

2022



ANNUAL REPORT

first presbyterian church
west chester pennsylvania

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A WORD FROM THE PASTOR

Dear First Pres Members and Friends,

A few months ago a church member lent me a book on, of all things, a college crew team. Anyone who has seen my office knows that books tend to pile up within its walls, stacks of wisdom with cracked spines and dog-eared pages (and some Greek texts that frankly I haven't opened since a final exam circa 2007). Since one of the unsung perks of pastoring is being the recipient of many excellent reading recommendations, it took me a few months to pick up the crew book.

When I finally had a chance to begin reading, the reasons for this gift revealed themselves. The book is a nonfiction account of the 1936 University of Washington rowing team, a scrappy, under-funded hodgepodge of working-class kids who won an impossibly unlikely Olympic gold medal in fascist Germany. The story of how these young men came together mirrors our congregation's life in unmistakable ways.

As any athlete knows, there is no substitute for conditioning, and 2022 was a year in which this congregation worked hard. Whether it was deacons organizing dozens of flower deliveries, volunteers bolting down wiggly pews and renovating apartments from the ground up, starting new ministries like the children's bell choir, or pouring countless hours into youth ministry or the Pastoral Nominating Committee, you have much to be proud of (and no doubt some sore muscles to show for it!).



Thriving congregations share the labor; no one is rowing on their own. As pastor, I get a front-row seat to the ways in which you pour your energy, imagination, and hearts into our church home.

TRUST IS ESSENTIAL

Boats are not made up of individual athletes, but bodies and minds woven together as a single whole. Unless each rower deeply trusts the person in front and back of them, amplifying their strengths and compensating for their deficits, even the strongest oarsman will founder. There are some who say that as Americans we live in an era with a poverty of trust, especially when it comes to values and institutions. It is all too easy for this distrust to infect churches, and plenty of congregations spend their best efforts trying to diffuse conflict because people just don't like the folks they share the pews with. In times of transition, it would be natural for a lack of trust to be amplified. But what I've observed at First Pres is just the opposite: you have developed and nurtured a culture of trust. Disagreements are settled over face-to-face conversations; people of different backgrounds come together in shared projects, transparency is sought and valued. That's not to say we never disagree or stumble, but our differences strengthen the whole rather than detract from it.

FELLOWSHIP MATTERS

When the boys started rowing together they kept separate lives outside of crew practice. Gradually they realized that this limited contact would not be sufficient for the goal that lay before them. I've always been a person who feels like anything of value belongs on a to-do list, or it's not real work. What I've learned from you all, and from my amazing staff colleagues, is that having fun is not something you do with time left over. Fellowship is the cornerstone to everything else, including worship. For every story of preaching or healing in the Gospels, it feels like there are ten where Jesus is spending time with his friends (appropriately for this letter, there was usually a boat involved). While we praise God in beautiful ways on Sunday mornings, no less important is how your lives are interwoven on the other 6 ½ days of the week. The dozens of you who show up for Craft Beer Club; the ways that a Session meeting can linger not because there's a long agenda, but because people just want to chat with one another; the fact that the church kids have a shared culture and set of rituals all their own (on a related note, take caution in the halls on Wednesdays evenings lest you be mown down by hordes of tiny, stampeding choristers).

