaign, and our Annual Stewardship Campaign have been launched, with good progress and outcomes achieved. A special thank you to Chris Ullrich (Chair for both), Natalie Akin (Director of Generosity and Stewardship), and Paulette Wilkes (Project Coordinator-Office of Generosity and Stewardship)
- The financial position of our church is an important Vestry responsibility. Thanks to Wendy Mauney, our Chief Operating Officer, and Dick Parkhurst our Treasurer for their discipline and daily oversight.
- Thanks to Fletcher Gregory as our Junior Warden, for our friendship, partnership, and his expertise.
- A special thank you to our current Vestry, Commissions, and Vestry/Commission members of the past. Our cumulative efforts and focus have led us to this historic and special year!
- Thanks to our Rector Chip Edens who has led us for the past 17 years, along with our gifted and extraordinary clergy and staff.

We are blessed as a parish family and Spiritual Home. Let us go forth with our focus on faith, connection, and well-being! Thanks be to God!

# JUNIOR WARDEN

**Submitted by Fletcher Gregory**

2023 has been the year of post-Covid reopening as parishioners return to our church campus. As a result of this return, it has made for a busy year for the Facilities/Operations staff at Christ Church. Both Wendy Mauney and Jason Schofield, as well as our sextons, Clayton Pride, Nikki Rushing, and Greg Young have worked tirelessly to maintain our facilities and manage the incredibly busy events schedule our facilities endure each week. The church is very fortunate to have this talented team of professionals, and it has been a privilege to work with them.

Here is a listing of some of the maintenance and enhancement projects which were completed this year:

- Updated safety and security assessment
- Set up two new CCK classrooms in the nursery suites
- Playground renovation
- Multiple plumbing and electrical repairs
- Production lighting additions in All Saints' Hall
- Phone system capacity upgrades
- Computer replacements/additions
- Replaced classroom furniture for rooms U305 and U306
- Constructed private office in M203
- Painted the following areas:
  - All Saints' Hall hallway wall at offices
  - Nursery rooms
  - Rotunda stairwell and doors
  - CCK corridors and classrooms
  - Stairwell at front playground
  - Offices for staff moves

In January, the Sacred Spaces Implementation Team was formed to plan the design of a new parish hall building and the renovation of some existing spaces. The committee has assembled a talented group of parishioners with experience and expertise to manage this process. To date, the committee has selected an architect (Jenkins Peer) and a general contractor (Barringer), and will be working with these professionals into 2024 to complete the design and begin the construction.

# BUILDINGS, GROUNDS, AND MEMORIALS

**Submitted by David M. Kern**

This group provides general oversight and assistance to the Junior Warden and the Director of Facilities concerning matters involving the church buildings and campus. In addition, the Committee directs the use of undesigned gifts and memorials made to Christ Church. In this regard, the group attempts to match specific Church needs with the personality and particular interests/activities of the person in whose name a gift or memorial is given.

This year saw the completion of numerous much-needed repairs and improvements throughout the campus. A special thanks goes to Wendy Mauney (Chief Operating Officer), Jason Scofield (Director of Facilities), and Fletcher Gregory (Junior Warden) for their tireless dedication and extraordinary work. The work of the Committee during 2023 has included the following:

- Purchasing new altar hangings and a new Paschal candle for the Sanctuary
- Purchasing new sound, lighting, and stage equipment for All Saints' Hall
- Providing funds and assisting generally with the beautification of the Rotunda area and other areas throughout All Saints' Hall, including carpeting, painting, lighting, and remodeling of the bathrooms
- Installing additional memorial plaques in the Memorial Garden
- Assisting the Director of Facilities generally concerning the replacement of the roof above the Blue Room
- Assisting with the removal of dogwood trees and the replacement with new trees near the Chapel
- Assisting the Director of Facilities and the Junior Warden generally with developing and enhancing best practices for security throughout the campus
- Assisting with the installation of a bench and children's seats in the Christ Church Kindergarten playground
- Assisting the Director of Facilities with significant plaster repairs to the Nave and chapel
- Assisting generally with repair, maintenance, and improvement needs concerning the duplexes on the Church property
- Reworking, reconfiguring, and installing new plantings in the Rose Garden
- Applying individual memorial gifts toward the Wellness Initiative
- Coordinating with the Director of Facilities and Junior Warden in reviewing, assessing and prioritizing present and future needs concerning all of the buildings and facilities throughout the Campus and communicating with the capital campaign Sacred Spaces implementation committee
- Overseeing and funding numerous plantings and landscaping throughout the Campus, including trees and shrubbery beside the Sanctuary, removal of dead trees, multiple planting and improvements to the Memorial Garden, and the completion of a variety of specialized pruning and landscape improvements throughout the campus

**Commission members:** David Kern (Chair), Rev. Fred Paschall, Jr., Wendy Mauney (COO), Jason Scofield (Director of Facilities), Fletcher Gregory (Junior Warden – ex officio), Catherine Browning, Eric Locher, Bill Lowry, Lulie Mallard, William Nichols, Jr. and Barbara Plumlee.

# TREASURER

Submitted by Dick Parkhurst

Summarized below are the financial results for the past three years along with the budget for 2023. For 2023, our budget calls for 6% growth in receipts reflecting similar growth in pledges. The expenses budget for 2023 is also up 6% reflecting well deserved support for our clergy and lay staff and general inflationary impacts to our operating costs. Budgets in other areas remain flat.

Annual receipts for 2022 increased 5% over 2021 bringing total receipts nearly \$6 million and in line with the 2022 budget. Consistent with past years, expenses were well managed coming in nearly \$100,000 under budget driven largely by the timing of planned staff additions. As a result, we recorded an operating surplus of \$30,000. While this surplus is lower than the prior few years, it is closer to the balanced budget we set each year. With the substantial reserve built over the past few years, the Vestry approved the use of approximately \$200,000 of reserve in 2023 to support areas of need outside of the operating budget. The remaining surplus of \$845,000 is available to meet unbudgeted funding requirements as approved by the Vestry.

	2020 Actual		2021 Actual		2022 Actual		2023 Budget	
Operating Receipts	5,654,233		5,663,612		5,954,716		6,289,000	
Personnel & Admin	3,635,187	66%	3,643,411	69%	4,213,550	71%	4,583,000	73%
Diocese of NC	536,282	11%	581,372	11%	606,705	10%	607,000	10%
Buildings and Grounds	328,931	8%	324,172	6%	346,293	6%	345,000	5%
Outreach	449,064	9%	450,000	9%	449,047	8%	450,000	7%
Programs	269,072	5%	257,770	5%	308,981	5%	304,000	5%
Operating Expenses	5,218,536		5,256,725		5,924,576		6,289,000	
Annual Surplus	435,697		406,887		30,140		-	
Reserve Usage	(168,953)		(170,210)		(404,105)		(198,510)	
Accumulated Reserve	1,181,182		1,417,859		1,043,894		845,384	

Through November 2023, both receipts and expenses are in line with expectations. As December always accounts for a significant portion of full-year receipts our final results will continue to depend on fulfillment of pledges. Given the consistent support throughout the past few years, I am confident in our budget and look forward to a solid finish to the year.

While Christ Church remains financially strong, the growing needs of our parish and community will require increased commitment to stewardship as we seek to Transform Hearts and Change Lives. The initiatives of this campaign will require increased resources to care for all our Sacred Spaces and support Wellness throughout our community. Beyond the capital campaign, our long-term success will depend on an ever-growing budget supporting current and future initiatives. With a growing, vibrant, and engaged parish community, I am confident Christ Church will meet this challenge we carry out our mission to Love God, Care for Each Other and Serve the World.

# ADULT SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Submitted by **Scottie Stamper, Ed.D., MDiv/CE, BCC**

The Adult Spiritual Formation team, which includes clergy, staff, volunteer teachers, leaders, facilitators, and commission members are passionate about the faith development of Christ Church parishioners and participants. We have enjoyed responding to the call to create, implement, and develop opportunities for meaningful connections, deepening faith, and promoting wellbeing.

## **School of Faith**

Continuing the format created in 2022, the School of Faith included classes at 10 am on Sunday mornings and on Wednesday evenings (September 2022 – May 2023). In addition to four original Sunday classes – Faith in Action, Soul Care, Family Matters, and Basics of Faith – we added the Weekly Word Bible Study (based on the lectionary) in January 2023 for a total of five Sunday School of Faith offerings. These classes provided other options to the Faith Forums and Clergy Classes in All Saints' Hall. Beginning in September 2023, the adult Weekly Word Bible Study content and scripture aligned with the Bible stories and scriptures taught in the children's Sunday School classes.

