

UNITED CHRISTIAN PARISH

ANNUAL REPORT 2023





Founded in 1973, the United Christian Parish is an open and affirming church united in ministry: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Presbyterian (USA), United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church.

How to Reach Us

United Christian Parish
11508 North Shore Drive
Reston, VA 20190
ucpreston@ucpreston.org
ucpreston.org



United Christian Parish's Mission

Creating opportunities for all people in the community to experience the amazing grace and love of God, whom we know through Christ.

United Christian Parish's Vision

God's beloved community on Earth—committed to compassionate service, spiritual development, inclusiveness and love.

Pastor

Rev. Elisabeth Williams

Parish Associate

Rev. Lloyd Kinzer

Pastor Emerita

Rev. Suzanne Rudiselle

Front Cover:

Pastor Beth baptizes child.

Back Cover:

Congregation witnesses baptism.



Members celebrate their church's landmark anniversary on Pentecost Sunday.

Staff

- Kevin Fletcher
Building Use Coordinator
- Micaela Hanney
Bookkeeper
- Kate Hoing
Communications Director
- Heidi Kharbanda
Administrator
- Yvonne Kauffman
Genesis Choir Director
- Ginger O'Rourke
Preschool Director
- Adama Sillah
Child Care
- Dave Tiller
Handbell Director
- Misha Tumanov
Music Director

Board

- Debbie Aschenbach
Congregational Care Council Chair
- Laurie Callahan, Judy Pew
Co-Clerks
- Jo Franklin
Justice & Peace Ministry Chair
- Chuck Gritton
Lay Co-Moderator
- Bob Haley
Finance Council Chair
- Roxane Hughes
Worship Ministry Liaison
- Sara McAlpine
Human & Administrative Resources Council Chair
- JoAnne Norton
Witness Ministry Liaison
- Lee Schmidt
Missions Ministry Chair
- Richard Steinmann
Building & Grounds/Trustees Council Chair
- Nancy Vollmer
Faith Formation Ministry Liaison
- Rev. Elisabeth Williams
Ministerial Co-Moderator

Other

- Matt Aguirre, Jim McConnell
Technology Team Co-Chairs
- Art Banks
Ecumenical Advisory Group
- Gerry Havran
Treasurer
- Kathy Kelley
Lay Leadership Nominating Committee Chair
- Glenn Surabian
Witness Ministry Chair
- Dave Tiller
Worship Ministry Chair
- Britt Williams
Preschool Advisory Committee Chair



Contents

06
PASTOR'S
NARRATIVE

08
MESSAGE FROM
THE BOARD CHAIR

12
HUMAN &
ADMINISTRATIVE
RESOURCES
COUNCIL REPORT

14
BUILDING &
GROUNDS/
TRUSTEES COUNCIL
REPORT

15
CONGREGATIONAL
CARE COUNCIL
REPORT

16
WORSHIP MINISTRY
REPORT

20
MEMBERSHIP
REPORT

21
WITNESS MINISTRY
REPORT

22
JUSTICE & PEACE
MINISTRY REPORT

23
ENVIRONMENTAL
JUSTICE TEAM
REPORT

24
FAITH FORMATION
MINISTRY REPORT

26
PRESCHOOL
REPORT

28
MISSIONS MINISTRY
REPORT

30
FINANCIALS



PASTOR'S NARRATIVE

We began 2023 in worship taking a “star word.” The use of star words is a prayer practice connected to Epiphany and the new year that has been growing in popularity in Protestant churches for nearly a decade. The practice involves holding a word before you throughout the year to consistently reflect on how God is moving through, around, or in connection to that word in your life. At our Epiphany service, we were invited to draw our star word from off the Table (or on “chat” or email if you were worshipping online). I encouraged everyone to trust the word they would draw and not to replace the word. Along with everyone else, with much anticipation to see what word God had chosen for me, I too took a word. It was not a big fancy word. It was a short, three letter word: “See.” I tried hard not to let my disappointment show and I was hoping for a “better” word. But I had just told everyone to trust the word they got, and so I had to do the same.

As it turns out, there may not have been a better word. “See” was a good word for 2023, for me and for United Christian Parish. We implemented a Sustainability Task Force to see how to sustain the financial viability of the parish. We looked to see if there was a more efficient way for our organizational structure and approved changes to our Constitution and By-laws. We will continue to see if those changes are doing what we hoped. We looked back as we celebrated our 50th anniversary, looked to see where we can serve in the present, and looked to see into the future. In all this, it was important to see God working with and guiding us.

My star word was not just for UCP. It was for me, a year of seeing how and why I have been called to ministry at the parish. It was a year to see how God is working in my life and my ministry. Especially with Marcus’ departure, it became a year to see what I can do, and what I can’t. What I saw is that I cannot do it all, but God does not expect me to. For we are a united parish, we work together, we dream together, and together we see what God is calling and equipping us to do. It was a year to see that God has been with us, is with us, and will be with us as we move through 2024 and into the future.

My 2024 star word is two words: “Draw Near.” I look forward to drawing nearer to God, to our community and to you as we work together toward our goal to build spiritual connections. May you see God in ways you may not have seen God before. May you see Christ in your lives and draw nearer to the God who loves you, unconditionally, with a love that never ends.

Blessings,



Elisabeth Williams



Pastor Beth leads
Children's Time on Holy
Humor Sunday.



Chuck Gritton
Lay Co-Moderator,
Parish Board

OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR WAS ONE BRIMMING WITH SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES.

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.
Romans 12:12

Effective steering requires the boat to move faster than the current, necessitating deliberate effort from the crew to ensure safety and direction. Our 50th anniversary year, 2023, was one brimming with significant activities and changes. Both the Board and the congregation have vigorously paddled through these times. Let's take a moment to review some highlights from our collective journey.

Celebrating – 50th Anniversary

Building on the efforts from late 2022, the 50th Anniversary Committee successfully orchestrated our 50th anniversary celebration. The commemorative Pentecost service and dinner drew not only current members but also former members and staff of United Christian Parish, who in some instances journeyed from long distances to participate. As a church, we embraced this milestone as a pivotal moment in our ongoing narrative, encapsulated by a threefold theme: “Reflecting on the Past, Celebrating the Present, and Preparing for the Future.”

Streamlining Governance

In 2022, we recognized that UCP's governance structure and processes were too cumbersome for a church of our size. To address this disparity, the Streamlining Task Force conducted a thorough review and presented a proposal to the Board, which the congregation approved on March 19, 2023. We initiated the transition to this new system in June 2023, coincident

with the new terms for the Board and other ministries and councils.

At each subsequent Board meeting, we assess the efficacy of these changes and tackle any identified issues. Initially, the focus was on determining representation for each ministry within the Board. More recently, we've shifted towards developing detailed job descriptions for positions that the Lay Leadership Nominating Committee (LLNC) will need to fill. Our preliminary assessments indicate that the current process is more streamlined and efficient than the prior one. We are committed to ongoing evaluation and will make further adjustments as needed.