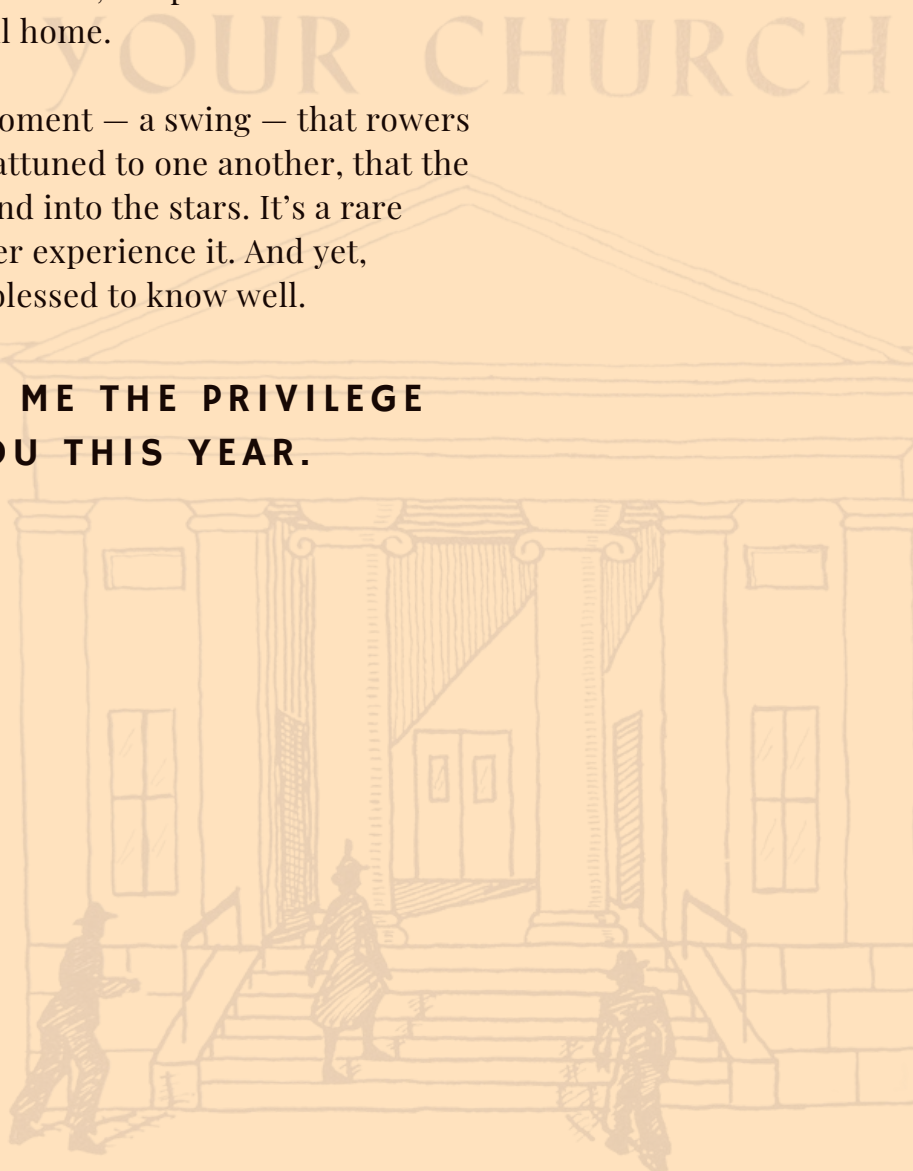
There have been parts of this year that have been challenging. We've lost those dear to us, and we all expected that by now there would be a new head of staff. There are places where our best efforts have fallen short, and disappointment or frustration has had the upper hand. Along with churches everywhere, we are confronting a world where faith is thought about and practiced differently than it was even a generation ago. At times it feels like the whole world is twisting, and we're just playing catch-up. And at the same time, in this turning we trust, proclaim, and see that God is still at work, breathing the Spirit not only into the world as a whole but into the hallways and classrooms, the pews and the Sunday School rooms, of this place we call home.

Crew coaches say that there's a special moment — a swing — that rowers experience where they are so in sync, so attuned to one another, that the boat feels like it flies right off the water and into the stars. It's a rare event, and one can row for years and never experience it. And yet, serving among you all, it's a feeling I am blessed to know well.

**THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME THE PRIVILEGE
OF SERVING ALONGSIDE YOU THIS YEAR.**

In Christ,

Pastor Caroline Cuypp



First Presbyterian Church

MINER AND DARLINGTON STREETS
WEST CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA

MUSIC MINISTRY

by sándor kádár
director of music ministry

- Provided outstanding music for two Sunday morning services
- Started a new bell program called Miner Street Bell Connections under the direction of Marci Major to promote intergenerational music making involving eight children and six adults
- The Column Classics fine art series hosted 5 events, including two successful Candlelight Christmas Concerts which involved 80 performers from 5 different music ensembles as well as students from West Chester University.
- Miner Street Brass played two concerts at Tel Hai Retirement Community: the first one was Memorial Day-themed, and a second one was a Christmas Concert.
- Presented the children's musical *It's Cool in the Furnace*, a story about the prophet Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar, and the faith of three brave young men Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
- Organized a Lenten Sung Prayer Retreat led by Rev. Adele Crawford
- Hosted the Austrian boys' choir *Grazer Kappellknaben* in April. The boys' choir led the Maundy Thursday service and gave a short concert afterwards. Their encore piece "The Lonely Goatherd" was a tremendous success.