The 10-week Adult Inquirers and Confirmation class, led by Christ Church clergy, began on Sunday mornings in January and was open to participants seeking to be confirmed as well as those who wanted to learn more about the Episcopal faith. The class had an average attendance of thirteen. Of those, seven were confirmed, four received, and one reaffirmed. (One person wanted to learn more about the traditions and distinctive characteristics of the Episcopal faith.)

Wednesday evening offerings included The Enneagram and Relationships, Becoming Beloved Community, The Bible Journeys, a Brian McLaren book study of *Do I Stay Christian?* in preparation for his Faith Forum presentation, a Lenten study, *Henri Matisse and The Colors of Lent*, a book study of *Poverty, by America*, hosted by our Missions and Outreach team, and *The Spiritual Life for Busy People* led by The Reverend Connor Gwin.

## **Renaissance Community**

Dr. Susan Golden, author of *Stage (Not Age)*, was a featured Faith Forum speaker in November 2022. Her conversation with the Reverend Chip Edens was the first introduction to a developing community within the body of Christ Church – the Renaissance Community. The Adult Spiritual Formation team and Dr. Susan Golden collaborated to design a five-week Deep Dive exploration.

The Renaissance Community is designed for people +/- 55 – 85 who are exploring life transitions i.e., retirement, empty nest, caregiving for aging parents. The development of this community within Christ Church creates space for mutual support for embracing life's transitions. Purpose, community, and well-being are terms that guide the work of the Renaissance Community.

The Living Your Renaissance Deep Dive kicked off on Wednesday evenings in October 2023 with approximately 80 participants. Following a short lecture delivered by Dr. Susan Golden via Zoom, small groups met to further discuss the lecture content. The small group facilitators were Bill Lorenz and A. T. Costillo, Doug and Tere Ey, Kent Walker, Jr. and Mark Anders, Wayne Ballard, Mary and Fletcher Gregory, and Lila Brown who hosted a small group at Southminster.

## **Men's Ministry**

The Men's ministry continues to thrive with many ongoing Bible studies and opportunities for connecting with others.

Fifteen men participated in the annual Men's Retreat at the Valle Crucis Conference Center in January 2023. The Reverend Allen Pruitt and Reverend Dr. Adam Roberts led participants throughout the weekend with the theme of

“The Foundation of a Life Well Lived.”

The monthly Men’s Big Breakfast, held on the first Wednesday of each month, offers a variety of programming with guest speakers, panel discussions, and clergy-led conversations as well as an opportunity for fellowship. A monthly email sent to the men of Christ Church encourages men of all ages to attend and keeps them informed of other men’s activities.

There are several men’s Bible study groups that meet weekly, some meeting at the church, and others meeting off-campus. These are covenant groups, or groups of men who have been meeting together for several years. The Tuesday morning Bible in a Bag study is open to newcomers and drop-ins. They meet weekly at Panera Bread on Providence Road.

A new men’s ministry initiative Stronger Together began in October 2023. Small groups connect based on areas of interests such as parenting, career, and relationships. The individual groups decide upon meeting days, locations, and times. The Reverend Allen Pruitt provides a monthly devotional and scripture for the groups to consider in their conversations. Helping participants recognize God’s work in their every-day routine is an intentional conduit for deepening their faith.

Over 20 Christ Church participants traveled to western North Carolina to hike Mount LeConte in November 2023. It has been an annual tradition enjoyed by men of Christ Church. Stuart Garner and The Reverend Allen Pruitt coordinated the trip. There is no electricity and no WiFi, so the pilgrimage offers an opportunity to unplug, enjoy mountain hiking, and eat together in rustic cabins lit with kerosene lanterns and flashlights. This annual trip has created a meaningful bond among all who have participated.

### **Women’s Bible Studies: CCWBS & WEBS**

CCWBS continues to draw 50 to 60 women to Christ Church for the weekly Thursday morning Bible study. The focus of the winter/spring 2023 semester was the Gospel of Mark, with the fall study focusing on the Book of Acts. While studying Acts, three clergy presenters shared pictures and experiences from their recent “Footsteps of Paul” pilgrimage to Turkey and Greece. CCWBS participants always have the option to join in small group discussions following the lectures. An outstanding team of leaders facilitated the four small groups: Lois Ann Partridge and Nancy Poe, Roline McGinnis and Dawn Franchina, Christy Howie, and Kaky Cassada.

WEBS, the Women’s Evening Bible Study, continued to meet bi-weekly at the church and via Zoom on Monday evenings. Their study has focused on the women of the Bible. Peggy Curlin facilitates this group.

### **Pilgrimages**

From September 27 - through October 8, thirty pilgrims journeyed to Turkey and Greece for the Footsteps of Paul Pilgrimage. The Reverends Allen Pruitt and Joshua Case co-hosted the trip, along with The Reverend Dr. Suzanne Watts Henderson, our New Testament Scholar-in-Residence. Highlights of the pilgrimage included visits to St. John’s Basilica, Ephesus, Corinth, and Patmos. In addition to the pilgrimage, three pre-pilgrimage dinners at the church allowed for travelers to learn about their pilgrimage destinations as well as get to know one another.

### **Sages**

Monthly programming and lunch provides the Sages (men and women 65+) an opportunity to connect socially and with our larger community. Highlights of 2023 include guest speakers Jane Singleton Myer, Christ Church Charlotte member and executive director of Trees Charlotte, Outreach Director Laura Konitzer, and learning about the Christ Church website from Ainslie Wall, Elizabeth Ignasher, Sandy Dyer, and Rosalyn Lackey. In November, a group of 20 Sages traveled to Winston-Salem by bus to visit Reynolda House. Each December, the program that attracts a large and enthusiastic audience is the Advent Carols and Lunch, featuring holiday music with Ben Outen and the choir. A monthly email sent to all members of Christ Church (65+ years) encourages attendance to Sages meeting and events.

### **Wisdom Circle**

Joana Wardell continues to lead a committed group of learners (currently women of various ages), focusing on the works of “wisdom writers” i.e., Cynthia Bourgeault and Richard Rohr. The Wisdom Circle meets via Zoom every other week on Tuesday afternoons. There are approximately 20 participants.

### **EfM**

There were five graduates of Education for Ministry (EfM) in May 2023. Currently, two groups of EfM mentees and mentors meet under the mentorship of Tere Ey and Virginia Anderson (Wednesday mornings), and Natalie Akin and Jenny Beaumont (Friday mornings).

### **The Space Between Us**

Christ Church’s three-day course The Space Between Us, a program based on the spiritual practices of St. Ignatius, was offered in February, April, July, and November. There was a total of about 40 participants, many of whom are part of our community partners such as Habitat for Humanity and Safe Alliance.

### **Reading Between the Lines**

Three Reading Between the Lines groups, with a total of 42 learners, meet on a weekly basis under the leadership of Amanda Anders, Jeanne Kutrow, and Charles Connor.

### **ECW**

The Adult Spiritual Formation team supports the work of the Episcopal Church Women (ECW) who have submitted a separate report. It is a joy to work with this vital group as they continue to rebuild following the pandemic.

The work of the Adult Spiritual Formation ministry area wouldn’t be possible without the assistance of Rosalyn Lackey, our Administrative Assistant, as well as the Adult Spiritual Formation Commission, led by Anne Schleusner. We are already looking forward to and planning for 2024, which will continue to creatively design, develop, and implement opportunities for connecting to self, others, and God. Well-being, faith development, and purpose are elements that continue to drive our work together.

# CHILDREN AND FAMILY

**Submitted by Sarah Ford**

We have seen another great year within Children's and Family Ministry!

Faith, connection, and well-being remain the central focuses of our ministry. Below are highlights of the ways in which we worked to create and build faith, connection and well-being among our children, families, and their spiritual home.

