

# First & Franklin Presbyterian Church 2023 Annual Report

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## FIRST & FRANKLIN LEADERSHIP

Rev. Stephen Nofel, Bridge Pastor  
Dr. Jason Kissel, DMA, Minister of Music & Organist

### PARISH ASSOCIATES

(All are honorary until the next installed Pastor)

Rev. Stephen Hollaway  
Rev. Rhonda Cooper

### SUPPORT STAFF

Anna Pollitt, Administrative Assistant  
Aaron Houston, Audio Engineer  
Deborah McCrimmon, Director of Christian Arts and Education  
George Meagher, Sexton  
Beth Seeley, Treasurer

### SESSION

Allie Pyan, Clerk of Session

#### CLASS OF 2023

Becca Hollaway  
John McLucas

#### CLASS OF 2024

Paul Fowler  
Alex Mendelsohn  
Allie Pyan

#### CLASS OF 2024

Dave Pierson  
Marianne Shick  
Kris Stinson

### DEACONS

#### CLASS OF 2023

Marla Holt  
Randolph Veale

#### CLASS OF 2024

Anne Culbertson  
Michael Johnson

#### CLASS OF 2025

Ryan-Paul Johnson

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Building & Grounds	Dave Pierson
Peacemaking	Betty Schroll
Church Life	Kris Stinson
Finance & Stewardship	Alex Mendelsohn
Personnel	Marianne Shick
Worship, Music, and Arts	John McLucas
Nominating	John McLucas

## BRIDGE PASTOR REPORT

The Grace and Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

First, I want to thank all of you from the bottom of my now healthy heart. I had only served FF for one month when I suffered a heart attack. I truly appreciate your prayers and patience during my recovery. My heart is healthy, and I am feeling great. I will never forget my first Sunday back in the FF pulpit and so many heartfelt (yes, I used the word on purpose) greetings, hugs, and good wishes.

I also thank you for being such a dedicated group of Christians trying your darndest to serve the Lord, each other, our neighborhood and our part of the world.

The session, our committees, paid and unpaid staff have shown grit, determination, and a strong desire to live into the Great Commandment: Love God and love each other. I especially want to thank Jason Kissel, our minister of music. I have told him time and again, he has made my life easier. Despite my pleas he won't come with me to my next call, ha, ha.

There are so many others I want to call out, but had better not, because one of you saints may slip my mind in this moment.

The leadership of our church had to make some incredibly difficult decisions, and taken some hard, hard actions. These were done through a lot of dedication, prayer, a lot of time donated, and a huge willingness to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Hard things done well – Way to go church leadership!

As I told our new pastor, Rev. Mark Phillips, I have never been more excited about my successor. I truly believe Pastor Mark and husband Larry are a perfect fit with our church family. I truly feel the Spirit of God blessed our Pastor Nominating Committee, Pastor Mark and our congregation with excellent discernment.

As a congregation we are moving forward with some out of the box thinking and actions, and I applaud us for it.

As you remember our time together, I thank you for living into two words that I helped bring into our consciousness and pray that we, as Christians, and the Family of God, continue to live into: "ALL-IN!"

We are off to a great start living out our Christianity in an all-in kind of way in 2024 – Keep it up.

Grace Abounds!  
Rev. Steve Nofel

## MUSIC & ARTS MINISTRY

*God of our life, through all the circling years, we trust in Thee;  
In all the past, through all our hopes and fears, Thy hand we see.  
With each new day, when morning lifts the veil,  
We own Thy mercies, Lord, which never fail.*

As the congregation of First & Franklin Presbyterian Church reflects on its past, ministers in the present, and plans for its future, I am repeatedly drawn to the hymn, *God of Our Life*, written by the Rev. Hugh Thompson Kerr, for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This hymn reminds us that God's loving hand is always near. At First & Franklin, my soul is lifted each Sunday, as together we join our voices with all the saints and faithful of *every generation* in the singing of great hymns and anthems of praise and thanksgiving.

**The Sanctuary Choir** (the part of our congregation that rehearses every week) remains a vital component of First & Franklin's ministry. I am grateful for the commitment of our volunteers and staff singers, whose dedication to the art of choral singing helps to lead congregational song, offer sacred anthems spanning hundreds of years, and inspire worshippers and concert attendees through special programs. The choir gave the premier performance of composer Aaron Houston's setting of *In the Bleak Mid-Winter* to an audience of 300 at the annual Candlelight Choral Concert. The choristers also prepare an extraordinary amount of music for Holy Week, including the Good Friday Service of Tenebrae, plus, a service of Lessons & Carols on Christmas Eve. A small choir comprised of regular and occasional choristers sang in worship twice last summer.