Planning and Budgeting for Sustainability

In late 2022, faced with the prospect of a tenth consecutive year of budget deficits and dwindling reserves, the United Christian Parish Board established the Sustainability Task Force (STF) led by Bob Haley. The task force's goal was to address the urgent threat to UCP's financial sustainability.

Early in 2023, the STF generated 30 innovative strategies to curb the deficit, including initiatives like the “50 for 50” fundraising campaign and a strategic emphasis on increasing rental income. Thanks in part to the implementation of these ideas and continuing focus on sustainability, we are now forecasting a significantly reduced budget deficit for 2024, estimated at \$40K, compared to the actual deficit of approximately \$96K for 2023—both of which are substantial improvements from the budgeted 2023

deficit of \$143K. Although challenges remain, these figures represent a positive shift in our financial trajectory.

The Sustainability Task Force remains dedicated to steering UCP towards achieving a positive cash flow. The STF plans another brainstorming session in early 2024 to continue this momentum and identify further opportunities for financial improvement.

Discerning our Pastoral Model

This past August, Rev. Marcus Leathers announced his departure, prompting immediate actions by the UCP Board to manage his transition and maintain continuity in the tasks he performed. The Board realized that it shouldn't just drift into a new Pastoral Model; instead a more deliberate approach was necessary to shape our future pastoral staff and task allocations.

Consequently, in October, we initiated the Pastoral Model Task Force (PMTF), co-chaired by Sara McAlpine, to proactively define our next steps. Currently, the PMTF is completing its recruitment of additional volunteers, setting the stage for the substantial work ahead. From January through April, the PMTF's primary focus will be engaging with the congregation to understand the present needs and long-term goals, particularly ones requiring pastoral support.

The objective of the PMTF extends beyond immediate concerns; it aims to project and plan for the needs of our growing church and finances over the next three to five years. By April and May 2024, the team will synthesize the congregational feedback and begin discerning a strategic vision and approach. The culmination of this effort will be a comprehensive recommendation

to the UCP Board, expected by May or June 2024, outlining a forward-thinking Pastoral Model staffing plan over the next several years. The Board will, of course, keep the congregation informed of progress and seek approval if warranted or required.

Summary

This year has been a very active one for United Christian Parish. But thanks to the diligent work of many in the congregation, we are making progress on a number of very important fronts. We have a lighter weight, more streamlined organization with closer communication between the Board and the ministries and councils. Our approach to financial stewardship is yielding results, moving us closer to a deficit-free budget—a critical milestone for our long-term sustainability. Additionally, we're advancing towards a strategic decision in structuring and expanding our pastoral staff going forward so that we best serve the needs and wants of our congregation as a whole as we grow.

This year has been a very active one for United Christian Parish. But thanks to the diligent work of many in the congregation, we are making progress on a number of very important fronts.

You will find more in-depth information about United Christian Parish in the rest of this report. As we work through 2024, may God help us across all our missions and activities.

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

Your generosity has made all of this possible.

FEBRUARY

Opportunity Fairs Begin

The Missions Ministry hosted the first opportunity fair to reach potential volunteers. It was one of eight fairs hosted throughout the 50th anniversary year.



MARCH



A Night of Talent and Chili

The Talent Show and Chili Cook-off on March 19 welcomed the community for a variety of entertainment and chili.

Preschool Earns NAEYC Reaccreditation

The UCP Preschool earned reaccreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) through 2028—demonstrating an elite commitment to high-quality early childhood education.



APRIL

A Celebration of the Resurrected Christ

Easter Sunday marked the highest attended worship service of the year with over 300 people worshipping with United Christian Parish onsite and online.



UCP Celebrates Earth Day in the Pollinator Garden

The Environmental Justice Team and Scout Troop 124 work together to spruce up the pollinator garden on Earth Day.

JULY

A Summer of Concerts

Members and friends enjoyed good food and company at the Frying Pan Park weekly summer concerts.



UCP Celebrates Pride Month

For the fifth year in a row, United Christian Parish was a faith-based co-sponsor of Reston Pride on June 3.

JUNE

Kitchen Renovation

After 50 years the kitchen went through a beautiful transformation. The renovation provides workflow improvements, additional storage space and modern appliances.



A Evening for the Ages

More than 150 people marked the 50th anniversary of United Christian Parish with a celebratory dinner on Pentecost.

MAY

A Day for the Ages

On Pentecost Sunday, May 28, more than 200 people celebrated UCP's 50th anniversary with worship followed by a special coffee hour.



SEPTEMBER

Rev. Marcus Leathers Accepts Call as Regional Minister of the Christian Church Capital Area

On September 3, co-pastor Rev. Leathers received a farewell blessing following his six years of service to the parish.



UCP Adopts Lake Anne Park

To help our community stay clean and to inspire people to be environmental stewards, United Christian Parish adopted Lake Anne Park in Reston, VA.



OCTOBER

Women Retreat to Bethany Beach, Delaware

Twenty-three women traveled to Christian Church Disciples of Christ Capital Area Conference Center October 13-15 to learn more about the Bible, experience worship, prayer, and to relax together.



NOVEMBER

A Tradition Lives On

The Thanksgiving Interfaith Service, our cornerstone event for over 35 years, united religious and spiritual practitioners of many faiths and paths.





Sara McAlpine
Human & Administrative Resources Council Chair

The pastors and staff at UCP are serving and blessing our congregation and community every day with a multitude of impressive skills and gifts. These include providing pastoral care and guiding faith formation, administering the church office,

providing communications in multiple formats, leading our music program, providing detailed bookkeeping, operating the Preschool, and coordinating use of the building through rentals and for UCP's church meetings and events.

While our pastors and staff are supporting us and taking care of UCP, the Human and Administrative Resources Council (HARC) has the primary responsibility and accountability for taking care of personnel matters for the Ministerial Team and UCP's paid staff. HARC has general oversight of parish administrative office operations and works with the UCP Technology Team to ensure that the office equipment and technology are meeting current needs. In 2023, HARC members worked with the church office to complete a significant effort to replace the office's outdated copier machine with a newer donated machine at a reduced cost to UCP.

During 2023, as we worked through HARC's timeline of annual tasks, we had to say farewell to the Rev. Dr. Marcus Leathers as he accepted a call to regional ministry as the Regional Minister of the Christian Church Capital Area. We look forward to continuing UCP's connection with Rev. Marcus Leathers in his role as the Disciples' Regional Minister. Rev. Leathers concluded his service at United Christian Parish as its Pastor for Congregational Care and Development on September 8.

In October, following the departure of Rev. Leathers,



Rev. Marcus Leathers receives a farewell blessing as he accepted a call as Regional Minister of the Christian Church Capital Area.

the Parish Board initiated the Pastoral Model Task Force (PMTF), co-chaired by the HARC Chair, to proactively define and shape UCP's future pastoral staffing model and task allocations. This process is briefly described in "Discerning our Pastoral Model" in the Message from the Board in this *Annual Report*. Also, during 2023, with the help of members from Building and Grounds, HARC, Music, Worship and other volunteers, United Christian Parish signed our significant new renter, the Northern Virginia Music Teachers' Association (NVMTA). As UCP's building rental program has expanded, the role of UCP's Building Use Coordinator has changed accordingly, leading to a transition in that role in December, as we graciously said thank you to Bissi Badou and gave a warm welcome to Kevin Fletcher.