- In early February, 16 fifth graders and their parents participated in These Are Our Bodies to learn more about the connection between Faith and Human Sexuality. This was the first time Lindsay Masi and I offered this program as the facilitators with the help of three amazing adult volunteers, Burr Farrar, Virginia Flynn and Ashley Kerley.
- Throughout Lent, 22 fourth and fifth grade Navigators participated in a six-week long Bible Study guided by the devotional for children, *Press Play* by Carlos Whittaker. The tweens agreed to take on building confidence for the six weeks and our study ended with the task of confidently building the ice cream sundae of their dreams. This offering was made possible thanks to two to three parent volunteers a week who helped.
- Our team offered our annual Stations of the Cross for families in All Saints' Hall on Good Friday for children, youth and families.
- In late April, we held the Southern Soiree. This shared event between CCK and Children's Ministry was organized by co-chairs, Allison Kent and Mary Bates and raised enough funds to begin the renovation and construction of our largest playground at Christ Church.
- From June 19 – 22, 225 children, youth and adults gathered for our Hero Hotline Vacation Bible School and supported Thrive Global Project as our Service-Learning partner for the week. An enormous thank you to our amazing 2023 Steering Committee led by incredible co-chairs, Elizabeth Baker and Brittany Ingersoll!
- With the help of the Children's and Family Commission, we were able to successfully ask over 90 leaders to serve as Children's Chapel leaders and assistants, Sunday School teachers, and floaters. About 30 of those leaders are new to this ministry and are newcomers to Christ Church who wanted to share their gifts with the children of Christ Church.
- We purchased and implemented a new Sunday School curriculum for three-year-olds through 5th grade called Weaving God's Promises that will allow us to follow the three-year Church cycle.
- We were able to offer Children's Chapel on first and third Sundays during the summer and have continued that momentum with a great cohort of adult volunteers supporting and offering this ministry during 8:45 services regularly.
- Children's Sunday School classes continue to see large numbers. Our Sunday School leaders are the most dedicated and are the reason children continue to come week after week!
- We invited other ministries into our annual Advent Festival to help make crafts and were able to offer nine crafts as well as all the supplies to create Advent wreaths.
- We will wrap up our year in Children's and Family Ministry with our annual Christmas Pageant!

Our team has grown this year with the incredible addition of LaQuita Lindsay as our Assistant Director of Children's and Family Ministry and our team is supported by the administrative skills of Fay Palmer.

A special thank you to Elizabeth Walker and Lindsay Masi for their continued dedication and leadership to this team, and thank you to the staff, Clergy, Vestry, Children's and Family Commission, and parishioners of Christ Church. I am deeply grateful to call Christ Church both my place of work and my family's Spiritual Home.



# CHRIST CHURCH KINDERGARTEN

**Submitted by Meredith Sorrell**

Christ Church Preschool and Kindergarten (CCK) is the largest daily mission of Christ Church. The school is the largest it has ever been serving 253 students, 194 families and employing 57 staff members. Our mission is to cultivate our children's unique gifts and talents to inspire lives of learning, serving others and loving God. We seek to inspire the children of CCK to become life-long learners in a faith-based environment.

CCK has a long and rich history of successfully preparing children for their elementary education. The journey starts in our Toddler classrooms with children learning to separate from parents, and moves through our Four-year-old and Kindergarten hallways, where our children are learning pre-reading, writing, and math skills to prepare them for their educational journey beyond preschool. Our dedicated staff of teachers are at the core of what we do each day. These amazing, experienced teachers give countless hours towards planning, implementing curriculum, and nurturing the children and families of CCK. Our Special Area teachers are on our staff to enrich the children's daily educational experience. The Learning Center, Music, Science Lab, and Godly Play classes bring numerous opportunities for learning and growth. In addition, Creative Movement, Yoga and My Gym classes provide monthly gross motor play for students. Christian Education is at the core of our curriculum and All School Chapel allows all ages to come together one time each month for worship. Parents and grandparents enjoy joining us for All School Chapel, making these monthly services a multi-generational experience.

For the first time this year, our school offered a 3-day Toddler class, and a 5-day Threes class. We are sharing two of the nursery suites rooms with the Children and Family ministry team in order to accommodate our increased enrollment. We appreciate the strong connection between CCK and the greater Christ Church community.

CCK continues to employ the services of off-duty CMPD police officers to be on campus during the school day to support traffic in the parking lot and monitor the playgrounds while children play. These officers also help monitor the traffic in our parking lot during big events. We enjoy engaging families in larger all school events such as age-level gatherings, our fall family picnic, Christmas and spring concerts, the Sweetheart Dance and celebrations in the classrooms during the school day.

As a school we participate in two all-school service projects each year. The projects are designed to help our children begin to understand the importance of helping others in their community. For the third year in a row, CCK will have a Bake Sale on November 16th to benefit Cookies for Kids' Cancer. All teachers, students, staff and parents will participate in some way to support the Bake Sale. In addition, our Threes classes hold a canned food drive in November and our Toddler/Twos classes hold a pet supply drive in February. As part of these collections, all classes are asked to bring donations to All School Chapel during those months. Our Spring all-school service project is a school supply drive that benefits Freedom School Partners. We continue to connect with the Christ Church Outreach team to find ways that our school families can engage in outreach opportunities the church is planning.

CCK is governed by a Board of Directors, which meets monthly.

**Board of Directors:** Julia Duncan (Chair), Elliott Weeks (Chair-Elect), Joshua Case (Clergy Representative), Carl Showalter (Vestry Representative) Allison Kent (Treasurer), Marsha Thrasher (Teacher Representative), Mary Pell Teden (Parent Representative), David Brady, Kelly Coley (Coordinator of Engagement and Enhancement), Lindsay Gates, Zach Hill, Thomas Hipp, Jenna Hollmeyer, Hope Leak, Merrill Mills, Anna Papon, John Randall, Allison Schilz, Elizabeth Walker (Chaplain), Meredith Sorrell (Head of School), and Mary Caroline Lee (Assistant Head of School).

The support of our staff from CCK families, the greater church community, Church Leadership and our Board has been an incredible blessing over the last several years. As the church engages in a strategic planning initiative, our CCK Board and Administration have been doing so as well. The Board created the following Strategic Planning priorities as we look forward to enhancing and enriching CCK:

- Faith: Empower staff and parents with opportunities to foster faith development for the CCK community by offering quarterly parent chapel services, staff prayer sessions and a live streaming option for All School Chapel services so more parents and grandparents can be included.
- Well-Being: Foster well-being among the CCK community by incorporating mental, physical and spiritual wellness into existing programs.
- Connection: Create opportunities to strengthen engagement and connection with four key community stakeholders: CCK staff, parents, Christ Church, and the broader community.
- Long-Term Planning & Major Projects: Explore possibilities that will enrich the school experience of future CCK students and families; specifically.

#### **Programs & Services**

Our focus is to be recognized as a leader providing high quality services and programs that are responsive to the existing and emerging needs of CCK children and parents.

#### **Engagement**

Our focus is to provide opportunities to strengthen engagement across CCK, Christ Church, and the broader community.

#### **Facilities**

Our focus is to create and utilize purpose-built space to meet the needs of the CCK community.

# EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN (ECW)

**Submitted by Katherine Vest**

Page Gatewood did an amazing job last year in bringing ECW back to life in the post-Covid world. Our focus this year was to build upon her work and evaluate our mission and programming to ensure relevancy and meaning for the needs of today.

## **Goals for 2023:**

- ECW will rebrand itself for a modern era, think outside the box, and dedicate itself to what is “Good, True and Beautiful”
- ECW will broaden its leadership
- ECW will add “micro events” that foster CONNECTION and REAL RELATIONSHIP
- ECW will do work in the community vs. just giving money away.

## **Changes made in 2023:**

**LEADERSHIP:** Shifted structure from a traditional “Board” format (President, VP, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.;;) to that of a Commission. Reasons for this were to:

- Align with other Christ Church ministries
- Bring more voices to the table; Board was historically 4-5 women, Commission is 15
- Ensure that ALL ages and stages are represented among the leadership
- Create new ideas, continuity, and past experience at the same time by having a three-year term of service. Each year five new members join, five senior members roll off, and ten sophomore/junior members stay on.

**PROGRAMS:** Added a quarterly service opportunity for women in order to:

- Use Time, Talent & Treasure vs. merely raise money to give away.
- Coordinate with Laura Konitzer/Outreach Team to fulfill existing needs vs. starting new things
- Create a personal connection among each other and our community partners

## **COMMUNICATION:**

- Began a quarterly e-newsletter
- Plan to send a January postcard listing all events for the coming year

## **HISTORY**

- No single document existed showing all past ECW leadership, so we interviewed longtime parishioners, scoured paper files, digital records, and scrap books (going back to its inception in 1943) to create a comprehensive list covering ECW's 70-year history at Christ Church. It's a very impressive group of women! The list is permanently saved in Realm.

## **Events & Programs:**

### **Mission Funding**

\$60,750 was raised in 2022 (from GoodNews Shop sales and ECW events) and given away in February 2023. Kalie Kovisto and Lydia Hanna led the grant allocation process to award \$55,500 locally and \$5,250 internationally to groups who specially support women and children.

