



(fp) First Presbyterian
Church Bakersfield

2023/2024

Annual

REPORT

**Inviting people into meaningful life
through knowing Christ, loving one
another, and blessing the world.**

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One year ago, Dr. Jeff Chandler concluded his ministry at First Presbyterian Church of Bakersfield after 17 years of invested sacrifice and effort to honor a call to a new ministry. Since then, First Presbyterian Church has stepped up, electing a hard-working, dedicated Pastor Search Committee, under the capable leadership of Tracie Monroe. For the past 12 months, this committee has searched the nation for the future pastor of First Pres and now are ready to present their conclusion to you, the congregation.

While the search committee was hard at work, you have held things together here on the corner of Truxtun and H Street under the careful leadership of Pastor Dave Constance. Dave did this amazingly well, on the fly, and without an Associate Pastor. He has done an excellent job.

In February, your Session called me to come to Bakersfield and be your Transitional Pastor; I, a total stranger to you. Yet you have wrapped your arms around me, made me feel like I have been here for years, and accepted my odd idiosyncrasies and weird ideas without complaint. I have been truly rewarded by your trust in me and willingness to let me get back up into the “ministry saddle,” stretch my ecclesiastical legs, and do what I love doing most of all, serving our Lord in ministry. It has felt good.

Now we have come to that moment when we can exercise one of the most Presbyterian traditions available – elect your own pastor. In our denomination, no one or body can force a congregation to accept a pastor they do not want. Every congregation calls its own pastor. The search committee has not given us his name or history yet, but I have full confidence in their dedication, hard work, and God’s participation that they are bringing to us the perfect candidate. I know you will also. Keep this all in prayer and know that God’s will is truly going to be done. Remember, we are Presbyterians and believe in predestination.

As I watch my brief time with you come to a close, I want to express my deep-felt gratitude to you for placing your ministry into my hands for this all-too-brief period of time. I have loved preaching on most Sundays, opening God’s Word on most Wednesdays, and leading your excellent staff. You will always be in my prayers and the next time I go whizzing by up Interstate 5, I will give a brief honk on my car’s horn in your direction, and say a prayer that God is continuing to bless you in this special place. I have made some very special friends here in Bakersfield and will always cherish our time together. In closing, to quote your previous pastor, Jeff Chandler, “You will always be in my thoughts and prayers – asking God to grant you an extra measure of His Grace and Love.”

Your Brother in Christ,

Dr. Donald Baird, TE
Transitional Pastor

Beloved First Pres Family,

It's amazing what you can pack into a year. As I wrote the last annual congregational report, it was with the news of Pastor Scott's retirement and Pastor Jeff's impending departure fresh in my mind. Even though we were on the precipice of change, I still had the opportunity to write the 2022-2023 report through the lens of my primary ministry areas: Families & Discipleship. This year, I have so much more that needs to be shared.

For nearly eight months I served as the only pastor at First Pres, and I had the privilege to lead and participate in almost every area of our church's ministries. I moderated the Session, advised Deacons, and attended every Session committee: Discipleship, Finance, Membership & Fellowship, Missions, Personnel, Property, and Worship. I sat on the Foundation Board. I lead our awesome directors and support team.

With all those experiences, I want to tell you that we have incredible leaders at First Pres. In every ministry...on every committee...we have wonderful Godly men and women who seek the will of God for First Pres. We could not have been better served during this time of transition.

Believing in the priesthood of all believers, we've had a large variety of people reading Scripture, and elders and deacons assisting in worship. Our worship teams have grown in size and skill. You tolerated my crazy sermon series like "The Best Way" during Advent and our Esther series "Fingerprints of God." You've played "Getting to Know You" during midweek dinners and furthered your discipleship through various classes and connect groups. We got to know our community better through our annual Harvest Festival (reaching 1,500 people) and our new Easter Family Fun Day (450 people). We served over 5,300 households through our food pantry this year and sent teams to serve Gleanings for the Hungry in Dinuba, California, and Yugo in Ensenada, Mexico. We went to the mountains on our Amplify Retreat, we worshipped in the gym for most of the second half of the year, finally got back into the sanctuary for Advent, and we still like each other after a major cancel remodel. We celebrated some births, some baptisms (including our first immersion baptism in the courtyard) and celebrated the lives of too many departed saints of our church. We welcomed our Transitional Pastor Don Baird in February, and we are excited and stand ready to vote for our Senior Pastor Candidate Rev. Marcos Ortega. As I said, it's amazing how much you can pack into a year.

