

Annual Report to the Congregation

*First Presbyterian Church—Newark
Annual Congregational Meeting
February 15, 2026*



*A nurturing community in Jesus Christ
reflecting God's love for the world as we Worship, Grow, and Serve*

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Pastor's Report

Rev. Daniel McKenty

As I look back on the life of the church in 2025, one word comes to my mind more than others. *Eucharistia*. Derived from eu ("good") and charis ("grace"), *eucharistia* translates to gratitude for God's grace and blessings.

As pastor, I am certainly grateful for this church and all of the good and exciting things which took place in 2025 and are continuing into 2026. 2025 was a year of follow-through and new beginnings. A feeding ministry (Food for Success) which started as a vision in 2024 grew into a thriving and life-saving ministry during 2025. A decision made in 2024 to rehabilitate Westminster House was worked on tirelessly throughout 2025 and is now ready for the purpose God intends.

In the new beginnings department, the church was approached by our home Girl Scout troop with an idea to partner with the church in transforming our former playground into a community garden. Planning for the garden is underway, and I cannot wait to harvest all of the fruits and vegetables that will go to feed those in our community.

I am also grateful for the follow-through in thoughtful and careful leadership among the boards, committees, and subcommittees of this church. This church enjoys prayerful, committed, and competent leadership which guided the church well during 2025 and will continue to do so into the future.

I am grateful that worship remains a joyful experience as the Word is preached and as we make a joyful noise unto the Lord. We are led by talented music professionals, musicians and vocalists. Most of all, I am grateful to a congregation that is loving and supportive of not just me, but of each other and to the community and the world at large. Together we form the body of Christ as we go forth proclaiming His gospel and sharing His grace and peace with an anxious and needy world. This church is far more than the sum of its parts, and I am grateful to be part of it. I look forward to seeing what God has in store for us in the new year.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Dan

Session

Jim Pierson-Perry (Clerk of Session)

2025 was a very busy year for our church, keeping your Session engaged on multiple fronts. These included internal reorganizations, renovations and new ideas for use of our campus facilities, and opportunities to expand our ministries to the local community and further abroad.

Re-Organization

- After completing her second term on Session, Nancy Lewis retired from her role as Clerk of Session. I naively agreed to take on that position—and quickly grew to learn and appreciate all of the work that she had done for us. She has since taken on a position in our Presbytery with the Commission for Ministers and Congregations, helping to support all pastoral leaders and congregations throughout the Presbytery. In addition, she is the President of the STAR Foundation (more of that later in this report), continuing to support refugees.
- As expected last year, our long-serving Treasurer Bob Black retired from that position and turned the books over to our new Treasurer Allen Sievert. Assisting Allen is our new bookkeeper Anthony Condoluci-Smith. They are working to modernize our financial system to be fully on-line. Bob continues to serve as Chair of the Finance Committee.
- We have had some turnover in office staff following the loss of our previous Office Manager Grace Laughinghouse, who retired to have more time with her family. Our new office manager, Marchelle Folks, has been with us for several months now and we recently hired Helen Shore-Jones as the new office administrator. We also hired a new person, Anjali Johal, to oversee the nursery during worship services. Anjali is a UD nursing student, with a background of working with youth and volunteers with the Lori's Hands ministry.
- On the corporate level, we updated our church By-Laws and implemented updated procedures addressing child safety and addressing sexual misconduct. Part of this will require updated background checks and training for church leadership and those working with children, which will take place in 2026.

Westminster House

- A long standing concern for this church has been what to do with Westminster House, given that the building had fallen into significant disrepair and disuse over a number of years. Session commissioned a task team to provide a recommendation on what to do with the building. After doing a lot of background study as well as receiving input from stakeholders and consultants, the task team recommended that the building be renovated and used to lease space to suitable agencies and/or businesses.
- The recommendation was approved by Session and spawned two sets of activities: (1) renovation of the building and its infrastructure and (2) formation of an internal management board to operate the building as a rental site.
- The Westminster Management Board was created to oversee operation of the building and is discussed in a later section of this annual report. As part of that work, Mark Sisk was able to restore our charitable corporation [501(c)(3)] status which had lapsed.

- Multiple stages of renovation were needed to restore the building to operational use. These included installing a new sprinkler system, cleaning out mold and insect damage, internal plumbing/lighting fixes, a new roof, and new flooring. The work was largely overseen by the dedicated efforts of Don Tancredi and Dave Evers.
- With renovations complete, the Westminster Management Board contracted with a rental brokerage agency to begin looking for tenants. We look forward to putting Westminster House back into use as soon as possible in 2026.

Campus Improvements

- Safety concerns were identified through lighting failures in the Sanctuary. Dave Evers led a project to replace all lighting fixtures which both removed potential hazards and improved overall lighting.
- Don Tancredi found a buyer for our old playground equipment and oversaw its removal and cleanout. This was necessary as we were not able to stay current with changing Delaware regulations on playground safety, which put us at risk for liability.
- Girl Scout Troop 15 saw the open playground area and contacted us to ask if they could use the space to create a community garden as their Silver Award project. They presented their concepts to Session, which were approved. We look forward to their work starting this Spring and opportunities to work with them. One of their goals is for at least some of the garden's yield to be donated to our Food For Success ministry.

Missions and Outreach

- This was the first full year of operation for our new Food For Success ministry, and it has been a resounding success. Please read about this in a later section of this annual report.
- We “adopted” the STAR Foundation under our Mission and Outreach Committee in order to help them with leadership and to maintain their charitable organization status. STAR has been an important agency to assist refugees in a number of ways and is described in a later section of this annual report.
- Discussions were initiated with representatives of Newark Co-Housing and the Friendship House to see if there may ways that we could support these agencies.
- Several University of Delaware students came to Pastor Dan with ideas for expanding our presence on campus and how to increase our relevance to students. These discussions will continue when the students return after winter break.

Your Session is dedicated to helping this church bring the message of Jesus Christ into our community, as well as making the best decisions we can to support our membership and our community. If you have any questions about this report, please contact Jim Pierson-Perry.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Session Clerk of Session: Jim Pierson-Perry

Class of 2026: Lois Huggins, Mimi Lovelace, Jim Pierson-Perry, Don Tancredi

Class of 2027: Stan Blair, Melody Bock, Pat Nelson, Bob Wunder

Class of 2028: Carolyn Morton, Mark Sisk

Deacons Moderator: Greg Hills

Class of 2026: Julia Blair, Jennifer Dubé, Vickie Pierson-Perry, Willee Short

Class of 2027: Kaitlin Douglas, Greg Hills, Darlene Newsom, Melanie Sipko

Class of 2028: Patti Kelly, Kim Raff, Ann Roybal

ECCLESIASTICAL EVENTS - 2025

BAPTISMS

none

IN MEMORIAM OF OUR MEMBERS

Don Carroll

Ray Liebfried

Ken Lewis

Barbara Winters

NEW MEMBERS FOR 2025

Patti Kelly

Kim Raff

Allen Sievert

Laura Sievert

Pam Smith

Paul Welborn

Fe Wright

TRANSFER OF CERTIFICATE

Steve Hardwick

Pam Smith

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

Active Members as of December 31, 2024: 216

Total Active Members as of December 31, 2025: 180

Average Worship Attendance for 2025: 92

Belonging Ministry

Board of Deacons

Greg Hills (Moderator)

Members: Greg Hills (Moderator), Julie Blair, Kaitlin Douglas, Jennifer Dube, Patti Kelly, Darlene Newsom, Vickie Pierson-Perry, Kim Raff, Ann Roybal, Melanie Sipko, and Willee Short.

Moderator's Statement (Greg Hills)

The Deacons are a dedicated and spiritually driven group of church members. They step up to challenges and serve our church graciously through a variety of ministries. These can best be categorized as Worship Ministries, Fellowship Events, and Congregational Care. The Board of Deacons is also available to provide financial help to individuals in need.

