

2023 Annual Report  
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**2023 Annual Report  
Valley Forge Presbyterian Church**

**Table of Contents**

Pastor's Report	3
Session Report	5
Deacons' Report	6
Gathered to Grow Committee	7
Sustaining/Property Committee	8
Sent to Serve Committee	9
Long Term Vision Working Group Report	10
Standing Nominating Committee Report	14
Valley Forge Presbyterian Nursery School Report	15
Upper Merion Area Community Cupboard Report	16
Knitting Group Report	18
Meals on Wheels Report	19
Stewardship Report	19
Finance & Budget Report	20
2022 Budget	24
Balance Sheet – December 31, 2022	26

## Pastor's Report for 2023

Friends, neighbors, and siblings in faith,

The days of worship, work, and witness that we shared in 2023 were days of great joy, challenge, change, beauty, and faith. Thanks be to God for such a life-giving and up-building season together! We began our year, as we always do, with a collective focus on our Christian Epiphany – our realization and conviction that Jesus is the one whom we are to follow into the fullness of life that God intends for us together.

We grounded ourselves during the rest of January and February in six foundational parables of Jesus: the Mustard Seed, the Pounds, the Rich Fool, the Wicked Tenants, the Banquet, and the Prodigal. These parables invited us to see ourselves through the lens of abundance and to confess that we HAVE enough, and we ARE enough to be the Church that Christ is compelling us to be, and to set down the lies of scarcity that trick us into believing there is not enough.

We spent the Lenten season intentionally and prayerfully considering the principles of appreciative and grateful living. We considered how we get to choose whether or not we focus on that which is good or that which is imperfect, and that our focus determines the shape our future takes – so let's make sure we are focusing on the good and beautiful in this life we share, and upon the good gifts God has given us that we might share! The questions we ask about what is possible (rather than what is "wrong"), the images we discern for our future, and the words we use to narrate who we are (and who we are becoming) all likewise point us toward Christ's call upon a journey of peacemaking and joy.

After Easter, we entered into a season of prayerful reflection on Paul's letter to the Galatians, which was written as an argument against legalism within the Galatians developing commitment to Christianity as their foundational identity and ethic. We considered how Paul's argument meets us in our context and challenges the ways that legalism still exists within traditional and contemporary Christianity. The way of Jesus is the way of freedom and faith. It is a living by the Spirit of Christ his law of LOVE rather than by enslavement to the laws of Moses. As Paul wrote, the only thing that counts is our Christian faith acting itself out in LOVE! There is no going back to the old ways of conditionality!

Over the summer, the Dooners were most grateful to receive the gift of a season of Sabbatical. We drove 11,400 miles through 15 states and two Canadian provinces, and hiked between 80-100 miles while visiting ten American and three Canadian National Parks. We saw thousands of deer, herds of cattle, fields full of prairie dogs, wild horses, mountain goats and long horned sheep, a moose, a momma bear and three adorable cubs, eagles and falcons soaring over the Black Canyon, and had one close encounter with a buffalo. Not ONCE did we sense that we were anywhere else

but in the sanctuary and presence of God, or that the people we met along the way were anything but kin.

As the Dooners were away, our worship, work and witness continued uninterrupted! The Church gathered to grow in worship and was sent out to serve the good and peacemaking will of God. Pastor-friends of VFPC came to offer their preaching voices, and Lynne exercised her pastoral gifts by leading the congregation in creative, disciple-forming worship with the help of Fred Rogers. Our partners were busy at work furthering plans and fund-raising efforts for the sake of our soon-to-be-realized dream of transforming our CE building into housing for the least of our sisters and brothers. Our people loved their neighbors in the midst of their own summer comings and goings. Thanks be to God!

During the Fall and Winter, John's Gospel was at the heart of our worship, as we considered our own call as VFPC to the ministries of disciple-making, reforming false and incomplete systems and structures, tearing down the walls of hostility so that all can be included in God's promise of life, healing and empowering the marginalized, lifting up the poor and hungry, challenging bad religion and false prophets, and being sent into the world to proclaim forgiveness, relegate legalism, and tend to all of God's children as beloved sheep within God's flock.

We gathered throughout Advent to remember and celebrate the promise of God's guiding light coming to the world in the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, who was not to be a messiah that delivered a restoration of peace through military might and victory, nor a messiah that delivered a restoration of peace through the renewal of legalistic religion, but a messiah that was to deliver a restoration of peace by initiating a new kind of social order that was based on nurturing love for neighbor across the lines of race, gender, class, and religion. We gathered on Christmas Eve to celebrate the birth of this messiah in Scripture and Song, and on New Year's Eve morning to prayerfully toast to God's will being done with love!

This was a year in which we said goodbye to several long-time siblings in the VFPC fellowship as they were welcomed across the threshold unto eternity. It was a year in which we recognized God's call upon some to commit themselves in work and worship alongside of other congregations, and also recognized God's call leading some new sheep into our particular flock. It was a year in which we joyfully welcomed Seminarian Emma Marshall into the fold that we might be a blessing unto each other and that we both might grow, and in which we delighted in the ministry of Melanie Eberhard as the beauty of her voice and skill behind the keys of our piano added to the depth and power of our worship practices.

It was a year in which our Gathered to Grow, Sent to Serve, Sustaining, Nominating, and Long-Term Vision committees faithfully sought to discern God's fresh guidance and inspiration upon our life together, and faithfully refused to settle for the ease of the maintenance of past precedent. It was a year in which thousands upon thousands of food-insufficient neighbors found God's gifts of compassion and food

through the work of UMACC, a year in which children and youth were loved and nurtured in the children’s church time and the VFP Nursery School, and a year in which we reached \$4 MILLION raised in support of our future efforts to house some of our most vulnerable neighbors.