Last summer we studied Ephesians in a series called "God's Got This!" Looking back at our year together, this truth has become even more evident. I still stand by those sermon points and believe we need to hear them again.

God's Got This! You've Got This! God Is Pleased!

Let me say, "Well done First Pres Family." I'm proud of you and look forward to our next year together.

Your Brother in Christ,

Rev. Dave Constance, TE
Pastor of Families and Adult Discipleship

CLERK'S REPORT

We are a congregation of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church within the Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest. The session for the 2023-2024 program year was composed of eighteen ruling elders who met in ten regular meetings on the fourth Tuesday of each month to seek God's direction as they conducted the business and spiritual leadership of First Presbyterian Church, Bakersfield, California. Exceptions were the second Tuesday of December and no regular meetings in July and November. In addition, called meetings were held to conduct specific business like the reception of new members.

Dr. Jeff Chandler, TE was our Pastor and Moderator of the session until June 30, 2023. Associate Pastor Dave Constance, TE moderated Session from June 2023 until early February 2024. Transitional Pastor Dr. Don Baird, TE is the current Pastor and Moderator of the Session while the Pastor Search Committee seeks God's choice for our new Pastor.

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation was held in June 2023 in accordance with the By-Laws. An officer training class was held for newly elected elders and deacons in July. The session was organized into working committees as follows:

Standing Committees

Discipleship
Finance
Membership and Fellowship
Missions
Personnel
Property and Maintenance
Worship and Music
Trustees

Chairs

John Bair
Sally Herald
Dan Cronquist
Lisa Elliott
John McFarland
JB Hay
Kimberly Andresen
Jennifer Randel



Foundation Board
Congregation Nominating Committee
Congregation Pastor Search Committee

Russell Bigler
Jane Galbreath
Tracie Monroe

Committee membership is on the following page.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed on the first Sunday of each month.

We welcomed 8 of our family into God's family through the Sacrament of Baptism.

This past year began with saying farewell to Pastor Jeff and Pastor Scott where we experienced many emotions. For nearly 8 months Pastor Dave provided leadership and many in the congregation exercised the gifts God gave each of us to fill the gaps those two pastors left behind. As a result, we have all grown and seen firsthand even more of God's presence in the lives and ministries of First Pres. The Apostle Paul encourages us in Hebrews 10:23-24. *"Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ..."*. There is still work to do and our new pastor will need us to support him, pray for him, and continue the work we have started as he seeks God's direction for our church now and into the future. Thank you again for the honor of serving as the Clerk of Session and for the privilege of being a member of this family.

Blessings,

Jim Conners, RE
Clerk of Session

Session and Congregation Committees 2023-2024

Discipleship

Elders	John Bair (C), Esmeralda Tully
Congregation	Barry Lillie, Tracie Monroe, Kendra Green, Susan Worley
Staff	TE Dave Constance, (** Carol Scheevel, **Preston Henry)

** members without vote

Finance

Elders	Sally Herald (C), Jennifer Randel, Brian Conner
Congregation	Russ Bigler, George DeBoer, Jay Ericsson, John Stovall
Staff	TE Dave Constance, **John Bilotta, TE Don Baird

Membership & Fellowship

Elders	Dan Cronquist (C), Jane Galbreath, Tyson Witcher
Congregation	Delani Bair, Boyd Binninger, Shirley Byrd, Karrie Camp, Heather Gold
Staff	TE Dave Constance

Missions

Elders	Lisa Elliott (C), Mitchell Coleman, John Rodgers
Congregation	Bob Green, Beth Kuney, John McFarland, Jeff Smith, Shanna Treanor Fan
Staff	TE Dave Constance

Personnel Committee

Elders	John McFarland (C), Sally Selby
Congregation	Jim Duncan, Daryl Franks, Jana Peters
Staff	TE Dave Constance, **John Bilotta, TE Don Baird