**The Spire Series** will celebrate its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024! This program continues providing for the church and greater Baltimore community a variety of musical events that support artists and enrich the lives of those who attend. In 2023, the series hosted its first donor thank-you event, in addition to its first jazz concert with Baltimore's own *Joshua Espinoza Trio*. Other highlights include the inaugural *Prelude to Pride* concert, and the Baltimore School for the Arts (BSA) *Armstrong Honors Recital*. Apart from the series, First & Franklin hosted opportunities for its members to engage with the local community by presenting nearly 100 high school students from BSA in choral, orchestral, and operatic concerts. These performances drew young students, BSA faculty and administration, neighbors, and friends. **Art Under the Spire**, which will now function alongside The Spire Series, is committed to community engagement through the visual arts. This group met several times during the past year and will present its first exhibition in May 2024. The arts ministry is grateful to be working closely with the Church Life Committee to create beautiful, welcoming receptions for concerts and events.

*God of the coming years, through paths unknown, we follow Thee;  
When we are strong, Lord, leave us not alone, our refuge be.  
Be Thou for us in life, our daily bread,  
Our heart's true home when all our years have sped.*

Jason Kissel  
Minister of Music & Arts/Organist

## **CLERK OF SESSION REPORT**

The last year was one of many transitions for First & Franklin but the Session continued their good work throughout. In the spring we worked with the Presbytery Commission on Ministry and Rev. Jack Carlson stepped in as our interim moderator until Rev. Steve Nofel joined us.

Throughout the year we continued to meet at least monthly and occasionally more to address our budget deficits. In the summer we meet for three weeks on Sunday mornings to refocus on the role of the Session as congregational spiritual leaders. In November along with the Board of Deacons and staff we had a two-day leadership retreat. All to help us prepare to provide the best support for our new Pastor, Rev. Mark Phillips.

While some tough decisions were made to help reduce the budget deficit, you'll see throughout this report the wonderful work being done by our ministries and committees. I know I'm not alone in my excitement for what the future holds for us.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Allie Pyan, Clerk of Session

## WORSHIP, MUSIC, & ARTS COMMITTEE (WM&A)

Again, this year, all of our meetings were held on Zoom. Attendance and morale were high, and we always felt the Spirit at our virtual table. Our principal duties include coordination of our wonderful ongoing worship program, both on Sunday mornings and on special occasions throughout the year. Our pastors work closely with Minister of Music & Art/Organist, Dr. Jason Kissel, to ensure that our worship is coherent within each service and across the liturgical year. This includes things like selecting hymns and anthems which complement the Scripture each week. WM&A serves as a sounding board and partner for our preachers and Jason in planning worship, whether for individual services or for series or seasons.

We worked with a number of substitute preachers over the past year, and especially in the period between Rev. Chris Iosso's departure and Bridge Pastor Steve Nofel's arrival. One program which went beautifully was the series of Lenten mid-week services in the Sanctuary from Ash Wednesday to Holy Week. For these services, the church was softly lit, and lay leaders served as liturgists and homilists, with extended periods of quiet music or of silence. We are planning a very different, but we hope very moving, series for this coming Lent, led collaboratively by Pastor Steve and our new pastor. They will also work together on a Lenten devotional for use at home by church members and friends.

WM&A asked Session to shift the Communion schedule from the first to the second Sunday of each month to accommodate Pastor Steve's agreed-upon dates to lead worship. Having Steve preside at the Sacrament allowed him and us as a congregation to form a warm pastoral bond. He also provided gracious guidance on how to navigate the unusual frequency of Communion Sundays in early Fall, caused by the second Sunday *and* Reformation Sunday *and* World Communion Sunday coming so close together. Meanwhile, for Sundays when Steve has not been with us, WM&A has continued to help welcome visiting preachers. It has been enriching for all of us to hear so many perspectives from the pulpit. We joyfully look forward to the different and welcome challenges of getting to know and minister with a new called pastor this Spring, and to hear one familiar voice more consistently.

In Spring of 2023, we were involved in the display of panels from the Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt in Reid Chapel, including the quilt made for beloved church member Frank Osman, who died in 1990. The many community members who came through to visit the Quilt were deeply touched.

In April, the joy of Easter was enhanced by the baptism of a child (daughter of one of our staff singers) and the celebration of Communion at the same service.

