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**The First Presbyterian Church
of New Canaan**

Annual Report/Yearbook 2022

The Rev. Dr. R. Scott Herr
Senior Pastor/Head of Staff

The Rev. Mary Marple Thies
Parish Associate

Terence J. Flanagan
Director of Music & Fine Arts

James H. Riehl, Jr.
Business Administrator

Sherry Tate
Cherub Choir Director

Wendy Starr
Office Manager

Megan Schinella
Communications Assistant

Kate & Matt Ziance
Operations Managers

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Senior Pastor/Head of Staff
The Rev. Dr. R. Scott Herr

Dear Members and Friends of the FPCNC,

As a New Canaan progressive congregation in the Reformed tradition, we are moving into a new season not of survival but significance, and by the metrics of ABCs (Attendance, Building, Cash) from anemia to health, and a renewal of faithfulness to our mission pillars: *Living Spiritually; Loving Inclusively; Learning Continuously; and Leaving a Legacy*. From pandemic mode, we moved to staffing our children's worship Sunday school weekly with committed volunteers; grew our mission giving; revitalized our adult forums; increased fellowship events and made the wise decision to use a head-hunting service to help with the search for our next Associate Pastor. We are seeing new young families and new members as God slowly rebuilds our congregation.



I have three primary leadership teams with whom I serve normally: The Session, the Deacons, and our Staff. It is such an honor to work with these three great teams, and I have learned so much from each of them and the different perspectives my friends and colleagues bring to their roles, whether volunteer or paid.

The Session members this year have served faithfully: Bob Spangler, Co-Clerk; Jennifer Van de Graaf, Co-clerk; Jim Ely, Finance; Linda Ferguson, Nominating; Randy Ferguson, Personnel; Cindy Graziano, Mission and Outreach; Angela Johnson, Communications; Jan Lucie, WM&A; Mark Magnusen, Adult Education; Gordie Stuart, Youth Elder; Steve Van de Graaf, Congregational Life; Stephan von Jena, Buildings and Grounds; and Barbara Wentzel, Membership. Armin Thies has also served faithfully as our Parliamentarian.

There have been other significant losses this past year that we will acknowledge in our necrology as a part of our annual meeting, but John Lanaway's leadership on the Session, and his wise and caring friendship from the first time I met him until we said our goodbyes before he died peacefully at home needs to be noted here as well. I miss him dearly but also thank God for him.

The Deacons who have served faithfully this past year are Peg Bull, Donna Hill, Nancy LaBadie, Janet Lanaway, Linda Martin, Nell Smith, Jim Lucie, Jo Ann Nerenburg, Drew Gurley and Jackson Dooley. Our staff team has been significantly blessed this year with the coming of Terry Flanagan and his wife Lisa and son Terence. They have all brought tremendous gifts to our community and Terry's vision and leadership has been a tremendous gift to our staff and congregation. Wendy Starr has done a superb job as the office manager and has become an important coordinator in our community. She shows up early and goes home late, as she seems to care deeply about our congregation and receives high praise from all those who have worked with her, and her kindness and compassion is very much appreciated, especially by those families with whom we have offered memorial services. Jim Riehl, although still recovering from his heart surgery, has done a wonderful job over the past year running the business

Continued on next page

office and coordinating with contractors and most importantly, helping to improve our relationship with the FPC Nursery School. We also have been blessed with Kate Stringfellow's marriage to Matt Ziance as they are also key members of our staff team and church family. In the fall, we brought on board Megan Schinella as a communications consultant and she has been a great help with our social media!

If you are interested, ask Wendy to send you a copy of our staff covenant. It's a clear statement of our values and vision for healthy community and teamwork.

In addition to these three great teams, I have also had the privilege of serving as the Pastoral Liaison to the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee. This team's members are: Charlotte Allen (Co-Chair), Doug Gillespie (Youth Elder), Kristie Godina, Brian Lombardi (Co-Chair), Mark Magnusen, and Lynn Jackson (Secretary). We have patiently been waiting for Shepherd's Staff to help us in our search for AP candidates. As of this writing they have reached out to over 220 potential candidates, processed about 30, and are in the process of recommending two "excellent" candidates for our consideration. Though we have had our ups and downs with various candidates, we hope to have some good news for you soon! In fact, we only need one!

One of the mottos I have shared with the Session that keeps me encouraged is the Latin phrase "sic parvis magna" which means "from small to greatness." I have only served relatively larger congregations before coming to New Canaan, but genuinely have grown to love our congregation and the more familial dynamics here. It's no wonder Jesus used images like salt, light, and mustard seeds to talk about the Kingdom of God. It's no wonder he focused on 12 disciples to begin the movement which turned into the People of the Way and changed the world.

The past year has been a season of rebirth for our congregation, and we have grown towards what a healthy congregation is: "Internally strong, externally focused." Some highlights for me are...

INTERNALLY STRONG:

As I alluded to earlier, we are trying to build a *team culture* where everyone has a role to play and is valued. We have a long way to go, but our goal is to challenge one another to be the best we can be but through grace and encouragement. Excellence, not perfection. Our metric is simple: Are we becoming a more loving community?

Our Session went through a SWOT analysis and set and achieved goals. We have started meeting again in person for Bible Study and Adult forums. Part of this has involved different Fellowships of the congregation who have started to meet and sponsored other events for the whole congregation (Women's and Men's; Jesus Supper Club).

"A church that parties together stays together!" We have reinstituted a number of fellowship events (Scottish Heritage Sunday; Rally Day; Advent workshop; New Year's Eve concert) that have helped connect us and welcomed visitors and friends from the larger community.

Perhaps one of the best outreach ministries has been via *Music and Fine Arts*. Besides welcoming Terry (and Lisa and Terence) Flanagan, our vocal and bell choirs have excelled under Terry's leadership and

weekly inspire us with beautiful sacred music. We have hosted multiple world-class concerts and in Advent introduced a significant piece of art in worship (and for the 10-year anniversary of Newtown gun violence). See Terry's report for the full list of concerts.

We have seen modest increases in attendance but are definitely moving from *LocalLive* to in-person majority. I love the fact that we more regularly have children (and their parents) as a part of our worshipping community!

Many thanks to the Rev. Mary Marple Thies for her friendship and collegial partnership as our Parish Associate. I appreciate her weekly presence and praying in worship, and also her fine leadership of the Pastoral Care Team, as we want to stay in touch with our home-bound members and those who have gone through significant life changes, losses or medical challenges.

Our Deacons have done a great job of serving behind the scenes, with caring ministry through hand-written cards being sent, and Lilies and Christmas holly swags and Valentine candies being delivered personally to our members and friends.

The Worship, Music and Fine Arts Committee has been led by Jan Lucie and I have appreciated Jan's attention to detail every Sunday, and the teams that help with communion preparation and decorating the sanctuary for each season. The Finance team and Building and Grounds have managed our financial and physical assets well. Special thanks to Stephan von Jena, Jim Beall, Jim Riehl, Jim Ely, Bob Spangler, Janet Lanaway and Jennifer Van de Graaf for wise administration of the finances and physical plant. The Communications team, led by Angela Johnston, have made improvements and hired Megan Schinella.

EXTERNALLY FOCUSED:

We are a missional congregation, and believe we are called to reach out and help others. We want to impact our town and larger community through loving service. I love the fact that we have leveraged our beautiful facilities to host any number of other groups and community organizations:

- AA meets at our church twice weekly.
- St. Aloysius Church women's Bible Study has been meeting weekly in our Common Room
- St. Michael's Lutheran used our Common Room for Christmas Eve services when their power went out.
- Special Church celebrated 35 years meeting weekly at FPCNC
- We have improved our support for and relationship with the FPCNS
- We have served meals to dozens of people at New Covenant House (six times per year serving 60 people)...
- We have hosted various public concerts including Charis Chamber Voices, New Canaan Chamber Music, New Canaan High School Choir, and New Baroque Soloists for some amazing musical experiences!

Serving those who are in mourning (15 memorial services)

You can read the Mission and Outreach report to see which charities we have supported but let me add a special thanks to Cindy Graziano for her tremendous leadership and support behind the scenes to help us grow in mission and service as we move out of COVID limitations.

Part of my ministry is to be involved with other town groups, so I have tried to be faithful to regular meetings of the *Exchange Club*, the *Rotary Club*, the *NCCC*, the town clergy, I serve on the boards of *The School House Apartments* (low-income housing for seniors) and the *South Cottage House* (special needs group home). I also serve on the *American Foreign Christian Union* board which supports the ministries of the American Church in Berlin, the American Church in Paris and the Vienna Community Church.

Part of how I care for my soul is through prayers and savoring the different types of music I enjoy. It was a gift this year to join Peter Flournoy and the Holy Horns to play at the Manse Christmas Party. Who knows if we might have a reprise for Easter?

Finally, I want to thank Kim for her faithful support behind the scenes. Putting up with a pastors' ridiculous schedule, tapping Maple trees, keeping bees, putting in a new vegetable garden, and splitting wood around the house is not for the faint of heart. It's been a tough start on the year with the death of our beloved cat, Mr. Pims, and as we are now moving into that season of life trying to figure out what caring for our aging parents looks like, recognizing that our family systems (both in our own home and extended) always need more love and care.

As I end this report, I'm sure I've left someone out or some major event unmentioned. Forgive me. I love the proverb: "In the end, it will all be OK. And if it's not all OK, it's not the end!" Like we ended the year (literally with a party!), may we continue to celebrate all that God is doing and look forward with hope to what God will do in and through us in the coming year. I pray we will continue to grow together in friendship and service, as we deepen our rootedness in the gospel of God's grace and love. I remain yours...

In Christ,
Scott



Parish Associate
The Rev. Mary Marple Thies

It is hard to believe that another year has passed. Perhaps because the days and months have been marked with so many occasions of joy and deep meaning, the time has flown by.

I am more grateful than I can express for the deep privilege of serving this congregation. Over the years, you have welcomed me into your lives and have allowed me to walk with you through some of life's challenges. In your presence and from your witness, I have known God's Spirit extant in your living room or at your bedside, as we have shared conversation and prayer. I have learned from you that even a phone call or a text message can be received appreciatively and can effectively express concern. You have allowed me to learn how to pray over the phone or on Zoom, media I never before considered as ways God might be at work.



As I reflect on this past year, I am struck at how normal it has felt, how crisis-free, and, though our nation and the world continue to set before us great difficulties, within this community of faith I have found grace and peace. Scott and the Session have put together a terrific team of people with whom to work. Terry joined us last January, allowing Jan Lucie to return to her Session responsibilities. Thank you, Jan, for filling in for all those months in 2021. Terry has brought enthusiasm and energy to worship, our staff meetings, and the general life of the congregation. I look forward to each new idea he tosses onto the table because he makes all of us think a little more creatively. Wendy keeps us grounded with her questions of when and how and who needs to know. She is a terrific support for us all and has developed a wonderful sense of what is important and necessary for informing the congregation. She and Jim Riehl appear to have a good working relationship and between the two of them, all those practical matters that can easily sink a church, are attended to with grace and confidence. Jim, of course, brings to our team not only his engineering logic but his wry and delightful sense of humor. He keeps us all paying attention, so as not to miss one of his jokes. At the very end of the year, Megan Schinella came on board as Communications Assistant, just in time to keep the larger community informed of all our Advent, Christmas and New Year's activities. She has challenged us to think more broadly about whom we serve. Scott has crafted our group into a smoothly functioning team. Most of my colleagues on staff come from a background in business and they repeatedly comment on how different it is to work in this setting. Together, he has had us develop a Staff Covenant, which grounds us and reminds us who we are, what we are about and how we intend to work together. It is a gift we have given ourselves, but Scott is the one to remind us of the gift and encourages us to use it. All of this is to say that it is a rare joy and privilege to do God's work with these partners.