Property & Maintenance

Elders	JB Hay (C), Scott Kuney
Congregation	Bruce Bair, Brian Branquinho, Duane Keathley, Steve Magar, Archie Smith
Staff	TE Dave Constance, **John Bilotta, TE Don Baird

Worship & Music

Elders	Kimberly Andresen (C), Tracie Monroe, Steve Gold
Congregation	Catherine Brisco, Cathy Cummings, Nancy Hess, Jana Peters, Leslie Roberts
Staff	TE Dave Constance, **Kevin Brisco, TE Don Baird

Trustees

Session RE	Jennifer Randel (P), Brian Conner (VP)
Bylaws Officers	Sally Herald (Treasurer), Jim Conners (Secretary)

Foundation Board

Elders	
Congregation	Russ Bigler(P), Grover Waldon, Ginger Lane, Bob Collier, David Chesney
Staff	TE Dave Constance

Congregation Nominating Committee

Elders	Jane Galbreath (C), John Bair
Deacon	Sharon Knowles
Congregation	Boyd Binninger, Doug Heitman, Carol Scheevel, Terry Wyckoff

General Fund Budget 2024

Fiscal Year ending December 31

	2023	2023	2024
REVENUES	BUDGET	ACTUAL	BUDGET
GIVING	1,475,000	1,368,984	1,391,000
INCOME	56,620	49,629	59,660
OTHER (Invest gain / loss)	1,200	4,887	2,400
TRUXTUN PROPERTY	148,000	163,845	156,000
Total REVENUES	\$ 1,680,820	\$ 1,587,345	\$ 1,609,060
EXPENSES			
MISSIONS	100,000	88,469	90,000
PERSONNEL	1,107,499	976,239	1,017,154
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	86,500	69,320	84,550
MUSIC AND WORSHIP	32,340	33,015	33,990
MEMBERSHIP	26,560	24,078	21,300
PROPERTY	272,500	296,061	294,728
FINANCE	46,188	46,153	53,319
TRUXTUN PROPERTY	75,485	78,501	66,848
Total EXPENSES	\$ 1,747,072	\$ 1,611,836	\$ 1,661,889
Net Operating Total	\$ (66,252)	\$ (24,491)	\$ (52,829)

Membership Statistics

Jan 1, 2023 to Dec 31, 2023

Total Active Members December 31, 2023 383

Gains:

Profession of Faith	1
Transfer	0
Reaffirmation of Faith	13
Reactivation	6
Total Gains	20

Losses:

Transfer	0
Death	14
Moved to Inactive Roll	17
All other losses	8
Total Losses	39

Total Membership at December 31

<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
472	452	402	383

New Members Joining

(during 12 month period ending December 31)

<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
0	14	16	14

Average Attendance at Sunday Worship

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
In Person	192	229	232	232
Online	200	128	118	103
Full Year	392	357	350	335

DISCIPLESHIP COMMITTEE

The purpose of Discipleship is to equip and support all ages in our formation as fully developed followers of Jesus Christ. We accomplish this through our dependence upon the Holy Spirit, founded on the unchanging truths of Scripture, and committed to addressing the spiritual, intellectual, physical, relational, and emotional needs of every participant in our church. In short, we exist to help others know Christ in such a way that leads to loving one another and blessing the world.

PROGRAMS/LEADERS & STAFF

Student Ministries "JHM & HSM": Preston Henry
Family Ministries: Pastor Dave Constance

Children's Ministries "FP Kids": Carol Scheevel
Foundation Scholarships: John Bair

2023-2024 EVENTS

2023 Summer Bible Blast

2023 Summer Camp for 4th – 6th graders at Forest Home

2023 Summer Camp for JH/HS at Hume Lake

2023 Amplify All Church Retreat 117 attenders

2023 Harvest Festival: 1500+ attenders and 115+ volunteers

2023 Operation Christmas Child 169 shoeboxes collected

2023 Jingle Jam

2024 Easter Family Fun Day 400+ attenders

2024 Spring Break Mission Trip – HSM took 16 students and 3 adults to Gleanings for the Hungry in Dinuba to package soup

2023-24 Midweek classes included Galatians, Build a Better Marriage, Intro to the New Testament, The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry, The 10 Most Misunderstood Bible Verses, Hebrews, Genesis: In the Beginning God, and You Belong (New Members)