In May, we helped host a reading by Rev. Steve Hollaway of his newly published volume of poetry, *Tin Ear*. Steve, a long-time friend of our congregation and one of our best guest preachers, also read one poem from the book in worship that morning.

The Spire Series has continued to attract large audiences, often directly supporting the church's mission. One example was the brilliant recital by acclaimed pianist Sara Davis Buechner, a Baltimore native and a trans woman. WM&A is hoping to hold a service in the coming year affirming the names of trans people.

Our Sanctuary has also served as the venue for a number of splendid and very well-attended programs by the students and faculty of the nearby Baltimore School for the Arts.

The “Art Under the Spire” program, presenting art exhibitions in Reid Chapel, is reviving since the pandemic – stay tuned for updates of future shows.

The Purple Ribbons Ministry continues to be an important part of our witness to the ongoing tragedy of gun violence in our city.

Our children’s program has flourished this year. Our young people participated in our Earth Day worship service. They again helped lead worship on December 10, presenting their gifts of toys for hospitalized children during the Christmas season. The leadership in worship of some of our older children has been so good that WM&A is exploring a “junior liturgist” position, with children reading one of the Scripture passages and/or prayers when possible.

We still seek volunteers to receive training on how to prepare Communion and set up the Sanctuary for all kinds of worship services, and how to tidy up afterwards. We informally refer to this lay ministry as the Table Guild. Please consider joining!

Respectfully submitted,  
John C. McLucas, Elder and Chair

## BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE REPORT

By the grace of God, First & Franklin was awarded more than of \$218,000 in grants in 2023 to upgrade, maintain and restore our historic campus. Pursuing grants allows us to address long-standing needs with little to no impact on our general operating budget. We are proud to be able to leverage private and public support to address capital needs, allowing us to focus our energy on funding our operational deficit.

First & Franklin received a generous personal gift from a good and valued friend to kickstart the planning for the addition of a much-needed ADA bathroom in the narthex of Reid Chapel.



The project converted a little used maintenance closet into a community restroom facility to enhance the comfort of First & Franklin for members, friends and visitors. First & Franklin would like to thank The Baltimore Presbytery, Catonsville Presbyterian Church, the Baltimore National Heritage Area and The Middendorf Foundation for their generous contributions to our project.

In total, First & Franklin raised \$86,000 for the ADA bathroom which was completed in October.

In early 2023, First & Franklin began the process of finding funding for the repair and restoration of our historic spire with the ultimate goal of safely removing the scaffolding from our glorious façade. In May, First & Franklin received a \$10,000 grant from Preservation Maryland to begin the analysis of the spire. In July, First & Franklin was doubly blessed to receive an additional \$100,000 from The Maryland Historical Trust to fund the completion of an engineering and architectural survey. An RFP has been issued and six firms are bidding on this project. The analysis should begin in Q2 of 2024 and be complete in Q3. This work will inform the capital campaign to fund the “hands on” restoration of the spire which should take place in 2025. With fingers crossed, we hope to remove the scaffolding in 2026.

In September of this year, First & Franklin received a \$20,000 grant from the Baltimore National Heritage Area to upgrade our National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) designation. This funding will add the important and rich history of our support of the LGBTQ+ community in Baltimore to our designation. Much of the important work in the LGBTQ+ community performed by First & Franklin happened after our NRHP designation on June 18, 1973. With this upgrade First & Franklin “may” have the important honor of being the first NRHP property in the State of Maryland with a LGBTQ+ associations. This designation will help us elevate our profile in capital campaign funding efforts in the future.

The Mount Vernon Belvedere Association has awarded First & Franklin \$2,300 to update the light pole banners along Park Ave and to cover our Madison St. scaffolding with a decorative scrim. The Park Ave. banners were last updated in 2011 during First & Franklin’s 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration.



In January First & Franklin hosted the first semester of the Accomplished Arts Apprenticeship Program. The program set up a workshop in Hodge House. In exchange for a workshop studio space for their students, the program rebuilt six of our historic windows free of charge using appropriate and historically accurate materials and processes. The program aims to increase equity and inclusion in the arts, creative and preservation trades with specific focus on people from marginalized communities in Baltimore. Apprentices are paid a living wage while gaining access to meaningful, creative careers. The AAA program will be returning to First and Franklin for two semesters in 2024 to rebuild additional windows and restore the historic brownstone façade of Backus House.



In March First & Franklin planted a pollinator's garden in the courtyard of the church. This garden replaced the unsafe jungle gym which was demolished. The garden will be replanted in 2024.