### **Past President's Wine & Cheese**

Held in March at the home of Laura Copps

All living past leaders were invited (see "History" above) and 40 attended a lovely evening of laughter, fellowship, and stories from the past. A survey was given which gave us helpful feedback on successful past work and suggestions for an improved future.

### **Kick-Off & Reimagining Lunch**

Held in April at the home of Kimberly Mize

25 women were in attendance to explore a potential role in the newly formed ECW Commission and imagine "ECW 2.0." Julie Marr guided discussions and created productive language around the brainstorming of fresh ideas.

### **Mountain Retreat Weekend**

Held in May at Kanuga

30 women attended a restorative weekend filled with: program by Ginny Cobb and Lisa Cashion on the spiritual importance of "Connection," outdoor contemplative yoga with Joyce Cmiel, a holy hike, a beading class led by Laura Copps, and an interactive worship service (so creative!) by The Reverend Joan Killian in the Kanuga chapel.

### **Friendship Feast**

Held in October in All Saints' Hall

100 women were in attendance for an evening of "Connecting the D.O.T.S.: Divine, Others, Together, Serving" where our three female clergy (Emily Parker, Joan Kilian and Elizabeth Walker) and our Director of Outreach, Laura Konitzer, shared the stage to give deeply inspiring messages on how serving others connects us to God, ourselves and each other. Chef Andrea Wimberly served a delicious dinner and did an excellent job with every aspect of this large-scale event.

### **Mahjong**

Started in November, 2x per month in Green Room

A "micro event" for all ages, stages and level of play, fostering connection + fun, which was VERY well received.

### **Greenery Sale**

December 2 in All Saints' Hall

A primary fundraiser for the financial grants we allocate, Laura Copps and Gigi Harris worked with Laurel Springs Nursery to procure gorgeous fresh holiday greenery for sale. As of this writing, 100 orders were placed, with an additional 30 items ready for "day of" sales.

### **Christmas Pop-Up**

December 2 in All Saints' Hall

Page Gatewood resurrected this iconic event last year (formally the "Christmas Bazaar") and was the lead this year on making it even better. We increased the number and variety of vendors (from 11 last year to 16 this year) and know it will be a big success!

**(NEW) Christmas Cooking:** We brought back the making of homemade food to sell at the Pop-Up. Small groups of women gathered in the Christ Church kitchen to make 56 quarts of Brunswick Stew, 30 Pizza Breads, and 20 Breakfast Casseroles, headed up by Merrill Mills and Holly Hobson.

### **UPCOMING:**

ECW sponsors Room in the Inn, January 21, 2024

Weekend Retreat, February 9 – 11, 2024

**ECW Commission Members:** Mary Beth Ausman, Julliann Bannon, Aimee Borders, Lisa Cashion, Sis Cranz, Page Gatewood, Lydia Hanna, Gigi Harris, Holly Hobson, Kalie Kovisto, Merrill Mills, Kimberly Mize, Katherine Vest, Gail Landers (GNS), Laura Konitzer (Outreach). Scottie Stamper, Rosalyn Lackey, Allen Pruitt. And a VERY SPECIAL nod to Laura Copps, our Vestry Liaison, who has committed herself to this group and its work more than anyone else involved. She has kept the ship afloat and moving forward when we needed it most.

# MUSIC AND THE ARTS

**Submitted by Ben Outen**

The Christ Church music ministry has seen growth, change and continuity of excellence during the year of 2023. Our music offerings for children, adults, and the community at large have expanded and continue to inspire many. Music Ministry offerings are highlighted below in five sections: Music Department Personnel, Children's Music, Contemporary Music, Christ Church Choir, and Parish and Community Offerings.

Personnel within the Music Program changed significantly in 2023.

- Olivia Beaver, part time Music Department Administrator, left Christ Church at the end of March to accept a full-time job. At the beginning of November, David Beard was hired to be full-time Music Department Administrator.
- At the end of July, Jerrick Cavagnaro, Assistant Music Director and Organist, left Christ Church to accept a new position at Trinity Church, Copley Square, Boston, MA. Immediately a search was organized to find his replacement, but it was unsuccessful. Once the fall season started, the search was suspended until the spring. Traditionally, after Easter is a time when organists change jobs and music schools are graduating organists in need of a job.
- In the interim of both positions, Ben Outen, Music Director, has managed the various responsibilities of the two jobs.

## **Children's Music**

This past year has seen continued growth in children's music with a total of 106 registrations in Fall of 2023.

- Music Club (4 years old - Kindergarten) has a total of 55 registrations.
- Music Club sang in the Discovery Eucharist in the spring and will be part of the Christmas Pageant this fall.
- St. Nicolas Choir (1st<sup>t</sup> – 2nd grades) increased from 19 registrations in Fall of 2022 to 30 registrations in the fall of 2023.
- Christ Church Choristers (3rd – 8th grades) has a total of 21 registrations.
- St. Nicolas Choir and the Christ Church Choristers sang once monthly for worship in the Church equating to 9 full worship services and for special services: Advent Lessons and Carols, the 3 pm Christmas Eve service in the church. As has become a tradition, they participated in a weekend RSCM festival at St. John's Episcopal Cathedral in Knoxville, Tn. Also, the St. Nicolas Choir and Christ Church Choristers participated in an annual choir camp in August to begin their new choir season.
- RSCM (Royal School of Church Music) Ribbon Classes (music reading classes) are offered along with the choir rehearsals on Wednesday evenings.

In the first half of the year, Children's Music was led by the Assistant Director of Music and Organist, Jerrick Cavagnaro and the Associate Musician for Children, Katie Lehman. In the second half of the year, Katie Lehman led this program and after the Assistant Organist's departure, was joined by Lauren Tomme, who previously held the position of Associate Musician for Children and who also assisted in 2022 during Katie Lehman's maternity leave. Ben Outen continues to teach music literacy in the RSCM 'ribbon class.' Volunteers Genie Hufham, Dottie Chambers and Michael Hurlburt, help weekly with children's choirs signing in and out and assisting in rehearsals.

## **Contemporary Music**

At the conclusion of 2023, Charles Milling and the Christ Church Band will have presented 35 Contemporary and Discovery services. Along with those, they also have led specialty services and programs such as Spring and Fall Parish Days, Confirmation Sunday, Vacation Bible School, Church at the Farm, All Saints' Hall Advent Lessons and Carols, the Christmas Pageant, and Christmas Eve services in All Saints' Hall. Of the wonderful 29 partners in

music leadership this year, we want to bring attention and special thanks to David Milling and Pete Landry, who each volunteered close to 300 hours, bringing warmth and excellence to every congregational gathering.

### **Christ Church Choir**

The Christ Church Choir has maintained a high standard of musical excellence leading two Sunday morning services and providing cantors for the 5 pm service weekly, throughout 2023. Beyond the Sunday offerings they have offered these special services:

- Hymn Festival during the Faith Forum in January
- Ash Wednesday Eucharists, February
- Holy Week: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Eve/Vigil
- Five Evensongs on the third Sunday at 3 pm, January, February, March, September, and October
- All Saints' Day Eucharist
- Choir and Orchestra Concert for the Celebration of the 80th Anniversary of Christ Church
- Advent Lessons and Carols
- Sages Carol Concert for their December meeting
- Four Christmas Eve Services with concert-styled preludes
- Various weddings and funerals

The personnel of the Christ Church Schola continues to change and evolve. We currently have 10 section leaders including Katie Lehman, Associate Musician for Children. Members of the Schola also serve as cantors for the 5 pm Eucharist each week. There are 11 volunteers in the Christ Church Choir: Theresa Gibson, Sam Bomar, Kate McLoughlin, Sarah Tull, Janice Mueller, Bill Stokes, Lauren Cable, John Craver, Anne Jackson and Emma Gwin.

The Christ Church Parish Choir has been reinstated. The volunteers include John Crehore, Anne Crehore, Susan Tompkins, Deidre Stiles, Haines Barksdale, Will Trotter, Amy Klett, Libby Dondero, Margaret Bauer and Maggie Loselle. They will have sung seven Sunday services by the end of 2023.

