

Church of the Servant-Episcopal

2023 Annual Report



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2023

Annual Parish Meeting Agenda

I. Call to order and Opening Prayer

For a Church Convention or Meeting

Almighty and everliving God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with those who take counsel for the renewal and mission of Church of the Servant. Teach us in all things to seek first your honor and glory. Guide us to perceive what is right, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

II. Recognition of Outgoing Vestry Members

Jerry Hansen, Lekeshia Jarrett, Ginny Lundeen, Rey Smith, Rachel Williamson

III. VOTING

a) Election of new Vestry members (3 year terms):

Leslie Antos, Hap Rogers, and Inza Walston.

The Vestry approved the appointment of David Smith and Jan

Christophersen to fill two 1-year vacancies and Natasha Clay to fill a 2-year vacancy.

b) Election of Delegates to Annual Convention in February 2024

Nominees: Natasha Clay, Tammy Clay, David Smith

IV. Sr. Warden's Report

V. Treasurer's Report

VI. Liaison Reports

Adult Christian Life Formation

Communications

Parish Care

Building & Grounds

Liturgy

Parish Life

Children, Youth & Families

Outreach

Racial Equity Project

VII. Rector's Report

VIII. Q&A

IX. Adjourn & Closing Prayer

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Minutes of 2023 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Call to Order and Opening Prayer – Rev. Jody Greenwood called the meeting to order and offered the opening prayer.

Recognition of Outgoing Vestry Members – Outgoing vestry members were presented and thanked for their service. These members were Frank Glossl, Margie Hickman, Shawn Manning, and Phillip Stine.

Election of New Vestry Members (three-year terms) – Sandra Sink moved that Larry Cahoon, Jodi Davis, Kemille Moore, and David Schultz be chosen to serve on the COS Vestry; Dennis Conlon seconded the motion. At this time other nominations from the floor were welcome, but none were made. The motion carried.

Confirmation of Delegates to Annual Convention in February, 2023 – The convention will take place on Feb. 10-11 in Greenville, NC. The Vestry voted to approve Natasha Clay, Mary Beth Koehler, and David Smith as delegates in December. They were confirmed by the congregation.

NOTE: More complete versions of all reports are available in the printed Annual Report.

Senior Warden's Report – Senior Warden Ginny Lundeen recognized the many activities that marked the fiftieth anniversary of Church of the Servant. She thanked the 50th Anniversary Committee, chaired by Emily Bliss, for all their work on this. COS was founded to follow Jesus' message that we are to serve. Ginny reviewed the purpose of the Safe Church initiatives that have come from the East Carolina Diocese, deaths of members during 2022, the closing of the Bargain Box, and the work of the Racial Equity study group. She gave thanks for the focus on the victims of gun violence and for the new and improved sound system, as well as for the many other good things going on at COS all year. The addition of a new Deacon, Rev. Deacon Rhonda Thomas, and Children and Youth Director Jonathan D'Amico were also important milestones. Ginny closed her report with a prayer.

Liaison Reports –

Adult Christian Life Formation: Phil Stine was not able to attend the meeting.

Building and Grounds: Rey Smith reported that much was accomplished during the year regarding the maintenance of the building and grounds. A full list is in the printed report. Future work will include repairs and painting of the wooden trim on the exterior of the church and planting of native plants on church grounds. Rey thanked his committee for their work and assistance.

Children, Youth, and Families: Rachel Williamson reported that much was accomplished in 2022 but the need for more volunteers continues. She summarized the focus of the programs for the various age groups and recognized the leaders of those groups. An important step forward was the hiring of Jonathan D'Amico to direct the Youth program.

Communications: Frank Glossl was not able to attend the meeting but sent notes which were shared by Rev. Jody. Much gratitude was expressed for the work of Parish Administrator Sally Peel and others who worked on building the new church website. Rev. Jody also thanked Geneva Reid for her years editing the Tideline publication.

Liturgy: Rev. Jody prepared the liturgy report that is included in the printed Annual Report. She reviewed the many special services that were held during the year, and thanked Joe Hickman for filling in for Matt Rosendahl while Matt was unable to work.

Outreach: Jerry Hansen quoted from the statement on the COS website that outreach is a primary purpose of COS. The many Outreach initiatives listed in the printed report are evidence of that. Jerry recognized committee chair Clint Robertson and the committee members, and highlighted the First Friday dinners and the College Park School tutoring program. Jerry thanked the congregation for all that they do in this area.