As to what I have been doing over the past year—what is most visible is my leadership in worship and occasional preaching. You are responsive and engaged worshipers, so you make my work easy!



What may be less visible is the pastoral care I offered to those who are shut in at home or in care facilities, those who are hospitalized and those who have suffered a loss. I shared this ministry with the Pastoral Care Team, which was made up of Kay Brix, Peg Bull, Nancy Flournoy, Lisa Gifford, Anne Palmer and Ellen Sisson. With their calls, visits, notes and prayers, these faithful people have reached out across the congregation to those in need. I am grateful to know that I can count on them and that our folks are in good hands.

Besides the PCT, I have the privilege of sharing the pastoral care of the congregation with Scott, who brings caring, tender concern, wisdom and the love of Christ to all.

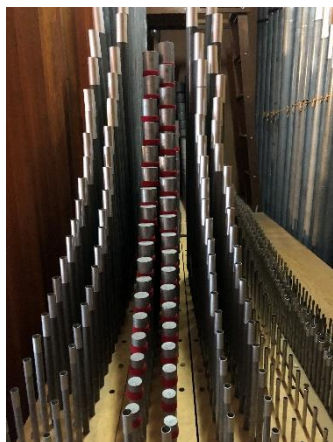
I end where I began, saying thank you for the ministry that you have entrusted to me. I pray God's continued blessing on you each one and upon this congregation.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Mary Marple Thies

Music Ministry

Terence J. Flanagan, Director of Music and Fine Arts

This has been an exciting and busy year for your music ministry at FPCNC. I began my post last January and wish to mention again that my family and I feel truly blessed to be a part of this wonderful church. It is a delight to work with Scott Herr every week and an even bigger treat to be moved and inspired on Sunday mornings by his sermons. Even before you physically saw me last January, I spent the month of December moving my library to the church and began the monumental task of reorganizing the pipe organ's blower room (located under the organ) as well as the church's music libraries. I have just recently finished reorganizing the handbell music and orchestra music. I believe that you will find that the space designated for our libraries is both cleaner and better used, and, there is room to grow if needed. I would also like to thank Jan Lucie and Stephan von Jena from Building and Grounds for the time and effort spent on refurbishment and redecorating the office for the Director of Music and Fine Arts. This space, although some have commented on its slightly distanced proximity from the other offices, is perfectly suited for what I do and a very nice place to work from during the week.



I have spent a great deal of time this past year getting to know and assessing the church's instruments. My one surprise was the discovery that some of the flute pipes in our pipe organ needed some routine tlc, as when I went to tune one, parts of it separated in my hand. (My November 11, 2022, Weekly Tidings article explains more about our unique Aeolian Skinner Pipe Organ.) Roughly 244 flute pipes were removed last October and half of them have been refurbished and returned. You can tell easily from the picture which pipes were restored by the new bright red felt seen around the top of the pipes. Related to our pipe organ, I quickly noticed larger than optimal fluctuations in our Sanctuary temperature during a weekly period of time. The environment in which a pipe organ rests is very important, as temperature and humidity play a big role in the instrument's care. We were able to adjust temperatures – slightly lower – for a better consistency. It also became apparent that humidity was greatly lacking, with readings of 16% showing consistently. We discovered that the humidification component of our climate

control was not functioning and needed repair. I am ever so grateful for our building and finance teams in realizing the importance of this and having authorized the repairs. This will go a long way in helping maintain an instrument that would cost approximately 1.75 million dollars to replace.

Another project that I knew I would need to attend to was the refurbishing of our Whitechapel Handbells. When I was interviewed, I was made aware that service had not taken place on the bells in quite some time. My wife Lisa and son Terence drove the bells to Ohio last July and Jan Lucie picked them up in December and returned them to the church. If you have not seen them, it is worth a peak as the workmanship is superb. Please see the picture I have included. The new leather



handles were each cut by hand in England. I just ask that if you handle them, please have soft gloves on as to protect the metal from the oil on your skin. (This is Rule #1 in ringing handbells!)

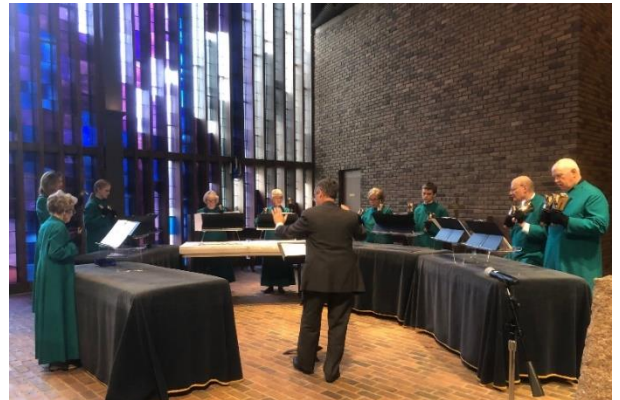


Another project started was the rebuilding of the action in our Sanctuary Steinway piano. Right after Christmas, the action was removed from the piano and taken to be rebuilt/refurbished. This project is almost finished, and needless to say, I can't wait to give the instrument a "spin" once it is ready. The picture shows the keys, which are being leveled and travelled. The piano is scheduled to be put back together mid-February 2023.



Enough on the projects! I must take some time to mention our FPCNC Choir. I not only need to but wish to extend my most grateful thanks and appreciation to each and every choir member. FPCNC is blessed to have such a talented group of individuals leading our Worship on Sunday morning. Every Thursday, at 7PM, rehearsals take place in our Choir Room, and then on the following Sunday, at 9AM, we warm up in the Sanctuary. I look forward to Thursday evenings, not only from a musical standpoint, but from the standpoint of spending time with some wonderful friends. I am also grateful for our English Handbell Choir ringers. Once again, we are

blessed to have a group of 12 ringers who show up every Wednesday afternoon to have fun ringing and preparing music for Sunday mornings. We have a great time, and it is another highlight of my week. Immediately following our bell rehearsal, I work with our youth. They keep me “on my toes” and always surprise me. I am very thankful to have Sherry Tate working with our littlest of musicians on Sundays following our Worship. Along with the tireless efforts of Mark Magnusen, we are rebuilding our youth music offerings at church. This makes me very happy, and I hope that we continue to see more children present in the coming years.



One hope and wish the church shared with me when I was interviewed was that of building relationships to see our Sanctuary used for musical events. Last year we saw (and heard) the St. Luke’s Choirs, the Greenwich Choral Society, New Canaan Chamber Music, Charis Chamber Voices, Wilton Music Studios, the Classic Whiffenpoofs, and members of the Stamford Symphony – now Lumos – all perform in our Sanctuary. We also saw the return of the New Canaan High School Choirs to perform in our space. Finally, we ended the year on a “fun note” with the New Baroque Soloists making an appearance on New Year’s Eve.

I would like to mention another very special event that took place this past year at FPCNC. Last October members of Charis Chamber Voices, alumni from Pro Arte Singers and area musicians offered a Memorial Concert for Maestro Arthur R. Sjögren. This was a truly moving event for all who attended. Art had many connections in the New Canaan community. On a personal note, I am grateful to FPCNC for allowing me to convert two small unused rooms upstairs in the Bliss House into the Arthur R. Sjögren Memorial Music Library. Last summer I personally moved all of Art’s scores to the newly cleaned and painted rooms where they were organized on newly purchased shelving. From a musician’s standpoint, this is one of the finest library spaces I have ever seen, not to mention the fact that the library is remarkable and an incredible resource for us to have at our disposal. If you have not seen these rooms and would like to, please reach out to me as I love to show them off.

My hope for 2023 and onward is, now that some of these organizational and repair related projects have taken place, to be able to spend more time on music and related matters – practicing, enjoying our libraries – and even planning some type of extended choral work for our choir to offer.

2023 is off to a good start, and I look forward to the rest of the year.
Soli Deo Gloria!



Terry

Cherub Choir **Sherry Tate, Director**

The Cherub Choir at FPC is intended for children ages 4-7 (pre-K through grade 2) and meets weekly after worship on Sundays, 11:15–11:45am, offering these children a first opportunity to participate in services as worship leaders. The choir sings in regular worship several times a year, September – June, as well as in Christmas Eve and Easter worship services when possible. In the past, Cherubs have also participated with older children in a biblical-themed musical.

The repertoire for the Cherub Choir includes unison songs and anthems which teach Bible stories, reinforce faith concepts, or celebrate events in the liturgical calendar. Musical goals include matching pitch, keeping a steady beat, and exploring various rhythm patterns. Songs and activities using movement and simple instruments (rhythm sticks, melody bells, chime bars, tambourines, drums, other percussion instruments) are part of rehearsals.

In September 2022, after more than two years of pandemic with no in-person rehearsals, and with the invaluable aid of Jan Lucie as accompanist and all-around helper, Cherub Choir activity resumed at last! The children sang in worship during Advent, joined by several children from the Carol Choir. It is our hope that with time, the Cherub Choir will continue to grow and thrive. Our children learn to use their natural talent to serve God and their church as they create beautiful sounds to express joy and enthusiasm in worshipping our God, who guides their lives.



Business Administrator
James H. Riehl, Jr.

Since assuming the role of Business Administrator on a part-time, “interim” basis in March 2019, I have had the privilege of engaging with a steadily evolving, increasingly talented and progressively optimistic FPCNC leadership team, which portends well for our institution going forward.

My pre-dawn office work regimen allows me to beat the traffic on I-95 and accomplish great things early in the day, before encountering the flotsam and jetsam of everyday affairs.

For those unfamiliar with the Business Administrator position, key responsibilities include:

- Day-in / day-out contact and liaison for our tenant, the First Presbyterian Nursery School
- Weekly cash offering and bank deposit processing
- Mail management and invoice review and approval
- Ongoing Building & Grounds cleaning and maintenance
- Outside contractor negotiation and liaison
- Annual giving and stewardship campaign tracking and reporting
- Weekly Covid-19 new case tracking and reporting
- Whatever else comes up

To this last point, in my tenure, “whatever else” has included things like:

- The disposal via Kars-4-Kids of a derelict Nissan sedan abandoned in the FPCNC parking lot
- Negotiations regarding FPCNC facilities use with a Hollywood production company shooting a full-length motion picture in New Canaan
- The trapping of wild woodchucks and groundhogs on the FPNS playground
- Procurement of insurance policy riders for FPCNC musical instruments and art exhibits

Key 2022 accomplishments include:

- The creation of a regularly scheduled annual internal and external program to proactively encapsulate any exposed lead-based paints on the FPNS grounds, in accordance with State of CT regulations.
- The institution of a monthly FPCNC-FPNS status meeting to review currently open work orders or other important issues. Since these meetings were initiated in November 2021, 65 work orders have been processed, completed and closed out.
- A significantly improved working relationship between FPCNC and FPNS staff members.
- The painting of the exterior of the FPCNC sanctuary and Bliss House.
- The black top patching, re-sealing and striping of the parking lot and front driveway.
- Clearing of perimeter brush surrounding the parking lot.
- Retention of a new FPCNC / manse landscaper who has significantly upgraded service and quality of work.
- Negotiation of a new office copier contract saving FPCNC almost an estimated \$18,000 over the five-year term of the contract.
- Processing of bank deposits through the Business Administrator’s office of an estimated \$150,000-plus in the fourth quarter of 2022. This projects to annual deposits of over \$600,000, or almost two-thirds of FPCNC’s annual budget.