### **Parish and Community Offerings**

As Charlotte continues to grow and Christ Church continues to expand its reach, the community that surrounds the campus increasingly notices and seeks the spaces and location provided within Christ Church. In 2022, the Music Ministry welcomed almost a dozen community arts organizations and instructors that utilized our spaces for private lessons, presented concerts and recitals, and hosted large scale events during each month of 2023. Organizations included:

- Arts+
- Charlotte Bach Academy
- Charlotte Master Chorale
- The Choir of New College, Oxford, England
- Caritas
- Dahlia Grove
- Charlotte Chamber Choir
- Charlotte Harps
- Private piano teachers, Kristine Hooped and Annette Morris annual recitals

Each organization, recitalist, and instructor were welcomed by all the Music staff including Director of Music, Ben

Outen, Director of Contemporary and Family Worship Charles Milling, Assistant Director of Music and Organist, Jerrick Cavagnaro, and Administrative Assistant for Music, Olivia Beaver. In the absence of Jerrick and Olivia, Ben has had the opportunity to host these organizations and to find ways to use their programs in the life of Christ Church. The most notable being The Charlotte Chamber Choir, directed by Matt Wetmore, was a part of the November 10 concert celebrating the 80th anniversary of Christ Church and the Faith Forum presentation that followed.

The midweek service, The Well, was offered during the spring of 2023. Charles Milling and Ben Outen provided musical leadership along with various instrumentalists and singers.

Other occasions for which guest instrumentalists were used include:

- Hymn Festival, Strings and Brass, January
- Easter, Brass and Percussion, April
- All Saints Day, Bagpiper, November
- 80th Anniversary Concert featuring The Christ Church Choir, The Charlotte Chamber Choir and a small orchestra of 15 instrumentalists playing Bach, “Lobet den Herren” and Maurice Duruflé, Requiem, Opus 9, in November
- Christmas, Brass Quintet, Harp and Percussion, December

In addition to the weekly worship services in the Church, Ben Outen and Jerrick Cavagnaro played for most of the 16 weddings and 41 funerals during 2023. Several of those required finding and hiring guest instrumentalists, soloists and ensembles. Ben has served as a resource helping the Organ Committee and Strategic Planning Committee understand the dramatic need for a new organ, how it would enhance worship and contribute to the worship life of the entire parish.

The Music Ministry of Christ Church Charlotte is one of the many ministries that invite and engage the diverse landscape of churchgoers in 2023. Each piece of music played and sung, relationship cultivated, worship experience offered, and faith journey explored is affected by those who are a part of the Music Ministry of Christ Church. This ministry will continue to grow and thrive in Christ Church’s mission to engage, equip and empower people in the love and faithfulness of Jesus Christ.

# NEWCOMERS AND PARISH LIFE

Submitted by **The Reverend Chip Edens, Kathryn Saunders, Ainslie Wall, Molly Nielsen, and Mary Catherine Zito**

## **Newcomers**

We continue to welcome each visitor that we are made aware of with a personal welcome email, entry into the database so that they receive communications, a tour (if desired), invitations to newcomer activities; and follow-up email(s) – all with the focus and hope that they feel connected and become engaged members of Christ Church.

Additionally, we have a system set up in most ministry areas to identify newcomers. Children and Family Ministry forwards names of newcomers attending Sunday School or in the Nursery; Adult Formation welcomes class registrants who aren't in our system and ask if they are interested in learning more; and Worship asks all couples getting married if they plan to live in Charlotte and would like to be involved. These are great ways of making sure that visitors or others don't fall through the cracks.

Over the past 12 months, we welcomed almost 200 households. Approximately half of these have become member households, comprised of young adults (63%), adults (27%) and Sages (10%).

**Starting Point Class:** We continued the newly developed Starting Point class, for those new to Christ Church or looking to restart their spiritual journey. This class was held in the Parlor, facilitated by clergy and staff. Members of the Vestry and Hospitality Committee joined after to invite newcomers to brunch to get to know them and answer questions.

**Greeter Ministry:** We enlist parishioners to be greeters before and after our 8:45 and 11:15 am services, as well as our 5:00 pm service. The greeters are very helpful to visitors, particularly with requests to locate the nursery or Sunday school classrooms. We continue to identify newcomers this way and feel the greeter impact is significant.

**Vespers in the Garden:** We held our annual Vespers in the Garden on May 10. The Funderburgs hosted the event again in their gardens and it was a very special evening. Roughly 40 newcomers were welcomed by 50 members of our clergy, staff, Vestry, and hospitality committee. The choir assisted leading the beautiful candlelight Vespers service at sundown. It was a beautiful evening! Caroline Austin and Lauren Carter co-chaired this event.

**Newcomer Dinners:** We hosted monthly newcomer dinners from October through May. These are a very casual way to meet other newcomers. We include a personal element by having a Clergy or staff member come talk about their own spiritual journey, along with what they do at Christ Church. A great way to get to know newcomers more deeply and allow them to feel more integrated.

**Hospitality Committee:** The Hospitality Committee, chaired by Catherine Ruth Kelly, meets monthly throughout the year and plays the greatest role in the success of the Shrove Tuesday Supper and the Vespers in the Garden events. In addition, the Committee members participate in welcoming newcomers as Greeters and reach out personally to all newcomers who wish to be engaged. We are grateful for their hospitality.

**The 2023 Hospitality Committee members are** Catherine Ruth Kelly (Chair), Kathi Adams, Natalie Akin, Caroline Austin, Austin Carey, Lauren Carter, John Crehore, Lindsay Gates, Page Gatewood, Mary Gregory, Gigi Harris, Claudia Pitt, Carol Lorenz, Ann Rogers, Katie Salmon, Julia Taylor, Liz Willett, Hillary Wyche, and Sara Yorke.



## **PARISH LIFE:**

**Parish Life Commission:** The commission consists primarily of event chairs, along with representation by the Hospitality Committee. We hold monthly meetings to discuss how to best connect and engage parishioners through parish wide events. Mary Catherine Zito is serving her third year as chair of the committee and has done an outstanding job.

**Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper:** Shrove Tuesday was a great success. This year, we continued the education element, where Joshua Case presented the burning of the palms, and we “buried” alleluias in Memorial Garden and Charles Milling led the children with “The Saints Go Marching In” into All Saints’ Hall for a wonderful pancake and jambalaya supper prepared by Chef Mary and hosted by the Hospitality Committee. Lindsay Gates and Claudia Pitt chaired this event.

**Easter Egg Hunt:** The hunt took place on the lawn and toddler playground after the 11:15 am services. Lots of parishioners donated eggs and many volunteers helped hide them. It was a well-attended event.

**Spring Parish Day:** Spring Parish Day was well attended. We brought back the Bubble Show, which was a big hit, along with bounce houses and other activities. Following the Parish Day service, parishioners enjoyed great fried chicken from Chef Mary to the tunes of the Faultline bluegrass band. It was Chef Mary’s last day before retirement. Bethany Swift chaired this event.

**Funday Sundays:** We continued the summer tradition of hosting food truck Sundays and hot dog buffets with live music on the 2nd and 4th Sundays. These were such a great way to welcome newcomers and parishioners and provide fellowship during the slower days of summer. Emily Evans, Tori Irvin, and Garland Talbott helped organize these events.

**Fall Parish Day:** This annual event welcoming back the parish from summer was very well attended. Chef Andrea provided BBQ and other delicious sides. Chairs Lucy Butler and Annie Greene planned a fabulous day with Faultline performing bluegrass music, to the delight of all, while the children enjoyed a petting zoo, face painting, balloon artists, and the bounce houses. Along with the firetruck’s appearance, it was a great day to welcome so many and celebrate the year ahead.

**Night Under the Stars: Celebrating 80 Years:** This year we held an additional parish-wide event to celebrate Christ Church’s 80th anniversary. It was a beautiful night of festive music, food, and fellowship. With the help of a fabulous committee, we welcomed many parishioners from all stages together.

**Trunk or Treat:** The annual event was again a success with perfect fall weather. There were around 500 people in attendance, who enjoyed a hot dog supper, crafts in the Circle, and then paraded to the upper parking lot to trick or treat among parishioners’ decorated trunks. This year we had 25 trunks, many of which were represented by children, youth, and family teams. Laura Spivey and Lizzie Holbrook, along with Mary Catherine Zito, orchestrated the successful event.

**Young Adult Socials:** We continued to host young adult socials every 4-6 weeks, with very good attendance. Events included a brewery meetup, 5 pm worship followed by dinner, summer kick off at a young adult home, firepit fellowship gathering, and an end-of-year Christmas party.

**Parish Life Commission members include** Mary Catherine Zito (Chair), Emily Evans, Tori Irvin, Garland Talbott, Laura Spivey, Lizzie Holbrook, Jacob Cornell, Julia Davis, Catherine Ruth Kelly (Hospitality Representative), Bethany Swift, Jaclyn Foster, Lucy Butler, Annie Greene, Stacey King, Alison Gugenheim, and Ginny Cobb (Vestry Rep).