The Human and Administrative Resources Council appreciates the work of volunteers, including the members of HARC, who give their time and attention to taking care of our pastors and staff, such as—by letting our amazing staff members know they are appreciated or by answering phones in the church office when a staff member is out of office. If you can consider volunteering in the church office, let us know (harc@ucpreston.org)!

Charter member and Genesis Choir Director Yvonne Kauffman is recognized for her fifty years of service to the children and mission of the parish.



BUILDING & GROUNDS/TRUSTEES COUNCIL REPORT



Rich Steinmann

*Building & Grounds/
Trustees Council
Chair*

The Building & Grounds/Trustees (B&G/T) Council continued working to make our church comfortable and welcoming for members and visitors and environmentally friendly. The Council is responsible for negotiating, signing, and overseeing service contracts for maintenance and improvement of the United Christian Parish campus.

The most significant project of 2023 was renovation of the kitchen. Other major contracts this year included extensive tree work, storm water control cleaning, repair of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment, and continued custodial care, snow and leaf removal, and yard maintenance.

To reduce energy consumption and save on maintenance costs, fluorescent light fixtures are being replaced with Light Emitting Diode (LED) fixtures as the older fixtures reach the end of their useful lives.

The Council arranged training in the use of our Automated External Defibrillator and Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation.

The Council also assisted in the development of additional building rental opportunities, to help provide much-needed income to the parish.

The B&G/T Council now consists of six members, three of whom serve as Commonwealth Trustees responsible for signing major contracts. In addition, the team includes many faithful and knowledgeable alumni. They do many smaller tasks themselves, to reduce the financial burden on the budget.



Kitchen before renovation.



Renovated kitchen.

Because of your generosity the United Christian Parish kitchen was renovated after 50 years. The new space enables us to continue its legacy of service and spirit of hospitality to future generations.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE COUNCIL REPORT



Debbie Ashcenbach

*Congregational
Care Council Chair*

The Congregational Care Council (CCC) reaches out to church members to foster connections through visits, home communion, phone calls and cards. CCC members also provide transportation and food to those who are sick or are in need of rides to doctor appointments or physical therapy sessions.

Collectively, CCC members contributed an average of 300 hours a month providing care for homebound individuals and for those who contacted the Samaritan of the Month or the church office in need of food or transportation. Congregational Care Council members also made efforts to stay in touch with former members. In addition, CCC members provided mentoring to new members to connect them to people in the parish and church groups in which they may wish to participate.

The Fellowship Team, which is part of the CCC, continued to host several small groups—Women in the Spirit, Intercessory Prayer, Joyful Diners and Dine with Nine. The Fellowship Team fostered connection through hosting meals, coffee hours, picnics at Frying Pan Park’s summer concert series and a chili cook-off. The Fellowship Team continued to provide meals at church-wide events such as the Fall and Christmas Festivals. All of these activities were done to make lasting connections.

Additionally, parishioners and friends experienced the joys of faith, fun, and fellowship through the Diamond Tours Lancaster Show Trip & the Dutch Country in November with the UCP Travel Ministry. After 16 Travel Ministry trips, this trip had the largest number of subscribers ever, with 37 enrolling.

Under the new streamlined governance organization, the Congregational Care Council takes a holistic approach to fostering spiritual connections.

In addition to caring for one another in times of change or need, the Congregational Care Council works with the Fellowship Team to host small groups for members to share their joys, challenges, and to seek spiritual guidance.

Rental income in 2022 was **\$6,363.**

Rental income in 2023 was **\$16,956,**

representing an increase of **166%.**



Dine with Nine.

CELEBRATING MILESTONES THROUGH SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS



Dave Tiller
Worship Ministry
Chair

Reflecting on the Past 50 years; Celebrating the Present; Preparing for the Future

The United Christian Parish has spent the past 50 years building spiritual connections within our church community, across Reston, and around the world! Yet we continue to ask ourselves how we can create more. Prayer and conversation are two key elements

that strengthen the bonds among people developed in small groups. Intentional prayer sums up the activities of these groups, brings us closer together, allows us opportunities for joys and concerns, and promises the future within these groups and for the congregation at large. Beyond the well-established prayer groups, Women in the Spirit, or the Men's Breakfast, new spirited companion groups are encouraged to form and covenant in prayer through devotionals or just honest, trusted conversations.

Music has always been a key element of the parish. Vocal groups for all ages meet regularly and offer their gifts on a regular basis. Talent shows, recitals, and an annual Christmas Festival provide outlets that

supplement formal worship services for these groups to praise God. Our youth choir, Joyful Noise, has formed and gained strength this year, as our children grow and look for ways to continue the strong music foundation built in the Genesis Choir. Handbells and liturgical dance continue to flourish as their numbers recover from the COVID years. Several young people have often been overheard pleading for more organ music. And the whole congregation joins in regularly to celebrate milestone birthdays and anniversaries.

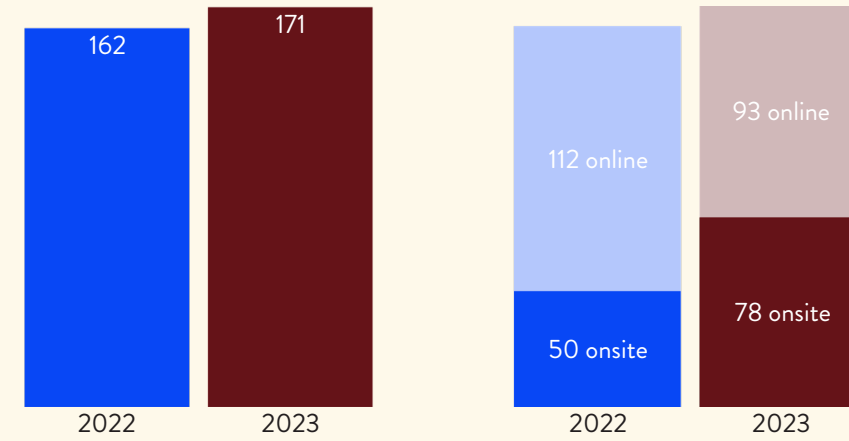
UCP's commitment to hybrid worship (in-person and livestreaming) remains unwavering. Attendance numbers show that a similar number of worshipers join online and in the sanctuary each Sunday and for special events. As our congregation ages and travels, members remind us how much they value the on-line, livestreaming worship and fellowship that UCP continues to support. Monthly Opportunity Fairs have highlighted ways that members and newcomers can serve in the Worship Ministry and other ministries and councils. Even though one of our pastors, Rev. Marcus Leathers, was called to a judicatory position within his denomination, the foundation of the spiritual connections he helped create remains strong. New connections will enable our numbers to grow and our spirituality to bind us in Christ.