- Eight music ensembles held approximately 300 rehearsals throughout the program year.
- Organized the annual Weekend with the Arts, featuring thirty local artists and two WCU ensembles: the Rosedale String Quartet and the ORGANized Mallets Duo.

GROWING IN FAITH

by sara pantazes, director of faith formation

- Refreshed classrooms and purchased new curricula to support the continued rebuilding of our post-pandemic Sunday School program, run by a team of ten teachers
- Gave Bibles to third graders and refined how we are introducing Biblical literacy to older elementary aged kids
- Introduced a new VBS format with VBS as Summer Sunday School, which fostered stronger relationships between young families in the church and encouraged more consistent summer worship attendance (along with VBS fun!)
- The Young Justice Builder's Club thoughtfully engaged with a lesson on language we use about God and started exploring the concept of non-violence.



- Justice Ministry Team organized several programs to encourage the congregation's faith-based engagement with justice, including a photo exhibit, walking tours of historically black sections of West Chester, distributed a monthly resource newsletter, and invited Jeff Heim to speak to the Christian Faith & Issues class on discrimination.
- Offered a chocolate-themed Women's Retreat featuring a Certified Biblical Storyteller, small group discussion and fellowship
- Organized several church-wide programs to build people's faith, including Lent study groups, Ukrainian prayer doves, a gun violence book discussion and the *Songs for the Waiting* Advent devotion



YOUTH MINISTRY

by sara pantazes, director of faith formation

- Walked alongside students and encouraged their faith development through weekly youth groups, high school Bible studies and middle school Bible studies. Leaders also led twelve students through a revamped Confirmation program.
- Participated in special events of the life of First Pres by leading worship on Youth Sunday and helping prepare for the Trick or Treat event
- Summer outdoor fun included attending a Phillies game, trip to Guppy Gulch, an Ocean City beach day and a hike to the Chesapeake Bay.
- Trip highlights included Fun In the Son (summer trip for high school students) and fall retreats to North Bay, MD and Johnsonburg, NJ.
- Local service projects included organizing the Congregational Night of Generosity, gardening at Church St. Towers, canned food drive and organizing food donations for the West Chester Food Cupboard, helping with the church's clothing closet, and holiday decorating at Denney Reyburn.
- Dedicated youth leaders supported students by attending many of their musical performances, graduations, NHS inductions, swim meets and baseball, softball, bocce, track, and football games throughout the year.



WORSHIP MINISTRY



- Continued to facilitate and enhance two in person worship services while maintaining our livestream and radio ministry options
- Added microphones to improve the streaming experience of worship
- Welcomed several notable preachers to our pulpit, including Dr. Tom Long and Rev. Adele Crawford.
- Conducted a congregation-wide survey on worship times, with the aim of increasing the accessibility of our services
- Returned to offering communion in a traditional manner with minor adjustments to enhance safety and comfort
- Offered three Wednesday evening contemplative worship services, an Easter Sunrise service, and returned to pre-pandemic worship practices.

DEACONS

- Facilitated connections to church members through deacon parishes
- Supported members going through times of difficulty
- Provided the first home communion service since the beginning of the COVID pandemic
- Delivered poinsettias and cards to members who have difficulty attending church in person
- Put together care packages for first year college students
- Provided baptism gifts for infants and adults
- **Stephen Ministers** continued to provide one-on-one support to individuals going through times of illness, transition, or grief.
- **The Prayer Band** received prayer requests from church members and the community.

- Conducted major roof repairs
- Structural improvements the ceiling in Social Hall
- Facilitated significant improvements to the church's HVAC system
- Had all of the church building's outside windows washed
- Worked on repairs and improvements to the church's security system
- Led Property Committee, resulting in the conversion of three apartments at 122 W. Miner to Housing Choice Voucher units

TRUSTEES

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

by elizabeth hess, director of engagement

- Coordinated a Welcoming Spaces task force with the goal of tidying up all the spaces around church—sorting, organizing, donating items from the classrooms, closets and gathering spaces
- Sent out notes from staff to those we prayed for in our weekly meetings
- Easter Basket Extravaganza: along with the Missions committee, collected food and treat items to make one hundred Easter baskets to be donated to area organizations
- Summer Movie Matinees
- Celebrated the work of the Transition Team by hosting a gathering at the beginning of summer; attendees took home a small potted plant as a reminder of the good and active work God is doing in our church. Extra flowers were placed on our front steps and given to neighbors
- Name tag Sundays on the first Sunday of the month



- Hosted a brunch on Kickoff Sunday between services
- Started up Bridge dinners in September, October and November, with 25-45 attendees each month
- Hosted the Trick or Treat event for the first time since before COVID, with 139 members and visitors attending
- Expanded the previous year's Wreath Workshop to include activities for kids and teens, with over 70 attendees
- Created a First Pres slate ornament for sale at Christmastime; proceeds directed to the Bridge dinner funds
- Women's Bible Study took place October through December with a new daytime format, and 12 attendees.