What an amazing, awe-inspiring, and humbling year of life and ministry we have shared! +Thank God for your faithfulness, your energy, your willingness to adapt and change, and your continued ability to include, gift, and love the Dooner family as we lived in life and ministry alongside of you for another blessed year.

Take a deep breath of rest and gratitude, my sisters and brothers in faith, for in 2024 there is more work that is ours to do for the sake of Christ’s Kingdom of peace come to KOP as it is in heaven!

Gratefully and humbly,  
Tim

### Session Report

2023 was the church’s first full year of worshipping in the new sanctuary since it was converted. The congregation has adopted the space and is comfortable with it, which is evident when we pass the peace! We have continued to offer Zoom for those members and friends who are not able to attend in person.

All Session and committee meetings have remained as Zoom meetings, however, because they have become commonplace to those boards.

In September 2023 the congregation was blessed to have another seminarian from Princeton, Emma Marshall, join us for her academic year. Emma, like Peter Manning before her, brings her spirit to us each week in worship and we are so grateful for her presence.

Elsewhere in this annual report you will see that Valley Forge also had a good year financially. VFPC did not have to use planned savings to meet its budget needs and even ended the year with a small surplus.

You will also see that the church’s plans for converting the CE building into affordable apartments has also progressed and we hope to begin actual demolition/construction in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2024.

Membership changes in 2023 were as follows:

Total Active Membership, 12/31/22 (adjusted):	95
Gains:	0
Losses:     Death	-1
Other	0
Total Active Membership, 12/31/23:	94

On behalf of the Session, thank you, the members, and friends of the Valley Forge. Thank you for your faithfulness and your support to our church as we seek to know and do God's will here in our community.

Mike Henry  
Clerk of Session

### **Deacons Report for 2023**

The Deacons, 9 of us, are responsible for caring for our members. We each have a "flock" to whom we offer support. This support may be offered by calls, emails, cards, meals or rides as needed. The Deacons welcome a call from anyone who feels the need to be comforted or assisted with a concern.

Every month there is a Deacon's meeting to discuss and act on new ways to help the individuals and congregation. We continue to offer donuts and coffee the first Sunday of each month except in the Summer when cookies and lemonade are made available.

We sent 9 care boxes with snack goodies to our young people in college. The congregation gave snacks of their choice for the care boxes.

Rebecca Gonsalves, a high school student and member of our church, designed Thank you cards for one hundred volunteers in the Community Cupboard. She was assisted by her mother, Parinita, who is a deacon, to have the church members sign the cards. They were distributed to the volunteers between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

It was decided that we would honor our 90+ year old members by interviewing them and asking for photographs. We are hoping to put together a video and slide show about all 10 of our senior congregants.

We are guided by the words of Maya Angelou: " Be the rainbow in someone else's cloud. Anyone of us can be a rainbow in somebody's cloud. God puts Rainbows in the clouds so that each of us - in the dreariest and most dreaded moments- can see a possibility of hope."

Barbara Beck, Moderator

## **Gathered To Grow Committee**

The *Gathered To Grow Committee* is the “umbrella” covering Worship, Discipleship, and Fellowship. We meet on the third Monday of each month.

Lynne Klepacki continues to provide outstanding Christian Ed Programs for our youth both in person and on Zoom.

Throughout the year our Committee has been discussing the many ways of Fellowship and reaching out to our members.

We hosted Friendsgiving Luncheons, Easter Egg Hunts on Palm Sunday, and Halloween Bags for the Cupboard. The children hosted a beautiful Mother’s Day Service and Luncheon as well as a Pancake Breakfast where they gave out handmade tree ornaments to Church Members.

Our committee helped with the Summer Services during Pastor Tim’s Sabbatical. Lynne Klepacki ran the Neighborhood Services during the Summer that helped bring us all closer together. We welcomed Pastor Ashley Rossi, Pastor Steven Emick, Pastor Cassie Heinz, and Pastor Laura Colee as Supply Pastors this Summer.

The Wednesday Advent Services run by Pastor Tim were enjoyed. As Christmas Eve fell on a Sunday this past year, we had our regular Sunday Service at 10am as well as the Christmas Eve Family Service at 4pm.

The midweek Bible Study with Ejvind Hansen has been an excellent time of Christian Education and Fellowship each week.

Gathered to Grow also purchased new Hymnals. The Glory to God Hymnals are an updated version with most of the same Hymns from the Presbyterian Hymnal as well as many new songs.

“God never said that the journey would be easy, but He did say that the arrival would be worthwhile.” – Max Lucado

CoChairs – Laurie Whiteley and Betsy Develin

## Sustaining - Property / Personnel Committee Report

*1 Corinthians 3:9 –For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building*

The VFPC Sustaining Committee had a number of property projects this year to support our buildings and property maintenance. Here is a list of items that were completed in 2023:

1. In the first quarter we terminated our lease agreement for the large copier / printer that was in the office. We purchased a new Epson ET 5850 as the replacement. This has provided VFPC with cost savings this year and reduces our yearly recurring costs.
2. The doors to the Sanctuary were replaced in June as part of the Sanctuary Renovation project. Also during that time the broken Sanctuary window was replaced.
3. In July we hired our lawn service team, Pablo Montes to remove a few of the large overgrown hedges that were in front of the Sanctuary Building.
4. In late fall we had Pablo Montes team perform full leaf cleanup on the property.
5. Maintenance of the underground drainage system was performed in August by Bruce's plumbing. This cost \$880 and needs to be scheduled yearly. It had been a few years since the last maintenance.
6. The gutters of the CE Building were cleaned by Quick-n-Clean Services in August. Quick-n-Clean also reattached the one gutter on the Sanctuary Building that had blown down due to a wind storm.
7. Cooper Roofing performed a patch to the CE Building roof that had caused a small hole in the Chapel ceiling. The inside ceiling on the Chapel still has a hole in it, but the outer roofing is now sealed to prevent further damage. This repair was performed in October.
8. In July, UMACC received a Defibrillator and it is mounted next to the kitchen doorway in Fellowship Hall / Pantry.
9. In December we changed the cleaning schedule for the Sanctuary from weekly to every two weeks.
10. The VFPC Ladders that were in the closet on the stage have been moved to the following locations
  - a. Werner 8 foot step / 16 foot straight ladder – Boiler room
  - b. Werner 8 foot fiberglass step ladder- Sexton closet – secured in place by a bungee.
  - c. Werner 6 foot aluminum step ladder- Boiler room
  - d. Werner 13 foot aluminum straight ladder – stage wall
  - e. The large 40 foot fiberglass ladder was sold this year.
11. UMACC funded a number of changes in support of their food mission that utilizes our facility.



- a. Four new electrical circuits were added to Fellowship Hall to support one new refrigerator and two new freezers. The new circuits were installed in September.
- b. A new spot light was installed on the Prince Frederick side of the building to lighten the walkway to the side door. Note this side door has two lights, but the one light doesn't have power to it and thus the need for the additional spot light.
- c. A hot standby natural gas generator is being purchased to support the pantry operation. The new generator will be located near the UMACC outside refrigerator on a separate concrete pad. This generator will provide power for the pantry facility in the event of power outages. This requires modifications to the electrical panels and the natural gas line that are located in the boiler room. This project has been active since December, 2023 and expects to become operational in the first quarter of 2024.

#### Member Activities:

1. Don Hawk and Dave Wilkie performed some tree and bush trimming in the fall of this year. Jeff Mann provided brush removal services.
2. Jeff Mann worked on the steps to the parking lot and unfortunately the concrete patching material did not work out. This will be an ongoing item.
3. Also thanks to others, who did things that I did not capture as everything is appreciated.

Below is a list of items that are actively being discussed:

1. The lighting in the Sanctuary is being evaluated.
2. The doors to the kitchen and boiler room are both in need of replacement.

#### Personnel Activity

No activity to report on for 2023.

The Sustaining / Property committee is very thankful to all our volunteers, who have helped us this year. Also a special thanks to Jeff Mann for his help on a number of items around the facility this year. If you would like to assist on property concerns, please contact Dave Wilkie via email ([dwwilkie@comcast.net](mailto:dwwilkie@comcast.net)) or the office.

Thank you.

Dave Wilkie  
Sustaining Committee Chair.

Some Before and After pictures.

Sanctuary Landscape –



Before 2018



After June 2023

### Sanctuary Doors –



## **Sent to Serve Committee Annual Report for 2023**

The Sent to Serve Committee played a key role in the life of the church through its focus on five areas of work:

1. Benevolence management: stewardship of treasure
2. Local active mission: stewardship of time and talent
3. Congregational vitality
4. Systemic poverty
5. Structural racism

These areas overlap at times with efforts of other church committees and boards. These overlaps give strength and a broader foundation for the activities and programs and are celebrated as work of the entire church community.

The Committee is guided by its charter, which tries to capture its role in the overall ministry of the church.

The Sent to Serve Committee will embrace the practice of kingdom building by desiring the abundant life not only for us, but for our neighbor, the person down the street, our communities and the world, desiring a life not based in scarcity and fear, but abundance, happiness and joy. The Committee acknowledges the systemic and ongoing issues in our communities around poverty, healthcare access, food, family systems, mental health needs, racism, appropriate paying jobs and training for them, schooling and the full funding of schools, infrastructure of the both physical kind and virtual kind. The Committee takes action by doing something, not just acknowledging problems, through careful examination of ourselves and our lives. The Committee acknowledges that it cannot do everything; it cannot tackle every problem. But it can raise awareness and take action in collaboration with others on some problems. There are many local and community organizations doing important mission and Matthew 25 work. There are resources in our congregational community that are available to support the stewardship and kingdom building; the committee will provide the discernment and leadership to make things happen.

Some of the Committee's ministries in 2023 connected to its five areas of work are:

- Upper Merion Area Community Cupboard, our most significant contribution to addressing systemic poverty
- Neighborhood Meals on Wheels
- Upper Merion Emergency Aid
- Norristown Hospitality Center
- The Knitters at VFPC
- Racial Equity Conversations
- Pre-K education, a collaboration with VFPC Nursery School
- Mission Co-worker for Zambia: Melissa Johnson. Melissa has retired from her work in Zambia and has joined the staff of Central Presbyterian Church in Atlanta as Executive Assistant and Events Coordinator.
- Mukti Mission, a Christian mission in India supporting women and children. Parinita Gonsalves is the Secretary of the US Board of Directors.

The Committee built on the national publicity for Giving Tuesday by promoting ways that everyone (child, youth, adult) could give time or money in support of projects benefitting the church and its missions.

In 2023 the Committee distributed mission support funds as follows:

- Denominational Giving - \$10,000. This amount is split among the Presbytery of Philadelphia (\$6200), the Synod of the Trinity (\$500), and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (\$3300)
- Caring Through Sharing Scholarship - \$2000. This money has been transferred to the Caring Through Sharing Fund for use in 2024.