2023-24 Successful small group program including:

- September small group campaign added 3-4 new small groups and had responses from 25-30 new people interested in placement
- 17 Connect Groups
- 170 total people involved in the groups
- 1 leader training class
- 4 new trained people to aid with leading small groups

YEAR IN REVIEW

- Our youth and adult ministries continue to build momentum as we grow from the difficulties of the past few years. Our youth are inviting friends into fellowship, and we see families of the past returning to regular church groups. Our discipleship team continues to ask for your prayers for discernment as we look toward what our church needs in the coming year. This past year has seen a lot of changes for our church family, and we look forward to what God has in store for us over the next year. We ask that you continue to think about opportunities to plug your gifts into our church family. We continue to be blessed with the best staff and volunteers, who are thoughtful leaders as they guide the direction of our church family.

Respectfully submitted,

John Bair, RE
Chair

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee meets monthly to review financial statements and investment performance, review and recommend funding options for non-budgeted projects, and monitor the overall financial well-being of the church. The committee is responsible for reviewing the annual budget and presenting it to Session for approval.

2023 was a difficult year of pastoral transitions and change that affected the church finances; however, through the congregation's faithfulness and prudent planning, we ended up ahead of budget. We ended the year with operating expenses exceeding revenue by \$24,491.46. While this was a disappointment, it was almost \$42,000.00 better than our budgeted loss of \$66,251.91. While we continue to have a generous congregation, our giving continues to decline. 2023 giving of \$1,368,983.97 was approximately \$59,500.00 less than giving in 2022. Our committee believes a large part of this is due to the fact that we have an older congregation, and they tend to be the ones who retire and move away to be near family or, sadly, pass away. Even with the decline in giving, our financial performance was better than expected because we did not have a senior pastor for the last six months of the year which contributed to a savings in personnel costs. Our investment in the office building on the corner of Truxtun Avenue and F Street continues to generate net income that is used for the operations of the church. In 2023, we generated a net income of \$85,343.75 from the rental of the building. This net income is included in our overall financial results for 2023.

The Finance Committee, in conjunction with the Worship Committee, supported the return of "passing the plate" at our Sunday services. This began on Easter Sunday 2024, and we have received positive feedback regarding this change. While we hope to generate more giving with this change, we all believe it is an important part of worship and will help teach our new members, and children, the importance of stewardship within the church.

The Finance Committee has completed the revision of the Investment Policy for the church. This policy requires that the church maintain a cash asset balance of 3 months of budgeted expenses as reserves for normal monthly expenditures. The church has sufficient funds to meet this requirement. Any excess funds are then prudently invested, maintaining sufficient liquidity to meet the ongoing needs of the church. The committee meets with our investment advisor each quarter to monitor the performance of these investments and make changes to our portfolio as needed.

As of April 30, 2024, our giving continues to decline. We are approximately \$48,500.00 below our giving from the same period in 2023. We believe, however, that the Lord will continue to provide for First Presbyterian Church and our members will continue to generously bless this church with their tithes and offerings for the remainder of 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Herald, RE
Chair

MEMBERSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership and Fellowship Committee serves as a pathway for inviting members, friends, and visitors into knowing Christ, loving one another, and blessing the world. The committee is made up of Associate Pastor Dave Constance, Elders Jane Galbreath, Tyson Witcher, and Dan Cronquist, and at-large members Heather Gold – Women’s Ministry, Boyd Binninger – Men’s Ministry, Karrie Camp – Schooners, Shirley Byrd, and Delani Bair.

John 15:12 “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” This verse epitomizes what our committee seeks to do through food, fun, and fellowship. Here is a brief summary of our year.