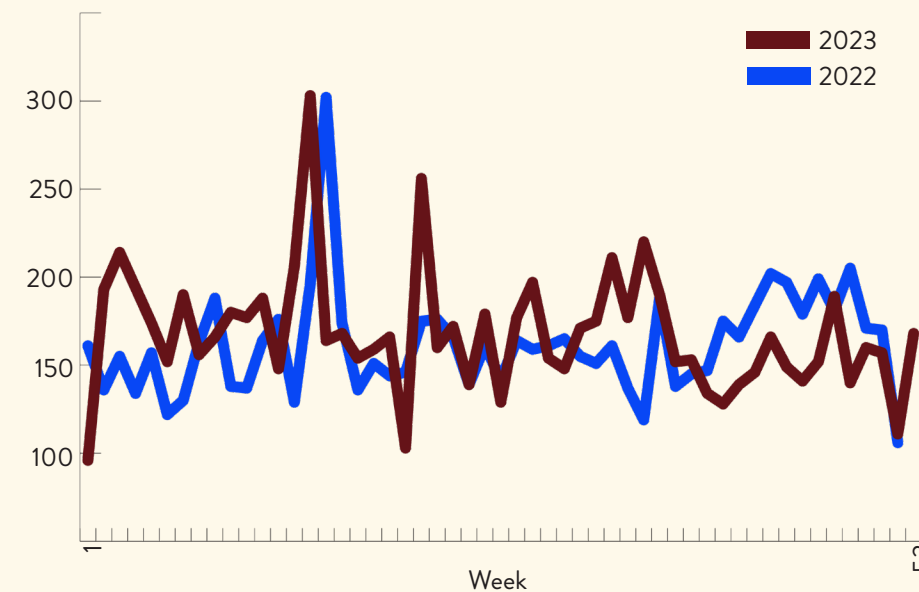
Charter member Bill Jackson leads congregation in prayer on Pentecost.

SUNDAY WORSHIP By the Numbers

Average Attendance



Weekly Attendance Comparison



Top Three Attended Services

1. Easter.....303
2. Pentecost.....256
3. Rev. Marcus Leather's Farewell.....220



16

COMMUNION SERVICES



60

ONLINE SERVICES

59 HYBRID
1 ONLINE-ONLY



4

MEMORIAL SERVICES

3 LIVESTREAMED
1 ONSITE-ONLY



2

CONFIRMATIONS



1

BAPTISM

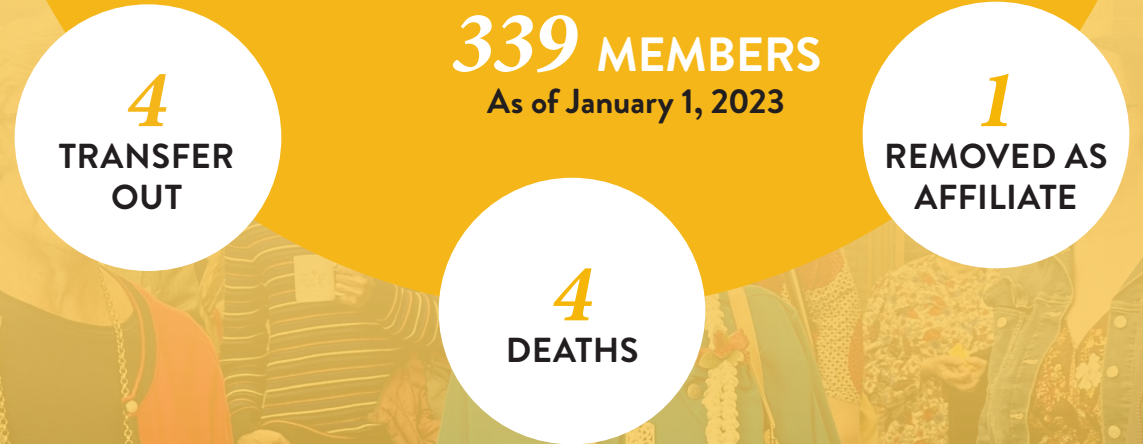
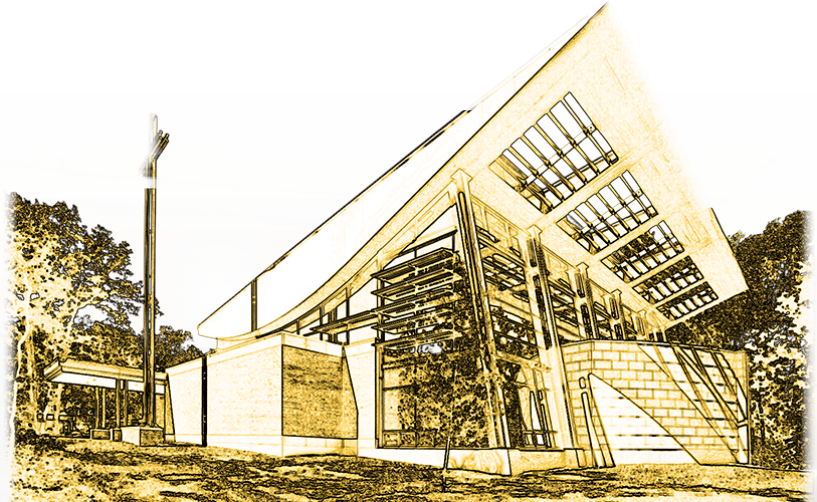
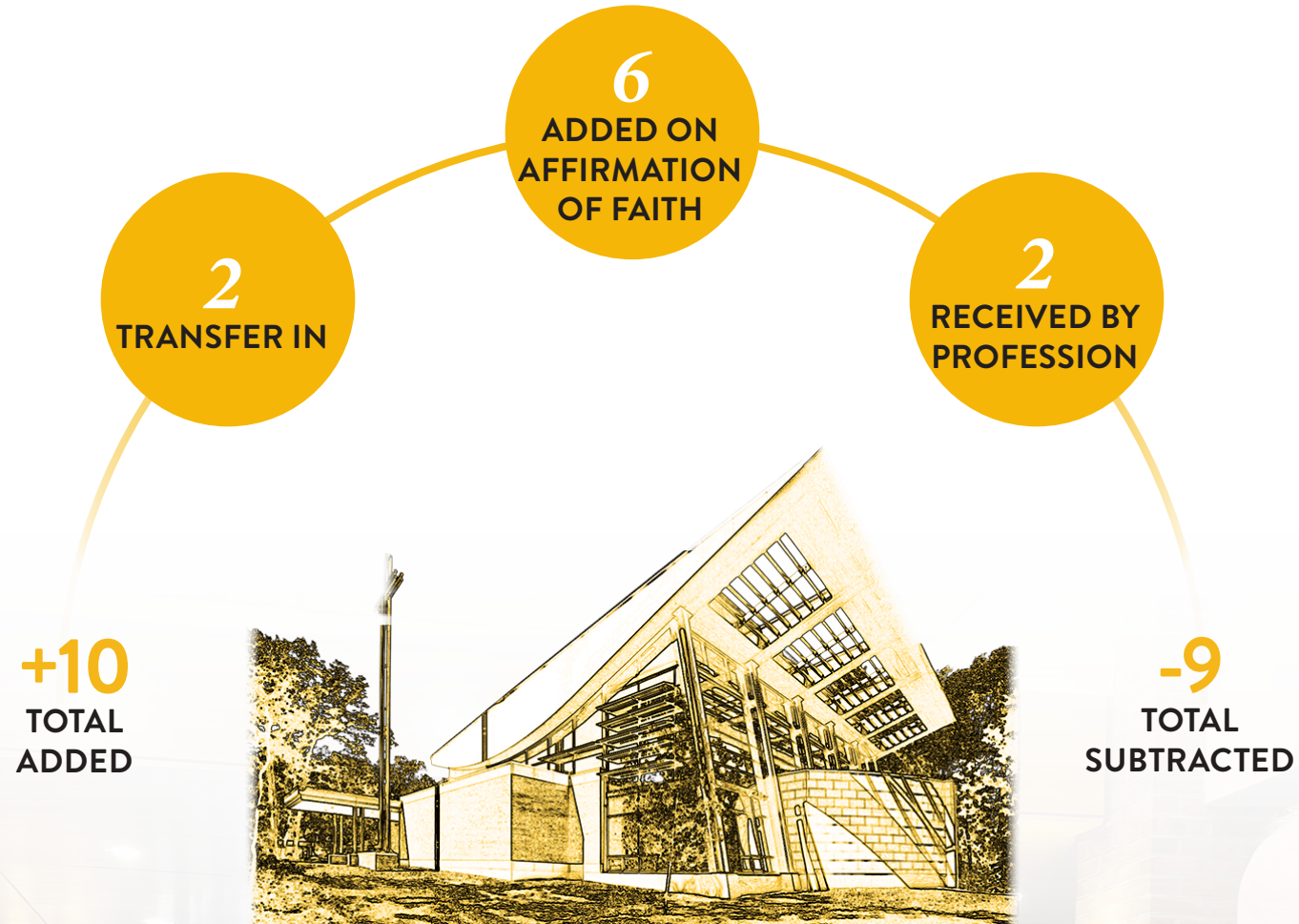
Celebrating 50 Years