- Central Presbyterian Church (Norristown) - \$1000 for general church activities. Central Presbyterian is the Spanish language church that meets in the First Presbyterian Church of Norristown facility.
- Norristown Ministries Inc. Hospitality Center - \$1000
- Mukti Mission - \$500.
- Upper Merion Area Community Cupboard - \$500 to kickstart a program of providing fresh vegetables and fruits each week
- Upper Merion Emergency Aid - \$1000 plus gifts at Christmas bought by church members
- West Kensington Ministries - \$1000
- One Great Hour of Sharing - \$3132
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance - \$510
- Pastor's Discretionary Fund - \$6151

In collaboration with the Sustaining Committee, Sent to Serve followed a yearly calendar of giving activities. As part of this collaboration, the Sent to Serve Committee developed this year's stewardship campaign that was carried out in October and November.

In addition, many members of our church community, acting as stewards of their time, talent, and treasures

- Donated food to the Upper Merion Area Community Cupboard by filling the shopping cart in the sanctuary each Sunday,
- Volunteered their time for our local ministries, such as helping with the UMEA Holiday Shop and winter coat distribution,
- Tended the vegetable gardens at the Upper Merion Community Garden that grow fresh veggies for the Community Cupboard,
- And performed many other tasks quietly to promote congregational vitality.

To help our church members and the wider community understand the breadth of activities of our church as we are sent to serve, each week the BLAST contains a section on Servings: Our Stewardship of Time, Talent, and Resources. Also, the Committee prepared posters for display in the sanctuary that describe the activities of our mission partners. Finally, the Committee depends on the weekly announcements during worship and the on-going outreach of the Deacons to their flocks to encourage us all to be Sent to Serve.

The Committee hosted Sunanda Charles, the Executive Director of the Norristown Hospitality Center, at Sunday worship in September. She described the work of the Center and the challenges that homeless and recently incarcerated people have as they try to return to the community.

Thanks to all for their support.

Bob Beck, Chair  
Rev. Tim Dooner, Pastor  
Kevin Gibbons

Kristin Maas  
Barbara McElvogue  
Florence Sangster

## Long-Term Vision Working Group (LTVWG) Report – 2023

2023 was a year of progress for VFPC's project: the Upper Merion Area Housing Association (UMAHA), to convert the Chapel/Christian Education Building into affordable apartments.

The original estimated cost for the project was approx. \$3.4 million. During 2023 the project cost was raised to \$5 million. This was done because one of the larger funding sources, the PA Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) required minimum sizes for rental units which were larger than some of our planned apartments. To qualify for that funding, we increased the apartment sizes, but then needed to increase the number of apartments to make the project financially sustainable. The result was that the project needed to go from 16 apartments to 20 apartments. In order to fit 20 apartments into the building, the roof on the CE building needed to be raised to create apartments on the new, third floor. The benefits to this change include the addition of an elevator, which will make all levels handicapped-accessible, and, obviously, the ability to serve more people in need of affordable housing.

Through the excellent work of our fundraising consultants, Stone Sherick Consulting, we continued to secure grant funding, capped off in October with a \$2 million grant from the PHFA Housing Opportunity Program mentioned above. This brought the total amount of grants committed to \$4.25 million.

We are now looking to secure the remaining \$0.75 million needed, as well as interrogating construction costs to determine if there might be a lower number.

We hope to be able to start construction in the second half of 2024. To that end, our Architect/Builder, Evolve Build, has spoken with township officials to plan out the licensing/permitting process. The township is very supportive of the project. Pastor Tim and Mike Henry will also be meeting with the township Board Chair and Vice Chair in January.

This is a preliminary representation of the 20 unit, apartment conversion. It shows the raised roofs of the Chapel and CE building and a large elevator tower on the parking lot end of the building. Please note, the colors may change and exterior decoration (such as the cross) will likely change.



God has continued to guide us and direct us to people who can help. We ask that you continue to pray for VFPC in this new mission for our community.

The members of the LTVWG are Betsy Develin, Mike Henry, Lynne Klepacki, Kathy Knoebel, Zandra Maffett, Eileen Wilkie, and Pastor Tim.

### **STANDING NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT FOR 2023**

**MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:** Betsy Develin, Chair (Elder), Kirsten Yatsko (Elder), Kim Mengel (Deacon), and (at large) David Ford, Mike Henry, Susanne Hill, and Ann Zugay

**PURPOSE:**

- To discern what it means to be a faithful Elder & Deacon.
- To look at those Elders & Deacons who will have completed their 1 or 3-year term commitments.
- To peruse the active membership list and prayerfully consider who might be a good fit for serving in those positions.
- After taking time to consider potential candidates, to call and ask if they would be willing to serve in such a capacity with joy and excitement on behalf of VFPC.
- It is our desire that those who accept might wish to serve willingly, being filled with the Holy Spirit from above. These positions are not meant to be looked at as obligatory tasks.

## **OUR VISION:**

As we have heard before from Pastor Tim, we all have **enough**, and we all are **enough**. God does not expect perfection from any of us. And, as Jimmy Carter said, "We have one life and one chance to make it count for something. Our faith demands that we do whatever we can, wherever we are, wherever we can, for as long as we can with whatever we have to try to make a difference." We are looking for willing participants to engage more with the life of the church as an Elder or Deacon. We are bound together in communion with one another, united in relationships of accountability and responsibility, contributing our strengths to the benefit of the whole collectively as the church here at VFPC. We will answer any questions potential candidates may have to the best of our ability and if we don't have the answers, we will get them with Pastor Tim's help. Our hope is that there are individuals who agree wholeheartedly and willing to take a chance for Jesus!