- **Women’s Ministry** hosted many events this year including summer events, monthly coffee socials, and participating in the “IF: Gathering” conference.
- **Men’s Ministry** has continued holding a weekly Bible study and serving a monthly breakfast. Volunteers from the Men’s Ministry also served at various church events.
- Our **Schooners**, thanks to the hard work of Karrie Camp and her team, put on fun fellowship events this year that included the Friendsgiving Dinner in November, Progressive Dinner in December, and the Swing into Spring Garden Party in March.
- Many thanks go out to Jane Galbreath, her committee, and the volunteers who made the **Father Daughter Dance** a reality in February.
- Our **welcome team**, thanks to all the hard work of Marci Fleischer and her team, have done a great job in greeting members, attendees, and visitors.
- We held three **New Members** classes this year, including one specifically for our high schoolers in which 12 youth were welcomed as members.
- Lastly, we are grateful to Shirley Byrd and Carole Yates for hosting two rounds of **Grief Share** this year. It has been a blessing to many who are experiencing loss.

Thank you for a great year and we look forward to serving with you next year. All the praise and glory be to God!

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Cronquist, RE
Chair

MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The Missions Committee continues to support our mission partners who are dedicated to growing the Lord's Kingdom by shining the light in a dark world. Over the past year, First Pres giving has allowed us to bless the world in many ways.

Local: Our FP food pantry continues to be a shining light in the heart of downtown. In 2023, the pantry provided meals to nearly 5,300 households! In addition to food, the pantry gave away 168 Bibles in English and Spanish and handed out Bible Study materials to 123 individuals who expressed an interest in studying God's word.

Other local partners have been busy, as well, including two that participated in our Missions Sunday: Cru Inner City's Richard Garcia and a husband-and-wife team from the Bakersfield Pregnancy Center.

National: Gleanings for the Hungry in Dinuba, CA is a long-time mission partner. This spring, we sent a 10-person adult team to pack dried soup mix. They bagged enough soup for 70,000 meals!

Also, through funds provided by First Pres, Completion Global was able to print and distribute a book to men and women preparing for release from incarceration. The book was given to those who completed a Bible study course while incarcerated.

International: In November 2023, nine First Pres members went to the Ensenada area to build a home for a family in need through YUGO Ministries. The recipient family of four participated in the build, as did their pastor. Everyone was blessed by the experience.

Hands-on opportunities and other partner support included:

- Bakersfield Pregnancy Center Baby Bottle Drive – First Pres raised over \$3,800 for BPC!
- FP Food Pantry – nearly 5,300 households blessed with food!
- Gleanings for the Hungry (Dinuba, CA) – a team of 10 adults from First Pres packed over 70,000 meals of dried soup mix that missionaries will distribute to people in need around the world!
- Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes – First Pres packed 169 boxes that will show God's love and provision to children around the world!
- Yugo Ministries (Ensenada, Mexico) – an adult team built a home for a family in need!

Your generous gifts to Missions allowed us to support the work of great missionaries and organizations that are acting daily as the salt and light in the world.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Elliott, RE
Chair

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Your Personnel Committee is comprised of two elders, two at-large church members, our Transitional Pastor, and the Director of Operations. We meet monthly and serve in an advisory capacity. Our tasks are: 1) to oversee Human Resource policies, procedures, and decisions affecting FP staff; 2) ensure compliance with federal, state, and local labor laws and regulations, referring to professionals when necessary; 3) review and approve health insurance packages and workers' compensation insurance, and 4) recommend and approve salary changes, including recommendations to Session concerning compensation packages for pastoral and executive staff.

In fulfillment of the above, the Personnel Committee reports the following for 2023: The elders of the committee oversee the annual pastoral performance reviews which were paused due to COVID-19 and reinstated in May 2024. A proposed 2024 personnel budget was submitted to the Finance Committee. The committee updated its Operating Principles and Guidelines and ensured compliance training was completed for all employees. To comply with California minimum wage requirements, minimum wage employees were increased to \$16/hr effective 1/1/24. Additional merit increases were implemented effective 1/1/24 for those that did not receive a minimum wage increase for calendar year 2023 and holiday bonuses were provided in December 2023.