The Board of Deacons has been operating with only 11 members since the summer and are eagerly awaiting a replacement.

The Deacons have also been working on a rewrite of the Deacons' Handbook which they hope to be able to publish soon. This handbook is the first part in educating new members for their roles as Deacons.

Pastor Dan

Pastor Dan supports the Deacons by providing spiritual guidance and identifying members that may need our help.

Worship Ministries

Communion *(Coordinator: Vickie Pierson-Perry)*

Communion for Sunday Services is organized by the church's Worship Committee. Deacons are periodically called to serve in Worship. Deacons are in charge homebound communion. On the first Sunday of the month (Communion Sunday), Deacons take Communion to members of the congregation unable to attend worship. The Communion Kit contains church blessed juice, bread and a script for the home Communion service. The Deacons bring a bulletin along with them and will typically stay and visit with the member.

Liturgists

Organized by the Worship Committee, Deacons are called to assist as Liturgists every 2nd Sunday of the month.

Fellowship Events

Fat Tuesday Pancake Dinner *(Coordinator: Kim Raff)*

The Fat Tuesday Pancake Dinner was held on March 5, 2025. The entertainer for Fat Tuesday Pancake Dinner had to cancel due to illness. We had 14 tables and about 80 people. We flipped about 300 pancakes! The Deacons pitched in (especially our new Deacons) to make this event happen. Special thanks to Stephanie Birdsall who decorated the tables.

Strawberry Festival (Coordinator: Kim Raff)

The Strawberry picnic was held on June 8, 2025 and was a great success. We had people from the community come to join us. We hosted people inside Memorial Hall West due to the weather. We had about --- attendees and ---tables. Special thanks to Ron Olson, David Berkebile and Matt Reyne for setting up the grills and for grilling hamburgers and chicken.

Harvest Festival (Coordinator: Kaitlin Douglas)

The Harvest Festival was held on October 19, 2025. Deacons went to Memorial West kitchen on Saturday to carve the turkeys and prepare side dishes. They set up tables in the hall and decorated. Many members of the Presbyterian Women provided stuffing and cooked the turkey breasts. About 80 people attended this wonderful meal. Yummy desserts were also provided by various church members.

Congregational Care (Coordinator: Ann Roybal)

The Deacon's Congregational Care is concerned with the special needs of our congregation. We welcome visitors and visit members at home and the hospital. We also can deliver meals or offer rides to appointments. This care is not limited to the Deacons. We are reaching out to other members of the congregation who are willing to help. Ann Roybal is the coordinator of care, the person to be contacted if someone is in need of a visit, a ride or a meal or if a member of the congregation is willing to help with such needs.

Ann serves as the Congregational Care Coordinator, acting as the interface to the Board of Deacons for those members in need of support through several ministries. The Deacons welcome help from members of the congregation who are willing to assist with these ministries.

ann.roybal@gmail.com.

Card Ministry (Coordinator: Melanie Sipko)

The Card Ministry sends greeting cards to offer encouragement, support, and to celebrate with various people in the congregation. 129 cards sent to those who are homebound, experiencing illness or injury (long term and short term), and those grieving. Melanie has sent such heart felt messages of prayers for hope, healing, comfort, strength, support, faith, peace, and love.

Flowers (Coordinator: Willee Short)

Delivering flowers is one of the many ways of showing we care about our church family. On Sunday after the worship service, Deacons deliver the chancel flowers that were used during the service to a congregant. They are given as encouragement, congratulations, thinking of you, thank you, sympathy, and special occasions.

~~ Flowers are like friends; they bring color to your world -unknown ~~

The card that is delivered with the flowers says, *"They have heard the hymns that have been sung, the prayers that have been said, and the sermon that has been preached. Now they come to you and in their silent way are telling you of God's great love and healing power."*

Funeral / Memorial Receptions *(Coordinator: Patti Kelly)*

The Board of Deacons care for grieving families by responding to their loss with a reception after the funeral service. Patti oversees preparations before the funeral reception, monitors volunteer help and sees that punch and cookies are served during the reception. This past year we held only two receptions for families who had lost a loved one (Lea McMurtry and Bob Crowder).

Meals

Although there have been no requests to date, the Deacons are available to help arrange for meals for those in need.

Rides *(Coordinator: Katlin Douglas)*

The Deacons are available to assist members with rides if needed. There were two requests that came in this year, but only one could be accommodated.

Visitation

Deacons will often be called upon to visit members of the congregation that are in need of spiritual and emotional support. They may be isolated due to illness, grief, or other circumstances for a variety of reasons. This can include visiting people who are homebound, hospitalized, or in nursing homes, and involves offering companionship, prayer, and encouragement.

The coordinator maintains a list of those that are Homebound with an ongoing need and matches them with Deacons for regular support. This may include phone calls, visits, cards, gifts, etc. These aim to provide spiritual support, companionship, and a connection to the church community.

Presbyterian Women

Laura Sievert (Moderator)

Presbyterian Women, Inc., is the women's organization in the Presbyterian Church (USA). We are a community of more than 200,000 women who participate in Presbyterian Women (PW) and align our ministry and hearts around a shared purpose, the PW Purpose.

The Purpose of the Presbyterian Women:

Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves:

- to nurture faith through prayer and Bible study,
- to support the mission of the Church worldwide,
- to work for justice and peace, and
- to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (USA) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom.

The First Presbyterian Church of Newark (FPCN) PW is open to all Christian women (FPCN members and non-members). Our 61 active members and 11 'Special Sisters' (those no longer able to participate), are divided into 4 Circles. Lydia Circle has 16 active members and 3 special sisters. Elizabeth Circle has 15 active members and 3 special sisters. Ruth Circle has 15 active members and 3 special sisters. Rachel Circle has 15 active members and 2 special sisters.

The 4 circles meet at 10 am, 1 pm, and 7 pm on the third Tuesday of each month. Each of the monthly meetings consist of Bible study, fellowship and support of one another. This is the third year that we are reading Max Lucado's book They Walked with God.

The PW provides greeters and liturgists for Sunday worship services and aids many church functions, such as staffing First Saturday Breakfasts, providing rosebuds for Baptisms, assisting with funerals, and nurturing the congregation with cards. The PW delivers "thinking of you" cards to local Nursing Homes monthly. The PW assisted the Deacons with the Strawberry Festival and the Harvest Festival. The PW set up Memorial Hall for the 190th luncheon and organized the historical displays to ensure the celebration was a success.

Our June General Association meeting was held in Memorial Hall. Everyone enjoyed a Tropical Island themed night, with a musical presentation by a steel drummer from the Steel Horizons Pan group. We ended the evening with our general meeting featuring the recognition of the 2024-2025 officers, and the election and installation of officers for 2025-2026.

The PW started a couple of new programs this year for all FPCN women and their friends. One PW sister hosted and taught a journaling workshop, conducted a "reunion" for the journalists, and will continue this program next year. Another new program was started this summer called "The Lunch Bunch". The group met outside of the Church for lunch on numerous occasions. This fellowship helped to nourish our relationships over the summer months when we did not have regular meetings. Both of these new programs were well received.

In September, the PW sponsored the 2nd annual "Hat Day" in support of Rally Day. Most of the congregation wore hats to worship service and had fun together.

Our October program featured Kristen Reisor speaking about the activities of the Friendship House, with specific focus on transitional housing and the Women's Shelter. For over 35 years, Friendship House has served the Delaware community with the support of dedicated volunteers, donors, and partners. Reaching more than 17,000 people annually, they believe everyone deserves a place to call home—physically, emotionally, and within a caring community. We collected \$405 in our free-will offering, as well as donated supplies to support their mission.

Our PW hosted a Fall Fundraiser which built camaraderie among the women and attendees and raised over \$3,000. This amount included proceeds from Raffle baskets, Soup/Chili, baked goods, and contributions from our congregation and PW sisters.