This report is issued with sincere appreciation for all those who every day make my experience easier and more fun, and who back-stopped me in early 2023 after my heart surgery... including Scott, Mary, Terry Flanagan, Wendy Starr, Kate and Matt Ziance, Jim Beall, Bob Spangler, Jim Ely, Stephan von Jena, Janet Lanaway, Jennifer van de Graaf, The Session, Stacey Walker, Jeff Davis and Diego Ospina. And in memory of John Lanaway, who we miss every day.

Respectfully Submitted,
 James H. Riehl, Jr.

Co-Clerks of Session

Bob Spangler and Jennifer Van de Graaf

In 2022 the First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan demonstrated strength and resilience as we continued to face the on-going concern around Covid (and the Flu and RSV) and emerged by year's end hopeful and renewed in our fellowship and faith. Under the unwavering and inspiring leadership of Rev. Dr. Scott Herr and Rev. Mary Marple Thies, FPCNC took great strides towards full re-engagement and vitality with many "green shoots" of optimism and growth reflected in our congregation.

- Our Music Ministry was reborn with the arrival of Terry Flanagan (with Lisa and Terence!) in January 2022. The choir's performances this past year were a true inspiration. The soloists are outstanding, and Terry's organ fills the sanctuary and spaces in our hearts with moving tributes to our faith in Christ.
- There is an energy and sense of fellowship in the congregation that is palpable. Attendance on Sundays, while still below pre-pandemic levels, has increased 20%+ over the past year and averages 120 persons each Sunday (including the ~40 who join weekly through Local Live). The Passing of the Peace is a joyous moment for us all as we are reminded of the healing powers of human touch and the bonds we have built with those who have joined us in our journeys of faith.
- While we have mourned too many this past year (7 members of our congregation passed in 2022 including our beloved Co-Clerk of Session, John Lanaway), our congregation stands at 399 members strong having added 14 new members in 2022.
- Our financial and physical house is in order. Through the tremendous generosity of our members, we operated financially well within our means in 2022. Our business and management staff (Wendy Starr, Jim Riehl and Treasurer, Jim Beall) are tremendous. Our relationship with the First Presbyterian Nursery School has not been this strong in many years. And our physical house is in great shape. Under the leadership of Stephan von Jena, we have tackled the major deferred maintenance issues in the Bliss House, Tate Barn, and the Manse.
- Importantly, we are starting to see several families with young children join us in Worship. While the numbers are modest, we have a strong children's worship each week and an active Cherub Choir (lead by Sherri Tate). Our quest for an Associate Pastor is well under way with an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (lead by Brian Lombardi and Charlotte Allen) that is focused on having an AP in place before the start of the new church year. The APNC has contracted with a Christian search firm that is conducting a national review for an AP focused on building our Children's and Youth ministry.
- Our church calendar was enriched this past year with many "first time since before the pandemic" events such as Scottish Sunday, Rally Day, Advent Wreath and Christmas Tree lighting and many more. The faithfulness and engagement by the congregation and friends of FPCNC is infectious and spreading (finally, something worth catching!).

We are truly blessed to be a part of this church with such great pastors, leaders, and faithful servants of Christ. Thank you for all that you do for FPCNC and our community.

In Christ,

Bob Spangler and Jennifer Van de Graaf, Co-Clerks of Session

Adult Education

Chair: Mark Magnusen

The year marked a return to in-person activities after the Covid-19 pandemic, and we launched a series of Adult Education events based on the pillars of our FPCNC mission statement. These workshops or seminars were opportunities for members to hear different perspectives from respected speakers and to invite friends and neighbors to join us. The events also enabled members to learn and fellowship with each other. Meanwhile the Bible study series started by Rev. Scott Herr continued as well.

Sunday Morning Adult Study

Rev. Scott Herr continued hosting an Intergenerational Learning Time from 8:30 to 9:30am on Sundays. The class uses the PCUSA Curriculum “Follow Me: Biblical Practices for Faithful Living.” Several specific themes and topics were also discussed including:

Black History Month – focus on the theme of “Honoring God’s Diversity”

Easter season - six-week study on the Apostles’ Creed.

Lenten series - “Practicing Spiritual Disciplines”:

Mar 13 – Pray (Matthew 6:9-13; Philippians 1:3-11)

Mar 20 – Listen to God (I Samuel 3:1-11; Mark 1:35-39)

Mar 27 – Embrace Simplicity (Matthew 6:19-21; Philippians 4:11-12)

Apr 3 – Unplug (Genesis 2:1-3; Mark 6:30-34)

Apr 10 – Try Different Practices (Isaiah 43:19; Hebrews 4:15-16)

Summer – six-week study on “The Lord’s Prayer”. This study opened new directions of the Lord's Prayer. It was grounded in what the words meant when Jesus gave them and goes on to show us what they can mean for the church today.

Events and Guest Speakers:

Sunday, May 1, 2022: Rev. Christopher Tate - Sailboat Faith: Living Spiritually

Rev. Christopher Tate led a workshop after church on our First Mission Pillar, Living Spiritually. Questions explored and discussed included:

- What does it really mean to **live spiritually**?
- What are some of the obstacles to improving spiritual practices, and how might they be overcome?
- What are some “real-life” examples of living spiritually?
- What are some of the benefits of improving and/or enriching our spiritual lives?
- What are some concrete “action steps” one can take to live more spiritually?



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Chris grew up in the First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan and was ordained as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament in the PC(USA) in 2006. Chris has served churches in Greenwich, Wilton, and New Canaan, CT and served for almost a decade on the Board of Pacific House, Inc. a housing and human services agency focusing on people who are homeless, and based in Stamford, CT.

Sunday, October 2, 2022: Nathan Stucky – Farminary: Seeking Faith in an Exhausted World”

Nathan Stucky gave a presentation about the Farminary at Princeton Theological Seminary. The Farminary recognizes that we live in a world grappling with multiple fatigues: environmental fatigue, pandemic fatigue, screen fatigue, activism fatigue, politics fatigue, and all these fatigues interconnect. Does our faith have anything to say in the face of such exhaustion? Does Christian faith connect meaningfully with an exhausted creation (humans included)? Mr. Stucky introduced the Farminary and explained how it provides space for wrestling with these questions by integrating theological education with small-scale, regenerative agriculture at the Seminary’s 21-acre farm.



Nathan Stucky serves as Director of the Farminary Project at Princeton Theological Seminary.

He grew up on a farm in Kansas where his love for Christian faith and agriculture first took root. After earning a BA in Music from Bethel College (KS), Stucky spent six years doing ecumenical youth ministry on the eastern shore of Maryland, and two years farming back in Kansas. After farming, Stucky earned an MDiv and a PhD (Practical Theology, Christian Education and Formation) from Princeton Theological Seminary.

His scholarship explores questions of land, ecology, theology, agriculture, justice, joy, and Sabbath as they relate to theological education. He is the author of *Wrestling with Rest: Inviting Youth to Discover the Gift of Sabbath*. Ordained in the Mennonite Church (USA), Stucky engages Farminary work as integral to his calling to teaching ministry.

Continued on next page

Sunday, October 16, 2022: Rev. Dr. Mark Francisco Bozzuti-Jones: Loving Inclusively



Rev. Dr. Mark Bozzuti-Jones led a discussion of our Second Mission Pillar: Loving Inclusively. As a congregation of inclusivity, we strive to welcome all people into the life of our church. We are a friendly and caring church where people of all ages, backgrounds, and life situations are always welcomed, and where our differences are celebrated and respected. Dr. Bozzuti-Jones helped us explore ways of deepening and building upon our inclusiveness.

Mark is an Episcopal priest at *Trinity Church Wall Street* in New York City. He serves as the Priest and Director of Spiritual Formation of Trinity's Retreat Center in West Cornwall, CT. He is an avid reader, award-winning author and international speaker, and has taught at elementary and university levels.



Sunday, December 4, 2022: Wayne Te Brake Book Talk – Religious Peace



Wayne Te Brake led a thought-provoking discussion on Religious Peace based on his most recent book, *Religious Peace, Then and Now*. The book applies his research on religious war and religious peace in Europe to our understanding of religious conflict and the prospect of religious peace today.

Wayne studied history at Calvin College, the Free University of Amsterdam, and the University of Michigan. He is Professor Emeritus of History at Purchase College, State University of New York, where he taught European history for thirty-six years. He has been a visiting professor at Erasmus University Rotterdam, the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris, Yale University, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong; a senior research fellow European History in Mainz, Germany; and a research fellow at the Netherlands

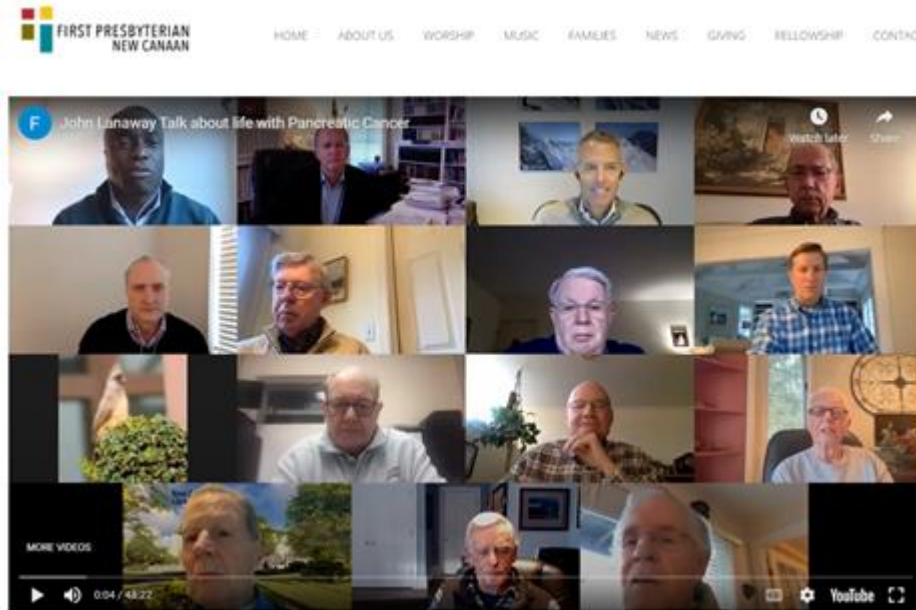
at the Leibniz Institute of Institute for Advanced Study. A resident of Ossining, New York, he is a Presbyterian elder and a member of the Presbyterian Church of Mount Kisco.