In anticipation of a development opportunity for our historic buildings, First & Franklin has retained the prestigious national law firm of Saul Ewing to represent us. Their local office is a true advocate of development in Baltimore. We look forward to working with them as they help us navigate this process.

Throughout 2023, First & Franklin has been in discussion with a local developer to monetize our properties. While the historic buildings and properties present many challenges, they also hold many opportunities for the financial future of our congregation. The Building and Grounds committee in partnership with the Finance Committee hopes to share good news about development in the coming months.

The Session of First & Franklin has taken the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s commitment to environmental sustainability and has begun a congregation and campus wide Environmental Stewardship Sustainability Plan for 2024.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dave Pierson, Chair

## PERSONNEL REPORT

The personnel committee had to make some tough decisions this year. We began in January with the resignation of Chris Iosso. We immediately began discussions with the Presbytery, along with Session, about what pastor situation would be best for us here at F&F. Session, PNC, personnel and Presbytery agreed that a part time “bridge pastor” would be best for us. Steve Nofel was recommended to us. We interviewed him and really appreciated his understanding of our challenges. We extended an invitation to him through Presbytery to get us through the time we needed for the PNC to find our permanent pastor. We worked to get Steve up to speed and handed off our staff to him.

We conducted two annual reviews with George, Anna and Jason and presented consistent contracts for them all through the end of 2023.

Personnel partnered with finance and PNC to help create the terms of call for our new pastor.

The end of 2023 began to outline some significant budget challenges we faced for the future with 4 full-time staff members. The finance committee recommended some immediate changes to Session and Session made the very tough decision to eliminate the Office Administrator, Sexton and Bridge Pastor positions at the end of the year. The personnel committee presented the termination letters to George, Anna and Steve in December, with a heavy heart. We gave George and Anna 30 days notice, terminating their employment on January 31, 2024.

Personnel will be working diligently, along with all committees, to create clear and concise organization of the office and the church building for the ease of volunteers, as we all step up to prepare for Mark Phillips at the end of April. We look forward to working with our community over the next few months and pray that God will guide us all with patience and kindness.

Respectfully submitted - Personnel Committee - Marianne Shick - Chair, Alex Mendelsohn, Allie Pyan.

## 2023 CHURCH LIFE COMMITTEE REPORT

This year was particularly exciting as it was the year the Education and Membership committees merged to form the Church Life Committee (CLC). This decision was made in the hope that by ‘right-sizing’ two small committees with parallel and intertwined functions, we can increase the effectiveness of our church programming and reduce burnout. Our vision is to foster a cohesive, edifying church life for all at First & Franklin Presbyterian Church. Our goals (both short and long term) include: developing a holistic approach and strategy for the experience, engagement, and edification of F&F attendees; crafting an adult ed and multiage program that is congregant focused and enables and empowers the teachers both inside and outside the church; to infuse church programming with biblically and theologically rich content; creating meaningful connections between new and existing members; streamlining efforts with quarterly check-ins with the deacons and hospitality support of existing events rather than duplicating efforts; help approach new members with an open rather than a closed hand; fostering a new members class/program that is easy, honest, and accessible. As one, the CLC continued the ministries of the Education and Membership Committees.

The CLC had several amazing Adult Ed forums that garnered some rich engagement. We met in Backus House and Reid Chapel as well as on Zoom. As has been our tradition for the past several years, we began with a series on Epiphany(ies) where we invited several folks from the congregation to come and lead a reflection about moments in which we come to understand God or each other in new ways. From there, Kris Stinson led a series on Howard Thurman’s *Jesus and the Disinherited* in hopes of using the time of Lent to think about the ways we as a church are called to sit with the broken and hurting until justice “rolls down like a mighty stream.” Steve Holloway then led us in a series on N.T. Wright’s *Surprised by Hope* that spurred many great discussions about how we think about Heaven and the ways in which the Church is called to embody the New Creation here and now. Kris then led a two-part, multi-month class on the Bible and Sexuality, kicking off during Pride month. This series brought together a large group of folks with a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds. Though it may have gotten heated, we hope that it was an important, first discussion in helping the church consider why we believe what we believe. Following this series, Steve led us in a short study of the book of Romans which eventually led into our annual Advent study. This year we used Walter Brueggeman’s *Names for the Messiah*. This wonderful series included a rotating reflection leader (including Steve, Kris, Mike Johnson, and Rachel Walsh) and a beautiful deconstructed stained-glass mural that Rachel designed that the congregation could add reflections to.