Elder Class of 2024 – Hope MacDougall, Barb McElvogue, & Laurie Whiteley

Elder Class of 2025 – Betsy Develin, Kevin Gibbons, & Kirsten Yatsko

Elder Class of 2026 – Bob Beck, Kevin Mengel, & Dave Wilkie

Deacon Class of 2024 – Tim Cybart, Kirsten Mass, & Sandy Rodman

Deacon Class of 2025 – Barb Beck, Corrine Weaver, & Kim Mengel

Deacon Class of 2026 – Dillon Baker, Joanne Henry, & Parinita Gonsalves

The above shows who will matriculate as Elders & Deacons in the spring of 2024. The PCUSA guidelines allow for positions to be filled for 2 consecutive 3- year terms depending on the willingness of candidates.

If any in the congregation have a desire to become an Elder or Deacon, please feel free to reach out to Pastor Tim, myself, or others on the Nominating Committee to explore the possibility. We would love to speak with you about what it has meant to our sense of calling here at VFPC.



Valley Forge Presbyterian Nursery School had a wonderful 2023. Our classrooms are filled with smiling joy filled children busy with growing, searching and discovering the world around them. We continue to be blessed with the dedication of an amazing staff of teachers including Mrs. Lorraine Tenney, Mrs. Laurie Whiteley and Mrs. Amy Craig. We are also so fortunate to have the gifts and talents of an amazing support staff including Mrs. Dee Huebner and Mrs. Patty Alleva.

We are proud of our Nursery School and as we enter our 63 years of service to our community we look forward to the many changes that 2024 will bring. We sincerely thank the congregation of VFPC for their continued support.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Klepacki  
Director

### **Upper Merion Area Community Cupboard Annual Report for 2023**

The Upper Merion Area Community Cupboard (UMACC) is feeding more families than ever as the high inflation numbers in the beginning of 2023 caused families to spend more and more of their disposable income on food. The number of families coming through the pantry on any given Tuesday is greater than any other time in our 5 ½ year history. Every week, volunteers are asking again and again, 'is that a new record?', and most of the time, it is! Thankfully, we converted to a 'full choice' model in September, which enables us to serve more families at one time.

The following provides some statistics on our service activity during 2023:

- Over the last three months of 2023, an average of **169 households** were served by UMACC, which is about 30 more per week than last years' average. Each week, a team of 7-8 drivers deliver food to 25-30 of these households who were unable to shop in person due to lack of transportation.
- We had 7,354 total "pantry visits" in 2023. Comparatively, in 2022 we had 5,912 total pantry visits. Since July of this year, 425 unique families have utilized the Cupboard.

The Fellowship Hall is in use most of the week from Monday to Thursday. We now do 'retail rescue' from 10 different food establishments and we receive deliveries each week from SHARE and Philabundance, as well as 6 other food wholesalers. At any given time at the pantry, you will be sure to see a volunteer dropping off food picked up at some food establishment.

None of what we do would be possible without the tireless efforts of our army of volunteers. **Every single week**, we fill over 75 volunteer slots with donation pickups at almost a dozen locations, home deliveries to over 30 families, and hundreds of hours of pantry work.





We also want to thank our many food and financial donors during 2023, who allow us to continue serving our community.

- We filled the UMACC van 4 times with donations of Toilet Paper and paper towels from the First Quality Company. Unfortunately, they are moving out of King of Prussia, so we will miss their wonderful generosity in the coming years.
- The KOP BID donated a huge check after having an 'IGLOO EVENT' at the town center around the Thanksgiving Holidays.
- The school district continues to collect food for UMACC and the Bridgeport Elementary School did a 'turkey trot' fundraiser for us.
- We also received large donations from many individuals, and many of our volunteers give us money as well as their time.

Anna Derby Nelson continues to do an outstanding job as Pantry Manager and is wonderful with both the patrons and the volunteers. If you haven't had a chance to volunteer and meet her, please try to do so in 2024!

The entire UMACC board is very thankful to VFPC for all the support we receive. Please continue to donate as you are able by either bring in food donations or visiting our website ([www.umacc.org](http://www.umacc.org)) and using the Donate button to make a financial gift.

With Deep Appreciation,  
Eileen Wilkie, Director of Operations

### **VFPC Knitting Group**

The Knitting Group has been meeting faithfully for a number of years and is made up of members from VFPC as well as former members and friends. Knitters and crocheters met in person twice a month on Monday afternoons this past year for conversation and needlework. Another member, who can't make it to meetings, works on hats at home and then turns them in. They have made prayer shawls which Pastor Tim has distributed. They continue to make hats and baby blankets for Knit for Kids, in addition to squares that are sent away to be made into blankets. New members are always welcome, and those interested in joining the group can contact Joanne Henry for more information.

## Neighborhood Meals on Wheels Report for 2023

The Neighborhood Meals on Wheels (NMOW) organization, with its office in the Christian Ed building, is proud to have continued serving patrons throughout the pandemic and beyond. Volunteers go to the state hospital in Norristown to pack the meals, then return to VFPC, where more volunteers pick up the meals and distribute them throughout the township, five days a week, including holidays. They also provide a friendly personal contact with the patrons. In 2024, we are celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> year of service. New volunteers are always welcome. The office can be reached by phone at 610-265-7051, or more information is available on our website, [neighborhoodmealsonwheels.com](http://neighborhoodmealsonwheels.com).

## Stewardship Report for 2023

This report summarizes the financial donations made to the church by members and friends in 2023 and the financial commitments (pledges) made for the 2024 budget.

In 2023, 34 members of VFPC made financial commitments (pledges) totaling \$192,064. By the end of the year, these pledges accounted for \$190,282 of income, which is 99.1% of the amount pledged.

In addition to pledged income, 29 additional donors gave to the church, bringing the total amount of Named Giving to \$231,654. On top of this, loose cash donations, holiday donations and per capita donations totaled \$4,627, making the **total donations to the operating fund \$236,280 in 2023**. This represented 96% of the entire budget, once again emphasizing the significant dependency of our church on these faith donations.