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Men's Gatherings

Our Men's Gatherings continued in 2022 via Zoom, open to FPCNC men and friends from 7:00–8:00am on the first and third Wednesdays or on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. As usual, the first meetings of each month were bible study and meditations led by Rev. Scott Herr, and the second meetings were led by members who either shared their family history, career and life experiences and faith journeys or shared about a meaningful subject.



On November 30th, we held our first in-person Men's Gathering with longtime FPCNC member Ted Foster as our special guest, and several of our regular participants met in person for the first time.



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The following meetings were held during the year:

January 12th: Bible Study and Meditations

January 26th: Paul Martin – Family History, Life Experiences and Faith Journey

February 9th: Bible Study and Meditations (Biblical Foundations of MLK's Speeches)

February 23rd: Bible Study and Meditations

March 9th: Sherman Bull – Family History, Life Experiences and Faith Journey

March 23rd: Dan Mason – Family History, Life Experiences and Faith Journey

April 6th: Bible Study and Meditations

April 20th: John Lanaway – Life after Pancreatic Cancer Diagnosis

May 11th: Bible Study and Meditations

May 25th: Doug Scarth – Family History, Life Experiences and Faith Journey

June 8th: Scott Herr – Camino Santiago Pilgrimage

June 22nd: Bible Study and Meditations

July and August: *Meetings not held*

September 14th: Bible Study and Meditations

September 29th: Sherman Bull – Climbing Everest and Other Challenges

October 12th: Bible Study and Meditations

October 26th: Tom Nissley – Reflection: Worship, Choir, and the Congregation

November 9th: Bible Study and Meditations

November 30th: Ted Foster – Family History, Life Experiences and Faith Journey

December 14th: Bible Study and Meditations

December 28th: Jim Beall – Western Water – the Drought

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Women's Fellowship: The Women's Fellowship had several meetings throughout the year under the leadership of Barbara Wentzel and Darlene Harmon. The meetings included weekly Bible studies in November, faith journey "talks" by FPCNC women and presentations by special guest speakers.

Women's Fellowship meetings held during the year included:

March 20th: Kim Kerr - "Liminal Space - Transformation on the Camino"

Kim shared through photos and stories her experience walking the Camino de Santiago, the logistics of completing a journey like that, and what can happen along "The Way".

May 17th: Evelyn Bergstrom Farewell Tea



September 4th: Erica Bergman Talk

September 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th: Weekly Bible Study - First Letter of the Apostle John

November 6th: Rabbi Liz Rolle – Interfaith Conversation: What is reform Judaism?

Rabbi Liz Rolle gave an informative talk on Reform Judaism. Liz is a Reform Rabbi who has served in synagogue life for 35 years, as well as an educator, chaplain, mother of two and expert knitting teacher. Currently, she runs Senior Concierge Services, LLC, providing customized, caring solutions to older adults who choose to remain in their own homes.

She and her husband, Rabbi Phil Schechter, who serves as rabbi-in-Residence at First Presbyterian Church in Stamford, have been residents of that city for two decades.

November 16th and 30th: Weekly Bible Study - The People of the Nativity

December 14th: Weekly Bible Study - The People of the Nativity



Buildings and Grounds

Elder: Stephan von Jena

Members: Jim Beall, Jim Riehl, Denise Riehl, Terry Flanagan

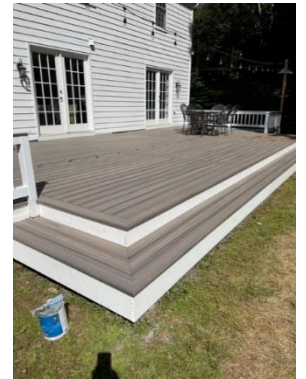
2022 was a challenging year for all of us, including Buildings & Grounds. The team's focus was in the following areas: the Manse, future expansion of the Columbarium, interior & exterior maintenance of Bliss House and the Sanctuary, the Tate Youth Barn and our continued support of the Nursery School.

The Manse - It was a busy year at the Manse as we accomplished several important maintenance and upgrade projects. The first piece included gutting the old upstairs hall bathroom and installing a completely new full bathroom (see pic.). The old bathroom was nearly 30 years old and had a persistent leak that was damaging the bathroom floor and the dining room ceiling below. The new bathroom is a great improvement.



Additional items included a concerted effort to improve the operating efficiencies at the Manse. We installed eight(8) new storm windows in the living room and office, insulated the basement perimeter sill-cap and all exposed water pipes, replaced the failing well-water bladder tank and leaking water supply piping, and installed a new gasket to the front door. All of this repair and insulation work will make the Manse far more comfortable to live in while greatly reducing the ongoing heating and air-conditioning costs

We also replaced the old wood deck at the Manse and installed a new, composite material deck (see pic). Unlike the old wood deck, this new deck will last for years and require almost no maintenance (only occasional power washing). Part of this new deck project was to create an access-way (hatch) that would allow easy access to the basement - something that was not possible with the old deck. This access will allow us to remove and supply any larger materials (boiler, water tanks, oil tanks, washers and dryers, etc.) into the basement without having to create or cut an access way. The exterior basement stairs and entry door were already there; we just didn't have a way to use them because the previous owner had built the wood deck over this access way. We also installed a new, water-tight, exterior basement door and repaired a small section of roofing that had developed a leak into the garage.



The Manse also had some interior and exterior painting done: we removed the dark wallpaper and painted the powder room, repaired and painted the damaged dining room ceiling, and painted the front door "NC Tar Heal Blue", putting a smile on alumna's Kim Herr's face! At the end of 2022, we also had major tree work completed at the Manse, with more than six dead trees being removed and two others being trimmed away from the house. While there remains more interior painting to be done in the next couple of years, the Manse is looking great.

Columbarium Expansion Project - This project was delayed for 2022 and is now slated for Spring/Summer of 2023 (see pic). There were multitude of reasons for the delay, including zoning requirements, changing project design and scope, and the substantially higher costs we received to accomplish the project. As such, we determined it was best to wait a year, refine our final designs and then pursue the best price estimates possible. We are now confident that this important expansion project will be completed before the Fall of 2023.



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Church Grounds - In 2022, we continued with our ongoing tree-care and trimming program, including the removal of the invasive vines covering much of the 100-year-old rhododendrons located between the Church's main entrance driveway and parking lot to the north. Although there are still some vines present, we have made great progress and will continue to prune and fertilize these beautiful rhododendron shrubs. In cooperation with the Nature Center, we have also removed much of the dead trees, scrub and debris abutting our main parking lot and the trees bordering our Memorial Garden area. Although not yet completed, this "clean-up work" is thus far a great improvement.

Nursery School - In the summer of 2022, we continued our Lead Paint Abatement & Maintenance Plan, performing encapsulation treatment to the south, west and north sides of the Bliss House exterior and to the interior spaces of the Nursery School (classrooms, hallways, windows, trim, etc.). This work, performed in 2021 and in 2022, at a significant initial investment, has allowed us to remain state and local EPA compliant, while improving and simplifying our ongoing maintenance efforts at greatly reduced costs. This effort has been a "win-win" for both the Church, Nursery School and its children and staff

We also painted the Nursery School entrance ramp and installed a new front door, painting it and the ramp railings a bright and cheerful red color. Our work with the Nursery School will continue in 2023, with improvements to various electrical requirements and support for the school with the renovation of the Director's Office.

Bliss House Exterior Repair & Painting - In addition to the Nursery School work described above, we repaired and replaced several small pieces of rotten siding and trim, and then painted the exterior western and northern portions of Bliss House.

The Tate Youth Barn - On the heels of all the interior work completed in 2021, we focused on the exterior work required in the summer of 2022, including removing and replacing the roof shingles and flashing, and painting the exterior. This cherished asset is now in excellent condition and well prepared for our Youth activities moving forward.

The Sanctuary - In early 2022, just before Terry Flanagan joined FPCNC, we cleaned out and renovated the Music Director's office. This included repairing rotting wood, repainting the space and installing new carpeting. Over the summer, we also had a portion of the exterior eastern wall of the Sanctuary painted, and installed a new, designated electrical circuit with six(6) new GFCI plug boxes out at the Christmas Tree in our front lawn. In the Fall of 2022, the 40-year-old humidifier system failed and we replaced the entire system. This humidifier system is required to maintain the proper humidity in the Sanctuary for the organ.

Church Infrastructure Project - In the first week of February 2023, when we had an extreme arctic blast and plunging temperatures, our nearly 40 year old air-handlers heat exchanger failed. This heat exchanger is how the boilers provide heat to the Sanctuary, Music Directors office, the Sanctuary bathrooms, choir room and the music library. As a temporary measure, we have isolated the cracked heat exchanger tubs (see below pic) and are now working with our mechanical contractor to replace the entire heat exchanger - not a small or inexpensive task. At the time of this writing, we have yet to receive budget estimates for this critical piece of equipment, and we are hopeful this work can be accomplished soon.



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Major projects slated for 2023 include: the Columbarium Expansion, renovation of the new Associate Pastors office, upgrades to the Church's "campus security and signage" and the resolution of the Sanctuary heat exchanger failure.

Note: The Buildings & Grounds Committee is always looking for members to assist in whatever capacity deemed possible for the care of our Church properties. If you, or someone you know might have an interest (it's not a big or long commitment!), please reach out to Stephan von Jena at 203-434-8472. As they say, "many hands make light work" certainly applies! Come join us.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephan von Jena

Communications Committee

Members: Angela Johnson, Linda Ferguson, Julie Hoffman, and Sue Benko

Annual Report 2022

Communications Committee

Angela Johnson, Linda Ferguson and Sue Benko

Acting on our Communications strategy, we continued throughout 2022, to present ourselves to the congregation and community as a welcoming church.

Our branding is more visible and impactful, appearing across our literature and internet presence. As a quick reminder, the colored blocks in the design were chosen to reflect the mid-Century modern glass in our Sanctuary and they come together to form a cross. Our slogan “*Where Faith, Families and Friends Connect*” acts as a great summation of how we as a church pull together whatever the situation and especially during the challenges of the last few years.

Our branding appeared on signage, worship materials, promotional pieces and even on T-shirts!