Deborah McCrimmon faithfully led the Sunday School (except during the summer) using an all-age curriculum and lots of arts-and-crafts ideas. There was a small but regular group of children.

Deborah also organized children for a Christmas program on the third Sunday of Advent. Sadly, this will be Deborah's final semester with F&F and we, as a committee, could not be more thankful for her work and ministry to children and families.

The CLC also worked with many other committees to host a variety of Church functions and meals. Many of us on the CLC helped with both the stewardship luncheon and our own Rachel Walsh organized and led the cookie reception after the Candlelight concert with help from several folks from the CLC. Additionally, the Membership committee (prior to merging) hosted yet another deliciously successfully welcome back luncheon in September. As always Judy Dadds is an invaluable member of these efforts as she helps with decorations and set up. Additionally, many of us joined our fellow committees to march in the Pride parade. We have also begun work on reformatting the ways Ushers are trained in hopes of maximizing their presence on Sunday mornings (a big thank you to Mike Johnson for leading this effort) and are looking forward to helping the Peacemaking Committee host a Progressive Church Brunch. We pray for God's continued guidance, hope, and strength in this new year that we might partner with God in the work of the Kingdom in Mt. Vernon.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kris Stinson, Chair of Church Life Committee

## PEACEMAKING COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Members: Ann Silberman, Betty Schroll, Corena Bridges, Diane Newman, Judy Dadds and Steve Hollaway

The Peacemaking Committee has continued its work with the same missions as last year: Food Pantry, Cuba Partnership, Baltimore Dakota Learning Camps, Purple Ribbon Ministry/Gun Buy-Back, Bread for the World, and the Alternative Christmas Market.

The **Food Pantry** continues to be open on Saturdays between 1:00 and 3:00. Even though we have a healthy set of volunteers from the neighborhood, we decided to close the pantry on the last Saturday of each month to help fight volunteer burn-out. On July 9, a thank-you picnic was held after church in honor of the volunteers who faithfully keep the pantry running. The number of clients has risen with 40 plus neighbors coming for the last five months. The Bridges continue to pick up a truck load of fresh produce, breads, and proteins each week which has been gratefully received by our clients. We are grateful for the continued financial support of the congregation which supplies canned and boxed foods to our neighbors.

The **Purple Ribbon Ministry** raises awareness of the continued violence in the city to our neighbors and congregation through prayers and hanging the ribbons and names of the homicide victims outside the church on the Park Avenue side. A memorial service for the victims of 2022 was held during our morning worship on January 29. The congregation also participated in Wear Orange Weekend, June 2-4, which brings attention to gun safety.

Marla Holt, J Hyph, and Becca and Steve Hollaway went to South Dakota, July 22-29, to help run the **Dakota Learning Camp**. It was a success, despite low turnout, for relationships were started with the Dakota community and lessons learned concerning better communication and needs to be considered for building trust with each other.

Communication has improved between **Cuba** and Baltimore since the pandemic, mainly because of resumed in-person meetings between El Centro and Baltimore Presbyteries and by using WhatsApp for church-to-church communication. The relationship between the three US churches, who are partners with Taguasco, has continued to be united and strong, sharing concerns and information of the Taguasco congregation. There was no trip between Taguasco and First and Franklin this year but we have continued to share stories and pray for each other. On March 26, a Cuban fundraiser luncheon was held collecting \$610. Taguasco Church has been in contact with Living Waters for the World, who will hopefully help install a filter for their well, making clean water available for their community.

Our second **Guns to Gardens** buy-back event was held on August 5<sup>th</sup> at Edmundson Village Shopping Center. This year we joined with Father Mike Murphy of the Monastery of St. Joseph with backing from the Baltimore Archdiocese, Hunting Ridge Presbyterian Church, and the Baltimore City Police. Joining together brought our experience with their abilities in fundraising and publicity. Nearly 260 weapons were collected and over \$60,000 given to the donors. Relationships are being established with Roca and Family Survivor Network to listen and be present with communities who suffer from gun violence.

The **Alternative Christmas Market** was held on Sundays November 19 and December 3. For the first time since the pandemic, we returned to inviting groups from outside the church to be present with us. A total of \$4,068 was collected for 10 organizations.

## FINANCE AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Purpose: The Finance & Stewardship committee supports the near-term and long-term financial health of First & Franklin by overseeing all financial operations, strategy, and stewardship/giving for the church and related operations with the goal of creating a sustainable budget and support for future building and operational needs.