Parish Care: Kim Deslaurier reported on the activities of the Parish Care Committee. The Parish Care program gives us the opportunity to minister to each other, through such activities as the Prayer Shawl ministry, the Hurricane and Disaster group, and many others. The assistive listening devices that were made available in 2021 and the improvements to the sound system during the past year have helped make services more accessible. Kim thanked Harriet Forbis for her leadership, and Phil Jorgensen and Joe Hickman for their work in getting the sound system

installed. The church benefitted from a grant from the Diocese of East Carolina to help pay for the listening devices and sound equipment, and a plaque recognizing this help will be displayed soon.

Parish Life: Shawn Manning celebrated the return to an active parish life program after the quiet of the pandemic. She thanked the many volunteers who have made the activities possible. Jerry Hansen and Kim Simcox were thanked for heading up the groups who go out for meals together. Thanks also went to the 50th Anniversary Committee for the many fun activities throughout the year.

Racial Equity Project: Lekeshia Jarrett reported that this initiative was planned at the January 2022 vestry retreat. She thanked those who have been active and have provided leadership.

Stewardship: Margie Hickman reported that the fall stewardship campaign was a success, and thanked the committee who helped with planning. The theme of the campaign was "More Than Enough," reminding us that when we all do what we can, we all have more than enough.

Rector's Report – Rev. Jody spoke of a busy year serving and working with the parish. Some of the most difficult decisions that she had to make during the year were those that led, ultimately, to the closing of the Bargain Box. She thanked all who have served on the Bargain Box board and who have volunteered there. There will be another dignity-based ministry to come out of this development. The church is not about immortality but about death and resurrection, and good things can come from change. In terms of size, COS is between being a pastoral church and a program church. We don't always have the resources to do all that we want to do. With regard to next year's annual meeting, perhaps we will plan one service for that morning, with a parish lunch afterward.

Q&A --

Are we looking for a new music director? Yes, a team is being organized to work on that.

Are we reaching out to people who have not been coming to COS for quite a while? Yes, off and on, but this is best done by individual members of the parish.

Adjourn & Closing Prayer -- Rev. Jody closed the meeting by thanking the COS staff, especially Parish Administrator Sally Peel. A closing prayer was shared. Laura Hickey moved that the meeting be adjourned; Rey Smith seconded the motion; the motion carried.

Report of the Rector The Rev. Jody Greenwood

Hello Fellow Servants! In last year's annual report I shared that 2022, for me, felt like bungie-jumping, with recurring ups and downs that came as we continued to navigate the challenges of coming out of a global pandemic. I'm happy to say that 2023 has felt much more stable, with the ability to resume a fairly steady rhythm for our worship, our ministries, and our programs, all year long. I am grateful to our staff, vestry and ministry leaders who serve on behalf of the worshipping community, giving of your time and talents to keep the Servant Spirit alive!

This was also a year of looking ahead to 2024, spurred by our decision in late 2022 to apply for a Lilly Grant to provide financial resources for clergy and congregational renewal. As our grant proposal was being developed, the question the Lilly Foundation asked me and us to consider as we discern how we want to use this renewal time, was "*What makes your heart sing?*" For me, it's my family and my faith. For our congregation, it's living into all aspects of the assertion embossed in our entryway: "*We seek, serve and celebrate God and each other in a safe and accepting community.*" What emerged from our discernment, including your feedback, was to offer time to experience "Holy Lands, Holy Listening, and Holy Laughter." I am thankful to the group of individuals that helped put this grant proposal together: Emilia Boyette, Blair Kutrow, Ginny Lundeen, Karen Rogalski and Erin Williamson, and am thankful it was awarded to us for the coming year. You can find out more about the plans on page 23 of this report.



The reports that follow, provided by the Vestry and staff, convey the many amazing things that took place during 2023, so I am not going to “steal their thunder.” I hope you will give these careful review, and convey your personal thanks to the many hands and hearts that have not only lifted up one another, but many others beyond our walls. That is what CHURCH does!

I want to take a moment to give thanks for our staff, and share some transitions in 2023.