United Christian Parish's anniversary celebrations reached their apex on May 28 as more than 200 present and former members and clergy, family, and friends attended Pentecost worship, a special coffee hour and a celebratory dinner.

1. Roy Oishi and Ken Plum. 2. Rev. Chris Braudaway-Bauman, Rev. Joan Bell-Haynes and Rev. Lloyd Kinzer help lead communion. 3. Rev. Elisabeth Williams and Rev. Marcus Leathers. 4. Annette Reed and Mary Jackson. 5. "The Great Parade" procession. 6. Mandela Langhum and Evan Melnick. 7. Family of UCP co-founder, Rev. Robert Regan. 8. Barry Johnson, Ginny Johnson, Eleanor Dickey, Ken Plum and Jane Plum. 9. Bonnie Hudson and Rev. Kay Rodgers. 10. Menda Ahart, Karen Keys-Gamarra and Cassandra Partridge.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT



340 TOTAL MEMBERS
As of December 31, 2023

WITNESS MINISTRY REPORT



Glenn Surabian
Witness Ministry
Chair

The Witness Ministry spreads the Good News to those who come to the parish for worship or participate in parish programs—inviting all to join in the life and work of the parish.

This Ministry is responsible for community outreach, visitor tracking and visitor follow-up. It works to ensure a presence at community events.

Witness continued with its staple programs in 2023—coordinating greeters, blessing animals at DogFest (54 dogs and two ferrets in 2023), monthly appearances at Reston Farmers market, advertising, etc.—in addition to attending ad hoc events (Lake Anne Reggae Festival and Lake Anne Christmas Festival).

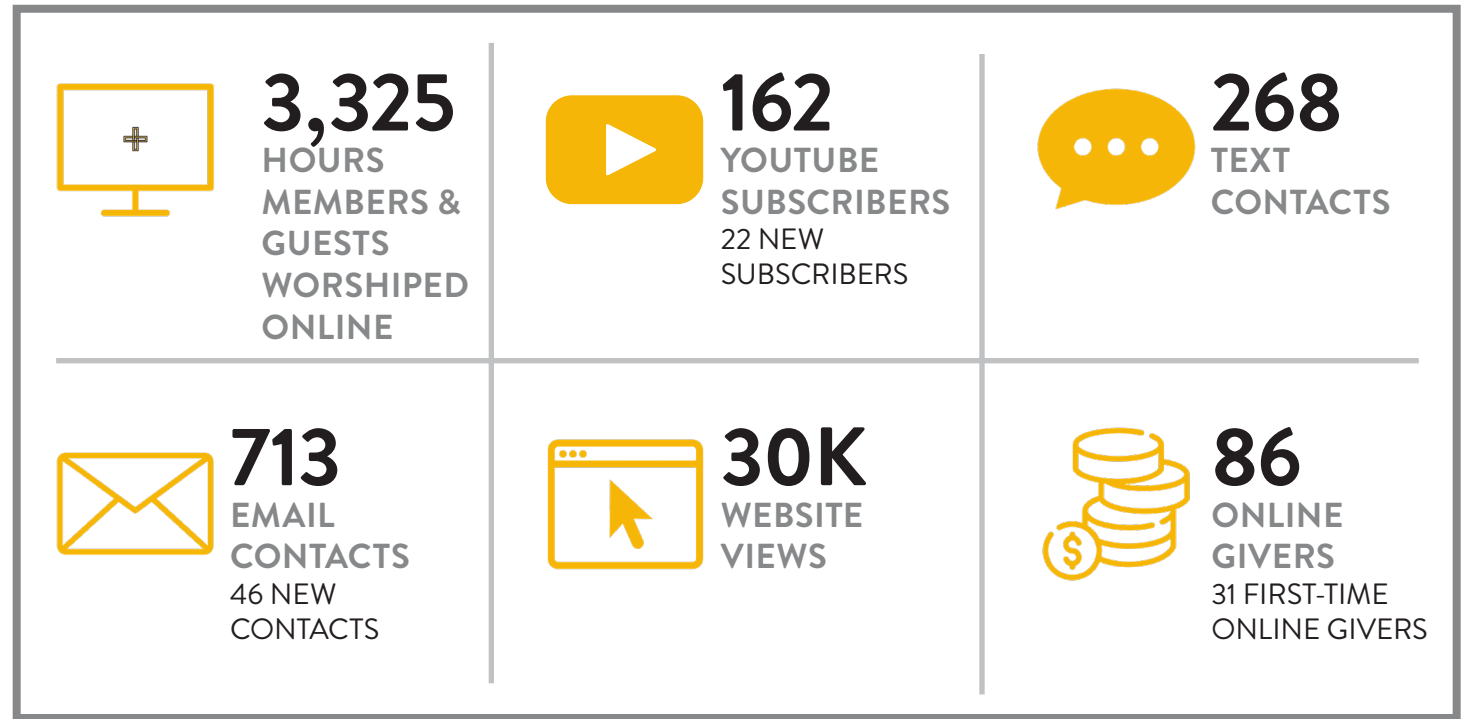
Witness also spearheaded the successful effort to revive the talent show/chili cook-off—in collaboration with Worship and Fellowship (chili/dessert cookoff) ministries—after a few years’ hiatus.