Members: Alex Mendelsohn (Chair), Ken Davies, David Wallace, Frank McNeil, Matt Davis, Steve Hollaway. Beth Seeley, Treasurer

### 2023 REPORT

**SUMMARY:** In 2023, First & Franklin continued to face financial challenges, though we've also made steady progress in ensuring a vibrant future for the church. The national economic climate saw improving forecasts, with inflation moderating and stock performance picking up. Indeed, our endowment portfolio, after taking a hit in 2022 and into mid-2023, saw some good signs of recovery late in the year. Still, we had a deficit budget and we continued to draw on our endowment at unsustainable levels. Put simply, when we should see an increasing balance in our investment accounts, we see a decreasing balance due to the amount of money we need to transfer to cover our expenses. In December 2023, the Session made the difficult decision to eliminate 3 staff positions (Bridge Pastor, Sexton, and Office Administrator) to address our continued structural deficit and lessen the unsustainable draw on the endowment. Session continues to look for (and find!) ways to get our financial house in order, and there are options (though not quick fixes) for securing our future.

### **A condensed 2024 budget can be found at the end of this report.**

**BUDGET OVERVIEW:** Due to changes made to our budget reporting in 2022, we were able to gain much needed clarity into where our money is both earned and spent. We were able to focus on cash flow and minimizing untimely withdrawals from our endowment, and we are now able to more clearly see opportunities to strengthen our fiscal position.

**EXPENSES:** Our actual total expenses for 2023 were \$659,476.92. This is about \$50,000 over the 2022 budgeted amount, due to engaging a Bridge Pastor instead of utilizing guest pastors on a weekly basis and also the ADA Bathroom project. The ADA Bathroom project was offset by grants, and this will not be a line item in the 2024 budget. In 2024, we have cut expenses mainly through the elimination of 2 full-time staff positions, though our total budget cuts were spread across every program area. We are also looking at ways to reduce major operating expenses such as our utilities. Our Sanctuary building alone costs about \$45,000/year to operate.

**REVENUE:** Our actual total revenue for 2023 was \$413,010.59, including grants for the ADA bathroom and a sustainable draw of \$65,060 from our endowment. In order to make up the budget deficit of \$246,466.33, we had to withdraw nearly \$250,000. In 2024, we will continue to have an unsustainable draw on our endowment, though to a lesser degree than in previous year. This represents an improvement but is not where we ultimately need to be. We will continue to secure additional sources of revenue, including space rentals, weddings, and campus development.

**ENDOWMENT:** Our endowment at the end of 2022 was \$1.3 million. At the end of 2023, our balance was \$1.275 million. While this does not seem like a large decrease, had we not had to take an oversized amount out of our endowment, we would have a balance of nearly \$1.5 million dollars. As stated in the summary, where we should see increasing balances in our investment accounts, we see decreases due to the amount of money we need to transfer to cover our expenses.

In 2024, a sustainable draw on our endowment would be 4%-5% (\$60,000). A sustainable draw allows us to take money from our endowment to pay for operations while still letting the endowment

grow in value. Investments in a portfolio such as ours can be expected to grow at 7%-9% annually over time. To balance growth with revenue, we should be withdrawing only 4%-5% of our balance annually. In 2023 we withdrew \$264,000, about 20% (4x the sustainable amount) of our endowment. For 2023, we have budgeted 4.7% (\$60,000) of our 2023 year-end balance of \$1.275 million. If we are unable to increase other revenue (or decrease expenses in 2024, we will need to exceed the sustainable 5% withdrawal amount.

**2024 AND BEYOND:** The decision to eliminate staff and to actively prune our budget was not easy, but it was necessary in order to allow us a runway for growth. We continue to explore ways to increase revenues and to control expenses. As we've mentioned before, there are four main options we have to increase revenue. We are constantly mindful that we need to meet, not only, our present-day expenses, but prepare for major building projects in the near future. As has been mentioned before, we have four main options for increasing revenue.

1. **Monetizing Our Property** – We are aggressively pursuing campus development opportunities, and this remains a viable opportunity. We are exploring options for developing our property, utilizing historic preservation tax credits, pursuing financing partnerships, and finding partners to lease our property. In addition to developing property we own, we are still aware that selling property may become part of an overall plan, though selling alone will not completely solve our structural deficit and also deprives us of potential long-term programming and revenue opportunities.
2. **Earned Revenue** – We are always looking at ways to increase our earned revenue, like space rentals and hosting more weddings.
3. **Grants** – We have secured several grants for things like Guns2Gardens and the ADA bathroom. Grants are an essential tool for any non-profit to fund programs and projects, and we continue to explore the many options to fund our building repair needs in addition to helping fund our programming.
4. **Capital Campaign** – It remains likely that we will need a capital campaign to secure both the funding needed for our buildings and to increase the amount in our endowment. Any campaign will be designed to not only meet our immediate needs but to secure the future of the church for generations to come.