MISSIONS

by anna bentley

- Wednesday Lunches started during Lent and continued through 2022 providing an open invitation to our West Chester community and our congregation to share a meal and get to know each other better. We've offered food and friendly conversations to all who attend and plan to continue with the lunches and growing new friendships with our church neighbors in 2023.
- Supported sixteen local Mission Partners to address housing, food insecurity, aging, domestic violence, job training and to help children with specific needs
- Contributions to the Matthew 25 Fund during Lent allowed us to provide significant grants to three local agencies addressing food and housing insecurity: West Chester Food Cupboard, Kennett Area Community Services, and Friends Association. Our pastor and staff were also able to use this fund to help church members and others in the community with emergency food and shelter needs.
- Helped to sponsor six PC(USA) Mission workers in Haiti, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Peru, Thailand, and the Congo. Three of these workers were added in 2022 following the retirement of missionaries we had previously supported. Carol and Leith Fujii, long time mission workers in Thailand, visited and spoke to the congregation in October.
- Through a partnership with St. Vladimir Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral in Philadelphia, and generous contributions from the congregation, we gave \$9845 to help ship medical and other needed supplies to Ukraine.
- Continued our support of Michael and Bev Harrar's work in Papua New Guinea (Wycliff Bible Translators) and for Naphthali which assists Native Americans in North Dakota. Expanded our international missions by adding support for Lifetime Wells International, a local non-profit that has drilled more than 2500 water wells in Ghana and Tanzania.
- Our strong partnership with Getsemani Presbyterian Church in Villa Nueva, Guatemala, continued and was bolstered through Easter video greetings and Zoom meetings with members of their congregation. Our \$2500 gift helped to support their medical clinic program.
- Volunteers for the Migrant Ministry Christmas program provided gifts for twenty-three families (over one hundred individuals) as well as more than \$1000 in additional gift cards to be used for future family emergency needs.
- The Giving Tree provided 171 individuals with personal gifts or gift cards through our local partner agencies including the Pocopson Home, Migrant Ministry, North Star Ministry, MCHC, and Naphthali. There were expanded giving options this year that resulted in \$1325 in gift cards for the WC Food Cupboard and Domestic Violence Center, and thirty-eight financial contributions to the Matthew 25 fund as well.



PERSONNEL REPORT

Welcomed New Staff

Peyton Cole
Assistant Organist

David Teager
Office Administrator

New Roles & Responsibilities

Kiana Rivera
Lead Vocalist,
Contemporary Service

Jennifer Rosenberg
Preschool Director

Mary Wilkinson
Nursery Director



OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

by david teager, office administrator

- Produced worship bulletins and congregational communications
- Shared quarterly newsletters and the annual report of the congregation, along with concert posters, flyers, and additional publications.
- Prepared the financial systems for conversion to the latest web-based software and for the future move to cloud-based systems storage
- Oversaw financial responsibilities: payroll, deposits, accounts payable
- Maintaining membership and employee records



Celebrated 35 years of service for Karen Goldstein!



PASTORAL NOMINATING COMMITTEE

submitted by chris menan and deb shyrock
co-chairs, pnc

The Holy Spirit fills and refills the PNC's sails. In just over a year, we have created an FPC profile, met with staff, held meetings with the congregation and kept survey results at the forefront. We continue to meet amazing people who describe their calling and share their insights, sailing in their own boats wherever they serve. It helps us to discern more deeply what means the most to the First Pres community and in what ways these people may fit into our congregation or not. Your support and prayers have such an important impact as we continue on this journey.

PROPERTIES COMMITTEE

On Easter Sunday, the Properties Committee celebrated the dedication of three apartments at 122 W. Miner.

The dedication was the culmination of a significant project aimed at discerning the future of the buildings adjacent to the church. In partnership with the Chester County Housing Authority and Friends Association, and with the enthusiastic support of Session, the majority of the church's apartments were renovated by volunteers and converted in Housing Choice Voucher units.