Due to the profits from our successful fundraiser and generous contributions from members, the PW was able to donate over \$6,000 to the following local and international organizations:

the New Castle Presbytery Guatemala Project, the New Castle County Hope Center Inc., FPCN Little Food Pantry, FPCN Food for Success, Hope Dining Room, Meals on Wheels, Door of Hope, Meeting Ground, Habitat for Humanity, Young Moms, Newark Area Welfare, Sean's House, Child Inc (Rapid Rehousing), Empowerment Center, Exceptional Care for Children, Compassion International, the Star Foundation, and the Friendship House.

The PW participates in mission projects such as knitting caps and prayer shawls, sending cards to local nursing care centers, collecting can tabs for the H.I.K.E. Foundation (Hearing Improvement Kids Endowment), and collecting stamps for the Stamp Alliance for Bible lesson translation. Groceries were purchased several times throughout the year for the Little Food Pantry. The PW also supported the Presbytery PW World Thank Offering, Birthday Offering, and Least Coin Offering. PW members worked at the NAWC Christmas "pop-up" grocery store in Memorial Hall.

The PW-sponsored Christmas program featured the Diamond State Chorus, a local women's *a capella* group. The entire congregation and friends were invited to this outstanding performance. Refreshments were enjoyed afterwards. A free-will offering of \$490 was collected and donated to Meeting Ground.

Trustees

Buildings and Grounds Committee

Don Tancredi (Chair)

Our committee is small with only a handful of volunteers, and I am thankful for them. With all our grounds and buildings, it seems to be always something that needs attention. Most of the year was concentrated on Westminster House. I am happy to say our work is completed and will be turned over to the Westminster Management Board. We solved the lighting issue in the Sanctuary after Dave Evers figured out what was going on, and we installed a handicap door opener at the main Memorial Hall entrance.

In 2026 we will focus on getting the small stuff done like replacing all the soap dispensers and replacing the old toilets that use less water. I will also develop a budget proposal to give Memorial Hall a face lift with new flooring, and painting at both entrances and the west side.

As always it is a pleasure to serve the Church and my Church family. I thank Dave Evers, Ron Olson, Scott Sheldon, and Mike Corrado for their time and service.

Westminster Management Board

Stan Blair (Chair)

Mission Vision

To utilize Westminster House in a manner which proclaims the gospel of Jesus Christ in the greater Newark, Delaware area.

The Westminster Management Corporation (WMC) held its initial meeting on July 29th, 2025, following recertification of the Corporation. At the meeting an Election of Officers was held. President and CEO, Stan Blair; Vice President, Nancy Lewis; Secretary, Dan McKenty; Treasurer, Karen Baker; members, Joe Huggins, Patti Kelly and Jim Pierrson-Perry. The Mission Vision for the facility was discussed and approved. The need for a complete rewrite of the By-Laws was discussed. The rewritten By-Laws were reviewed and approved and sent to the Session. (October 25, 2025).

During several meetings of the Board, a review of the renovations and repairs needed for facility use was discussed. All expenses were discussed with the Finance committee and the required funding made available. Special thanks to Dan Tancredi and Dave Evers who were among several people who accomplished much of the renovations, clearing, and prep work.

The cost of repair and renovations in 2025 are as follows:

Replace the Fire Sprinkler system	\$81,530.50
Replace Roof	\$18,800.00
Drywall & Painting	\$14,182.00
Replace Flooring	\$12,422.00
Floor removal and substrate repair	\$4,300.00
Misc Expenses & supplies	\$2,094.99
Total Renovations 2025	\$133,329.49

It was determined that the best approach for leasing Westminster House would be to engage a realtor. Several draft proposals from various realtors were reviewed. Allen Mazetti, Gioffre Commercial Realty LLC was invited to a WMC Board meeting to discuss the several aspects of engaging his firm in a Lease Listing Agreement. The decision was made to move forward with Gioffre following Session approval, which was granted Jan19, 2026.

Coordinating Ministry

Human Resource Committee (HR)

Jerry Holt (Chair)

The year 2025 saw several personnel changes. Grace Laughinghouse resigned as Office Administrator in the summer and was replaced by Marchelle Folks as Office Manager, in line with the reconfiguration of office staffing. Office Assistant Megan Connolly resigned to pursue a new career opportunity and was replaced by Stephanie Walker as Office Administrator. She, in turn, resigned to pursue an expanded career opportunity and was replaced by Helen Shore-Jones at the beginning of the new year. At the end of the year, UD student Anjali Johal became our nursery worker, replacing Jules Stevenson.

The Human Resources Committee (HR) recognizes the continuing efforts and thoughtful initiatives of our entire staff in 2025: Pastor Daniel McKenty, Director of Music Ministry Christian Hendricks, Praise Team Music Leader Larry Benson, Office Administrator Grace Laughinghouse, Office Manager Marchelle Folks, as well as the Praise Service Musicians, Nursery Worker Jules Stevenson, Office Assistant Megan Connolly, and all volunteers as the church completes another year. We also appreciate the service of previous HR members Evelyn Hayes and Greg Hills.

A major HR endeavor in 2025 was to revise and upgrade FPCN's "Sexual Misconduct" and "Child and Youth Protection" policies so as to strengthen the church's ability to ensure a safe environment for all, to comply with legal requirements, and to prevent any incident from damaging our credibility as a witness to the Gospel. In addition to the standard background checks, mandatory on-line training will start in early 2026 for staff, Session, Deacons, and those volunteers who work with children and youth. Also, we upgraded the Employee Assessment process to improve its effectiveness.

Annually, HR makes budget recommendations to the Session and works with the Finance Committee to complete the Session-approved Human Resources Budget for the year. Now that FPCN has a unicameral board, HR represents the congregation to the Session.

On a continuing basis, the Committee works to resolve personnel issues and concerns within the church in a timely, effective manner. We welcome your feedback, comments, suggestions, and concerns regarding staff personnel.

In alphabetical order, the present committee members are Jerry Holt (Chair), Nancy Lewis (at large), Mimi Lovelace (representing Session), Jane Moore (at large), and Patti Smith (representing Deacons). Pastor Dan is also a member. More volunteers would be very welcome.

Church Officer Nominating Committee (CONC)

Bob Wunder (Chair)

The Church Officer Nominating Committee found leaders to serve as Deacons and Elders of First Presbyterian Church of Newark.

For Session

Class of 2028 – Carolyn Morton began a first term. Mark Sisk continued in office for a second term. Two vacancies remain

For Deacons

Class of 2028 – Ann Roybal, Kim Raff, Patti Kelly, and Ann Ferreira began a first term. Ann Ferreira was unable to continue and resigned. Pam Wunder was nominated to fill her position.

The Nominating Committee members are: Bob Wunder, Dave Berkebile, Joe Huggins, Jane Moore, and Vickie Pierson-Perry. They will be looking for Elders and Deacons over the coming months.

FPC/UD/Newark Community Engagement Team

Pat Nelson (Chair)

Through the contributions of many, progress is being made toward FPC's Vision: *...seeking to be vibrantly active messengers of hope, bringing the caring presence of Jesus Christ and love of God into our community and the wider world.*

- We are strengthened by the wisdom and perspective of stalwart members who have been volunteering (some for decades) with the Newark Empowerment Center, Habitat for Humanity, Hope Dining Room, Meals on Wheels, Afghan and Ukrainian Resettlement, and the Congo.
- Matthew 25 provides urgent, timely guidance: *For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in...* Through the incredible work of the *Food for Success* Leadership Team (Francis Kwansa, Sandy Wenner, Marianne Piser, Stan Blair) in orchestrating the contributions of numerous FPC and community members, **nearly 2,000 families have received basic, healthy food**. Please see the details in the *Food for Success* report. With Mark Sisk's crucial help, we are completing the process to become a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, which will broaden fund-raising opportunities.
- As we strive to refresh and enhance our skills in listening and discussing difficult issues with others from different cultures and perspectives, we're exploring ways to promote conversational English skills among interested *Food for Success* participants and other FPC and community members.