First Pres experienced a season of change among our entire clergy team in 2023 with our Senior Pastor accepting a call to Washington, our Associate Pastor's retirement, and the elevation of our Assistant Pastor to Associate Pastor with added duties of Interim-Senior Pastor until our Transitional Pastor started. Beginning in June 2023, the committee actively recruited, interviewed and recommended two Transitional Pastors to Session to fill the temporary role. One declined the position after thoughtful prayer and consideration and one accepted and began serving in February 2024. Our open position for Director of Missions was eliminated to balance the 2024 budget. Normal attrition and hiring in non-leadership staff positions continued, heavily concentrated within our Custodial and Nursery Worker positions.

The Lord's financial provisions were poured into the FP staff by way of the generous giving of our congregants. However, due to a steady decline in giving units, we had to make the difficult decision of eliminating the Director of Missions position as indicated above. Further cost cutting measures were made by withholding the start date of our Transitional Pastor. Fulfillment of custodial positions were a challenge throughout 2023 as starting pay for hospital custodians will increase to \$23/hr due to new 2023 minimum wage legislation specific to healthcare (proposed effective date was 6/1/24). This, combined with standard State minimum wage changes for fast food restaurants, continue to pose challenges with attraction and retention as well as wage compression among the existing staff.

The committee remains grateful to the Director of Operations for providing detailed information regarding personnel needs so the committee can make prayerful and informed decisions. We truly appreciate our amazing staff who remained focused and collaborative, and persevered during our clergy transitions. They not only served each of the committees that relied upon them for support, but also supported each other when called upon while simultaneously continuing to minister to those in need that frequented FP as a beacon of hope in Downtown Bakersfield. The FP staff continues to exemplify Knowing Christ, Loving One Another, and Blessing the World.

Respectfully submitted,

John McFarland, RE
Chair

PROPERTY AND MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

The Property and Maintenance Committee is responsible for the campus grounds and vehicles; the custodial staff; the security of the campus; and the safety of the occupants. The committee's charge is to be good stewards of God's House at Truxtun Avenue and F Street in Downtown Bakersfield. On a monthly basis, we review FPC's property-related income and expenses, maintenance issues, capital project needs, crime and vandalism activity, and facility use requests.

2023 church campus operating costs were \$296,000, vs a \$272,500 budget. The 2023 budget was more a reflection of funding available than of actual needs. Our staff are very good at finding the least costly methods to maintain our campus, often themselves undertaking significant repairs. Our current costs are generally at or below those from 15 years ago. Despite the best efforts of John Bilotta and his team, costs to maintain our church campus are increasing – in ways that we often cannot control. Partially offsetting the \$23,500 cost overage was revenue from the Truxtun Avenue office building. The building produced a \$85,000 net income, outperforming its projected net income by \$13,000.

The most significant action in 2023 was the \$385,000 chancel remodel, completed in time for Advent. The chancel was last touched in the 1980s. The remodeled chancel has a more open design; lower elevation; handicap access; increased floor space; and an under-floor wire system that removed power and sound cords from the surface.

Concurrently, we overhauled the organ. This \$155,000 project was completed in March 2024. The project included: reconditioning 2,545 pipes; relocating pipes for better sound; and updating the electronic components and communication modules. Over 300 pipes did not function; electronic components were out of date; and there were functionality problems from the original installation in 1983. The chancel and organ projects came in slightly under budget.

2023 capital projects totaled \$173,000. Significant projects were: Children's Ministry Center 2nd floor renovation; computers; dumpster enclosure (vandalism prevention); gym floor resurfacing; H Street side exterior painting; roof replacement over Bride's Room; and steeple resurfacing/painting.

The capital budget for 2024 is \$104,000. Significant projects are computer & network equipment upgrades; painting the 17th Street side exterior; 1 HVAC replacement; upgrades to the Senior High Room; wireless sound system and electronic drum kit for the Sanctuary.

Other areas of interest: Vandalism activity on our campus is up threefold since 2019. Despite being across the street from the Bakersfield Police Department, we are regularly vandalized. 2023 saw 6+ broken windows, slashed auto tires, small fires, and two assaults on mission partner staff housed in the Truxtun Avenue office building. Vandalism repair costs exceeded \$5,500 and nearly \$15,000 was spent to harden the campus against vandalism. We are pursuing a significant grant to upgrade church security. We are also looking to buy out our solar panel lease in early 2025. This will be a significant financial benefit and save roughly \$6,000/month. Capital needs are increasing as our facility ages. We have 43 HVAC units (20-year average age), a 40-year-old elevator in the Truxtun building, and an obsolete fire alarm system in the Children's Ministry Center.