Joining the fray in 2023 were two new initiatives: spiritual yoga and adopt-a-spot at Lake Anne Park



Rev. Rosemary Welch blesses dogs at Reston Town Center's DogFest on October 15.

(co-funded by the good folks of the Justice & Peace Ministry). UCP's monthly cleanup at Lake Anne Park started slowly but has grown in popularity, drawing in busloads of people from around the world pouring in to participate in this grand event. Witness welcomes suggestions for outreach ideas.





Jo Franklin
Justice & Peace
Ministry Chair

This past year the Justice & Peace Ministry (JPM) engaged in environmental, LGBTQ, racism, and diversity justice.

Environmental Justice

As a Presbyterian certified Earth Care congregation, United Christian Parish is deeply concerned and involved in preserving a healthy environment locally in the community and around the church facility. UCP oversees Lake Anne Park, which means cleaning up, removing trash, and maintaining the park as a beautiful open space area for community use. Through the “Adopt-a-Highway” program, signage recognizes United Christian Parish.

Also, UCP maintains a pollination garden on church grounds initially planted by the Boy Scouts. Garden maintenance requires weeding, periodic replacement of plants, and removal of invasive plant species. Always looking for ideas to sustain and improve our environment, UCP participated in the Presbyterian Earth Care Conference. UCP also participated in the Mid-Atlantic Air Quality Data Collaboration which resulted in a small grant and ongoing monitoring of the air quality in and around the church.

Racial Justice

JPM continued the program series called “Diversity Matters” to bring us together as a congregation in understanding and addressing racism that continues to impact our society. We engaged in conversations around books and videos such as *A Brother’s Peace* by Jan G. Linn; *How the Word is Passed* by Clint Smith; *Good Trouble* by John Lewis; and *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne.

LGBTQ

JPM participated in the annual Reston Pride program at Lake Anne Plaza and engaged in conversation with several people who were looking for a local congregation.

Voter Registration

JPM participated in the Get Out the Vote Initiative by completing two hundred postcards to encourage voter registration in areas with low voter turnout. It is especially important that we continue this activity in preparation for the upcoming 2024 general election to promote democracy.

JPM published monthly articles in *Parish Life* to educate the UCP community about justice issues that impact society.



1. Clean up at Lake Anne Park.
2. Shade tolerant plants in the pollinator garden.
3. Children’s message on Earth Day Sunday.
4. Potomac River Watershed clean up at Colvin Run on Earth Day.



Beth Hetzler
Environmental
Justice Team

In 2023, the Environmental Justice Team renewed its focus on the native pollinator garden, adding several new shrubs and many new perennials that are better suited to the growing shade profile of the garden.

We continued our focus on outreach and education, providing numerous articles for *Parish Life* about practical ways we can all help address these issues. We contributed both financially and with our time to the Witness Ministry’s adoption of a park for cleanup. We helped plan and run a special worship service in honor of Earth Day.

The Environmental Justice Team also

worked with the Building & Grounds Council to host an Air Quality Monitor. This monitor will contribute to a regional effort to gather data and support underserved communities in changing public policy and improving their communities.

In 2024, the Environmental Justice Team plans to continue and build on these successes. For the garden, we plan to add a sign visible on the street, to showcase the goal of the pollinator garden, and to seek funding for a modest effort for erosion control and fixed border. For outreach, we plan to sponsor one or more speakers to provide useful seminars. We will support the Earth Day service. We will explore renewable energy solutions and additional justice actions.



Reston Pride.



Rev. Elisabeth Williams
Pastor

Connecting and Engaging with our Children

Our children continued to have opportunities to grow in faith on Sunday mornings with Bible Explorers,

Godly Play, and Genesis Choir and with special programs throughout the year like Vacation Bible School (VBS). We are grateful for the faithful group of teachers that led Bible Explorers during the school year and the youth and adult volunteers who helped with “Knights of the North Castle: The Quest for the King’s Armor” VBS.

Genesis Choir was incorporated into the Bible Explorers time. The children shared their learning of Bible stories through song once a month in the worship service.

The Faith Formation Ministry will continue to listen to families about how we can support their children’s spiritual growth and to pray for guidance in offering activities and events that will encourage more participation.

Connecting and Engaging with our Youth

We continued to have a small but mighty group of young people participating in our Youth Group program. In addition to our regular programming, they:

- Hosted an Easter Festival for church, preschool and community families. It included an egg hunt, Easter crafts and games, and bedecking our



Genesis Choir.

- sanctuary with butterflies.
- Planned and led worship on Pride Sunday in June.
 - Assisted with games and crafts at the Easter Festival, Vacation Bible School, the Fall Festival, and hosted the Children’s Shop at the Christmas Festival.

We moved the Youth Choir, Joyful Noise, rehearsals to Sunday mornings under the leadership of Misha, United Christian Parish Music Director. Joyful Noise sang on Youth Sunday, at the Thanksgiving Interfaith Service, and twice in worship during the fall.

Connecting and Engaging through Adult Faith Formation

Adult classes, both on Sunday morning and during the week, were hybrid. Bible 101 followed the scriptures used in worship each week. Living Your Faith studied a variety of topics to include:

- A Lenten Study using the music of Mark Miller, “Roll Down Justice”
- “Investing in our Planet” (in conjunction with Earth Day)
- A mini series on Artificial Intelligence
- A mini series on immigration
- A study on *Poverty by America* by Matthew Desmond

After a break for the summer, we began the fall with the series “The Role of Religion in the World in the 21 Century.” Living Your Faith ended the year with an Advent study on *Heaven and Earth: Advent and the Incarnation* by Will Willimon.

A leadership team met and will continue to meet approximately quarterly to plan for the Living Your Faith topics and speakers. Ideas are welcome and you are invited to participate.

Bible Study met Wednesday mornings on Zoom. Topics were the following:

- Bible Project: Biblical Words
- The Grace of Les Misérables
- Revelation for Progressive Christians
- Celebrating Sabbath: Accepting God’s Gift of Rest and Delight
- Navigating Isaiah
- Bible Stories for Grownups (Old Testament)
- An Unlikely Advent: Extraordinary People of the Christmas Story

Library

Youth volunteers and others needing community service hours continued to catalogue and shelf new donations. We still have a lot of donations to enter in if you want to help. Also, don’t forget to visit our Little Free Library, add a book, take a book!