But that is not all. The generosity of the members and friends of Valley Forge also provided \$9,793 to One Great Hour of Sharing (\$3,132), Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (\$510), and our Pastor's Discretionary Fund (\$6,151) which has helped Pastor Tim respond to the needs of the church and community.

So, all told, the members and friends of the church provided approximately \$246,073 to the support the mission of Valley Forge in 2023. Note that this **does not include** donations (money and food) to the Upper Merion Area Community Cupboard nor the donations members and friends have made to other agencies involved in social good.

The Stewardship Campaign for 2023 stressed the importance of VFPC's mission in our world and urged all to make a commitment toward that mission. We are grateful for the response to date: at the end of 2023, the church had received pledges from 36 members totaling \$206,020. It is never too late to make a financial commitment to VFPC, so members are urged to give this prayerful thought.

On behalf of the Sent to Serve Committee, the Sustaining Committee, and the Session, we want to thank all our members and friends who supported VFPC financially. Your faithfulness allows Valley Forge to serve God in our community.

Bob Beck – for Sent to Serve Committee  
 Mike Henry – for the Sustaining Committee

**Finance and Budget Report – 2023-2024**

The following pages summarize the original 2023 budget, the actual 2023 income and expenses, and the approved 2024 budget. Also shown is the Balance Sheet as of 12/31/23. Below is a top-line summary. Please refer to the tables at the end of this report for detailed information.

	Budget	Actual	Difference
2023 Income			
Gift Receipts	\$234,238	\$236,280	\$2,042
Other Receipts	\$11,900	\$14,634	\$2,734
Total Income	\$246,138	\$250,914	\$4,776
2023 Expenses			
Program	\$229,138	\$228,106	-\$1,032
Benevolence	\$17,000	\$17,377	-\$377
Total Expenses	\$246,138	\$245,483	-\$1,408
Income minus Expenses	\$0	\$5,431	

Please see attached Budget for more detail. Note: Mission-specific income and disbursements are not included above because they are not in the yearly budget. Please see the Mission Report for a summary of these items. Numbers above are rounded to the nearest whole number, therefore, totals and differences between totals may vary by 1 when rounded.

Total Income in 2023 was made up of Gift Receipts (cash tithes and offerings, including per capita), and Other Receipts (donations made for facility use, interest income, donation from the Nursery School). In 2023 actual Gift Receipts were 101% of the budgeted number. Other Receipts were also slightly higher than budget. In all, total income in 2023 was 102% of the budgeted amount. It should be noted that the church did not have to use any of the 2022 surplus that was in the budget. This was mainly due to several unanticipated donations late in the year.

Most expenses for 2023 were fairly close to budget. Exceptions were found in the costs to maintain the church property: utilities, which were over \$4,000 *higher* than budget (mainly

due to electricity usage and rates), and lawn care (which included additional work such as shrub removal). These property expenses were offset by maintenance items which were *lower* than budget (such as general maintenance and snow removal).

In summary, both income and expenses in 2023 were reasonably close to the original budget, with the slight exceptions mentioned above. The net result was that the church budget ended with a modest surplus of \$5,431. The approved budget for 2024 carries this surplus over as support for 2024. Based on the church's history over the last several years, we are hoping that this 2023 surplus will not be needed to support the 2024 budget.

## **2024 Budget**

The 2024 budget is shown on the following pages. It is compared with both the original 2023 budget and the actual 2023 results.

The 2024 Expense budget is based mainly on the actual costs in 2023, and the total is approximately 1.5% higher than the original 2023 Expense budget. Staff salaries (Pastor Tim and Lynne Klepacki) have been increased by 4% for 2024, in accordance to the recommendation from the Presbytery of Philadelphia.

## **Balance Sheet**

The Balance Sheet lists the churches assets and liabilities and equity as of December 31, 2023.

The balance sheet continues to be heavily influenced by the church's re-construction of the sanctuary and VFPC's plans to convert the CE building into affordable housing. Of immediate notice, the balance of the church's checking account at the end of the year was \$608,887, due significantly to the \$600,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement (PHARE) fund. This is the first large grant received for the conversion of the CE building. It also shows as a Fund since it's dedicated to the housing mission.

At year end, VFPC had a total of \$768,734.33 in current assets (checking at Bank of America, a high interest CD and member account at American Heritage Credit Union, and an investment account with Vanguard).

As first shown in the 2022 Balance Sheet, the 2023 Balance sheet contains an asset class termed "Construction in Progress". This represents the total money spent (invested) to date in the Sanctuary reconstruction and Stage II (apartment) construction projects. It has risen considerably since last year due to costs incurred preparing for the CE building apartment conversion.

The Total Assets of the church at the end of 2023 were \$1,226,511.88.

Offsetting the Current Assets are Liabilities and Equity. Current Liabilities are debt (mainly loans) that the church has acquired during the Sanctuary reconstruction and Stage II (apartment) construction projects. These loans will be paid off from grant money the church receives for these projects. Total liabilities at the end of 2022 were \$235,356.58.

Equity is shown on the Balance Sheet as Equity funds (monies that have been raised in the past and designated for specific purposes, including the large PHARE grant), Retained Earnings, and Net Income (the net of the current year's Income minus Expenses).

Here are some selected comments regarding the Balance Sheet:

## **ASSETS**

**1202 American Heritage CD** – In June 2023 the church moved its savings accounts to the American Heritage Credit Union. American Heritage was able to provide higher interest rates than our former bank.