- Sally Peel, our Parish Administrator and Bookkeeper continues to be invaluable, not only to me, but to all of us at Church of the Servant—working behind the scenes, keeping her cool composure, and noticing things that others (mostly me) might miss. What a gift!
- Jonathan D’Amico has settled in to his role as Director of Youth Ministries, connecting with our Illuminate youth and their families. He’s also shared his insights through the Vitality Team.
- Joe Hickman served as Interim Music Director after Matt’s retirement, bringing his breadth of experience to our choir and to me, for which I am deeply grateful.
- Catherine Charles joined the staff in August and hit the ground running. We are glad to have her as part of our staff ensemble.
- The Rev. Deacon Rhonda Thomas continues to share her gifts through her support in worship, coordination of Eucharistic Visits, and engaging in prison ministry in our community.
- Luis Hernandez has served as our Sexton for many years, yet with the resumption of our post-pandemic activities, coupled with changes in his family and career commitments, he shared that it was time for him to step away from this role with COS. We are grateful for his faithful service through the years, and wish him well for his future.
- Shannon with Carolina Squeaky Clean, LLC is now providing the cleaning services for our church campus and is off to a great start!

While we have a fantastic team, they do not replace the need for YOU to be an integral part of our ministries. In particular, our Children and Youth programs depend on adults to be Catechists and Youth Leaders, so please prayerfully consider being part of these ministries.

Thank You Faithful Leaders

I’m thankful for our faithful Vestry: Ginny Lundeen (Sr. Warden), Rey Smith (Jr. Warden), Kim Deslaurier (Clerk), Jodi Davis, Jerry Hansen, Lekeshia Jarrett, Kemille Moore, and Rachel Williamson, and the partial terms served by Larry Cahoon and David Schultz. Thank you to Blair Kutrow who wrapped up her fifth year as our Treasurer, passing the baton to Don Anderson. Thanks to both of you for sharing your gifts in this essential need for our congregational life.

I also give thanks for Clint Robertson who led the Outreach Committee for over 5 years, and while still serving on the committee has stepped down from the leadership role. Martin Posey has begun serving as the chair of Outreach in 2024, which is great!

Celebration of Life

Several beloved members of our COS Community moved beyond this earthly realm in 2023: Ken Byrd, Carol Whitehill, Frank Reid, and Peter Makuck. We hold the light of their lives in our hearts still. Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted.

We also had three Baptisms: Rosalie Scott-Pollock and Hannah Sorensen at COS, and Harrison Mullaney, at St. Francis in Tyler, Tx (near family), and welcomed Harper Bautz into the world last June! She will be baptized at the Easter Vigil in 2024.

Letting our Light Shine

Another theme of 2023 was to let our light shine. Several times throughout the year we hung the Epiphany star in the sanctuary and ended worship by singing “This little light of mine” as a way to remind ourselves that we are called to be light in the world. As we move into a new year, let us continue to find ways to let the light of Christ shine in our hearts and to spread that light into our community and beyond. Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!



Report of the Deacon Rev. Deacon Rhonda Thomas

It's been a busy, Holy Spirit-filled year at Church of the Servant. Thank you, fellow parishioners, for your love, grace, and hospitality throughout the year. It's been a joy to watch this from the Deacon's perspective! The church seasons included many opportunities to share the Good News, in both readings and actions.

Thank you to the Baristas, who share coffee and food with love each Sunday morning. Thank you to the Altar and Linen Guild, as well as the Flower Guild, who work behind the scenes to prepare (and reset) the Sanctuary for Eucharist. Thank you to the Choir, Lectors, and Acolytes for sharing your talents with us each Sunday. Thank you to the Eucharistic Ministers and Eucharistic Visitors for sharing your time with the parishioners inside and outside the church. Thank you to the various committees at our church who work behind the scenes on programs and other efforts that connect us with each other and the community. Thank you to the Vestry for your continued work behind the scenes, as well as your weekly roles, that keep everything running smoothly throughout the year. Thank you for my fellow staff members - you make "work" fun and a great learning experience.

Part of a Deacon's role is to have an outside ministry that I share with the congregation. My passion is Prison Ministry, and it grew this past year, thanks be to God! Kim Deslaurier, David Smith, and I visit LINC (Leading Into New Communities) to share some love with those who've recently been released from prison or drug rehab. The residents at LINC are transitioning to a new reality, and this time can be exciting, overwhelming, and scary. As representatives of Yokefellow Prison Ministry, we show up twice a month to love on these folks and listen to whatever they want to share with us. We hope and pray to share the Good News, that God loves them, that their actions do not define who they are, and that their stories matter. These folks actually feed our souls during each visit in these meaningful conversations! I also received training and a blue card from New Hanover Correctional this summer. This led to joining with another ministry group (New Life Prison Ministries) and the opportunity to visit the men at "025" for worship. This energetic ministry group took me in as Sister Rhonda and includes me in the way of sharing God's love through the Word and some conversations of tough love. We end with prayer, holding hands in a large circle, laying hands on those who will be released soon, and reciting Philippians 4:13 three times, ending with an emphatic "Amen". Thank you, Church of the Servant, for supporting me in these important ministry opportunities.