We have a beautiful campus that we must improve and preserve for our members and to attract new attendees to our church. We thank God for the privilege of worshipping at FPC and want all to have an effective and attractive place to worship our Lord.

Respectfully submitted,

JB Hay, RE
Chair

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The purpose of the worship committee is to help develop the congregation into an active, vital worshipping community, to help coordinate the different aspects of the worship ministry, and to work on short-range and long-range planning of worship services. Those serving on the committee for the 2023-2024 program year were: Kimberly Andresen, Tracie Monroe, and Steve Gold (Ruling Elders), Cathy Cummings, Nancy Hess, Jana Peters, Leslie Roberts (at-large members), and staff Kevin Brisco II (Director of Worship Arts), Pastor Dave Constance (August 2023-February 2024) and Transitional Pastor Don Baird (March 2024-present).

Sunday Services Highlights – First Pres continues to have two Sunday morning services. Both the 9 am classic service and the 10:45 am contemporary service are held in the sanctuary and live-streamed online. From June 2023 to early December 2023, services were held in the Activities Center while the sanctuary's chancel underwent a renovation. Upon completion of the project in December, the congregation returned to worshipping in the sanctuary. During this transitional period, worship services have included an increased number of lay leaders assisting with various aspects of the worship services. More members of the congregation are using their gifts in a variety of ways, whether through playing instruments in the brass ensemble, singing in the choir, or playing and singing in the worship band. Approximately 45 different people have been involved in music leadership in the past year, including some of our high school students. On March 31, 2024, First Pres reinstated passing the plate during the worship service. This has increased our cash-giving, but more importantly, allows space to emphasize the importance of giving as an act of worshipping our Lord.

Special Events – Under the leadership of our Director of Worship Arts, Kevin Brisco II, the Worship Committee has hosted several special events, including a worship retreat to increase cohesion and develop a vision for the year. Over 50 people involved in the worship ministry attended the event hosted by Karrie & Clayton Camp; several Hymn Sings were well attended; and the church hosted a post-renovation organ dedication. The Organ Guild arranged for a world-renowned organist to play and over 300 church and community members attended, with more participating virtually.

Looking Toward the Future – The Worship and Discipleship Committees are working together to host young adult worship events that invite young people into our church family. The Worship Committee is fostering intentional connections with the music departments at local schools to welcome more people onto our church campus.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Andresen, RE
Chair

BOARD OF DEACONS

The word “deacon” means helper. The Deacons carry on a rich ministry that touches the lives of many people. Deacons minister to those who are in need — to the sick, friendless, homeless, hungry, and to any who may be in distress. Visitation of the sick, infirm, elderly, and those in crisis is an important part of the ongoing ministry. Deacons are entrusted to be the hands and feet of the First Presbyterian family and come from various backgrounds, lengths of service, and life experiences which help us to serve the unique needs of our FP family.

The Board of Deacons currently consists of 26 members serving a three-year term of office and participating in one of three Ministry Service areas. The officers for the 2023-24 year are-Moderator: Jana Peters; Vice-Moderator: Jill Rodriguez; Treasurer: Matt Andresen; and Secretary: Heather Gold.

Ministry to Congregation. Chair: Keith Roberts, Secretary: Annette Bridgman – Ministry Areas: 1) Welcome Center ~ Coordinator: Sharon Knowles. This ministry ensures staffing for the Welcome Center in the courtyard before and between the first and second services. 2) Communion Prep and Clean-Up ~ Coordinators: David & MyLe Diosi. This ministry prepares and cleans up the communion items for both services and the homebound kits. 3) Agape Supper ~ Coordinator: Keith Roberts. This ministry coordinates the Agape Supper for Maundy Thursday Services. 4) Blood Donation Bank ~ Coordinator: Vicki Billington. This ministry puts together and provides information on blood donation contributions to the First Presbyterian account at Houchin Blood Bank.