**Construction in Progress** – The two lines in this asset class show the total amount of money spent to date on the conversion of the sanctuary and the Stage II construction of the new apartments (builder's costs and fundraising consultant costs). Construction in Progress will continue to show on the balance sheet until the debt on these investments has been paid off.

## **LIABILITIES & EQUITY**

**2333 Presbytery Line of Credit.** The church received a \$87,5000 line-of-credit from the Trustees of the Presbytery of Philadelphia to assist VFPC's plans for the sanctuary and CE building conversion. The amount shown on the balance sheet, \$85,448.21, is the current balance on that loan.

**2336 Stage II Construction Loan.** This is a zero-interest, private loan to the church to pay for preliminary work (drawings, documents, permitting requirements) for the apartment project. It will be paid off from grant monies for the apartment project.

**EQUITY Funds**, which totaled \$670,625.15 at the end of 2023 are monies set aside by VFPC in the past for specific purposes and plans. Some, such as the Endowment Fund and the UMAHA Grants, are restricted. (UMAHA is the Upper Merion Area Housing Association, the separate 501c(3) corporation set up to manage the CE apartment conversion)

Finally, the Balance Sheet shows the church's **Total Equity**. This is the difference between the Total Assets and the Current Liabilities and at the end of 2023 Total Equity was \$991,155.30. Total equity is made up of the Equity Funds (above), Net

Income (which the end-of-year budget's income minus expense - in this case a budget surplus of \$5,431.23) and Retained Earnings (Total Equity minus Equity Funds and Net Income). Retained Earnings at the end of 2023 were \$315,098.92.

As a reminder, the numbers on the Balance Sheet are heavily influenced by the assets and costs of the construction. The assets and liabilities for UMAHA project will be separated from VFPC assets and liabilities in 2024 and will be easier to understand.

The financial books for 2022 were audited in 2023 and found to be in good order.

In summary, the finances of our church continue to be sound.

Our church continues to be blessed by dedicated people who volunteer their time and energy to keep our church finances in good order: Becky Clark, Church Treasurer, Ejvind Hanson, Assistant Treasurer, and Joanne Henry, the church's Financial Secretary. Finally, the church's Sustaining Committee (Becky, Ejvind, Sujoy Gonsalves, Mike Henry, Kathy Knoebel, Kevin Mengel, Dave Wilkie (Chair), and Pastor Tim) meet monthly to oversee the financial health of the church.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mike Henry  
For the Sustaining Committee

**2023 BUDGET and 2024 Budget**

<b>Line Item No.</b>		<b>2023 Budget</b>	<b>2023 Actual</b>	<b>Diff</b>	<b>2024 Budget</b>	<b>Diff from 2023</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>						
<b>5000</b>	<b>SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP</b>					
5010	Pastor Salary	\$36,412	\$36,412	\$0	\$37,869	\$1,456
5011	Pastor SECA	\$5,571	\$5,571	\$0	\$5,794	\$223
5012	Pastor Travel & Expense	\$2,500	\$1,163	-\$1,337	\$2,500	\$0
5013	Pastor Manse Allowance	\$36,412	\$37,444	\$1,032	\$37,869	\$1,456
5014	Pastor Pension	\$28,401	\$28,724	\$322	\$29,538	\$1,136
5016	Pastoral Residents		\$500			
5018	Pastor Medical Allowance	\$1,000	\$914	-\$86	\$1,000	\$0
5040	Pastor Study Leave	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$0
5080	Pulpit Supply	\$600	\$201	-\$399	\$800	\$200
5090	Miscellaneous					
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$111,897</b>	<b>\$111,929</b>	<b>\$32</b>	<b>\$116,369</b>	<b>\$4,472</b>
<b>5500</b>	<b>OFFICE ADMINISTRATION</b>					
5510	Admin. Assistant Salary	\$10,873	\$10,873	\$0	\$11,308	\$435
5600	Office Equip & Contracts	\$4,000	\$2,546	-\$1,454	\$0	-\$4,000
5610	Postage	\$400	\$381	-\$19	\$400	\$0
5620	Office Expenses	\$2,000	\$733	-\$1,267	\$1,500	-\$500
5625	Publicity	\$300	\$204	-\$96	\$300	\$0
5650	Gen. Assem. Assess. (per cap)	\$3,040	\$2,944	-\$96	\$3,040	\$0
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$20,613</b>	<b>\$17,681</b>	<b>-\$2,933</b>	<b>\$16,548</b>	<b>-\$4,065</b>
<b>5700</b>	<b>PAYROLL SERVICES</b>	<b>\$1,671</b>	<b>\$2,607</b>	<b>\$936</b>	<b>\$1,738</b>	<b>\$67</b>
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$1,671</b>	<b>\$2,607</b>	<b>\$936</b>	<b>\$1,738</b>	<b>\$67</b>
<b>6000</b>	<b>MUSIC</b>					
6030	Substitute Organist/Pianist	\$2,500	\$2,675	\$175	\$2,500	\$0
6040	Sheet Music	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
6050	Organ & Piano Maintenance	\$200	\$0	-\$200	\$200	\$0
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$2,700</b>	<b>\$2,675</b>	<b>-\$25</b>	<b>\$2,700</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>6100</b>	<b>CHURCH PROPERTY</b>					
6200	Insurance	\$9,240	\$9,980	\$740	\$9,700	\$460
6300	Utilities	\$22,000	\$26,049	\$4,049	\$29,000	\$7,000
6400	Maintenance	\$10,000	\$7,614	-\$2,387	\$8,000	-\$2,000
6410	Elevator	\$2,220	\$2,344	\$124	\$2,500	\$280
6450	Building Supplies	\$2,000	\$347	-\$1,653	\$1,500	-\$500
6510	Trash Contract	\$3,600	\$4,380	\$780	\$4,800	\$1,200
6520	Cleaning Contract	\$10,400	\$10,000	-\$400	\$5,200	-\$5,200
6540	Snow Removal	\$5,000	\$0	-\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0
6550	Lawn Care	\$3,000	\$6,080	\$3,080	\$4,000	\$1,000
6900	Miscellaneous					
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$67,460</b>	<b>\$66,794</b>	<b>-\$666</b>	<b>\$69,700</b>	<b>\$2,240</b>