**GOING ALL IN:** The theme of our 2023 Stewardship Campaign was going “all in.” That is, looking at ways that each of us can give to First & Franklin and to the community that we love. So, what can you do?

- Prayerfully consider what you can give and if you can increase your contribution from last year. Giving from the congregation remains the key source of our revenue. We depend on many gifts, of all sizes, and are incredibly grateful for the strong support year after year.
- **Give Early** – Making your annual gift early in the year lessens the pressure on our cash flow, allowing funds to remain in our endowment where they can increase in value.
- **Volunteer** – We are always looking for volunteers for all our ministries. If you have skills in giving campaigns, marketing, accounting, etc., please know that we could use you as part of our team as we seek to increase our revenue and improve our financial outlook.
- **Suggest** – If you don't feel like you have the time or interest in volunteering, perhaps you have suggestions or would like to brainstorm about grant opportunities or other ideas relating to the health of the finances of First & Franklin, let us know! Our success will be a group effort.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Alex Mendelsohn

<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>2024 Budget</b>	<b>2023 Budget</b>	<b>2023 Actual</b>
Undesignated Congregational Giving	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 210,121.39
Designated Per Capita	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 2,252.82
Designated Congregational Giving	\$ -	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 10,739.94
ADA Bathroom Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 70,000.00
Rental Income	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 18,658.32
Wedding Fees	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 4,630.00
Parking Income	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,737.42
PILP Loan rebate	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 3,250.00	\$ 2,450.68
Designated Spire Series	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 27,360.02
Sustainable Endowment Withdrawal	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 65,060.00	\$ 65,060.00
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 284,900.00</b>	<b>\$ 378,310.00</b>	<b>\$ 413,010.59</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>			
<b>Personnel</b>	<b>2024 Budget</b>	<b>2023 Budget</b>	<b>2023 Actual</b>
<b>SUB-TOTAL (Personnel)</b>	<b>\$ 255,375.00</b>	<b>\$ 308,400.00</b>	<b>\$ 331,733.08</b>
<b>Operating (Committees/Office/Utilities/Supplies/Etc.)</b>	<b>2024 Budget</b>	<b>2023 Budget</b>	<b>2023 Actual</b>
Office Supplies	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 16,250.00	\$ 19,007.01
Technology & Web	\$ 3,250.00	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 6,028.90
Christian Education	\$ 350.00	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 830.85
Congregational Life	\$ 660.00	\$ 2,640.00	\$ 939.91
Mission & Peacemaking	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 18,688.17
Per Capita	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 3,760.00	\$ 2,252.82
Worship & Music	\$ 5,250.00	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 6,360.54
Utilities	\$ 64,700.00	\$ 102,300.00	\$ 61,049.09
Building Repairs and Maintenance	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 20,874.11
Insurance	\$ 22,351.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 24,013.50
Misc. Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Spire Series	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 19,520.18
ADA Bathroom Project	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 68,382.00
<b>SUB-TOTAL (Operating)</b>	<b>\$ 142,961.00</b>	<b>\$ 227,850.00</b>	<b>\$ 247,947.08</b>
<b>SUB-TOTAL EXPENSE (Personnel + Operating)</b>	<b>\$ 398,336.00</b>	<b>\$ 536,250.00</b>	<b>\$ 579,680.16</b>
PILP Loan Repayment (a.k.a. Sanctuary Renovation Loan)	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 74,000.00	\$ 79,796.76
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$ 473,336.00</b>	<b>\$ 610,250.00</b>	<b>\$ 659,476.92</b>
<b>SURPLUS or (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>\$ (188,436.00)</b>	<b>\$ (231,940.00)</b>	<b>\$ (246,466.33)</b>



## DEACON REPORT

It was difficult to get together as a board this year with several of us not driving, involved with other ministries\* and having Steve Nofel also dividing his time, but as individuals, we provided a listening ear, a hug, a hospital or other visit, or a ride to church frequently.

\*(that would be the Dakota learning camps, choir, food pantry/peacemaking, signing for a deaf regular attendee, ushering, serving communion, and outreach to LGBTQ community)

- We viewed a series of videos from a church in Philadelphia about the duties of a deacon and discussed.
- Individual serving containers were provided so that people could take leftovers home from coffee hour or fellowship meals demonstrating both thrift and thoughtfulness.
- Greetings were sent to our community on special occasions like birthdays and anniversaries. (Small things are important too)
- The office sent us the prayers requests so we could lift those up too.
- We were present for the leadership retreat in December and will continue to be generous with our time and talents as are called to volunteer and work with our new pastor.