Report of the Senior Warden Ginny Lundeen

I was given an Advent quote as we began the new church year last month. It read, "Advent asks the question, what is it for which you are spending your life? Is the star you are following a place that is really comprehensive enough to equal the breadth of the human soul?" This speaks to me in regard to the thanks I give for having grown to adulthood, and now to older adulthood, as a member of Church of the Servant. This is a church that has always embraced honoring one another's views and opinions, while striving for a better world. A world embracing the gifts, and wellbeing of all people.



I cannot say it better than Rachel Williamson did at our last meeting, when she said, "Serving on the vestry of Church of the Servant is not only something I do for the church and the world, but a gift I give to myself." I am SO grateful for this amazing vestry and congregation. We have such kindness and talent. It was hard to give up Blair Kutrow as treasurer, and we gained Don Anderson. When sadly our Matt Rosendahl retired as choir director, we gained Catherine Charles. The Church of the Servant is a hand-basket of intelligent, amazing, creative, giving people.

2023 has been filled with gifts: Several anonymous financial gifts have been designated to provide speakers to enhance our spiritual and personal growth. One paved the way to begin the Journeys Through Loss groups. Another gift: With the leadership of Rachel Williamson, the Racial Equity Project (REP) has been cited for the work it has done to benefit the community of Wilmington, not to mention how the REP parish group enhances our own growth in understanding systemic racism.

Much creativity has gone into preparing for our 2024 year of RENEWAL. Rev. Jody has already told us about the wonderful grant COS received from the Lilly Foundation. She has already used some of Lilly's language as we look at "What makes our hearts sing." YES, in 2024 we will look at **OUR** renewal, as Rev. Jody takes time for her own renewal. In this light, I ask you these questions: What does "renewal" mean to you, personally, and to this church? Define "church." What is "the church" to which you minister?

Of course, we have worked diligently to continue those things we began in 2022: safe church, building and grounds repairs and improvements, selling the Bargain Box property, returning to worship that includes homemade bread and the choice of wine from the chalice or intinction; as well as supporting all of our ministries.

It has been another amazing year of this special community.

Special thanks to Sally Peel who does so much to keep us going; to the 2023 Vestry: Larry Cahoon, Jodi Davis, Kim Deslaurier, Jerry Hansen, Lekeshia Jarrett, Kemille Moore, David Schultz, Rey Smith, Rachel Williamson; to those who have kept us aware of our finances this year, Blair Kutrow and Don Anderson; to those who will fill vacancies in leadership: Jan Christophersen, Natasha Clay, David Smith; and those who will be elected today. I give thanks for those who are our guiding lights: Rev. Jody and Rev. Deacon Rhonda; to Jonathan, and to all those who minister to our little, and not-so-little children, who are our future; AND to all of YOU who DO our ministry. Thank you.

As I rotate off vestry,
and I think about what makes MY HEART SING, it is YOU; Each unique and special you.
I am Grateful.



Report of the Treasurer

Don Anderson

Following in the footsteps of Blair Kutrow, I have served as the Treasurer since May of 2023. I have benefited enormously from the support and encouragement of Blair, Sally, Jody, and Joan Geiszler-Ludlum, the chair of the Finance Committee.

As the Treasurer of Church of the Servant, I work with Sally Peel in her role as Bookkeeper to review monthly financial statements and prepare the monthly Treasurer's reports for the Finance Committee and Vestry. I also work with our Rector, Jody, the Finance Committee, and Vestry liaisons to prepare budget recommendations for the upcoming year, and provide recommendations on financial matters.

2023 Budget Overview

At the beginning of 2023, the Vestry approved a 2023 annual budget anticipating \$367,973 of income, about 90% of which provided by parishioners' pledges. Budgeted expenses, including mortgage payments, totaled \$449,615, creating an expected deficit of \$81,642. The Vestry approved this deficit budget because they felt it was important to provide the cost of living increase for our support staff (no increase was included for our rector), and knowing that certain other costs like insurance, building maintenance, and utilities would be rising as well. The Vestry also knew there were funds in our banking and Raymond James investment accounts to cover the projected deficit, and committed to look for ways to increase future revenue.