1. Children at Knights of North Castle Vacation Bible School. 2. Joyful Noise. 3. Living Your Faith Sunday School class.



Ginger O'Rourke

Preschool Director

United Christian Parish Preschool welcomed back 44 families with children ages 2-5 for the 2023-24 school year. Although our enrollment numbers were lower than expected, it didn't change our mission or enthusiasm for our exceptional school! We were so proud to welcome our entire staff of 19 back to the building in September. How lucky are we to have such a dedicated group of educators and administrators that remain committed to what we do every day.

We continue to use mitigation strategies to protect our students from illness, such as optional mask wearing, policy guidelines for communicable disease, lots of outdoor play, and encouraging vaccinations.

We passed our National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation assessment in March and will maintain these high standards until our next visit in 2028. We were recognized in the *Northern Virginia Magazine* "Best Preschools" issue for the fifth year in a row as well as showcased in the *Reston Letter* for our accomplishments.

Our Conscious Discipline Coach, Paula Kassraie, returned with even more enthusiasm and parents have been interested and engaged in this life changing social emotional literacy program.

The children continued yoga class once a month along with music and movement activities each day. Our Family Group grew, even with the lower enrollment, and we are confident it will continue to offer families a way to connect, learn, and grown together. They have organized fun events as well as fundraising for our scholarship fund. We welcomed a new Preschool Advisory Committee (PAC) chair, United Christian Parish member Britt Williams, along with three new members!

We are so humbled over the support we received from the members of this community and are very proud of the connections we have built with the members of United Christian Parish. We hope to continue to strengthen our relationship as part of this extraordinary ministry. We are looking forward to a robust enrollment season and will continue our mission to offer high quality early education for all children.

"We recently completed our sixth year at UCP Preschool and I could not recommend it more. The school family is so welcoming and loving. All three of my children have thrived at UCP Preschool. It has truly been a wonderful space for our family!"

Leah MacDonell





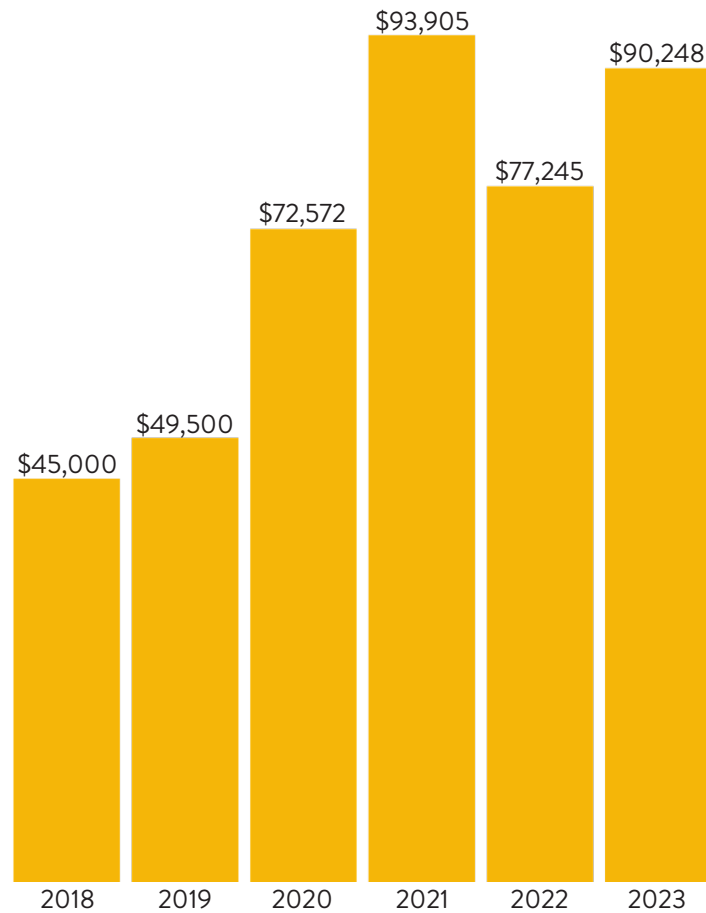
Lee Schmidt
Missions Ministry
Chair

In addition to our continued work with Cornerstones, The Closet, Herndon-Reston, Friendly Instant Sympathetic Help (FISH), Lake Anne Elementary School, Helping Hungry Kids, and ARISE Campus Ministry, United Christian Parish donated \$90,248 to organizations providing humanitarian services.

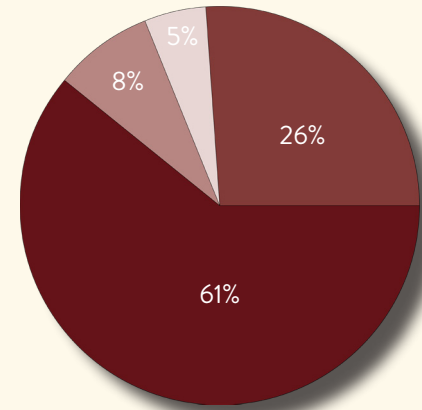
The One Great Hour of Sharing Lent offering was split equally and sent directly to the mission organizations of our four judicatories. The November Harvest Offering and the Interfaith Thanksgiving Offering were combined and sent to Herndon-Reston FISH.

Because of Gaza, available funds were sent to our judicatories (\$1,000 each, with a note “for Middle East Support”) and to Doctors Without Borders.

Total Missions Giving by Year



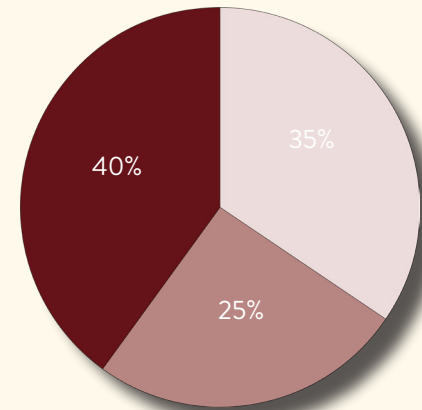
MISSIONS FUNDING By the Numbers



Sources of Missions Funds

Pledged Contributions	61%
One Great Hour of Sharing Offering	8%
Harvest Offering	5%
Other Designated Funds	26%

MISSIONS GIVING By the Numbers



Organizations Allotted Funds To

Local	35%
Arise, Capital Area Food Bank, Centreville Day Labor, Cornerstones, FISH, Grace Inside, Just Neighbors, Lake Anne Elementary School, Lake Anne Social Services, Shelter House, UCP Preschool Scholarship	
National	25%
Congregation Action Network, Feeding America, Hawaii Maui Strong, Health Wagon (Appalachia), Judicatories' Disaster Relief Programs, Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service, Navajo Nation Relief	
International	40%
Doctors Without Borders, Haiti House of Hope, Hope Made Real, International Rescue Committee, Judicatories' Disaster Relief Programs, Mercy Ships, Partners in Health, Schools for Salone, World Central Kitchen	