Of the many needs emerging in our community, we strive to articulate those needs that FPC might be especially called and well suited to address. How can FPC have the greatest enduring positive impact on these needs? We are prioritizing opportunities with the potential for developing personal relationships with those in need AND working collaboratively with individuals and other organizations addressing these issues.

FPC/UD/Community Engagement Team -- Francis Kwansa, Ann Roybal, Kern Piser, Stan Blair, and Pat Nelson

Finance

Bob Black (Chair)

The Finance Committee advises Session and ministries on all financial matters of the Church. The Committee meets monthly to review the Church's finances and operations including:

- Income and expenses
- Asset reconciliations
- Assets and liabilities comparisons
- Treasurer's reports
- Financial statements
- Investments

The Committee also has responsibility to develop the Church's annual budget (with assistance from Stewardship) and monitor it. Additionally, it evaluates project proposals from other committees for their impact on the budget and recommends funding sources for them to Session.

Allen Sievert assumed the position of Church Treasurer last Fall. He has worked with me to learn the duties of this role as well as coordinating with our new bookkeeper, Anthony Condoluci-Smith. This transition includes migration of our QuickBooks financial platform to an on-line version, which should be completed during the first quarter of 2026.

Financial Overview and 2025 Experience

Overall, the financial condition of the Church remains sound. Our assets were positively impacted by the improvement in the financial markets and lower than expected spending to support our programs. Our total assets (predominated by investments portfolio) improved about 7.4% over 2025. This is very good considering the significant monies withdrawn for the 2025 budget and unbudgeted items.

It was a good year, as we dealt with adjustments—particularly those related to our office and paid contract bookkeeper staffing. Both the office manager and office administrator personnel changed during the year. We also had additional expenses related to restoring the Westminster House for operational fitness. Even so, we stayed within the operating budget.

Perhaps the greatest fiscal concern of any year is whether donations from our membership, known as Venture in Faith or VIF, would meet our expense needs. VIF income historically accounts for about 75% of our total income but this has been lagging over recent years. At times during 2025 we predicted VIF to lag at a level that caused concern and we started to provide VIF updates to the congregation. Contributions improved late in the year so that VIF finished the year slightly below our goal (98.2%).

Fortunately, several other income items came in above budget, such as from the recovering community who exceeded their anticipated income by about \$2,910 over their \$14,000 budget. Additionally, we received a larger than budgeted amount from a deceased members’ foundation (designated as “Special Gift” income). While the 2025 operating budget anticipated using about 36% of our equity reserves, none was needed in 2025 due to underspending.

The table below shows the six ministries which form the expense portion of our budget and totaled to only 87.8% of the anticipated 2025 spending. Due to this under-spending, mostly from HR, we finished 2025 with a positive net income of \$21,523. This positive income would have increased our equity by the same amount; however, Session allocated another \$50,000 of equity for Westminster House restorations.

2025

EXPENSES	Actual	Annual Budget	% of Annual Budget	Under Budget Spending	
COORDINATING MINISTRY	299,228	347,470	86.12%	48,242	13.88%
BELONGING MINISTRY (Deacons)	547	800	68.34%	253	31.66%
LEARNING MINISTRY	171	2,425	7.06%	2,254	92.94%
SUPPORTING MINISTRY ("Trustee" Type Activity)	151,599	164,505	92.16%	12,906	7.85%
WITNESSING MINISTRY	47,482	50,000	94.96%	2,518	5.04%
WORSHIPING MINISTRY	12,526	17,300	72.40%	4,774	27.60%
TOTAL EXPENSE	511,553	582,500	87.82%	70,947	12.18%

2026 Budget – refer to the tables within this section for details and comparisons to 2025

Overview

The 2026 budget totals \$576,684. This reflects an expense increase of \$65,131 (12.7%) over 2025 actual expenses, and includes continued funding of the two outstanding loans totaling \$31,708. The estimated total income budget is higher than 2025 actuals by \$43,608 (8.18%) but lower than the 2025 budget by \$5,816. In order to achieve a balanced operating budget (Income = Expenses) a portion of the year-end 2025 equity was required (31.4% or \$37,500).

2026 Budget and Comparison to 2025: Income

INCOME	2025		2026		
	Actual	Annual Budget	Annual Budget	Budget to Budget Increase (Decrease) From Budget 2025	Budget Increase (Decrease) From Actual 2025
VIF					
Checks-Incl. PayPal Net	332,658	339,000	324,000	(15,000)	(8,658)
Cash	12,005	12,100	12,000	(100)	(5)
Total VIF	<u>344,663</u>	<u>351,100</u>	<u>336,000</u>	<u>(15,100)</u>	<u>(8,663)</u>
Agency Contributions					
Recovery Groups (Mem. Hall-East)	16,910	14,000	16,000	2,000	(910)
Other Agencies (Sanctuary & Mem. Hall)	2,726	2,500	3,000	500	274
Westminster Tenant (Lease & Wear)	0	0	4,800	4,800	4,800
Total Agency Contributions	<u>19,636</u>	<u>16,500</u>	<u>23,800</u>	<u>7,300</u>	<u>4,164</u>
Equity from Prior Years	0	53,000	37,500	(15,500)	37,500
Interest	4,389	4,000	4,000	0	(389)
Credit Card Rewards	1,213	1,213	1,392	179	179
Designated Endowed Income	4,241	4,000	3,616	(384)	(625)
Investment Funds Earnings					
Restricted ("Beds" Landscaping)	1,246	1,246	1,324	78	78
Restricted ("Newark" Mission)	5,028	5,028	5,335	307	307
Unrestricted Fund Earnings (2019)	96,740	96,740	103,443	6,703	6,703
Eastman Fund (LG&I Est'd. Usage Limit)	639	639	0	(639)	(639)
Ministry Fund (LG&I Est'd. Usage Limit)	6,126	6,126	11,834	5,708	5,708
Special Gift	31,247	25,000	30,532	5,532	(715)
Unrestricted Earnings 2025+ - CRP Loan	8,406	8,406	7,829	(577)	(577)
Physical Properties Funds - CRP Loan	9,502	9,502	10,079	577	577
TOTAL INCOME	<u><u>533,076</u></u>	<u><u>582,500</u></u>	<u><u>576,684</u></u>	<u><u>(5,816)</u></u>	<u><u>43,608</u></u>

The income budget for 2026 comes predominantly from VIF (58.3%), with other earnings from investments (30.2%), equity (6.5%), building use (4.1%), and interest/rewards (0.9%). The VIF goal is \$336,000, which is 2.5% less than 2025's actual VIF amount. It has been our experience that VIF giving has fallen in some years. Church members are encouraged, if possible, to increase their level of VIF giving so that we can minimize the use of reserves (equity) and excessive draw-down of unrestricted invested assets. This is essential, as we appear to be on a continuing downward trend in membership.

This VIF uncertainty is the financial reality that FPC-N operates within and is part of the reason not to expend most of our equity in any budget year. This year we are budgeting to use about 31.4% of our equity, down from 2025's budgeted 35.8%. We realize unexpected expenses always arise, so a conservative fiscal posture is generally good.

Balancing expenses and income have been a long-standing principle of our Church. Although our assets are considerable, some of the earnings from them are restricted by donors to be used for special purposes and cannot be fully used to support the operating budget. This creates a situation of having to use our reserves (equity) and a prudent portion of the two unrestricted assets to balance budgets. In the 2026 budget, about 25.8% of our income comes from those reserves and the two unrestricted assets.

The Finance Committee works with the Legacy Gift and Investment Committee (LG&I). We follow their recommendations for prudent use of all Legacy gifts. The amount assigned for use in 2026 is about 90% of the maximum the committee recommended—about the same as used in 2025.