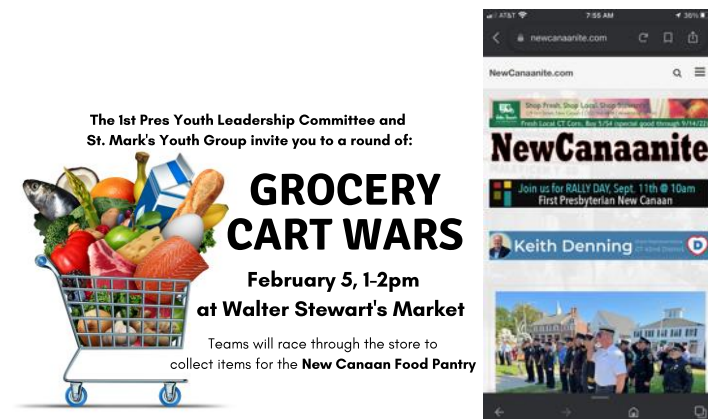
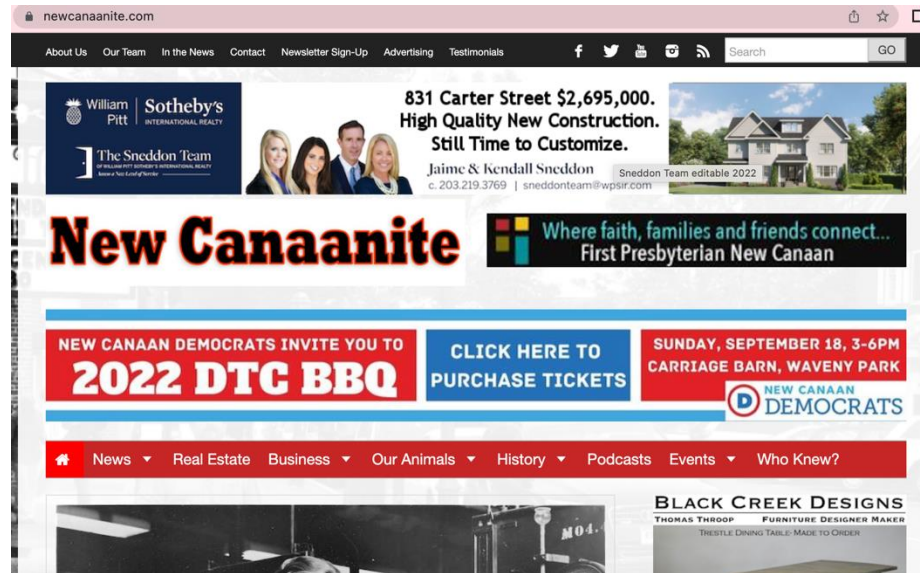


Communications to the wider community focused on both press relations and social media. The committee obtained funding to hire a Communications assistant from September and Megan Schinella joined the team part-time in October. Her impact was felt immediately as she used her extensive experience of social media and other communications channels to boost our presence.

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We continued our contract with the New Canaanite to run advertisements on their main page and also get mentions throughout the paper in their events section and obtained coverage for a podcast with Terry about his vision for the music programs at the church. We change out the ad copy regularly to amplify the events at church.

Example of the ad spaces we have:

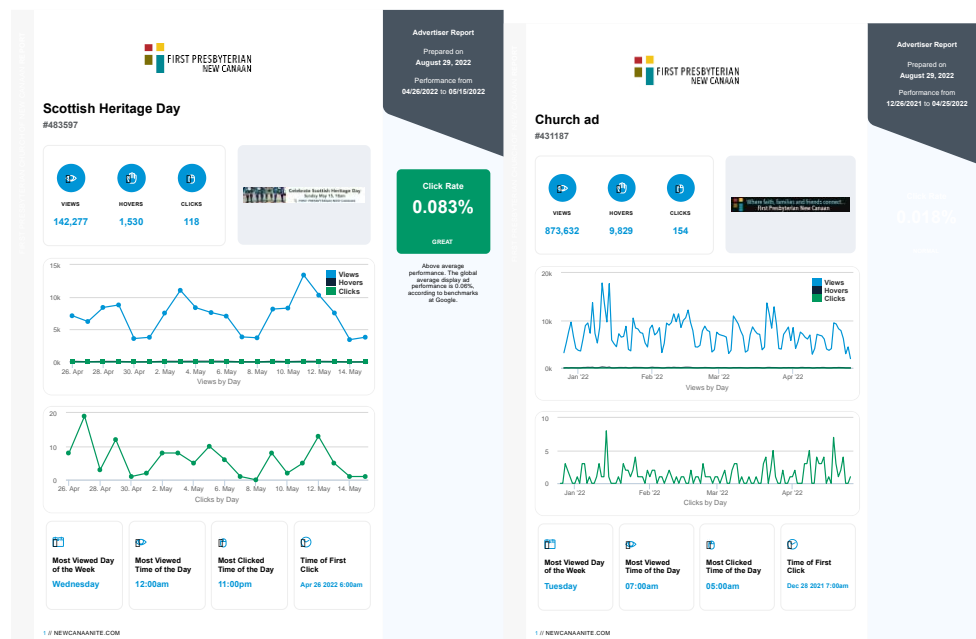


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Some of the articles and coverage we obtained in the paper:

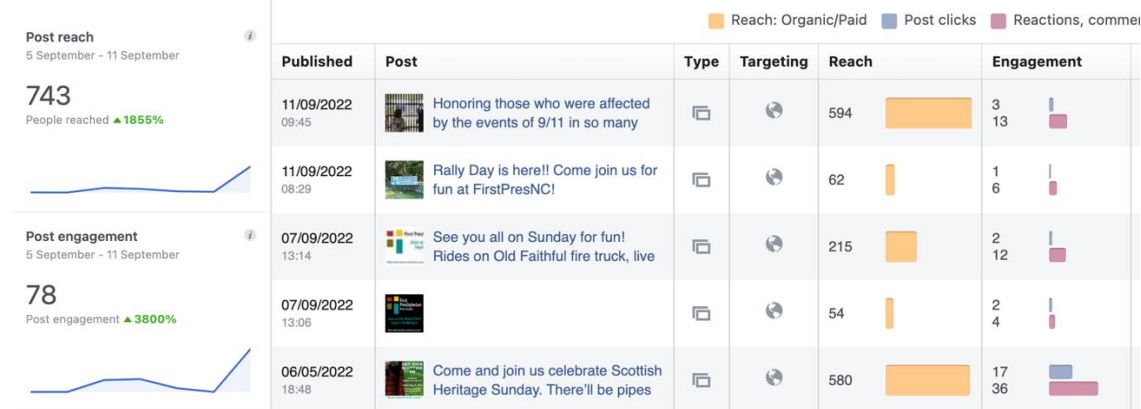
The screenshots show the NewCanaanite.com website. The top navigation bar includes links for News, Real Estate, Business, Our Animals, Bookmarks, and Podcasts. The main content area displays event listings for the week of Sunday, May 1, 2022, and Sunday, May 15, 2022. The May 1st page features a 'Sailboat Faith Event: Living Spiritually (light lunch served)' and a 'Scottish Heritage Sunday Celebration'. The May 15th page features a 'Sailboat Faith Event: Living Spiritually (light lunch served)' and a 'Scottish Heritage Sunday Celebration'. The May 15th page also includes a photo of the New Canaan High School Rams football team and a caption about their 'training regimen'.

The report on our results in the New Canaanite:



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Our Facebook posts regularly reach between 1000-2000 people in the local area and get between 100 -200 page views. On Instagram we have 316 followers and regularly see engagement from 100+ accounts. See below for a sample of the posts from 2022 and their reach/engagement.



Our Facebook page during the week before Christmas reached over 1,000 people. This was due to event posts, regular posts, and engagement in the community. We have seen an increase in followers since posting consistently. Reach on average per Facebook posts is over 150 people. Instagram has seen a growth as well. The members of the church love seeing photo round ups from their events. Accounts reached on average per Instagram post 100.

Local resources that also post and share our events regularly: New Canaan Moms, New Canaan Chamber Music, Mommmypoppinsct, New Canaanite.

A QR Code for donations has been implemented. Artwork for events is now created and shared on a regular basis.

We made use of the roadside posters to advertise upcoming events such as Rally Day and Scottish Sunday and we designed and sent out postcards.



Looking forward to 2023, the Communications Committee will continue to support all activities in the Church. Partnering with Megan we have a revitalized output, ensuring we spread the word as widely as possible about all the good things happening at First Pres NC!

Congregational Life Committee

Steve Van de Graaf, Elder

2022 was a great year for our church and Congregational Life (CL) achieved most of its goals for the year. Broadly, our mission is to enhance and enrich the experience of being an active congregant of First Pres (NC) through fellowship and events. Specifically, we seek to create or continue several 'core' events organized by CL, including Rally Day, the Advent Workshop, the Manse Christmas Party, the 'Winter's Blues' social event and Scottish Sunday. We are also expanding the number of less formal congregational events such as hikes & walks, pickleball, etc. Finally, CL helps support other committee's events when involving food & beverage, such as the New Year's Eve Celebration, refreshment for Congregational Meeting(s), and various post-service luncheon events.

Some photos of '22

New Year's Eve Concert and Reception – December



Manse Christmas Party – December



Continued on next page

Advent Workshop and Tree Lighting



Hike in Pound Ridge in October



Hike at Irwin Park in October



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Rally Day - September



Scottish Sunday – May



Flower Committee

Peg Bull, Jan Lucie, Patty von Jena

Members of the committee are responsible for decorating the Sanctuary with flowers for Christmas, Palm Sunday, Easter, and other church events. We would love to have flowers weekly in the sanctuary but need some additional volunteers to help arrange them.

In 2022 we planted perennial flowers in the beautifully renovated Memorial Garden. We also plant and care for the outdoor planters by the front entrance and the back terrace of the building.

In 2023 we will be working in conjunction with the Buildings and Grounds committee and their landscape architect on the Columbarium expansion project.

We are interested in enlarging our committee and would love to have you join us! No talent required! This committee is not a lot of work but is lots of fun and very rewarding. Please contact Patty von Jena if you are interested in helping out.

Finance Committee

For the Year Ended December 31, 2022

Jim Ely, Chair

Members: Jim Beall, Janet Lanaway, Jim Riehl, Bob Spangler, Jennifer Van de Graaf, Stephan von Jena

For the year ended 12/31/22, FPCNC enjoyed improved operating performance, with receipts increasing by 7.4% to \$960,429. This included 6.9% increase in pledge income versus 2021. Total operating expenses increased by 7.5%, primarily due to increases in Buildings and Grounds expenses related to deferred maintenance. Excluding an estimated \$100,000 in deferred maintenance expenditures in 2022, FPCNC expenses would not have exceeded budget. These additional costs were provided for by transfers from our General Fund which took place over the year.

Youth Ministries' expenses were substantially below budget due to the absence of a youth minister for the year. Those expenses, when incurred, will be covered by funds in the Youth and Family Fund for the next one to two years. Christian Education was over budget due to an expanded Childcare program during Worship and special events.

Other operating expenses were generally in line with budgeted amounts. The below numbers do not include Depreciation expenses. Reserve funds of \$100,000 were transferred to the Operating account during 2022. During the year, we received \$385,366 in bequests that were made during 2021. Those funds have been transferred to our General Reserve Fund for future use. Below is a Financial Summary and year to year comparison.