## SUNDAY FEBRUARY 11, 2024 REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION

Drawn solely from Members/Friends of the First & Franklin Presbyterian Church, the Board of Managers of the Egenton~Roberts Foundation provided financial gifts/support to over 900 young women within the Baltimore Metropolitan Area during 2023. These financial gifts ranged from support to first-time recipient *Ballet After Dark* (located nearby, in the Eubie Blake Center at 847 Howard Street) to long-term recipients including the *Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women* (located just south of us at Park and Franklin), the *Middle Grades Partnership, Girls Empowerment Mission, Sister's Circle*, and the *Lillie May Carroll Jackson Middle School*. The Board's largest grant recipient in 2023 was the *Samuel Ready Scholarships*, which fully supported three (3) young women at private high schools in the City (one of whom earned recognition as a National Merit Scholar!). The other new grant recipient in 2023 was the *Ingenuity Project*.

Overseeing an endowment of approximately \$6.09 million dollars (12.31.2023), the Board awarded \$307,130 in grant funding during 2023 to eight (8) organizations which nurture and support the health, education and welfare of young girls. In addition to formally meeting three (3) times per year, Board members work with the recipient organizations to monitor their use of our funds, and track their successes.

**Egenton:** Members of the First Presbyterian Church in the City of Baltimore, William and Margaret Egenton created a Memorial to honor their daughter Jane Nimmo Egenton following her tragic death on May 25, 1834 ... which was her third birthday! Jane was their only child. Their vision, funded with \$5,347.57 under William Egenton's Will dated February 18, 1836, was to establish a Home for Orphaned girls under the direction of a Board of Managers comprised of 12 adult male members of First Presbyterian Church. Through judicious investments, including B&O Railroad stock purchases and property sales of New York City real estate, the Board opened the first Jane Egenton Home for orphaned girls at the northwest corner of Madison Avenue and Preston Street in October 1880 "... with six little girls". The Board would eventually sell and update several homes, with a peak resident population in the year 1918 of 51 girls being nurtured at a home near 40th Street and Keswick Road. The Board's final home was located just south of the Church at 708 Park Avenue. Purchased in 1972, it had to be sold 40 years later in 2012 when the resident population declined to 5 girls. The proceeds from that sale were invested in the Egenton Endowment, permitting a significant expansion of our capacity for Grant Making to young girls.

**Roberts:** One of the Egenton Board Members in the 1900s was named Howland Roberts; he and his wife Annie were also members of First Presbyterian Church. They died without any descendants. Upon her death in December 1946, Annie Roberts' Will left \$119,000 to be managed by an Independent Trustee and the Jane Egenton Home Board of Managers with the goal of creating a similar home for young girls. To be named "The Annie and Howland Roberts Home for Girls", this Home was to be under the direction of "The Annie and Howland Roberts Foundation". Their gifted funds were wisely invested and grew tax-free for the specified 50 years. However, in 1999, the Trustee and Egenton Board deemed those funds to be insufficient to fund the operation of a separate home, and the Roberts' funds were merged with the Egenton funds as per provisions in the Roberts Will.

**Closing:** In the past decade, since the Board sold the Jane Egenton Home, the Board has awarded over \$3 million in grants in support of young girls primarily in the City of Baltimore. This incredible Mission effort is clearly something we all should celebrate and offer our thanks to both the Egenton and Roberts founders for their incredible generosity and vision so many years ago.

In March 2022, the Circuit Court for the City of Baltimore approved the Board's petition to legally consolidate the investment accounts and combine the two founder's names into a new entity, the **Egenton~Roberts Foundation**, under the direction of the Board of Managers.

### **2023-2024 Board of Managers**

Anjal Amin

Onyeka Anaedozi

Mary A. Anagnost

Haswell M. Franklin (Investment Chair)

Geoffrey H. Genth, Esq. (President)

Honorable Joan Bossmann Gordon

Diane Newman

Laura E. Oldham

Pastor (vacant), ex-Officio member

Sabrina S. Schumann

Elizabeth A. Seeley (Treasurer/Finance Chair)

Christine Morgan Wallace (Grants Chair)

David W. Wallace (Secretary)

written by David and edited by Geoff, Beth and Christine