All three units are filled, and we have enjoyed getting to know our new neighbors.



THE BUCKET SCHOOL

by jen rosenberg, preschool director

The Bucket School ended its 2021-2022 school year saying goodbye to director Dr. Marissa Truong. The 2022-2023 school year opened with a new director, 53 students and 9 teachers. By January 2023, there were 62 students and 11 teachers.

The Bucket School continued offering morning classes for children 2 ½ - 5 years old. The children received hands on experiences to facilitate a greater understanding of topics being presented to them as well as monthly music classes and mini worship classes, weekly physical education classes, bi-weekly library lessons.

Opportunities for a longer day were available on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays.



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

The five PW circles welcomed all First Pres women to gather on a monthly basis for fellowship, Bible/book study, mission, service opportunities and overall faith-filled friendship.

We shared agape love with our community neighbors through various service projects with local partners, including the Adventura (formerly Pembroke) Rehabilitation Facility, Migrant Ministry, Salvation Army, Friends Association, and the Domestic Violence Center of Chester County. In addition, we supported the service and outreach ministries of First Pres through coordination of the Meals-to-Go program and the Kettenring Memorial Clothing Closet.

PW Provided financial support to a variety of local, national and world-wide mission partners.

In honor of First Pres women who passed in 2021, PW presented an adult book, *Women in Praise of the Sacred: 43 Centuries of Spiritual Poetry*, by Jane Hirshfield to the church library and a children's book, *I Like Myself*, by Karen Beaumont to the Bucket School.

MEN'S MINISTRIES

Three men's study groups marked over twenty years of weekly gatherings on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Wednesday mornings. Participants met for Bible and book studies, prayer, fellowship, and to deepen bonds that have sustained them over a generation.



FIRST CREW by jim serum

The First Crew tagline is “Serving the Needs of Many” and First Crew was active once again in 2022 with projects at the church and with many of our mission partners. A major project has involved the demolition and reconstruction of a new facility for Act in Faith. Numerous projects at the Barn at Spring Brook Farm involved repair and painting of outbuildings, repair of the long driveway, and refurbishment of parts of the Tree House that we constructed some years ago. The First Crew National mission team completed its 19th trip to assist victims of catastrophic events. This year, the team of First Crew volunteers gathered in Kentucky to assist home owners who were devastated by a tornado. First Crew has frequently assisted in the transportation of household items and furniture donated by church members to persons in need. In addition, First Crew has taken on a variety of repair and renovation projects within the church and for members of the congregation.

MEMBERSHIP

Active Membership (January 1, 2022) 1026

Additions:

Received on Profession of Faith (12 in Confirmation Class)	17
Received by Certificate of Transfer	2
Restored to Active Membership	1
<i>Total Additions</i>	<i>20</i>

Losses:

By Death	9
By Transfer to other Churches	2
By Removal (inactive, withdrawn)	11
<i>Total Losses</i>	<i>22</i>

Total Active Membership – December 31, 2022 1024

Baptisms

Lydia Balascio, Scarlett Damadio, Charlotte Das, Rocco DeJoseph, Albert Feldstein, Leo Laquintano, James Smith, Michael Spaziani

Members Received

Lynda Blessing, Rich Blessing, Ana Dakes, Nick Dakes, Sally Hall, Leah Hampson, Natalie Hess, Alex Khan, Barbara Lyons, Kelly Lyons, Celio Ortiz, Kate Pruden, Leah Skomorucha, Morgan Smith, Tyler Smith, Lauren Sokurenko, Caitlin Treichel, Elise Volkman, Susan Walker, Emily Westbrook

Members who joined the Church Triumphant

Jean Bratton, Carolyn Church, Mary Beth Drobish, Geraldine Gibson, Elizabeth Gilchrist, Alfred Miller, George Nagorny, Mark Osmond, Hugh Sinclair