2023 Financial Summary

We ended 2023 with a smaller budget deficit than originally anticipated due to higher pledge receipts of \$12,538 and Money Market interest income of \$2,159, so even without a community fundraiser, total income was \$6,060 higher than budgeted. Operating expenses were lower by

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\$17,808, because of reduced spending in several categories including: salaries, office expenses, and program spending, which offset the higher than expected costs for Building Maintenance and Insurance. The net ordinary expense deficit was \$29,327 for 2023, plus mortgage principal payments of \$28,568, resulting in a total deficit of \$57,895. We had transferred \$80,000 from our Raymond James account earlier in the year, so these were used to cover that gap. The remaining \$22,105 will be available for 2024 budget shortfalls. In addition to a 4% rate of return on our PNC money market account, we benefited from a 14% rate of return on our Raymond James account.

The sale of the Princess Place property closed on December 28th, 2023. The net proceeds after paying off the mortgage on that property, as well as commissions and fees, is approximately \$626,000. As Rev. Jody mentioned in a recent email about that sale:

"Under the guidance of the Finance Committee, in the coming weeks we'll seek input from various perspectives within COS, including some who have served on the BB Advisory Board in the past, to explore options for how best to allocate, reserve, and invest the net proceeds to support existing and newly imagined dignity-based ministries (or other purposes) of Church of the Servant and the wider Wilmington community. They will then make a recommendation to the Vestry for consideration. I ask that you keep this process and discernment in your prayers."

Additional details about our 2023 income streams, our expenses, and our account balances at PNC bank and in our investment account at Raymond James are shown in the Table below.

	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	YTD Over (Under)	% Difference
Income				
Pledge Income	\$349,561	\$337,023	\$12,538	4%
Plate and Undesignated Income	\$4,292	\$4,000	\$292	7%
Community Fundraiser	\$0	\$10,000	-\$10,000	-100%
Building Use	\$1,320	\$1,000	\$320	32%
PNC Interest on Money Market Acct(s)	\$2,159	\$0	\$2,159	
Miscellaneous Income	\$16,701	\$15,950	\$751	5%
Total Ordinary Income	\$374,033	\$367,973	\$6,060	2%
Transferred from Raymond James	\$29,327	\$0	\$29,327	
Total Operating Income	\$403,360	\$367,973	\$35,387	10%
Expenses				
Salaries and Benefits	\$267,840	\$277,620	-\$9,780	-4%
Office Administration/Vestry	\$14,201	\$16,950	-\$2,749	-16%
Bldg. Maintenance/Insurance	\$67,326	\$59,500	\$7,826	13%
Diocesan Expenses	\$34,203	\$35,214	-\$1,011	-3%
Programs	\$8,197	\$19,900	-\$11,703	-59%
Misc. Expenses	\$2,730	\$3,000	-\$270	-9%
Total COS Bldg. Loan Interest	\$8,864	\$8,984	-\$120	-1%
Total Ordinary Expenses	\$403,360	\$421,168	-\$17,808	-4%
Net Ordinary Income (Deficit)	\$0	-\$53,195	\$53,195	
Building Loan Principal (Expense) *	\$28,568	\$28,447	-\$121	0%
Net Operating Income w/ Debt Reduction	(28,568)	-\$81,642	\$53,074	-65%

* Loan Principal payments covered by Raymond James funds

Funds @ PNC (Checking & Money Market)	\$871,010
COS loan at PNC Bank	\$158,135

Endowment Funds in Raymond James	\$97,096
Non-Endowment Funds in Raymond James	\$42,464
Total Balance in Raymond James	\$139,559
Rate of Return Year to Date	14.02%

2024 Outlook

Thanks to the generosity of our parish, the efforts of our Vestry, our staff, and other volunteers to contain costs, and the proceeds from the sale of the Princess Place property, we begin 2024 in a financially sound position. Under almost any scenario however, we will be budgeting with an operating deficit in 2024, though it will not be as large as 2023. The Vestry will be reviewing the proposed budget later this month, which will be shared as part of our Vestry Notes in February. I look forward to serving as the Treasurer of Church of the Servant this year.

Adult Christian Life Formation Kemille Moore

Throughout 2023 there were regularly two Adult Christian Ed offerings: Continuing the Conversation and a specific presentation in the parish hall.