Operating Financials 2015 – 2022

	<u>2015</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2016</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2017</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2018</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2019</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2020</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2021</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2022</u> <u>Actual</u>
Pledges	844,372	861,499	931,613	756,681	620,194	641,712	735,600	786,230
Plate	30,305	31,723	21,692	17,970	13,879	5,415	10,762	31,791
Gifts	58,637	98,847	59,014	80,505	191,716	33,197	66,589	34,786
Facility Rental	54,325	67,760	62,075	101,686	98,591	71,329	81,449	107,622
Other	<u>24,998</u>	<u>3,506</u>	<u>478</u>	<u>285</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total revenues	1,012,637	1,063,335	1,074,872	957,127	924,380	751,653	894,400	960,429
Buildings & Grounds	189,568	162,591	267,987	273,630	227,398	165,038	294,370	379,332
Children's Ministries	7,344	16,513	32,514	12,356	9,862	2,634	2,820	17,634
Outreach	32,021	4,812	43,866	30,528	34,893	31,979	40,952	46,612
Administration	166,486	163,192	89,281	100,035	129,731	98,345	114,395	127,829
Congregational Life	1,689	2,559	1,127	2,063	4,353	4,369	6,607	5,755
Membership	539	1,120	1,596	3,232	2,032	450	214	274
Personnel	612,252	595,408	549,078	537,145	611,998	492,523	489,532	436,279
Youth	9,159	11,990	20,101	13,725	15,699	15,699	2,770	2,158
Worship & Music	<u>66,710</u>	<u>53,004</u>	<u>63,591</u>	<u>64,863</u>	<u>63,555</u>	<u>43,535</u>	<u>41,548</u>	<u>51,882</u>
Operating expenses	1,085,768	1,011,189	1,069,141	1,037,577	1,099,521	847,810	993,208	1,067,755
Operating Surplus	-73,131	52,146	5,731	-80,450	-175,141	-96157	-98,808	-107,326
(Deficit) Unaudited								
Transfer from Reserve	73,000	0	60,000	0	250,000	90,130	69,978	100,000
Gifts to Reserves							374,604	385,366
Does not include depreciation or special gifts								

Investment Committee

For the Year Ended December 31, 2022

Jim Ely, Chair

Members: Jim Beall, Janet Lanaway

As we anticipated in early 2022, the debt and equity markets experienced significant volatility in 2022. While our investment portfolios experienced losses (net of gifts and withdrawals) during the year, we substantially outperformed the overall debt and equity markets due to our conservative investment strategy. The FPCNC Reserves account declined \$214,892.10 or 10.9% in 2022, compared to a decline of 18.1% for the S&P 500 index and 16.5% for the Ten-Year US Treasury Index. As has been the case in the past, our Reserves account was invested in a conservative portfolio of investment grade fixed income and equity index funds during the year. The Reserves account had a balance (net of contributions from gifts and withdrawals for capital projects) of \$1,736,417.28 at 12/31/22 versus a balance of \$1,665,942.89 at 12/31/2021. In addition to the Reserves account, FPCNC also maintains a Youth and Family Fund, which is used to hold the proceeds from donations received in support of our Youth and Children's Ministries and is invested in short-duration Treasuries and money market funds. The Fund's balance was \$239,230.22 at 12/31/22. Additionally, our Operating account is used to hold excess cash and to receive/sale donated stock received over the course of the year. The Operating Account had a balance of \$12,391.45 at 12/31/22.

The Investment Committee continues to believe the Church is best served by maintaining a conservative investment strategy, with the primary goal of capital preservation, while generating positive returns on our funds over time. We believe our portfolios continue to be well positioned for continued volatility in 2023.

Respectively,

Jim Ely, Jim Beall, and Janet Lanaway

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First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan
Reserves Account
For The Quarter and Year To Date Ended December 31, 2022

		<u>12/31/20212</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Holdings as of 12/31/2022:	Cash and Bank Sweep	\$7,986.16	
	Money Market	<u>375,933.94</u>	
	Total Cash & Cash Equivalent	383,920.10	22.1%
	PIMCO Enhanced Short Term ETF	126,272.00	
	Doubleline Low Duration Bond Fund	154,455.45	
	Doubleline Total Return Bond Fund	<u>137,265.94</u>	
	Total Fixed Income	417,993.39	24.1%
	Schwab S&P 500 Index Fund	386,017.18	
	Schwab Total Stock Market Index Fund	376,415.61	
	Vanguard Total Stock Market ETF	<u>172,071.00</u>	
	Total Equities	<u>934,503.79</u>	<u>53.8%</u>
	Total Investments	\$1,736,417.28	100.0%
Investment Performance:	Balance September 30, 2022:	\$1,767,765.38	
	Contributions	\$0.00	
	Withdrawals to Operating Account	(\$100,000.00)	
	Gains (Losses)	<u>\$68,651.90</u>	
	Balance December 31, 2022:	\$1,736,417.28	
	Pro Forma 4Q Return:	3.9%	
	Balance December 31, 2021:	\$1,665,942.89	
	Contributions	385,366.49	
	Withdrawals to Operating Account	(100,000.00)	
	Gains (Losses)	<u>(\$214,892.10)</u>	
	Balance December 31, 2022:	\$1,736,417.28	
	Pro Forma YTD Return:	-10.9%	
	YTD Returns:		
	S&P 500 Index	-18.1%	
	JPM Investment Grade Index	-15.5%	
	10-YR US Treasury Index	-16.5%	

Membership Involvement Committee

Barbara Wentzel, Chair

New Members: Scott Herr held three new member orientation classes (March, June and December).

The following people joined the church in 2022 (Reaffirmation of Faith):

March 20, 2022:

Holly Coughlin
Paul Coughlin
Terry J. Flanagan
Lisa Flanagan
Daniel Mason
Pornsawan (Buinun) Unamool

June 12, 2022:

Sue Dishart

December 18, 2022:

Maxine Gaddis
Thomas Emmons
Bonnie Peterson
Mike Peterson
Art Trotman

Confirmands: Jack Crowell, Jackson Dooley, Charlie Sulkowski

Baptisms for infant: Danni Joseph (June 12, 2022) Ann Kniffin Great Granddaughter

Weddings:

July 3 – Kate Stringfellow and Matt Ziance (FPC)

September 24 – Connor Swanberg and Brianna Altavilla (Waveny)



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The Membership Involvement Committee of the First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan welcomes and reaches out to visitors on Sunday mornings, arranges New Member Orientation Classes with the Clergy and helps integrate new members into the life of the church.

When new people come to FPCNC they are given information about the church and are encouraged to come to the Coffee Hour where they will be introduced to members of the congregation. Notes of welcome are written to each of them.

New Member's Orientations are held during the year when people express the desire to join the church. These new neighbors are encouraged to talk about their "faith Journey." Scott Herr talks about the First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan and explains "Who we are. What we believe and how we live out our faith together"

People enter into active church membership in the following ways: Public profession of faith, Certificate of Transfer or Reaffirmation of Faith. New members are introduced to the Elders of the church before they become members.

Another way FPCNC members and friends can come together is for lunch and talks in the Common Room after Worship. Some of these programs are introduced through Women's Fellowship. All members and friends of the congregation are invited and lunch is served in the Common Room.

This year Kim Herr titled her talk "Liminal space - Transformation on the Camino." She used photos and stories about the experience of walking the Camino de Santiago. We were all in awe of someone we know actually walking these 500 miles!

FPCNC member Erica Bergman gave a talk titled "A Child's Story of World War II." This program and lunch was enjoyed by many members of the congregation. Erica was raised in the Netherlands and still has family there. Many questions were asked after Erica's talk.

In November Rabbi Liz Rolle entertained us with her talk called "What is Reform Judaism?" Rabbi Liz Rolle has served in synagogue life for over 35 years. There was a good discussion after the talk.

George Post's 100th Birthday Celebration after Worship Service



Continued on next page

Women's Fellowship – Erica Bergman talk



Women's Fellowship – Rabbi Liz Rolle talk



Manse Family BBQ



Continued on next page



**Summary of Monthly Worship
Attendance for 2022**

Month	Special Services		2022 Sunday Worship Totals		2021 Sunday Worship Totals
January:			556		392
February:			559		422
	Ash Wednesday	80		28	
March:			764		486
	Palm Sunday	133		67	
	Easter Sunday	231		64	
	Maundy Thursday	30		32	
	Good Friday	20		35	
April:			471		587
May:			647		561
June:			419		402
July:			340		320
August:			284		456
September:			458		406
	Rally Day	145		117	
October:			633		468
November:			452		475
December:			521		466
	Christmas Eve 5:00pm	190		40	
	Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion 10:00pm	96		69	
		Total:	6,104	Total:	5,441

Continued on next page

Deaths:

(*Non-Members)

January 22, 2022	Shirley Keever Tanner
February 12, 2022	*Stephen (Steve) Benko
August 23, 2022	Christine M. Smith
September 5, 2022	Ruth Bovier Witt
September 7, 2022	John Lanaway
September 13, 2022	*Patricia Stoddard
October 30, 2022	Jill Walker Stevens
November 17, 2022	Virginia (Dinny) Lawrence
November 24, 2022	Donal (Don) O'Brien, III
November 29, 2022	Loel Amberg Baldwin

Memorial Services

February 24, 2022	*Stephen (Steve) Benko
August 13, 2022	Charlotte Conner
September 10, 2022	*Jacqueline Richardson(10am)
September 10, 2022	Ruth Bovier Witt (12pm)
September 13, 2022	John Lanaway
September 30, 2022	*Castle Nason Day
October 7, 2022	Alva Solomon
October 15, 2022	Christine M. Smith
December 9, 2022	Donal (Don) O'Brien, III

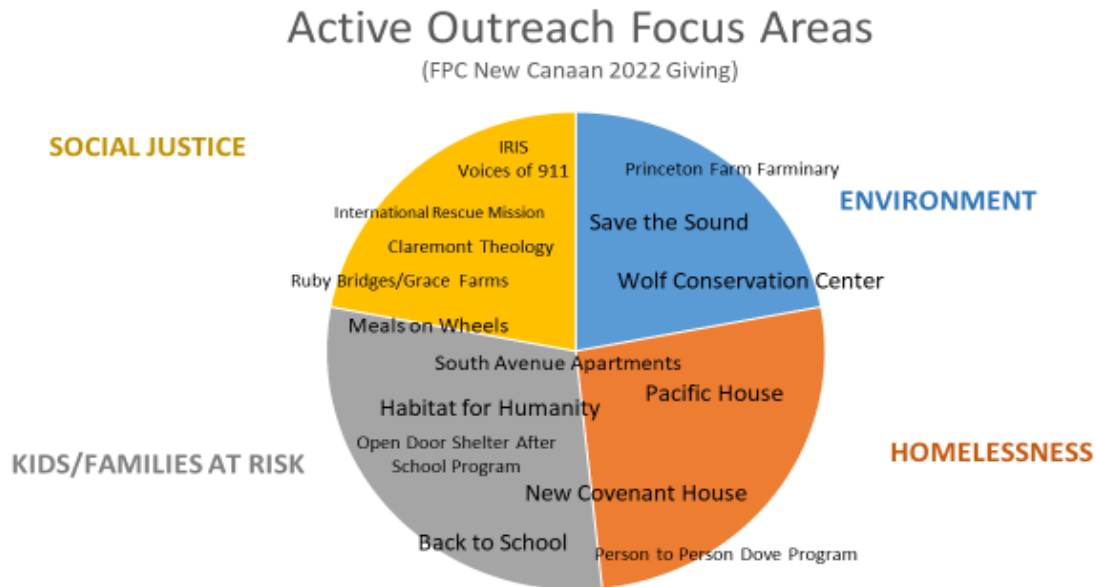
Memorial Garden Interments and Services:

June 24, 2022	Shirley Keever Tanner
September 9, 2022	*Marianne Ellefsen Rothballer
November 26, 2022	*Patricia Stoddard
October 17, 2022	*Ann Evans Price
December 21, 2022	Loel Baldwin

Columbarium Interment and Service:

December 20, 2022	Jill Walker Stevens
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Mission and Outreach | Annual Report 2023



We continue to take a thoughtful and thorough view of how our outreach can be most impactful. We focus on four primary issues: **Social Justice, Environment, Homelessness and Families and Children at Risk.** This will guide our efforts throughout 2023 too.