FINANCIAL REPORT

BUDGET OVERVIEW

INCOME	2023 BUDGET	2022 ACTUAL	2022 BUDGET
Pledge Income	\$892,977	\$847,714	\$890,193
Non-Pledge Income	\$139,929	\$139,905	\$138,142
Other Income	\$21,290	\$33,146	\$23,440
Employee Tax Credit	\$26,000	\$0	\$0
Preschool	\$7,000	\$7,022	\$7,000
Transfers from Investments	\$0	\$0	\$0
Des. Funds and Property Rentals	\$84,000	\$36,000	\$36,000
<i>TOTAL INCOME</i>	<i>\$1,171,196</i>	<i>\$1,063,787</i>	<i>\$1,094,775</i>
EXPENSES	2023 BUDGET	2022 ACTUAL	2022 BUDGET
Personnel	\$815,216	\$607,854	\$748,048
Programs	\$70,404	\$75,342	\$74,120
Administration	\$43,878	\$40,492	\$40,978
Comsys	\$20,280	\$23,220	\$20,880
Building and Grounds	\$98,664	\$142,261	\$86,331
Mission	\$122,754	\$123,379	\$124,418
Transfers	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>TOTAL EXPENSE</i>	<i>\$1,171,196</i>	<i>\$1,014,067</i>	<i>\$1,094,775</i>
<i>INCOME VS EXPENSE</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$49,720</i>	<i>\$0</i>

FINANCIAL REPORT

INVESTMENTS

	12.31.22	12.31.21
Vanguard Funds		
Legacy Endowment Fund	\$1,381,426	
Mission Endowment Fund	\$90,406	
Reserve Account	\$334,482	
<i>Vanguard Total</i>	<i>\$1,806,314</i>	<i>\$2,015,179</i>
Presbyterian Foundation Funds		
Morgan	\$18,299	\$21,187
McCardle	\$3,156	\$4,192
MacIver	\$4,751	\$5,664
Thompson	\$13,868	\$16,534
Elles	\$9,502	\$11,329
Other		
BNY Mellon – Whiteley	\$61,638	\$77,013
Wells Fargo – Bogle	\$127,600	\$153,144
Total assets	\$2,045,488	\$2,304,241

RENTAL PROPERTIES

Financial Activity	2022
Total Income	\$117,326
Operating Expenses	\$34,363
Transfer to GOF	\$36,000
Margin	\$46,963
Balance Sheet	
<i>Assets</i>	
Total Cash	\$205,557
Total Investments (Building)	\$1,656,937
Total Assets	\$1,862,495
<i>Liabilities</i>	
Security Deposits	\$10,855
<i>Fund Balance</i>	
Unrestricted	\$1,801,867
Current Year UFB	\$49,972
Total Fund Balance	\$1,851,839
Total Liabilities and Fund Balance	\$1,862,495

FINANCIAL REPORT

MISSION GIVING

Total Missions

\$178,016

Global Service & Outreach/ PCUSA Mission Workers

Total Giving	\$18,970
Boyd (Congo)	\$2,000
Undesignated Global	\$2,280
Fujii (Thailand)	\$2,200
GAUnified	\$2,500
Getsemani Church	\$4,990
Harrar Wycliffe Bible Translators	\$3,000
Koball (Peru)	\$2,000

National Service & Outreach

Total Giving	\$12,000
Naphtali	\$1,000
Nancy Wilkinson Fund	\$2,000
PCUSA	\$9,000

PC(USA) Commitment

Total Giving	\$38,246
Per Capita	\$38,246

Local Service & Outreach

Total Giving	\$47,200
ACT in Faith	\$5,000
The Barn at Spring Brook Farm	\$1,000
Charles A. Melton Center	\$2,000
Domestic Violence Center	\$2,000
Friends Association	\$2,000
Good Samaritan	\$2,000
Habitat for Humanity	\$2,000
Legal Aid of Southeastern PA.	\$1,000
Kennett Area Comm. Service	\$2,000
Meals on Wheels	\$2,000
Migrant Ministries	\$5,200
North Star	\$2,000
Opportunities Industrialization Ctr.	\$1,000
Safe Harbor	\$5,500
Voucher Program	\$3,000
West Chester Food Cupboard	\$5,000
West Chester Senior Center	\$4,500

Other Distributions

Total Giving	\$61,09
Matthew 25 Gifts	\$59,642
Miscellaneous	\$950
Youth	\$504

PROPOSED TERMS OF CALL: EXECUTIVE PASTOR

Salary & Benefits

Salary	\$25,900
Housing	\$56,000
Total Effective Salary	\$81,900
Soc. Sec. Replacement (7.6%)	\$6,265

Board of Pensions

Pension Dues (8.5%)	\$6,962
Death/Disability Dues (1.5%)	\$1,228
Medical Dues (29%)	\$23,751
Reimbursable Expenses	\$4,06

Total compensation, benefits, and expenses **\$124,168**

first presbyterian church

130 west miner street, west chester pa 19382

610.696.0554

www.firstpreswc.com