Ministry to Families. Chair: Judy Camp, Secretary: Heather Gold – Ministry Areas: 1) Family Aid & Crisis ~ Coordinators: Judy Camp & Barry Lillie. This ministry evaluates and gives financial aid to congregants. It also provides care to those in crisis. 2) Meals to Bless ~ Coordinator: Sandy Hughes. This ministry coordinates meals for those in crisis. 3) Memorial Service Reception ~ Coordinator: Marci Fleischer. This ministry coordinates the memorial reception for congregant memorial services.

Ministry to Individuals. Chair: Katie Irwin, Secretary: Cecelia Wade – Ministry Areas: 1) Homebound Visitation ~ Coordinators: Jana Peters & Barry Lillie. This ministry provides care for each homebound member (a church member who cannot attend church on either a permanent or temporary basis). 2) Prayer & Praise Correspondence ~ Coordinator: Jill Rodriguez. This ministry provides prayer and written correspondence in response to yellow card prayer requests from worship services. 3) Flower Dedications & Special Worship Events ~ Coordinator: Jana Peters. This ministry coordinates opportunities for congregants to dedicate flowers for friends or loved ones to display at worship services and provides flowers for special worship events. 4) College Student Care ~ Coordinator: Leslie Harvath. This ministry provides care for college students twice per year, usually with Amazon gift cards. 5) Care for Special Worship Event Music Team ~ Coordinator: Katie Irwin. This ministry provides care for music team participants for special worship service events. 6) Care Packages ~ Coordinator: Leslie Harvath. This ministry provides care packages to congregants in crisis.

The Deacons’ financial account balance over the year period is: \$51,463.37 on May 1, 2023, and \$38,524.08 on April 30, 2024. The decline over 11 months is \$7,558.80, or \$8,245.96 if annualized. The income the Deacons receive is derived from church offerings and family donations.

It has been a pleasure for the Deacons to provide as much assistance for congregants as we could throughout this past year, especially in their time of need.

Respectfully submitted,

Jana Peters, *Moderator*

BAKERSFIELD FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FOUNDATION

The specific objective of the Foundation is to provide a vehicle through which gifts, donations, contributions, and bequests can be received for support of specific and general goals of the First Presbyterian Church Bakersfield as they relate to missions, capital improvements to the church facilities, scholarships, and pastoral education. These distributions are determined, authorized, and made by the Foundation's Board of Directors.

The board members each serve a term of five years with a replacement of one board member each year. The current board members are Russ Bigler, Grover Waldon, Ginger Lane, Bob Collier, and David Chesney. Members of the Board are nominated by the Board of the Foundation, affirmed by the Finance Committee of Session, and approved by the Session of First Presbyterian Church Bakersfield.

Since March 1, 2019, investments have been managed by Mestmaker & Petry. Proceeds from investments are distributed for scholarships, capital improvements, pastoral training scholarships, mission projects, and Foundation Corpus. This year \$20,000 was distributed for scholarships and spiritual formation to the First Presbyterian Church. Note: It is a policy of the Foundation not to use Foundation Corpus Funds, only the proceeds; however, if special needs occur, then limited corpus funds may be used upon approval by the Board.

The Foundation provides scholarship funds to the First Presbyterian Church Scholarship Committee. The Scholarship Committee reviews applications for the scholarships and determines the scholarship amount awarded to each individual. The Foundation has no participation in the individual amounts of the scholarships or the selection of the recipients.

Since 1996, the Foundation has distributed \$465,719 for Capital Improvements, \$134,361 for Missions, \$371,000 for Scholarships, and \$29,985 for Pastoral Training Scholarships, for a total distributed amount of \$1,001,065. The total value of the Foundation's assets as of 12/31/23 was \$1,124,764 with designated uses for:

-Ministries:

- Pastoral & Spiritual Training \$158,051
- Special Needs Ministries \$110,086
- Capital Improvements \$162,584
- Scholarships \$441,224
- Undesignated \$252,819

The Foundation President for the term July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024, is Russell Bigler.

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Kelly
Treasurer