# OUTREACH AND MISSION

**Submitted by Mark Landers with thanks for the support of Ned Waller and the Outreach and Mission team (The Reverend Joan Kilian, Laura Konitzer, and Lesley Peace)**

The Outreach and Mission Commission (O & M) focuses its efforts on service, building diverse relationships and working to promote justice and peace in our community, our diocese, and beyond. Along with providing monetary support to our partner agencies in outreach and mission, we provide opportunities for all ages to serve as the hands and feet of Christ. Additionally, we offer educational programming and growth opportunities for Christ Church members in all areas of our work.

There are 12 Christ Church members on the commission, which includes one teen representative. Leadership is provided by the Reverend Joan Kilian, our Clergy member, Laura Konitzer, the Director of Outreach and Mission, and Lesley Peace, the Administrative Assistant for Outreach and Mission. In addition, Wellford Tabor serves as the liaison to the Vestry.

In 2023 the O & M Commission was tasked with continuing to provide support and assistance to our community in different ways as we all adjust to the changing patterns of life and needs stemming from the global pandemic. Led by Joan, Laura and Lesley, the commission has risen to that challenge, pivoting time and again to maintain parishioner engagement and meet the evolving needs of our partners. By no means exhaustive, this report hits the highlights of an extremely busy and impactful year in which the commission continued to find ways to serve those challenged by ongoing disruptions in their lives and encourage our parish to gather, connect and grow.

February marked the joyful in-person kick-off of construction on our 35th Habitat House, with this year's build, taking place at Habitat's new neighborhood, The Meadows at Plato Price. Located in a historically significant area in west Charlotte and named for the Plato Price School which closed in the 1960s, The Meadows of Plato Price will create opportunities for affordable home ownership in an area where the homeownership rate falls far below the county average. Throughout the build, numerous parishioners volunteered to help with construction while others kept up the remarkable builders' energy with a steady supply of lunches, snacks, and water.

In March, the commission met to vote on the recipients of the \$481,000 Outreach & Mission Budget. The organizations receiving grants from the \$450,000 allocated to Outreach are categorized into five pillars, and are as follows:

<b>Housing Stability &amp; Solutions to Homelessness</b>	<b>34.11%</b>	<b>Reconciliation &amp; Restorative Social Justice</b>	<b>9.66%</b>
Charlotte Family Housing	\$ 40,000	Galilee Ministries	\$ 20,000
Roof Above	\$ 25,000	Reimaging America Project	\$ 2,500
Habitat for Humanity	\$ 61,000	RAIN	\$ 5,000
The Relatives	\$ 7,500	Center For Community Transition	\$ 8,000
Shelter to Shutters	\$ 10,000	YWCA (Eliminating Racism)	\$ 8,000
YWCA (WIT/Families Together)	\$ 10,000	SUBTOTAL	\$ 43,500
SUBTOTAL	\$153,500	Care and Sustainment of God's Creation	\$ 0.0
<b>Economic Opportunity and Stabilization</b>	<b>17.78%</b>	<b>OTHER</b>	<b>2.00%</b>
Crisis Assistance	\$ 40,000	Mecklenburg Ministry Dues	\$ 1,000
Loaves & Fishes	\$ 20,000	Research & Development	\$ 1,000
BraveWorks	\$ 10,000	Undesignated	\$ 2,500
Common Wealth Charlotte	\$ 10,000	Administrative: Pilgrimage & Mission	\$ 500
SUBTOTAL	\$ 80,000	Administrative: Room in the Inn	\$ 1,000
<b>Children, Youth, &amp; Educational Equity</b>	<b>36.45%</b>	Administrative: Habitat for Humanity	\$ 500
Thompson Child/Family Focus & A Child's Place	\$ 7,500	Administrative: Education & Advocacy	\$ 500
Charlotte Bilingual Preschool	\$ 12,000	Immediate Response	\$ 2,000
Freedom School Partners (at Rama Rd)	\$ 48,000	TOTAL OTHER	\$ 9,000
Communities in Schools - Rama Rd	\$ 65,000	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$450,000</b>
Rama Road Annual Budget	\$ 9,000		
Academy of Goal Achievers	\$ 10,000		
ROC	\$ 5,000		
Foster Village	\$ 7,500		
SUBTOTAL	\$164,000		

**The \$31,000 for Mission was distributed to the following partners:**

Episcopal Diocese of Costa Rica	\$14,250
Thistle Farms	\$ 2,000
Episcopal Diocese of Botswana	\$14,250
Undesignated	\$ 500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$31,000</b>

Also in March, Outreach and Mission engaged parishioners from around the Charlotte Convocation in the national church's Becoming Beloved Community Lenten study. Follow-up activities included outdoor lunch gatherings in June and September at Galilee Ministries of East Charlotte.

Outreach and Mission continued its participation in a partnership with Veterans Bridge Home to support a refugee Afghan family, which was initiated early last year. The Church's very active team has provided them with asylum application guidance, food and settlement support, transportation assistance, and helped arrange for medical-related referrals. In addition, the family was referred to one of our partner agencies, BraveWorks, which helps women and families accomplish goals around employment, education, ESL, supportive community, and skill development.

In April, the parish donated generously to the Easter offering, which was given in equal amounts to Baby Bundles and Episcopal Relief and Development's Türkiye – Syria Earthquake Fund. Also in April, the Commission made recommendations to the Christ Church Foundation for the allocation of the Foundation's Outreach Fund. New Foundation grant recipients for 2023 were Safe Alliance, Southminster, Society of St. Andrew, BraveWorks,

OurBridge for Kids, Urban Promise, Wayfinders, Dahlia Grove, Diversity and Belonging at TES, NC Episcopal Church Women, Harvest Center, Carolina Farm Trust, Community Kitchen Program, Families Forward and Habitat for Humanity of the Charlotte Region.

As the church and the community continue to adjust to a sacred new normal, Joan, Laura and Lesley have remained active in creating Moveable Volunteer Possibilities (MVP) as a way of venturing into volunteerism with a small group of fellow parishioners. MVPs have included sorting/ packing donated items at Loaves & Fishes in January, Habitat in March, providing lunch for R.O.C. West in May, gleaning with the Society of Saint Andrew (SoSA) in July, and sorting/preparing classroom donations at Classroom Central in September. The work with the Diaper Bank of Charlotte continues as Christ Church is sponsoring a monthly Dignity Drive to provide supplies to those in need.

This summer, over 50 volunteers provided over 650 hours of support at Freedom School, and 9 teen board members, representing youth participation. This was the first fully functioning Freedom School, back at Rama since 2019. Our Girl Scouts and other Rama Road Elementary school support opportunities were also back fully in person for the first time post-covid. These opportunities at Rama Road have continued in the fall with back to school, Thanksgiving, and Christmas-focused outreach work. Other Christmas-focused outreach included the Jubilee Store for Charlotte Family Housing in November as well as adding holiday support for new outreach partners, Families Forward, OurBridge For Kids, Refugee Support Services, BraveWorks, and longtime partners, Thompson Child & Family and Charlotte Bilingual Preschool.

Christ Church continued to serve and host at Room the Inn (RITI), along with providing ongoing service opportunities at the Levine Men's Shelter.

In September, Outreach Director, Laura Konitzer, participated in a Civic Seminary co-hort in Seattle, Washington, with 12 other "civic seminarians" from around the United States. The program was part of Citizen University that was introduced to Christ Church during founder Eric Liu's Faith Forum in February. Laura looks forward to bringing civic gatherings to Christ Church in 2024.

**Outreach and Mission Commission:** Amelia Abbott, Deb Blackwood, Gilbert Browne, Charlie Deason, Lise Hinton, Joanne Jenkins, Mark Landers, Paula Moss, Dawn Osborn, Angela Paul, Lesley Peace, Dr. Giselle Sholler, Ned Waller

# STEWARDSHIP AND GENEROSITY

Submitted by Natalie Akin and Paulette Wilkes

## Generosity

In the fall of 2022, the Generosity Office facilitated a study, in consultation with Allen Walworth of Generis, to assess the feasibility of launching a capital campaign. It was concluded that such a campaign was feasible, so in January 2023 the Vestry authorized the launch of the Transforming Hearts, Changing Lives Capital Campaign to raise \$25 million.

Generosity continues to be prioritized by the Vestry. One of its 2023 goals is “to strengthen and nurture the spiritual practice of generosity and stewardship, enabling members to experience the joy of giving their first and best fruits to advance our mission to love God, care for each other, and to serve the world. In addition, to examine and standardize the approach to comprehensive stewardship, building upon experience and best practices to distinguish parishioners’ giving to Christ Church as their central and top charitable giving priority.”