Continuing the Conversation is a structured, but informal, discussion centered on the day's readings. We are grateful for Erin Williamson who leads these discussions, and the willingness of others to lead when Erin is not available.

The topics presented in the parish hall ranged widely in 2023. These included:

Winter/Spring

Clergy & Congregational Renewal: What makes your heart sing? - Rev. Jody

Conversation about Environment Issues - Martin Posey

The Gospel of Mark - Phil Stine

End of Life Series - Various speakers and topics

Prison Ministry - Rhonda Thomas

Changing the Narrative of the Passion Story - Rev. Jody

Christian Art - Kemille Moore

An Introduction to Mindfulness - Beverly McGuire

The Gospel of Thomas - Chris Moore

Envisioning Adult Formation for the Future! - Rev. Jody & Kemille Moore

Fall

Holy Lands, Holy Listening, & Holy Laughter - Rev. Jody

A Glimpse at Church architecture from 310-1500 - Kemille Moore

Excerpts from The Book of Acts - Phil Stine

Mysticism in Religion - Jamie Brummitt (UNCW faculty)

Resource Stewardship: Phosphorous: The Devil's Element - Larry Cahoon

Resource Stewardship Martin Posey

Racial Equity Project - Black Maternal Health - Laura Schultz & Rachel Williamson

An Invitation to the Enneagram - Rev. Jody

Thanks to Sandra Sink, Leslie Posey, and Kenneth Colston for their assistance in planning ACLF. The first several months of 2024 are planned with new topics such as the Enneagram, Book of James, Buddhism, and Mysticism.

Buildings and Grounds Rey Smith (Junior Warden)

The Building and Grounds committee had another busy year here at COS. We successfully completed quite a few projects. Just a few include:

- Each year the committee chooses a large project to be completed. In 2023 it was to have all of the rot of the wooden soffits and trim around the church repaired or replaced. Once done, all of the soffits and trim were painted.
- Removed the choir risers out of the sanctuary to provide more flexibility in our worship space.
- A commemorative stone bench gifted to COS was placed in the Memorial Garden in honor of Rose and John Bauerlein (by their children).
- Removed and installed damaged part on the sanctuary organ console.
- Repaired existing and installed new emergency exit signs throughout the church.
- Installed gutters along the front of the church.
- Repaired HVAC system in Parish Hall.
- Moved and spread a considerable amount of mulch to the playground area.
- Removed a wall between the two smaller rooms behind the nursery and painted those rooms.
- Rearranged bulletin boards, painted the back hallway and replaced floor molding. Also replaced floor molding in the Atrium hallway.
- Installed chair rail in the Parish Hall.
- The committee also maintained the Princess Place location (formerly Bargain Box), including repairing the HVAC systems multiple times, changing filters, cleaning out the considerable amount of debris left by the homeless and generally checking on the welfare of the property.



Committee members include:

Brad Boyette, Kim Sincox, Asa Williamson, Don Hickey, Ginny Lundeen
Friend of the Committee – Wayne Deslaurier

Children, Youth & Families Rachel Williamson

Children Youth and Families (CYF) Committee: David Hoolahan - Chair, Jonathan D'Amico - Director of Youth Ministry, Leslie Antos, Kim Deslaurier, Rev. Jody Greenwood, Rachel Williamson - Vestry Liaison

Children Youth and Families now has a mission statement:

Our Children Youth and Families ministry provides supportive, engaging space for children and youth to grow their relationship with God, in partnership with families, as we explore what it means to be followers of Jesus.

CYF leadership is grateful to parents for bringing your children on Sunday mornings!

We are also grateful for Jerry Hansen's work helping all who work with our children and youth complete model policy procedures set forth by the diocese.

There have been many highlights this year which are laid out below. Our main challenge has been communication. Many emails go unread and our new online registration forms not being filled out so we are exploring options to keep in touch with families.

Nursery: Recently our nursery space has been redesigned, cleaned, painted and decluttered. We appreciate the thought, but we do not need donations of any kind.

There is still no nursery staff, but families with young children are encouraged to use the nursery during services as needed. Reopening the nursery has been discussed. That would mean hiring 3-4 paid staff or a hybrid of paid staff and adult volunteers. Either way, COS would need a volunteer from the congregation to oversee hiring as well as ongoing management. If you are interested in serving in this way, please let me or David Hoolahan know.