MISSIONS STATEMENT *of* GIVING

for the twelve months ended December 31, 2023

TOTAL BUDGET EXPENSES (10% of pledged income)	\$ 55,366
Total Local/National (58%)	32,220
Cornerstones	3,000
Herndon-Reston FISH	1,000
Lake Anne Social Services	500
Centreville Labor Resource Center	2,000
Just Neighbors	2,000
Shelter House	1,000
Grace Inside	1,000
Arise Campus Ministry	4,600
UCP Preschool Scholarship	1,000
Capital Area Foodbank	2,000
Navajo Nation Relief	1,120
Congregation Action Network	2,000
Disaster Relief (four denominations)	4,000
Feeding America	1,000
Health Wagon (Appalachia)	2,000
Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service	2,000
Hawaii Maui Strong	2,000
Total International (34%)	18,536
Mercy Ships	1,000
Global Ministries	4,000
Partners in Health	1,500
Haiti House of Hope	2,500
International Rescue Committee	2,000
Doctors Without Borders	2,536
Hope Made Real	1,000
Presbyterian Relief	1,000
United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)	1,000
Schools for Salone	2,000
Total Discretionary (8%)	4,610
Transfer to Lake Anne Elementary School	1,010
Transfer to Rwanda Mission Trip	1,600
World Central Kitchen	2,000
TOTAL DESIGNATED EXPENSES	\$ 34,882
General Fund	6,100
Contingency/Crisis Fund	2,600
Super Bowl	418
Hypothermia	608
Works Sunday - Shelter Family Event	199
Lake Anne Elementary School	1,108
Cornerstones	3,116
Herndon-Reston FISH	1,500
Harvest Offering	4,902
Interfaith Service Offering	1,085
One Great Hour of Sharing	7,436
Disaster Assistance	5,810
TOTAL MISSIONS GIVING	\$ 90,248

FINANCIALS

Last year, over 100 families and friends strengthened United Christian Parish with their financial gifts. Every dollar is critical to UCP's continued ability to create opportunities for people of diverse backgrounds to know the love of Christ. Nothing we do or contribute to would be possible without your generosity.

Thank you.



2023 Operating Results Highlights

INCOME

General Fund Pledged.....	\$594,692
General Fund Unpledged.....	\$31,326
Plate.....	\$1,522
Specials.....	\$3,616
Preschool Reimbursement for Rent.....	\$18,800
Rental Income.....	\$16,956
Preschool Reimbursements for Printing, Insurance, Payroll.....	\$15,284
50 th Celebration Gifts.....	\$49,272
	\$731,468

EXPENSES

Building	\$183,344
Personnel.....	\$410,498
Administration.....	\$66,389
Ministries.....	\$132,063
	\$792,294

INCOME AFTER EXPENSES

-\$60,826



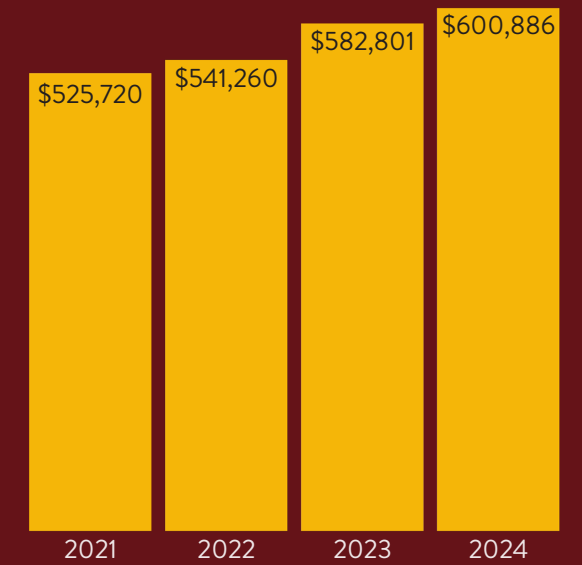
STATEMENT of INCOME and EXPENSES

GENERAL OPERATING FUND for the twelve months ended December 31, 2023

	Actual	Budget	Variance
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 731,468	\$ 632,457	\$ 99,011
General Fund Pledged	594,692	553,661	41,031
General Fund Unpledged	31,326	34,000	(2,674)
Plate	1,522	1,000	522
Specials	3,616	0	3,616
Preschool Reimbursement - Rent	18,800	18,000	800
Rental Income	16,956	12,500	4,456
Preschool - Print/Insurance	5,770	3,296	2,474
Preschool Payroll	9,514	10,000	(486)
50th Celebration Gifts	49,272	0	49,272
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 792,294	\$ 788,166	\$ (4,128)
Total Buildings	183,344	173,300	(10,044)
Utilities	34,697	40,300	5,603
Trash Pickup	4,445	3,500	(945)
Building Maintenance	21,587	18,000	(3,587)
Custodial Services	54,555	53,000	(1,555)
HVAC	30,740	10,000	(20,740)
Repair	14,650	20,000	5,350
Grounds	22,670	28,500	5,830
Total Personnel	410,498	421,017	10,519
Administrative Salaries	124,881	114,934	(9,947)
Ministerial Salaries	216,379	236,048	19,669
Nursery Salaries	1,221	3,023	1,802
Music Salaries	67,385	66,012	(1,373)
HARC	633	1,000	367
Total Administration	66,389	64,643	(1,746)
Postage	434	500	66
Office Ops	2,347	2,750	403
Bank Fees (ADP Services)	7,711	7,500	(211)
Supplies	2,259	2,000	(259)
Printing	3,347	3,000	(347)
Telephone/Internet	9,762	9,500	(262)
Insurance	40,765	36,693	(4,072)
Staff Recognition	300	1,500	1,200
Fidelity 403B Plan - Employees	-1,134	0	1,134
Software	598	1,200	602
Total Ministries	132,063	129,206	(2,857)
Congregational Care Council	3,729	4,500	771
Faith Formation	7,861	8,650	789
Missions Ministry	55,366	55,366	-
Witness Ministry	4,264	3,965	(299)
Worship Ministry	11,206	9,225	(1,981)
Benevolences	32,000	32,000	-
Stewardship/Finance	675	500	(175)
Parish Board	11,962	5,000	(6,962)
Justice & Peace Ministry	2,000	2,000	-
Technology Team	3,000	3,000	-
Ecumenical Council	0	5,000	5,000
NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$ -60,826	\$ -155,709	\$ 94,883



Pledge Totals



All of our contributions make a difference.

Listed below are options to consider when making your gift.

Cash or Check

Gifts may be made by cash or check, payable to United Christian Parish.

Tithe.ly

Gifts may be made through Tithe.ly, a safe and secure online giving system. You can set up your account by visiting ucpreston.org/give.

Legacy Gifts

Donors may consider giving through such means as bequests, life insurance, or charitable trusts. For more information visit ucpreston.org/legacy-giving. Legacy gifts are separate from annual pledges and other income sources needed to support the annual operating budget of the church.



Seraphim Choir
sings on Christmas
Eve. United
Christian Parish
welcomed 341
members and
guests at our two
Christmas Eve
services.