The Generosity & Stewardship Commission meets quarterly to carry out its mission of “cultivating generosity as a spiritual practice thereby equipping individuals to live a life saturated by generosity, joyfully sharing their blessings with others.” Doug Ey will step down as Chair at the end of 2023 and will be succeeded by current at-large member, Michael Baker. The Generosity Commission has been collaborating with the Spiritual Growth Commission to establish a means to assess the abundant gifts within our parish. A group of parishioners participated in a beta test of the EveryGift Discovery in Spring 2023, and a second beta test of an updated EveryGift Discovery class is planned during the 2024 Lent season. The hope is to offer the program to the parish during the 2024-25 program year.

## 2023 Annual Stewardship Campaign

The 2023 Annual Stewardship Campaign, co-chaired by Al Lindemann and John Wickham, began in the summer of 2022 by reaching out to approximately 125 of Christ Church’s core donors. The campaign was well underway by the time the pledge packages were mailed parish-wide on September 8, 2022. The following Sunday, before and after worship on Parish Day (September 11), Hunter Ives and Charlotte McArthur facilitated brief live interviews with parishioners about their generosity stories. These were shared on Christ Church’s social media platform during the following months.

The momentum surrounding generosity continued with Celebration Sunday on October 2. Parishioners were invited to present their pledges at the altar during the Eucharist. Clergy recognized parishioners who serve the church in any capacity, and Faith Forum featured a conversation with guest speaker and generosity consultant, Allen Walworth. Conversations surrounding generosity were highlighted, including table topics at a discounted brunch, and a photo booth with generosity prompts on whiteboards. Those who were unable to attend brunch could take a to-go package which included the table topic cards and cookies. Director of Generosity, Natalie Akin, led a brief presentation about generosity to a combined Children’s Sunday School.

Since more than 98% of Christ Church’s yearly budget is funded by the annual stewardship campaign, several opportunities were used to promote the importance of making a yearly pledge, including personal conversations, phone calls, letters, email, and social media. On February 27, 2023, the Vestry approved a budget which included \$5,914,482 in pledges, in addition to approximately \$118,000 from outstanding and new member pledges, making a pledge total of \$6,032,091. With 3.4% shrinkage, the total budget approved was \$6,289,000 (final numbers, no penny pledges).

## **Transforming Hearts, Changing Lives**

The campaign vision is to transform hearts and change lives by inviting people into a relationship with Jesus Christ, who calls us to a life of faith, connection and well-being. Long-time parishioner Chris Ullrich demonstrated experienced leadership by chairing both the capital and 2024 annual stewardship campaigns.

The quiet phase of the capital campaign began in April with a series of gatherings hosted in private homes and the church. Information about the future plans for Christ Church was shared and the parishioners were invited to pledge early. These gatherings were followed up with personal calls and meetings.

Additional gatherings were held in the fall providing a preview to parishioners ahead of the public launch of the campaign. Invitation postcards were mailed to those active in lay ministry within the parish. Further gatherings were facilitated at Southminster and The Cypress for the convenience of those residents who attend Christ Church.

The public phase of the capital campaign was officially launched on Sunday, October 22 with a Faith Forum led by the Rector, Strategic Planning Chairs Bill Lorenz and Jane Coulter, Campaign Chair Chris Ullrich, Sacred Spaces Chair Fletcher Gregory, and the architects retained from Jenkins Peer. Sundays from October 22 through November 19 included testimonies from Vestry members about their decision to support the campaigns and all pledges were formally blessed during each service. Allen Walworth returned for a moving Faith Forum on November 5 where he spoke on the topic 'What makes a meaningful life.'

The response by parishioners has been robust, and we hope to be able to present preliminary data to the Vestry at their December meeting.

## **2024 Annual Stewardship Campaign**

Once again, the Annual Stewardship Campaign began early with outreach to approximately 150 of Christ Church's core donors during the summer of 2023. Packages that included pledge cards for both campaigns were mailed to the parish on October 12, coincident with the public launch of the capital campaign.

Since more than 98% of Christ Church's annual budget is funded by the ASC, further efforts to promote the importance of making a yearly pledge continue to be made through emails, phone calls, personal conversations, and social media. As of November 21, 366 pledges totaling \$2,907,677 have been received. The Vestry will vote on the 2024 budget in February.

## **Christ Church Foundation**

### **2023 Board of Trustees:**

Marks Arnold, President

Suzanne Bledsoe, Vice-President

David Kern: Secretary

Ashley McWilliams: Treasurer

Hooper Hardison: Trustee

Mark Mealy: Trustee

Allison Popp: Trustee

Robert Schleusner: Trustee

Paul Tolmie: Trustee

Bill Lorenz, Senior Warden

Fletcher Gregory, Junior Warden

Ned Waller, then Mark Landers (from Sept), Outreach Commission Chair

Skip Smart, Planned Giving/Oak Circle Chair

As is customary, the Board of Trustees met three times throughout the year, in February, May, and November. Upon the recommendation by the Scholarship Committee, three undergraduate students and one divinity student received grants totaling \$13,000 from the Scholarship Fund. The Habitat For Humanity Fund contributed to the construction of another Habitat home. At the recommendation of the Outreach Commission, the following gifts were approved to the following community partners:

Brave Works	\$ 2,500
Carolina Farm Trust	\$ 5,000
Community Kitchen Program	\$ 4,000
Dahlia Grove	\$ 5,000
Episcopal Church Women (Diocese)	\$ 3,000
Families Forward	\$ 4,000
Harvest Center	\$ 5,000
ourBridge for Kids	\$ 7,500
Sage Alliance	\$10,000
Society of St. Andrew	\$ 3,000
Southminster	\$10,000
Trinity Episcopal School – Diversity & Belonging	\$ 5,000
Urban Promise	\$ 5,000
Wayfinders	\$ 5,000
TOTAL	<u>\$74,000</u>
Habitat Fund	\$14,000

The Nominating Committee recommended two names to the Vestry for approval to fill soon-to-be open positions. Paul Tolmie and Mark Mealy are rolling off after serving two three-year terms. In addition, two existing Trustees whose first terms expire in 2023 have agreed to serve a second three-year term.

**Oak Circle**

There are currently 84 households (141 parishioners) who, by establishing planned gifts to Christ Church or the Christ Church Foundation, are members of Oak Circle. Education provided through an April parish-wide mailing raised awareness of planned giving options to both Christ Church and the Christ Church Foundation. Further efforts to reach out to parishioners have been put on hold during the capital campaign. The Committee hopes to resume activities in the spring of 2024. Possible projects include a testimonial in The Disciple and a gathering in celebration of current members.

# WELL-BEING AND CARE

**Submitted by Mollee Reitz**

Our Well-being & Care ministry is excited to share a vibrant collection of in-person, digital, and hybrid offerings that occurred during the year. In 2023:

- Counseling services were available in person and virtually. Mollee Reitz and Alex Bacon provided 657 counseling services through November 30 (compared to 720 in 2022). We credit this slight decrease to an increase in program offerings and removing some of our evening session availability.
- Mollee and Alex continued to provide community referrals to parishioners, their loved ones, and all who reached out. In 2023, 127 referrals were provided through November 30 (compared to 95 in 2022). We credit this increase to the decrease in counseling offerings.
- Our Well-being team completed our first full year of tracking group data or “touchpoints.” We had 1423 touchpoints through November 30. This refers to the collective number of times parishioners participated in Well-being programs.
- Alex celebrated her second full year at Christ Church, Mollee celebrated her fourth full year, Jennifer Hamm celebrated her sixth full year at Christ Church, and The Reverend Connor Gwin celebrated his first full year on team Well-being (his third full year at Christ Church).
- The Well-being and Care Commission continued to meet monthly and welcomed new members Anne Ranson and Denise Hawse.
- Christ Church hosted several wellness-themed Faith Forums including:
  - 2/12 The Front Lines of Well-being in Charlotte
  - 2/19 Technology and Community with Lisa Strohman
  - 3/26 Teen Mental Health with Zach Gottlieb
  - 10/1 Building the Spiritual Core with Lisa Miller
  - 10/8 Living Your Renaissance with Susan Golden
- Mindful Mondays continued to meet on Mondays via Zoom.
- Our Holy Hike program grew with offerings at Reedy Creek Nature Preserve, different sections of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway, Lake Norman State Park, and Morrow Mountain State Park.
- We offered classes and workshops on a range of topics including spirituality for busy people, supporting a grieving friend, caregiving a loved one with Alzheimer’s or dementia, talking to children about death or dying, whole family wellness, the Enneagram, suicide prevention, Transforming your Marriage, and more.
- Alex, Connor, and The Reverend Lisa Saunders collaborated to lead two Grief and Hope classes.
- Our Well-being team facilitated a listening session to learn how our community can increase inclusivity for our LGBT+ members and their loved ones.
- The Well-being team worked to address child and teen mental health by sharing wellness lessons evening dinners and at middle school and high school EYC, and by bringing speakers such as Kelly Little from Dilworth Center to lead Tackling Tough Topics events. Well-being themed “tough topics” included substance use and suicide prevention.
- Mollee and Julie Marr co-facilitated Summer Soul Camp. It was so popular that they brought it back as Advent Soul Camp in the winter.
- Parishioner Joyce Cmiel donated her time and talents to lead yoga classes for parishioners.
- Mollee and Alex led Boundary Setting trainings for Christ Church staff, CCK staff, and parishioners.
- Our Well-being team participated in the Strategic Direction Center for Well-being Implementation Team.