2026 Budget and Comparison to 2025: Expenses

EXPENSES	2025		2026	Budget to Budget Increase (Decrease) From Budget 2025	Budget Increase (Decrease) From Actual 2025
	Actual	Annual Budget	Annual Budget		
COORDINATING MINISTRY					
Stewardship	431	600	220	(380)	(211)
Session & Child Safety Administration	14,222	14,950	18,689	3,739	4,467
Finance / Office	20,922	27,160	21,250	(5,910)	328
Human Resources (Personnel)	263,653	304,760	302,058	(2,702)	38,405
Total Coordinating	299,228	347,470	342,217	(5,253)	42,989
BELONGING MINISTRY (Deacons)					
Bereavement & Subscriptions	347	600	380	(220)	33
Fellowship	200	200	200	0	0
Stephen Ministry - General Operational	0	0	0	0	0
Total Belonging	547	800	580	(220)	33
LEARNING MINISTRY					
Adult Learning	171	1,000	0	(1,000)	(171)
Children's Education	0	700	300	(400)	300
Library	0	125	25	(100)	25
Nursery	0	600	0	(600)	0
Vacation Bible School/Youth Council	0	0	0	0	0
Total Learning	171	2,425	325	-2,100	154
SUPPORTING MINISTRY ("Trustee" Type Activity)					
Sanctuary & Memorial Hall	134,206	134,705	143,422	8,717	9,216
Westminster House	17,393	29,800	29,800	0	12,407
Total "Trustees"	151,599	164,505	173,222	8,717	21,623
WITNESSING MINISTRY					
Church Growth	2,593	3,200	2,150	(1,050)	(443)
Mission & Outreach	44,888	46,800	41,565	(5,235)	(3,323)
Total Witnessing	47,482	50,000	43,715	(6,285)	(3,767)
WORSHIPING MINISTRY					
Special Services	195	0	120	120	(75)
Worship	10,410	13,000	12,405	(595)	1,995
Worship - General	1,922	4,300	4,100	(200)	2,178
Total Worshiping	12,526	17,300	16,625	(675)	4,099
TOTAL EXPENSE	511,553	582,500	576,684	(5,816)	65,131

Expenses - Coordinating Ministry

Compared to 2025 actual expenses, the 2026 budget provides an increase of \$38,405 for HR. This reflects the increase required for a full year's funding of our contract bookkeeper. The 2026 HR budget also includes staff pay increases (reflective of a nation-wide COLA increase), increased working hours for both our office manager and office administrator, and some merit based changes, as well as an increased call for our Pastor. All these actions are as recommended by HR.

Expenses - Supporting Ministry

The operating budget provides an increase of \$21,623 for Facilities expenses. This reflects higher utility and insurance expenses. We recognize that until Westminster House (WMH) begins rental unit operations the church must bear expenses for utilities, insurance, and maintenance. In order to establish a budget we made assumptions of funding and expenses for WMH. We used a simple approach and added to the income a value assigned as "Lease & Wear" of \$4,800. We expect a matching amount will be expensed, making the value net income neutral.

Our plan is to eventually pay back the renovation funds borrowed (more than \$100,000) from our reserve accounts. Our balance sheet accounting document carries forward in time assets, liabilities, and equity year to year. The payback period will be established in 2026 and is expected to be in a three to five year interval. It is very important to replenish the reserves as rapidly as possible, as there are several future major maintenance facility items that will need to be funded.

Expenses - Witnessing Ministry

A critical part of our budget is to support our mission activities, both locally and abroad. This includes our long tradition of supporting the recovering community meetings. The 2025 budget increased the Mission & Outreach (M&O) budget to \$46,800. The actual for 2025 was \$1,912 below budget. 2026's budget is decreased below the 2025 actual expense, primarily because PC(USA) modified its global missionary funding model that is currently not funded.

The M&O budget does not include contributions to mission by our Presbyterian Women organization or funds contributed for other similar special PC(USA) mission collections. Also not included is our support of the new and very successful Food for Success program. The Church provides an expense-free space and utilities for this program.

Please note that these reflect only the "treasure" part of our mission gifts. Countless hours of service time are gifted by many faithful members that are priceless.

Outstanding Loans

A loan for the new Sanctuary HVAC System is active at a 2% interest rate. The anticipated pay-off date for this loan is mid-2032, with an annual cost of \$13,800/year funded by Supporting Ministry. The Campus Renovation Project (CRP) was initiated and funded by another loan at 3% interest; with a yearly expense of \$17,908. The CRP loan will be funded in 2026 with monies from unrestricted funds and facilities investment funds that are part of the LG&I monitored assets.

The interest rates on these loans are much lower than the earnings expected from our investments, thus, there is little incentive to pay them off early. We expect to maintain investment assets near their current level, which is nominally 9 times the total indebtedness of our church. This means, if it makes fiscal sense, we could retire these loans in the future.

Concluding Remarks

The Finance Committee extends its appreciation to the Congregation for continuing to faithfully support our Church. We also thank Ron Olson for consistently organizing the weekly offering counters and leading a counting team as well. The other 2025 counting teams were led by: Harvey Conner, Don Tancredi, Kevin Thomson, Matt Reyne, and Joe Huggins. Counters on these teams were: Kern Piser, Marianne Piser, Francis Kwansa, Kathy Tancredi, Mimi Lovelace, Clinton Nanji, Steve Breffitt, and Stan Blair.

A HUGE thanks goes to Harvey Conner for his many years of dedicated work as the church Financial Secretary. Additionally, a special note of thanks goes to Dave Berkebile, as he filled in on many tasks during this retirement year of my service to our church.

Finance Committee members in 2025 were: Bob Black, Jim Annett, Dave Berkebile, Harvey Conner, Joe Huggins, Jim Newsom, Ron Olson, and Don Tancredi. Also: Mimi Lovelace -- Session Representative and Allen Sievert, Treasurer.

Keep in mind we could use your involvement in our efforts to be faithful stewards of your gifts, both current and legacy. There is room on the Finance committee for you and your insights.

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE FULL FINANCIAL DETAILS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT IN AN ATTEMPT TO PRESERVE THE FINANCIAL PRIVACY OF OUR CHURCH.

If you would like even more financial details and information, please see the year-end 2025 financial reports that will be posted in the Narthex of our Sanctuary through March. Beyond that time, the normal monthly reports will resume being posted. Also you or your church group may reach out to me or the current treasurer, Allen Sievert, at treasurer@firstpresnewark.org. I am willing to hold a one on one discussion as requested by any church member.

FINALLY: Thank you for letting me share my talents, service, and knowledge over many years I expect to continue to provide leadership of this committee for a portion of 2026.

Stewardship

Mimi Lovelace (Chair)

Over the last several years, during the fall and leading up to the collection of VIF commitment cards, we have had congregants share with us the reasons that FPC-N became their church home and why they support the work of this church through their time, talent, and treasure.

This past fall we had contributions to our Communicator newsletter from Pam Wunder, Greg and Shirley Hills, Rosemarie Beron, Judy Agnello, and Melody Bock. It was hoped that each different story would prompt reflections on how valuable this church is to you, the reader, and encourage you to consider your support for FPC-N in 2026.

While that was taking place, we had a larger team of people going over the budget line by line, projecting where cuts could be made and watching for areas where increases were most likely needed for 2026. Thanks go to Pastor Dan, Jim Pierson-Perry, Don Tancredi, Bob Black, Dave Berkebile, and Mimi Lovelace. We also had input from Kern Piser regarding insurance, Christian Hendrix regarding the music program needs, and Jerry Holt regarding personnel expenses.

Session approved a 2026 budget which calls for a VIF contribution of \$336,000. This amount is 58.3% of our anticipated operational budget of 576,684 for 2026.

Looking back over the past four years, our VIF giving has been increasing yearly. In 2022 the VIF donations amounted to \$331,815, in 2023 FPC-N received \$333,478 dollars. \$337,149 came in for 2024, and \$344,663 came in for 2025.

We have a very generous congregation. I invite you all to join me in looking forward to seeing how the Lord leads us in sharing our time, talent, and treasure throughout the year ahead.