As the pie chart indicates, we have supported 16 non-profits with financial support and/or with hands-on efforts. We have had over 35 volunteers from our congregation help in a variety of ways: knitting hats for children at risk, cooking and serving for the homeless, providing books for a shelter, collecting our ‘doves’ so they can fly away to help families with their meals, and cleaning our park trails.



We will continue to diligently assess where and how to serve, with LOVE as our guiding principle.

Respectfully submitted by:

Cindy Graziano and a team of dedicated volunteers| Elder of Mission and Outreach

“God loves each of us as if there were only one of us” – St. Augustine

Mission Ministry - Abo Noktah Family Update 2022

Khaldoun and Khawla Abo Noktah became American citizens in 2022, as did their 4 youngest children. The eldest daughter, Hanin, is in the process of applying for citizenship. She was over the age of majority when her parents were granted citizenship so didn't automatically receive her citizenship at that time, like her 4 younger siblings.

Hanin is in her freshman year at Sacred Heart University and doing well. FPCNC was able to give her a scholarship to help with her university expenses. She is living at home and attending university during the day. She is hoping to secure a job in a pharmacy for the summer.

Eldest son, Yaman, is a senior in high school and is applying to community college for next year. Younger brother, Ahmed, is a sophomore in high school and is also planning to go to community college when he graduates. Both Yaman and Ahmed work at Dunkin Donuts in their spare time. Sister, Zain (age 11) is in 6th grade. The youngest, Hayat, will be 4 years old in April and may be enrolled in daycare soon, which will allow her mother, Khawla, time to look for work outside the home.

The Abo Noktah's have now been in the US for 6 years and live in Stamford.

Nominating Committee

Linda Ferguson
Chair and Session Representative

Members:

Rev. Scott Herr, George Benington, Serena Gillespie, Lynn Jackson, Nell Smith, Bob Spangler, Jennifer Van de Graaf, and Patty von Jena

The Nominating Committee is elected by the congregation and meets formally several times per year. The committee is charged with finding suitable and willing candidates from the congregation to assume lay leadership positions in the church. The committee presents to the congregation a slate of candidates for open Elder, Deacon, Youth Elder, Youth Deacon and Nominating Committee positions for election at the annual congregational meeting. In addition, the committee identifies people who would like to take a more active role in specific areas of the church and refers them to the relevant committee chairperson.



Personnel Committee

Randy Ferguson, Chair

The FPCNC Personnel Committee operates in an advisory capacity to the Senior Pastor and Associate Pastors and to the Session, and as a support team to the church staff. We help design, define, recommend, and monitor personnel policies and practices with the objective of rewarding performance, addressing grievances, and ensuring that the church's staff and personnel organization operates with equity and at a high level to meet the needs of our church.

OUR PASTORS

The Rev. Dr. R. Scott Herr, Senior Pastor • The Rev. Mary Marple Thies, Parish Associate

OUR STAFF

Terence J. Flanagan, Director of Music and Fine Arts • Sherry Tate, Cherub Choir Director • Jim Riehl, Business Administrator • Wendy Starr, Office Manager • Kate and Matt Ziance, Operations Managers • Megan Schinella, Communications Assistant

Following a year of transition in 2021, 2022 was a year that saw stability in our staff and the welcome addition of Megan Schinella. Megan has joined our staff on a part-time basis to assist Wendy and Communications Elder, Angela Johnson in creating and managing our social media posts.

Megan lives in New Canaan with her husband Joseph and three young children, Ava, Gianna and Nico. In addition to being a full-time mother, she runs "Camp by MaMa", a blog designed to share creative ideas and experiences for young families. We welcome her to the team and appreciate all of her talents!

Our work continues in our search for a new Director of Youth and Children's Ministries, and we have made steady progress. This has been a long process, but our team remains optimistic that their efforts will bear fruit in the coming months.

I would like to give special thanks to Rev. Mary Thies, Jim Riehl and Jim Beall for their extended dedication to FPCNC and our congregation. We are truly blessed!

Respectfully submitted,
Randy Ferguson

Stewardship Committee

Jim Ely and Bob Spangler, Co-chairs

The theme for the 2022-2023 Stewardship Campaign is “Stewarding Abundance”. It was also the title of Scott’s stewardship sermon in which he told the story from Luke, Chapter 17 of Jesus’ healing of the ten lepers and the one who “when he was healed, turned back, and praising God with a loud voice and thanked him”.

Thanks be to each of you who have given to the 2022 and 2023 Stewardship Campaigns and for all your support for the future of FPCNC! We all have much to be thankful for and as Stewardship Co-chairs we are incredibly grateful for your time, talents, and generous stewardship towards FPCNC.

As we write this summary on February 6, the Church has received 114 pledges totaling \$774,000, below our campaign goal of \$820,000, but effectively the same as the 120 pledges totaling \$771,000, we received at this same time last year.

But the campaign is not over. Through an incredible anonymous donor, the Church received a \$20,000 matching gift challenge for the month of February. The donor agreed to match, dollar for dollar, all new pledges and any additional pledge dollars received by the Church up to \$20,000.

If we can meet that challenge, and we are optimistic that we can, the Campaign should come very close to hitting its goal of \$820,000. That means more money for outreach, congregational life, children’s ministry, and the ability for FPCNC to operate on a balanced budget.

Thank you to the generous challenger donor and to all the congregation who made their initial pledges or increased their pledges during the month of February to make our goal of \$820,000 attainable!

We would also like to recognize the wonderful group of pledge captains who were so diligent and hard-working for this year’s effort.

Jim Beall
Jim Riehl

Jim Ely
Bob Spangler

Doug Gillespie
Jennifer Van de Graaf

Thanks to all of you for your continued commitment to the future of FPCNC.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
**BELL TOWER
SOCIETY**

If you have remembered FPCNC in your estate plans and would like to be included on the list of members of the Bell Tower Society, please let the church office know.

Thank you for making plans to leave a legacy.

Worship, Music and Fine Arts Committee

Jan Lucie, Chair

We welcomed the arrival of Terry Flanagan, Director of Worship, Music and Fine Arts after Christmas and were amazed at how dedicated he already was with reorganizing many of the music storage areas. His attentiveness to the care of the organ, the pianos and the harpsichord has been much appreciated and saved the church hundreds of dollars with his tuning abilities. His musicianship is exquisite and leads us in grateful worship experiences.

Almost back to normal! 2022 allowed us to worship in our beautiful Philip Ives sanctuary and to celebrate monthly communion with bread cubes and juice in addition to offering the small chalices of pre-packaged bread and juice. Linda Martin helped with communion preparation and several from our congregation have served the elements during intinction. The sanctuary chairs were placed with some space between but not in the small groups necessitated by COVID of 2021.

Nancy Flourney and Peg Bull shared their artistic and sewing skills with us by designing and constructing two antependia (paraments) for the pulpit and lectern. The beautiful white Celtic designs replaced very worn and impossible to dry clean older white antependia that are used for communion Sunday, days of special Christian celebration, funerals and memorial services.

Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday services returned with jubilant music under the direction of Mr. Flanagan. Scottish Sunday was celebrated in May under the direction of a committee comprised of Angela and Paul Johnson, Randy and Linda Ferguson, and Steve and Jen Van de Graaf. But what would our worship experience be without the challenging, inspiring messages of the Rev. Scott Herr and the Rev. Mary Marple Thies? Their leadership makes us a thriving, living community seeking God's direction in our individual and corporate selves.

Christmas Eve services were: 1) 5:00 Family Worship Service incorporating "Amazing! The Story of Jesus' Birth" using the talents of Terence Flanagan, Carolina and Nolan Coughlin, Douglas Gillespie, Layla Magnusen, the Bachran Family (Allyn, Josh and Issac), the Holden Family (Laura, Taylor, Kirk and Smith), the Peterson Family (Bonnie, Mike, Lily and Haley), Charlotte Allen and Margaux and Yates Allen-Alnouri, Kristie, Thomas and Ashley Godina, Cooper Feldman, and Steve Van de Graaf; 2) 10:00pm Candlelight Communion service with the FPCNC Choir, harp, and organ.

We recognize and appreciate the faithful work of Terence Flanagan managing the sound system in the sanctuary and Common Room. Adding to our service music has been Peter Flourney on trumpet.

Incorporating the fine arts into our worship experience was explored. The expertise of Daniel Mason of our congregation was sought and a large artwork was displayed on the chancel during Advent and specifically for the noon worship experience commemorating the gun violence of Sandy Hook, CT. The December 14, 2022, service was inspired by not only the painting by Vermont artist Rebecca Purdum but also by the dialogue of Rev. Herr with Marlene Miller Pratt of New Haven Botanical Garden of Healing.

In addition to our own FPCNC Choir and English Handbells, our sanctuary has resounded with concerts by New Canaan Chamber Music led by artistic director Andrew Armstrong, Charis Chamber Voices, the

Continued on next page

Classic Whiffenpoofs, the St. Luke's choral department, the Greenwich Choral Society, and the New Canaan High School choral department. New Baroque Soloists provided a beautiful New Year's Eve concert arranged by Terence J. Flanagan, Lisa Flanagan and Steve Van de Graaf. Wilton Music Studio uses our building for lessons and the Tate Barn and outside lawn areas are used by Jumpin' Jams, a music program for toddlers and their caregivers.

In the fall we were treated to the return of the Carol Choir who entranced us with the use of the boomwhackers, ably assisted by Terence and Lisa Flanagan. Under the direction of Sherry Tate, the Cherub Choir resumed rehearsals after Sunday church services beginning in September. What a joy to hear their voices with the Carol Choir in Advent. We wish to also recognize the faithful members of the FPCNC Choir assisted by section leaders Lisa Flanagan, Jennifer O'Neill, Evan McCormack and Devin Mitchell and the English Handbells.

The committee is grateful for the generous funding provided by Friends of Music. Some of these funds have been used in 2022 for the refurbishment of our English handbells. This was a project sorely needed since their purchase in the early 1970's. Mr. Flanagan arranged for extensive work on our majestic organ for remediation of worn organ pipes, particularly several ranks of woodwinds—and he provided beautiful organ music even when a great number of these pipes were gone for off-premises work!

The Flower Committee of Patty von Jena and Peg Bull have enhanced our Easter and Advent worship and they attend our meetings. Judy Schurman, Nancy Flournoy, Linda Martin and Rebecca Roth have shared their ideas and been faithful members of this committee in 2022. We are always looking for new ideas and those to carry the ideas forward. We continue to rely upon Sign-Up Genius to enlist greeters, ushers (encouraged by Peg Hooker), readers and communion preparation people and servers. We are a wonderful community—share your talents with us!

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Lucie

Youth Programs

The efforts of the Youth Leadership Committee (YLC) continued into 2022 under the guidance of Megan Wunderlich and Kristen Rodgers. On May 22nd, members of the YLC participated in service and our graduating High School Seniors were recognized. The members of the FPCNC class of 2022 were Cameron Forte, Douglas Gillespie, Layla Magnusen, Cooper Malley, Alexis Stuart, Calvin Stuart and Molly Wunderlich.