# WORSHIP AND LITURGY

**Submitted by The Reverend Joshua Case and Emily Skinner**

In the year 2023, our community has journeyed together under the theme of fostering deeper faith, connection, and well-being. Our worship and liturgy have been the cornerstones of this sacred journey.

We have maintained a robust schedule of worship, offering five Sunday services and two weekly weekday services. This steadfast dedication to worship has seen the joyful celebration of new beginnings, with 77 baptisms marking the start of spiritual journeys for the youngest among us. Love and commitment were honored in 14 weddings, and in times of loss, we have stood pastorally beside 32 families during funerals, offering solace and hope.

Our volunteers, the heartbeat of our Sunday worship, have embraced the digital frontier, streamlining the sign-up and recruitment process. This leap into the digital realm has cast a wider net, bringing in an array of parishioners eager to serve. A remarkable group of 14 adult volunteers and approximately 10 young ministers regularly participate in our Sundays with their service. Our youth ministry on Sundays has been reinvigorated with over 45 young acolytes bringing energy and devotion to our services.

Innovation has flourished with the introduction of Discovery+, a ministry connecting families with children aged 10-14 to diverse worship experiences. Host families have become connectors, guiding and answering the queries of those new to our services, enriching our collective worship journey.

During Lent 2023, we revived The Well service, offering a midweek respite through prayer and meditation, drawing us closer in reflection and community. In the coming year we will again offer this space and are regularly looking for new ways to help people connect faith to life. Another example of this innovation in worship was our Church at the Farm service this summer. We had over 170 people join us at North Corner Haven (Lancaster, SC) for worship at the farm. We plan to continue these type of moveable feasts for 2024.

Our digital ministry has been a beacon of connection and our post-COVID testament to the adaptability of faith in the modern era. As we have continued to embrace and refine our use of technology, we have cast a wider net of inclusion, seeing over 21,000 digital touchpoints through our worship streaming services (views and longer engagements). Our digital ministry – through worship and formation - has not only extended our reach beyond the physical walls of our sanctuary but has also provided a lifeline of spiritual sustenance and community to those unable to attend in person. The digital ministry has become central to our work, bridging distances and weaving a tapestry of well-being, ensuring that every member of our community – and those yet-to-be-part of our community – feel connected, cared for, and spiritually nourished from wherever they join. In a year where we have sought to deepen faith and connection, our digital ministry has been on the growing edge of our commitment to spread the light of God's love without bounds.

During 2023, our Liturgical Commission has welcomed new members, with Geoff Peters at the helm, nurturing the passion for worship that characterizes our services. The commission's evolution includes a new three-year term commitment, ensuring continuity and dedication across all our ministry areas. Missional Ministry statements and guidelines have been meticulously compiled, providing a clear reference for all those who serve (and will serve), ensuring that our liturgies are conducted with grace and reverence and the customs of Christ Church are chronicled and marked for generations.

The efforts of Geoff Peters and the Liturgical Commission members — a diverse and devoted group of parishioners — have been instrumental in the seamless unfolding of our weekly services. The Liturgical Commission includes: Geoff Peters (chair), Lise Hinton, Beeland Voellinger, Brad Robinson, Nancy LeDonne, Judd McAdams, Margaretta Leary, Genie Hufham, John Crehore, Tom Poe, Michael Murphy, Larry McWilliams, Mary Neal Harris, Brooke Meyer, David Dean, Ben Outen, Charles Milling, Emily Skinner, and Joshua Case. Make no mistake about it, their passion for worship and for engaging people in service in the many roles that make Sundays happen, have deeply fostered

faith, connection, and well-being in our parish.

This annual report reflects a snapshot not just the worship activities of our church but the spirit and vibrancy of a community committed to deepening faith, fostering connections, and nurturing the well-being of every soul that steps into our sacred space. In 2024, we hope to continue to meet the needs of our congregation gathered at 1412 Providence Road and to meet the needs of our growing digital congregation from wherever they gather.

# YOUTH AND FAMILY

**Submitted by Lexie Trader**

2023 was the first time since 2020 that we began the year with in person programming in full swing. We were able to offer the Youth Council Ski Trip once again at the end of February. We took 22 students and 4 leaders up to Winterplace in West Virginia for a rainy, but fun weekend. This is such a great way for some of our youth to bond and kick off the new year.

We saw some programming shifts in 2023. We began the year with Middle School Sunday School and Teen Board on Sunday mornings, EYC and High School Life Group on Wednesday evenings. In preparation for staff transitions in July, we held listening sessions with youth and parents pertaining to the programming schedule, asking which days and times worked best for their families, etc. After receiving feedback, the youth team made some adjustments to the program schedule beginning in September 2023. Middle School Sunday School remained on Sunday mornings, and students have enjoyed donuts from Chef Andrea while exploring the Rite 13 curriculum. Teen Board remained on Sunday mornings as well, but teens now get an assignment of a specific classroom and Sunday to serve in hopes of encouraging consistency. EYC shifted to Sunday evenings, along with a new High School Bible Study program on 2nd and 4th Sunday evenings. We opened Family Faith Talks to all youth families, and hold those on the evening of the 3rd Sunday of the month.

Amongst the shift in programming schedules, we also saw a change in the Confirmation process. We began January with a new cohort of Confirmands that embarked on the 3 semester Confirmation process with Confirmation students meeting in small groups at either 10 am or 4 pm on their designated Sundays. After holding our listening sessions in the spring, we decided to revert back to a 2 semester Confirmation process that completes by the end of the 8th grade year, with Confirmands meeting every Sunday at 10 am September - April. In September, we welcomed another new cohort of 8th grade Confirmands to begin this new Confirmation process and have received positive feedback. Both Confirmation groups, 9th and 8th grade, will be confirmed this spring. In June 2023, we confirmed a group of 46 9th graders.

Youth Council continues to meet 1st Sunday of the month. In September they welcomed 26 new members for a total of 86 members this year. Lizzy Dillard and Molly Schnyder were chosen to be junior co-chairs alongside seniors, Lena Bird and Carter Siegel.

We are gearing up for our 2024 Pilgrimage to Spain, with 14 pilgrims joining us. In December, we will begin our Autobell Gift Card Fundraiser in support of our trip. We have a great group and are excited to explore the Camino de Santiago and its spiritual significance.

This year has seen quite a few staff changes. At the end of July, Maggie Baker, Director of Youth and Family Ministry, moved to Virginia for seminary and we welcomed The Reverend Elizabeth Walker, Associate Rector for Young Adults & Families. At the end of October it was announced that Lexie Trader, Administrative Assistant for Youth and Young Adult ministry, will be transitioning to a new role as Communications Coordinator on the Communications team. We are currently searching for new staff members to fill the positions of Director of Youth Ministry and Administrative Assistant for Youth, Family, and Young Adult Ministry.

2023 has been a year of change, adaptation, and growth. We are so grateful to have The Rev. Elizabeth Walker join us, and for the new additions to our team of volunteer leaders. We are prayerfully hopeful for the future as we search for new team members and continue our programming.

**Youth Commission Members:** Chip Abbott, Sean Bird, Elizabeth Glasgow, Brindley Hale, Courtney Hyder, Cathy Lowe, Skye McMahan, Jenny Morton, Darrell Palasciano, Melanie Piasecki, Connell Pinckney, Mike Roof, Mary Frances Segars, Margaret Siegel, Cindy Costa, Lena Bird, Avery Cheatwood, Lizzy Dillard, Anderson Setaro, Carter Siegel, Abby Palasciano, Molly Schnyder, Claire Humphreys, Langston Koppang, Zoey Sideris



## **Christ Church Charlotte**

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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