Bequeaths and Memorials

Dave Berkebile (Chair)

Since memorial and bequest (M&B) monies usually are in response to the death of a church member, we are glad that 2025 was a year with minimal activity. One memorial was received during the year in honor of Dick Putscher. As is our normal practice, this memorial has been rolled into the previous memorials and bequests fund.

I thank Julia Blair for serving as the secretary for the M&B committee, and handling the letters and thanks for the gifts.

Legacy Gifts and Investments

Dave Berkebile (Chair)

The Legacy Gifts Funds are as follows

Jones/Smith	Use is unrestricted
General Purpose	Use is unrestricted
Koffenberger Permanent	(legal "restriction" described below)
(formerly Koffenberger Permanent Endowment & Koffenberger Ministry)	
Gliwa Physical Property	For maintaining the physical properties
(formerly Gliwa Physical Property & Gliwa Future Development)	
Searl Local Missions	For support of local missions
First Presbyterian Church	(legal "restriction" described below)
Searl Landscaping	For use with landscaping (not mowing/trimming)
Eastman	For missionary travel, scouting & youth

These legacy gifts were given by former members to help us maintain the church's work. We try to honor these donors by wisely overseeing the funds, using them in the way the donors intended and maintaining the fund values to allow the funds to help in the future while contributing as much as possible to the current church budgets.

The funds values increased during 2025, exceeding the amount the funds contributed to the 2025 budget, so the true value was maintained. We were able to grow the dollar value of the funds that LG&I Committee oversees by 8.46%, despite contributing almost 7% of the value to the 2025 budget. We were helped by stock market values continuing to increase and by inflation coming down to more manageable levels.

There are two funds that contribute to our budget which our committee does not manage. The Koffenberger Outreach Endowment is managed by the Presbyterian Foundation. They make the investment decisions and determine how much can be prudently contributed to FPC-N's budget each year. All monies received from this fund are distributed by the Mission and Outreach Committee. One additional fund established by a former member (who wanted to remain anonymous) is managed locally. Monies received from this fund are not restricted. It shows up in our financial reports as "Special Gift."

The Koffenberger Permanent Fund and the FP Church Endowment Fund are legally restricted by the following wording. "...established in March 1991 for the purpose of expanding and enriching the mission of our congregation by using the income for outreach to meet human need, to support the Church worldwide, to support theological education and to fund capital improvements." This wording allows Session to use the money in almost any way they vote.

The committee chair thanks the committee members: Francis Kwansa, Sandy Boyce, Marianne Piser, Mark Sisk and Julia Blair

Learning Ministry

Adult Discipleship

Melody Bock (Chair)

Adult Discipleship class had an active year, with an average attendance of 15 people. We started the year with the controversial book “Empathy for the Devil”, which generated good discussion and critical thinking about how we react/interact with difficult people in our lives and in Scripture.

Every 2-3 months the class studied new topics or books, ranging from the issue of “busy-ness” in our lives, through understanding our Savior through what the Bible says about the cross, to the challenge of following Jesus as revealed in the book of Acts. We also enjoyed a class led by Christian Hendricks on Music in the Church through the Ages, and a class on the Old Testament from a Middle Eastern perspective led by Pastor Dan.

Adult Discipleship asks for feedback from the congregation to help plan future studies and classes.

Children’s Education

Greg Hills and Darlene Newsom (Co-Chairs)

Sunday school teachers started a new curriculum called “Lift” with the Children’s Minister curriculum last September. The Lift curriculum for Children's and Preschool Ministries is a Christ centered program designed to promote and glorify Christ in the minds and hearts of students. It includes curriculum, games, worship, object lesson videos, and Bible story videos, all aimed at helping children learn about the love of God and the joy of a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. The curriculum is structured to ensure that every lesson leads to Jesus, making it a comprehensive and engaging resource for children's ministry leaders.

Children come to the 10am service with their parents. They participate in the service until Pastor Dan invites them up for the Children’s Message. Afterwards, they leave with their teacher for the Sunday School classroom. After the service, parents pick up their children downstairs.

The Children’s Learning Committee is comprised of teachers and assistants. Each member passed a background check and agreed to abide by our Child & Youth Safety Policy. There is one Sunday School classroom with one teacher and one assistant each Sunday. The teachers are Greg Hills, Mimi Lovelace, Sandy Wenner, and Mallory Kowalski. The assistants are Ann Roybal and Pam Wunder. **The Sunday school is in need of more assistants.**

A nursery is available for children four years old and younger. A paid employee, Anjali Johal, is in the nursery each Sunday that the University of Delaware is in session. When the university is not in session, church members will serve in the nursery. The nursery has the same curriculum as in Sunday School, except it is for their age group. The nursery also abides by the same safety rules.

Scouting America Program

Matt Reyne (Chartered Organization Representative)

The Scouting America (formerly BSA) Program of First Presbyterian Church had a very successful year in 2025. Troop 56 continued to have weekly Troop meetings and monthly adult committee meetings in Memorial Hall. The Scouts continued the usual monthly camping weekends, participated in a number of outdoor service projects during the summer months, and attended summer camp at Camp Rodney. All Scouts earned at least one rank advancement during the year.

Cub Pack 56 also continued monthly Den and Pack meetings in Memorial Hall. The highlight of the year was a very successful Pinewood Derby held in Memorial Hall in March 2024.

The First Presbyterian Church - Newark successfully completed its 81st consecutive charter in 2025 and rechartered Cub Pack 56 and Troop 56 for the calendar year 2026. First Presbyterian Church and the Scouting America Program will continue to promote the Scout Oath and Scout Law as a relevant moral code of conduct. Both Scouting Units look forward to providing a full year of program activities and learning opportunities for youth in our local community.

Witnessing Ministry

Mission & Outreach

Stan Blair (Chair)

Mission Statement

Connecting with Christ's Mission Within Our Community and Beyond

Mission and Outreach Committee

- Explore community needs and develop ways to meet them
- Continue support of successful mission projects
- Develop new local mission opportunities
- Build on current outreach programs
- Consider support of other outreach missions beyond our local area.

The Mission and Outreach Committee is the Session committee which selects, plans, and oversees mission projects for our church. Mission funds are designated in the annual budget and allocated to a number of benevolences—both local and beyond.

For many years, FPC has provided support for Presbytery and General Assembly mission projects. Money sent to Presbytery and General Assembly supports numerous local, national, and international mission programs and projects, including disaster relief, missionary work in several countries, hunger relief, support of Christian colleges, education of children, food kitchens, development of new Presbyterian churches, and the support of struggling churches.

Benevolence Budget – The Committee oversees budgeted mission programs, including Meeting Grounds, Newark Empowerment Center, Newark Area Welfare Committee, Habitat for Humanity New Castle County, Hope Dining Room, Food For Success, Dinanga School, STAR Foundation, and also non-budgeted mission programs, including the Peacemaking Offering, One Great Hour of Sharing, and the Alternative Gift Market. FPC also provides use of our facilities by the Recovering Community and Boy Scout Troop 56, Girl Scout Troop 16, and Cub Pack 56.

Alternative Gift Market – Throughout December, the Alternative Gift Market provides a way to give a special gift and support a needy world. The market is designed to honor family, friends, and loved ones with practical gifts that will educate, feed, heal, and shelter people. Funds were raised to be used for various programs. Sarah Huckelberry was this year’s coordinator. The total donated in 2025 was \$1,536, which went to the following missions: Food For Success, Hope Dining Room, Habitat for Humanity, Meeting Ground, the Newark Area Welfare Committee, Newark Empowerment Center, Refugee Support, the Heifer Project, and Dinanga Church.

Local Benevolence – FPC’s community reaches far beyond the boundaries of New Castle County. Our congregation supports a wide variety of programs. FPC members contributed bags of food and personal items that are collected throughout the year. FPC groups, such as Session, Choir, Deacons, PW Circles and numerous individual members donated gifts and/or money to support Mission and Outreach. We would also like to acknowledge our Deacons for all the contributions that were made throughout the year to numerous organizations.