**2023 BUDGET and 2024 Budget**

	<b>2023 Budget</b>	<b>2023 Actual</b>	<b>Diff</b>	<b>2024 Budget</b>	<b>Diff from 2023</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
<b>7000</b>	<b>Ministry Teams</b>				
7320	\$500	\$1,199	\$699	\$500	\$0
7325	\$100	\$117	\$17	\$100	\$0
7330	\$100	\$0	-\$100	\$100	\$0
7335	\$500	\$411	-\$89	\$500	\$0
7345	\$1,500	\$1,516	\$16	\$1,500	\$0
7410	\$21,847	\$23,133	\$1,286	\$22,721	\$874
7415	\$250	\$0	-\$250	\$250	\$0
7520		\$45			
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$24,797</b>	<b>\$1,624</b>	<b>\$25,671</b>	<b>\$874</b>
<b>8000</b>	<b>MISSION</b>				
8100	\$10,000	\$9,999	-\$1	\$10,000	\$0
8110	\$500	\$500	\$0	\$500	\$0
8200	\$1,000	\$1,377	\$377	\$1,000	\$0
8202	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$0
8430	\$500	\$500	\$0	\$500	\$0
8462	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$0
8465	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$0
8470	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000	\$0
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$17,000</b>	<b>-\$377</b>	<b>\$17,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>
	<b>TOTAL EXPENSE BUDGET</b>	<b>\$246,138</b>	<b>-\$1,408</b>	<b>\$249,726</b>	<b>\$3,588</b>
<b>INCOME</b>					
	<b>2023 Budget</b>	<b>2023 Actual</b>	<b>Diff</b>	<b>2024 Budget</b>	<b>Diff from 2023</b>
<b>4000</b>	<b>GIFT RECEIPTS</b>				
4040	\$11,275	\$0	-\$11,275	\$5,431	\$5,431
4050	\$219,863	\$231,654	\$11,791	\$226,945	-\$4,709
4150	\$400	\$783	\$383	\$450	-\$333
4300	\$1,000	\$1,885	\$885	\$1,000	-\$885
2321	\$1,700	\$1,959	\$259	\$2,000	\$42
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$234,238</b>	<b>\$2,042</b>	<b>\$235,826</b>	<b>-\$454</b>
<b>4400</b>	<b>OTHER RECEIPTS</b>				
4500	\$6,500	\$7,158	\$658	\$6,900	-\$258
4550	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$0
4600	\$400	\$2,476	\$2,076	\$2,000	-\$476
<b>Other</b>		\$95			
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$11,900</b>	<b>\$2,829</b>	<b>\$13,900</b>	<b>-\$734</b>
	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$246,138</b>	<b>\$4,871</b>	<b>\$249,726</b>	<b>\$3,588</b>
	Diff Income versus Expense	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$5,431</b>	<b>\$0</b>	

## Valley Forge Presbyterian Church Balance Sheet

	<b>12/31/23</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	
<b>Checking/Savings/Investments</b>	
1100 Checking	\$ 608,887.17
1202 American Heritage CD	\$ 102,476.38
1203 American Heritage MbrAcct	\$ 6,744.43
1230 Vanguard	\$ 50,626.35
<b>Total Checking/Savings</b>	\$ 768,734.33
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	\$ 768,734.33
<b>Construction in Progress</b>	
Sanctuary ReConstruction	\$ 204,175.59
Stage II Construction	\$ 253,601.96
<b>Total Construction in Progress</b>	\$ 457,777.55
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 1,226,511.88</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
2333 Presbytery Line of Credit	\$ 85,448.21
2336 Stage II Construction Loan	\$ 150,000.00
Payroll Liabilities	\$ (91.63)
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	\$ 235,356.58
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	\$ 235,356.58
<b>Equity</b>	
<b>Equity Funds</b>	
2300 Endowment Fund	\$ 245.00
2301 Vanguard Endow/Future (Restricted)	\$ 50,626.35
2302 Future Fund (Restricted)	\$ 13.73
2303 Matthew 25 Fund	\$ 15,262.76
2322 Ministry Teams Funds	\$ 978.64
2334 Sanctuary Re-Construction	\$ (9,207.86)
2336 Stage II Construction	\$ (24,595.11)
2337 UMAHA Grants (Restricted)	\$ 600,000.00
2340 Caring Through Sharing	\$ 4,221.34
2390 Deacons	\$ 1,515.78
2405 Vacation Bible School	\$ 53.96
2430 Communicants	\$ 281.56
2440 Adult Education	\$ 157.24
2445 Program Development	\$ 18,465.00
2447 Covenant Fund	\$ 2,889.84
2470 Pastor's Discretionary	\$ 1,178.03
2472 Events Fund - Weddings, etc.	\$ 0.87
2499 CE Dir Continuing Ed.	\$ 750.00
2515 TOTS Reserve	\$ 1,686.97
2520 Library	\$ 25.00
2700 MEMORIAL FUNDS	\$ 6,076.05
<b>Total Equity Funds</b>	\$ 670,625.15
Retained Earnings	\$ 315,098.92
Net Income	\$ 5,431.23
<b>Total Equity</b>	\$ 991,155.30
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<b>\$ 1,226,511.88</b>