The Fall presented an opportunity to build upon the success of the YLC and revive all our Youth Programs: Sunday School, Cherub Choir, Youth Choir & Chimes, Middle School Youth Group (MSYG) and High School Youth Group (HSYG).

We started the Fall with a Welcome BBQ and Ice Cream Social organized by Wendy Starr, sponsored by Session, and generously hosted at the manse by Rev. Scott Herr and Kim. Seven families were warmly welcomed at the event. Kristie Godina and Lynne Jackson Quinn brought food to add to Scott's famous BBQ, and nine members of Session were also in attendance: Linda Ferguson, Randy Ferguson, Mark Magnusen, Bob Spangler, Gordie Stuart, Jen Van de Graaf, Steve Van de Graaf, Stephan Von Jena and Barbara Wentzel.

Several of the Youth families in attendance signed their kids up for Youth programs: 4 for Sunday School and Cherub Choir, 3 for Youth Choir & Chimes, 2 for Middle School Youth Group (MSYG), and 1 for High School Youth Group.

The momentum from the Welcome BBQ and Rally Day carried into the beginning of our programs in September. We are very grateful for the FPCNC members and staff who have contributed significant amounts of time and effort so we can have comprehensive, enriching programs for our Youth.

Sunday School

Kristie Godina, Interim Sunday School Director

Sunday School returned to FPCNC in September 2022 with Kristie Godina providing fun and engaging lessons each week facilitated by a dedicated group of FPCNC members who volunteered to teach on Sundays. Sunday School teachers from September to December were Holly Coughlin, Lynn Jackson Quinn, Linda Ferguson, Jen Van de Graaf, Kristie Godina, Layla Magnusen, Steve Van de Graaf, Patty Von Jena, Bob Spangler and Linda Martin.

Attendance at Sunday School has ranged from 2 to 8 children each Sunday. Regular attendees include Margaux Alnouri, Yates Alnouri, Isaac Bachran, Carolina Coughlin, Nolan Coughlin, Cooper Feldman, Ashley Godina, Thomas Godina, Kirk Holden, Smith Holden, Charlotte Lombardi, Madeline Lombardi, Lachlan McCormack, Maeve McCormack, Haley Petersen, Lily Petersen, and Courtney Rumilly.

The aim is to continue to offer and grow an interesting and meaningful Sunday School program that will serve as a cornerstone to the faith journey of children and youth.





Youth Groups

Our Middle School Youth Group (MSYG) and High School Youth Group (HSYG) started the Fall with Kick-Off meetings at the Tate Youth Barn on September 25th. The kick-off meetings were attended by MSYG and HSYG Youth, parent leaders, Rev. Scott Herr, Cindy Graziano, Elder for Missions, and Mark Magnusen, Elder for Education.

The goal for the kick-off meetings was for the Youth to reconnect in person after a long break due to the pandemic, and plan activities for the year ahead. Service opportunities at organizations like New Covenant House, Save the Sound, Shopping Cart Wars and Habitat for Humanity were discussed. We also discussed bringing friends to events and the possibility of collaborating with other Youth groups like the St. Mark's Youth Group.

Draft Calendars for the year were prepared for each Youth group and the parent leaders agreed to follow up and confirm the activities for each month. Below are the events that were scheduled tentatively for the rest of the year:

September 2022

Fun & Games – Tate Barn

October 2022

Movie Night or Service Activity

November 2022

Fun & Games – Tate Barn

Shopping Cart Wars

December 2022

Holiday Needs Drive

Holiday Advent Fair

Christmas Play – Saturday, December 24th 5pm Service

Middle School Youth Group (MSYG)

Lisa Flanagan and Kristie Godina, Parent Leaders

Middle School Youth Group (MSYG) reconvened in October with a fun excursion through a corn maze at Castle Hill Farm in Newtown. Six of our youth & friends ranging in ages from 5th through 8th grade worked together to make their way through twists and turns in a Honeybee-themed labyrinth. They were rewarded with delicious pizza and cider from the food trucks set up at the bottom of the hill.

In November we returned to the Tate Youth Barn (with a few new kids!) for a fun night preparing for our first Mission Project - a Mac & Cheese Food Drive to support Filling in the Blanks - a local non-profit organization that fights childhood hunger by offering bags of food for kids to take home from school on the weekends. The goal was set to collect 300 boxes of Mac & Cheese. Thanks to the generosity of the congregation, we surpassed that goal with 317 boxes collected! After decorating the collection box, the kids enjoyed foosball, arcade basketball, games of "pass the pig" and "taboo" and ended with a Nintendo Mario Kart tournament.

In December, the youth were invited to join the congregation at the Manse Christmas Party for an evening of food, music, and cross generational fellowship.

Our MSYG includes Carolina Coughlin, Ellie Dooley, Terence Flanagan, Thomas Godina, and Everett Wingate.

We look forward to continuing our pattern of alternating mission projects and fun nights/outings in the Spring.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Flanagan and Kristie Godina



High School Youth Group (HSYG)

Jessica Dooley and Elizabeth Stuart, Parent Leaders

The High School Youth Group (HSYG) was scheduled to visit the Wolf Conservation Center in Salem on October 16th. Due to scheduling conflicts, the event had to be rescheduled.

On November 5th, HSYG families helped to serve food at Covenant House. They coordinated with Cindy Graziano to buy groceries, cook, and serve the food. Elizabeth Stuart and the Dooley family (Chris, Jess, Andy, Jack and Ella) participated in this event.

Our HSYG includes Danielle Asare, David Asare, Andy Dooley, Jack Dooley, Gordie Stuart, Charlie Sulkowski, Nik Sulkowski, and Trey Walker.



Board of Deacons

Co-Moderators: Nancy Lowman LaBadie and Linda Martin

Members: Carole Clarkson, Janet Lanaway, Nell Smith, Nancy Flournoy, Andrew Gurley, Patty Von Jena, Jim Lucie, JoAnn Nerenburg, Jackson Dooley – Youth

Ministries: Flowers & Gifts, New Member & Families Liaison, Baptisms, Cards & Letters, Pastoral Care, Memorial Services, Deacon Fund

“The ministry of Deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, witness and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structure, or anyone in distress. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, sincere compassion, and sound judgment should be chosen for this ministry.”

At FPCNC, we have slightly expanded our mission to include the following: Deacons are comprised of 11 active servant leaders who are called by the church community to dedicate three years of service assisting fellow members of the congregation, “to minister to the joys and challenges of life - those who are in need, the sick, the lonely or who may be distressed or to those who are experiencing a happy occasion - a church or life milestone”.

At FPCNC, our Deacons offer care and support to the church community through:

- Confidential emergency financial assistance to church members in need through the Deacon Fund
- Providing support and assistance to bereaved families during Memorial services, funerals and receptions
- Supporting the Pastoral Care Team
- Participating in the Prayer Chain
- Assisting families in preparation for the baptism of their children
- Delivering Christmas and Easter flowers/plants to the homebound or to families who have recently lost loved ones or have had a medical event (and/or on other holidays/occasions)
- Providing meals to members who are in temporary need of assistance
- Being a comforting support to our youth with care packages including thoughtful Thanksgiving greetings to our post high-school young adults, experiencing a period of growth & big change
- Valentine “Thinking of You” packages delivered at church service so all members feel our community’s embrace
- Driving members of the congregation when able to church functions
- Assisting with coffee service & refreshments for the congregation after church services as called upon
- Sending letters to individuals or families experiencing a happy or solemn occasion

The Deacons are grateful to all who support their efforts, especially volunteers who assist at specific events or all those who contribute to the Deacon Fund. Your continued generosity enables us to carry out our ministries of compassion.

As we look forward in 2023, we continue to seek ways to increase our ability to care for our church family and the greater community during both good and challenging times.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Lowman LaBadie and Linda Martin

Special Church

Nancy Reichart

We Are Marching in the Light of God!

Special Church is a community outreach of FPCNC. In 1987 our wonderful program was founded by parents who were seeking a religious experience that would be meaningful to their special needs children. Most of our members are charter members and the rest are friends who have joined us along the way. The group gathers for fellowship and spiritual growth on Thursdays from 3:30-5:00 pm in the Common Room at FPCNC.

The new year 2022 found us, once again, successfully navigating another Covid uptick by greeting, meeting and singing together on Zoom each week. In March we were thrilled to return to church masked and in person.

Every gathering begins with Words of the Week. We take turns being the reader as we hear God's Word and learn of his love. Following that you will find us engaged in one of many things including creating art, performing acts of kindness or celebrating a holiday or special occasion. During our final half hour, we sing joyfully with Matt Hennessy of RhythmHearts Creative Arts Therapy. Soloists are welcome to take a turn at our open mic and spontaneous dancing occurs frequently!

The highlight of 2022 was the celebrating the 35th anniversary of Special Church. All of us were honored and excited to participate in Sunday morning worship on October 23rd. Our sincere thanks to all for welcoming us warmly, joining us in singing and celebrating with us afterwards in the Common Room.

The year ended happily for us because, for the first time since 2019, we were able to be together in person for Advent and Christmas. Each week in Advent our members took turns lighting the candles on our Advent wreath. On December 22nd we celebrated Christmas by setting up our nativity scene while hearing the Christmas story. Santa arrived with gifts for all and there was a Christmas cake as well!

There will never be enough words to adequately thank everyone who has a part in making Special Church happen every week. We acknowledge the Session, Deacons and members of FPCNC for your support. Thank you to Terry Flanagan for rehearsing with us for our anniversary celebration, to Jim Beall and Jim Riehl for overseeing our financial needs and to Matt Ziance who sets up and takes down our room each week. Wendy Starr, you are a gem and we appreciate everything that you do for us. Scott, we could not have a better friend than you and we are so happy that you are part of our gatherings.

Most importantly, thank you to our Special Church members. You are truly special because of the kind, loving and caring people that you are. Keep on shining your light!

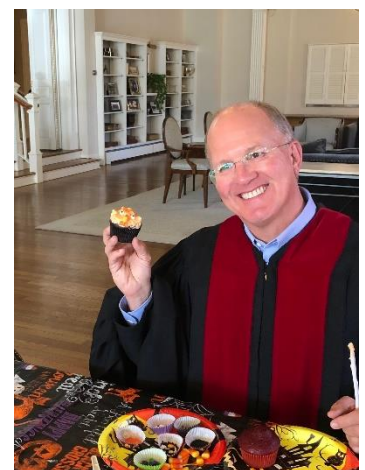
Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Reichart

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Easter:**Music time and enjoying the Patio:**



Halloween & decorating cupcakes:



Christmas Party

35th Anniversary Worship Service:



In Memoriam

Shirley Keever Tanner



Stephen (Steve) Benko



Christine M. Smith



Ruth Bovier Witt



John Lanaway



Patricia Lovejoy Stoddard

In Memoriam

Jill Walker Stevens



Virginia (Dinny) Lawrence



Donal (Don) O'Brien, III



Loel Amberg Baldwin



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
NEW CANAAN**

Where Faith, Families & Friends Connect

2022 Annual Report