Other Benevolence Programs – Other FPC groups, not part of the Mission and Outreach Committee, make many important and valuable contributions to the benevolence and mission work of our church. We want to acknowledge the contributions of those who supported the following:

Recovery Support	Ron Olson, Don Tancredi
1 st Saturday Breakfast	Bob Wenner, Jan Huckleberry
Hope Dining Room	Mimi Lovelace, Vickie Pierson-Perry
Scouting (BSA, GSA)	Matt Reyne, Dan McKenty
Community Outreach	Don Tancredi
Food For Success	Francis Kwansa, Marianne Piser, Sandy Wenner

More details of the donations can be found in the Mission and Outreach portion of the financial report and also in the PW Report.

The Mission and Outreach Committee thanks all the members and non-members of FPC’s congregation for their generous and continuous giving of prayers, time, talents, and monies in support of our mission and benevolence programs.

Session members serving on the Mission and Outreach Committee during 2025 were Elders Pat Nelson and Stan Blair. Our committee members were Co-Chair Sarah Huckelberry, Jim Annett, Bob Black, Nancy Lewis, Don Tancredi, and Marianne Piser.

Food For Success

Francis Kwansa (Chairs)

Leadership Team: Stan Blair, Francis Kwansa, Marianne Piser, Sandy Wenner

The Pantry opened in November 2024 as a separate ministry of FPC-N to be a Hunger Relief Partner of the Food Bank of Delaware. Our primary clients have been international graduate students at the University of Delaware. Since the summer of 2025, we have steadily grown our client base from Newark and the surrounding areas. In the last two months, we have experienced a significant increase in the number of clients from the non-UD community.

Last summer, the President announced cuts to the Food Banks in the U.S., which resulted in fewer products, like fish, chicken, and shrimp, available for order. Despite the government cuts, the Food for Success pantry has survived with 2 IGNITE grants of \$14,000 each from the New Castle Presbytery, appropriations from FPC-N's Mission & Outreach Committee, and donations from Presbyterian Women and individual donors. We are in the process of applying for designation as a 501(c)(3) organization; this will enable us to seek grants and other charitable tax-deductible donations. We hope to complete the process in 2026.

The contributions of our volunteers have been tremendous. They have included members of FPC-N, staff from the Bank of America, the Boy Scouts, members of the Recovering Community, Japanese students from the English Language Institute, the Hyatt Place Hotel, and UD Graduate students. The volunteers provide transportation to pick up our orders from the Food Bank of Delaware, unload the food to the kitchen and the food pantry, stock the shelves, check in clients, and assist clients with the shopping experience. We continue to recruit more volunteers for the pantry. We look forward to serving more clients in 2026 from Newark and the surrounding areas.

Operational Statistics: Nov 2024 – Dec 2025

# of Families	# in Home	# of Adults	# of Children
1,854	3,075	2,680	395

We are very proud to have served almost 2,000 families during our first year of operation. This ministry has enabled us to answer the urgent call from Matthew 25: For Jesus' followers to care for the hungry, thirsty, strangers, naked, sick, and imprisoned. There have been testimonies this past year of volunteers going beyond serving food to providing cash assistance to a client who needed money to purchase gas for his car because he had no funds. Another volunteer helped a student secure a job at UD to supplement his monthly financial resources. Praise God!!

Hope Dining Room

Mimi Lovelace (Chairs)

Hope Dining Room serves a hot lunch to anyone who is hungry, Mondays through Fridays at Kingswood United Methodist Church. There is a different team, drawn from different churches and organizations, for each day of the month and the meal is served from noon until 1pm.

In 2025, HDR was open 248 days and 7,589 meals were served. Although HDR is open Monday through Friday, it is closed when the Christina School District is closed or operating virtually.

First Presbyterian Church-Newark has a team of ten who serve a hot meal on the second Monday of the month to whomever arrives. Our standard meal is “Presbyterian Pasta” (aka hearty ziti), mixed vegetables, rolls, salad, fruit, and dessert. We have milk available on request and serve between 29-39 meals each month.

Our team members are Stephanie Birdsall, Katherine Jolly, Mimi Lovelace, Jane McAlpine, Willee Short, Vickie Pierson- Perry, Steve Hardwick, Greg Hills, Jim Pierson-Perry, and Paul Short. Our congregation supports our team through our Mission Committee and PW. We are deeply appreciative of the generosity of FPC-N.

STAR Foundation

Nancy Lewis (President)

STAR has been a committee of FPC since April 2025. Board members include Nancy Lewis, Pastor Dan McKenty, and Linda Brasel, a representative from Newark United Church of Christ, and also Elisa Cottrell, a representative of the LifePath Church in Newark. FPC Newark also has a Circle of Care to help refugees and this includes Melody Bock, Greg Hills, Shirley Hills, Faithe Koser, Nancy Lewis, Annette Mehan, Ron Mehan, and Carolyn Morton. We welcome any other volunteers.

STAR received startup money from the New Castle Presbytery IGNITE fund. We also received generous support from the FPC Mission and Outreach Committee and is now part of that committee. In the fall of 2025, IGNITE asked for a full report on our expenditures, year to date, and were very pleased with the variety of help we provided to refugees.

In 2025 we helped the refugee community in Newark by providing driver instruction, rent assistance, medical expenses, tuition assistance for students at the UD English Language Institute, help to get a Green Card, help paying for a Work Permit card, and also assisting a young Ukrainian man who won a full scholarship to the UD but needed help furnishing his freshman dorm room. STAR also hosted a resource day for refugees which included representatives from Food for Success, several local realtors, and information on the LifePath Clothing Exchange, and St Andrews Presbyterian Furniture Closet.

We have seen many more requests recently as Government funding for refugees has ceased. Both Church World Service and Jewish Family Services (JFS) used to receive government money to aid refugees. Church World Service stopped working in Delaware, and JFS is severely limited in what they can do. JFS asked STAR for help because they lost government funding. JFS asked us to fund English instruction for a young Afghan woman at the UD English Language Institute.

We recently received a request from Christiana Care Hospital to assist a refugee woman discharged from the hospital with nowhere to go. Later, we received a request to help a young Afghan woman living in Virginia who wanted to transfer into the University of Delaware astronomy department. She has been accepted but needs help applying for scholarship money.

We've never seen so many different types of requests before. In our efforts to help, we are trying to collaborate with other agencies. We have met with the State of Delaware Office of New Citizens, joined the Presbytery Immigrant Justice Committee, and are collaborating with the Newark Partnership. Each collaboration opens up other opportunities to help refugees.

Our refugee community is struggling because government policies have changed, leaving them no access to Green cards or affordable healthcare. One refugee shared with us that his medical insurance went from \$53.30 per month to \$377.52 for just himself. He had to cancel his insurance because he can no longer pay for it.

STAR is very grateful for the support of First Presbyterian Church of Newark.

Dinanga Parish—Our Sister Church

Jim Annett (FPC-N Contact) and Pastor Lazare Tshibuabua (Dinanga Church)

Dinanga Parish report for FPC-N (from Pastor Tshibuabua with edits by Jim Annett)

The report is divided into three main sections:

1. Report on funds received in 2025
2. Activities carried out
3. Activity plan for 2026

1. Funds received from FPCN: \$8,000.00

a. Funds received:

- May: \$4,800
- August: \$1,100
- October: \$1,100
- December: \$1,000

TOTAL: \$8,000.00

b. Expenses (use of funds):

- School support: \$1,700.00
- Tuition or study fees for students: \$2,300.00
- Church general needs: \$2,000.00
- Assistance to vulnerable persons (widows, orphans, funerals): \$1,600

- Communication, transportation, and other expenses for the Pastor: \$150.00
- Contingency expenses: \$250.00

2. Achievements for 2025

- a. Evangelization, administration, and sound system
 - The organization of a major event called: Evangelical Action for the Restoration of Souls.
 - o Theme: "I have seen the Lord" (John 20:18)
 - o Several people participated for 8 days with teachings from various pastors in Kananga and one from Kinshasa (a member of Dinanga Church).
 - Special 4-day event of teachings and prayer from December 28th to 31st, 2025, under the theme: "My destiny is in your hands" (Psalm 31:15)
 - 5 new members received
 - 2 blessed marriages
 - 6 new consecrated elders, including one woman
 - 2 consecrated deaconesses, including a young woman and Rose, my wife
 - Purchase of a new 3 KVA diesel generator
 - Purchase of a stabilizer
 - Purchase of a bass guitar and other accessories for the church.
 - Under my coordination and with the active participation of the youth, the drama of the birth of Jesus Christ was presented to the public on the night of December 24, 2025.
 - o This took place after more than 15 years.
 - o Many people participated at the Dinanga Church from 9:00 pm to 11:00 pm.
- b. Mission
 - Support for the Dinanga School (by FPCN)
 - Support for pupils and students (FPCN)
 - Assistance to widows and orphans (FPCN)
 - Funeral of an 87-year-old widow in need
 - Twelve targeted widows from the Dinanga parish received a significant amount of goods (see photos) thanks to a charitable organization called: "SON OF ABRAHAM FOUNDATION."
 - o Its founder is a Presbyterian living in Kinshasa. This great event, which took place on December 25, 2025, brought hope to these elderly people on Christmas Day.
 - School supplies were provided to some underprivileged children thanks to donations from a generous individual (my personal friend and supporter of Dinanga Church).

3. 2026 Plan

- a. Evangelism (one of the priorities for 2026)
 - Training on how to evangelize (theory/practice) in partnership with the Campus Ministry for Christ Ministry, within the Church of Christ in Congo, of which the CPC is a founding member.
 - May is designated "Evangelism Month" with door-to-door evangelism.
 - Evangelical Conference of Committed Christian Women for Christ, March 6-8, 2026. (an activity of Dinanga Church with women, and invitations will be extended to everyone to participate.)
 - Holy Week 2026 will also have an evangelical focus.
 - Another evangelical activity will be organized between mid-April and mid-May.
 - We will invite an evangelical pastor from the 3rd Baptist Community in Central Africa. This is a large community located in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, in the Maniema province.
 - o This pastor will work in our parish and several churches in Kananga.
 - o We will also accompany him to the city of Tshikapa (265 km from Kananga) for the same mission.
 - The Evangelical Action for the Restoration of Souls (2nd Edition) will be held from July 5th to 12th, 2026 in our region.

- Various speakers will come from Kananga and Kinshasa.
- Most will be pastors from the CPC and other Pentecostal and revival churches.
- Among them, two or three people from Dinanga, our church currently serving in different parts or cities of our country, will be included.
- Next October, an evangelistic campaign with young people will take place in a chosen public square for three days.
- The parish will be open to collaboration with pastors of Pentecostal churches to exchange experiences regarding the rapid quantitative and qualitative growth of the church.
- Intercessory prayer will be organized during the last three days of each month.
- A weekly broadcast of the Good News will air on a local radio station.
- Dinanga Church has a Facebook page, "Paroisse Dinanga," where its Communications and Media Committee posts pictures and videos of its activities.
 - Sunday sermons are streamed live on our Facebook page.
 - We would like to launch a YouTube channel this year.
- - It is true that some of these activities will require significant resources to be carried out.

The photos were taken on Christmas Day during a donation ceremony by a foundation mentioned in the report. It was a special Christmas Day!



Worshiping Ministry

Worship

Carol Olson (Chair)

Members: Larry Benson, Christian Hendricks, Pastor Dan McKenty, Carol Olson, Jim Pp

It has been an exciting year during Worship at First Pres. This year I want to highlight worship leading up to Easter. Maundy Thursday was a potluck dinner in Memorial Hall. It was a Tenebrae Service of Shadows that was well attended. Good Friday Service in the Sanctuary, was gospel readings of witness from the Passion and Taize Hymn. It was a thought-provoking service. On Palm Sunday, after the prelude by the bells a bagpiper proceeded down the aisle to open the service. Who can forget the triumph sounds on Easter Sunday of organ, many instruments and voices filling the sanctuary announcing that Christ Has Risen. We went from the crucifixion to the Risen Lord in meaningful services that captured the Lenten Season.

Many thanks go out to all those who help our Worship Service run smoothly.

- Carol Aftomis who continues to monthly prepare the Lord's Table and schedule servers.
- The five teams of ushers who do more than just hand out bulletins and collect the offering. While you are enjoying the service, ushers are working behind the scene to keep everything flowing fluidly.
- Thank you, Matt Reyne for finding and taking the time to hang Our Confessional Banners. We have not seen them in many years and it was greatly appreciated.

We are always looking for ushers. Volunteer to usher once every five weeks or be on the substitute list. We would greatly appreciate it.

Music Team

Christian Hendricks (Director of Music)

For 2025, the music program continued apace, maintaining a strong and constant presence from each of the ensembles:

- Choir
 - Numbers have remained generally consistent. While we had a promise of section leaders joining after the summer, unfortunately other commitments ultimately kept potential candidates from joining us. The question of having section leaders is shelved for the time being.
 - Thanks again to Allen, Annette, Carol, Fe, Jackie, Jane, Jane, Jerry, John, Judy, Jynx, Kern, Lois, Melody, Patti, Teyton, and the praise team for singing!

- Handbells
 - We’ve had some folks join or rejoin, some leave for other commitments, keeping the group a consistent size.
 - Performances about once a month, including a Gershwin melody to round out the season before summer.
 - Thanks to Dave, Jackie, Annette, Cait, Carol, Vicky, Beth, Stephanie, Eleanor, Patti, Michele, and Brenda for your dedication!

- Praise Team
 - The addition of another member brought increased variety to our performance options.
 - Efforts were made to increase the repertoire, adding new songs and beginning extra rehearsals outside of Sunday mornings.
 - Thanks to Larry, our praise team leader, for continuing to choose praise music each week and prepare materials for the team and choir, and to Dave, Jim, Mark, Clinton, Melody, Patti, and Karen!

Highlights of the year include:

- Our church hosted a combined concert of the choirs from the University of Delaware and the TUKS Camerata from the University of Pretoria, South Africa. It was an incredible concert that (almost literally) brought the house down.
- A full brass quintet ensemble (and timpani!) for our Easter service, performed a few pieces and enhanced the beautiful choir piece, “To the Lamb on the Throne”, by Dan Forrest.
- I led a four week lecture series on the history of music and the church, highlighting questions of what role music has in worship (if at all), what kind of music is suitable, and how we got to where we are with our present form of music in service.
- A summer of having various members of the church strut their stuff, singing solos, new pieces, and trio setting of “When You Believe” from *Prince of Egypt*.
- Painting and cleaning up the choir and handbell rooms, refreshing the space and the spirits of our ensembles.
- A Christmas goodwill offering to Juniper Retirement Village of our singers and ringers performing a program of Christmas music for the residents. It was lovingly received, and we aim to repeat and expand such an offering next Christmas/Advent.

Looking ahead, as we are planning for Lent and Easter, I have a few ideas for new things we might do, such as a weekly Lenten Music Meditation offering. Worship is looking to do a couple more music-focused services, such as a hymn sing. We purchased a music anthology to further expand the Praise Team’s repertoire and are continuing to play with what we can do as an ensemble.

Church Staff and Leadership Team

Pastor

Rev. Dan McKenty

Staff

Marchelle Folks Office Manager
Helen Shore-Jones..... Office Administrator
Christian Hendricks Music Director
Larry Benson..... Praise Team Music Leader
Anjali Johal Nursery Supervisor

Church Leadership

Jim Pierson-Perry Clerk of Session
Allen Sievert..... Treasurer
Harvey Conner Financial Secretary
Don Tancredi Facilities Manager
Greg Hills..... Moderator, Board of Deacons
Laura Sievert Moderator, Presbyterian Women