Playground: Over the summer our playground was partially painted by the youth of Illuminate. The job was much larger than anticipated and put on hold so that a small group could discern what needed to happen to make our playground a safe and interesting place for our young people to play. The decision was made to add mulch to the enclosed area and put up safety signs letting folks know that the equipment is intended for those ages 10 years and under. If you would like to volunteer to finish painting the equipment, please let me know.



Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS):



This Montessori based Christian Education program is led by trained catechists, David Hoolahan and Kim Deslaurier. Kim and David collaborate regularly to keep the program running appropriately and smoothly for the children who attend. Rebecca Blake and Rachel Phillips serve as assistants with Azzari Jarrett, Hap Rogers and Laura Hickey serving as substitutes. These adults work to create a peaceful engaging environment for children ages three to ten years old. Adult assistants are still needed for both atria as well as at least one more trained catechist. If you are called to this ministry, please let me or David Hoolahan know.

Training for adult catechists is essential to making this program work. A generous parishioner has donated money for educational experiences at COS like CGS training. David plans to use that gift to

take Level 2 training while Kim is looking for opportunities to train as a Level 3 catechist. These trainings will help them provide appropriate environments for the varied ages/levels of children in the hybrid Level 1/2 and Level 2/3 atria in which they serve. We are grateful for the monetary gift that makes these trainings possible.

This year Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:

- Held the annual Liturgy of Light service on Sunday, May 7 at 6pm in the Memorial Garden with 28 in attendance.
- Hosted two sessions of atrium training led by Rev. Catherine Powell on June 1st and 3rd with seven in attendance.
- Had a successful "Mini Open House" inviting parents to attend the first 10-15 minutes of the atrium hour.

Illuminate: Our youth leaders in 2023 have been our Director of Youth Ministry, Jonathan D'Amico and Leslie Antos with Becky Johnston increasing her involvement.

Leslie Antos has served as youth leader with energy, positivity, organization and fun for the last 2 years. We are so grateful! She is joining the Vestry in 2024 so new volunteer youth leadership plans are being made.





Jonathan and Leslie have created a strong, active youth group filled with service opportunities and socializing built on a foundation of following Jesus.

This year Illuminate has:

- Planned and led another successful Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. The youth generously voted to give 80% of the proceeds from the supper to the local nonprofit A Safe Place.
- Collected donations of school supplies for Banana Island. This effort was created and led by Brie Jarrett.
- Hosted the annual Easter egg “hunt” on Sunday, April 9th with a stormy weather twist. Five youth stood in designated spots inside the church and handed out lots of eggs to participating children trick or treat style.
- Updated seating in the Illuminate space to director chairs. This portable option helps with storage, durability and cleaning issues.
- Had a fun beach day at the Topsail Beach home of Claude and Azzari Jarrett. Thank you Jarrett Family! Eleven youth and six adults attended.
- Created a designated space for four-square and a fire pit in COS’ backyard! Illuminate’s Patio Project was completed over a few days and finished on November 4th with youth and adults volunteering.
- Purchased gifts for the Angel Tree and had lunch at Islands Fresh Mex Grill.

CYF closed out 2023 year with another amazing COS Christmas pageant. Thank you to Azzari Jarrett who once again led this joyful event!

Illuminate Jonathan D’Amico

Since coming to Illuminate last year, our group has been up to “some things.” Firstly, the crew was already working to figure out a new rhythm of being in a (sort-of) post pandemic world. This statistically was already emotionally difficult for students, having so much of their daily lives and interactions upended. So it has been fun learning a new rhythm for this group and for myself as a leader.

Our first year we really dove into the conversation around prophets- their way of being in the world and how they spoke honestly, spoke truth to power, and attempted to make wrong things right. That idea has stuck with us into this year as well, and as we enter a new calendar year, we will be seeking more ways to be active and engaged in the world around us, as this is a clarion call of the gospel.

Additionally, we've been having fun! Our weekly gathering is always a lively conversation and we had a great beach day over the summer, and are in the midst of planning events and projects for the new year. Speaking of projects, the students also dreamed up and installed a patio in the courtyard where they can hang out, have bonfires and s'mores, and even play 4-square. We are looking forward to putting this to good use! As we launch into 2024, we are also busy planning another (quickly approaching) Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper Dinner Extravaganza for Feb 13th.

Illuminate would love to thank the following individuals for their direct input, support and assistance in the past year:

- Rev Jody for her constant presence and support.
- Sally for making literally all the things happen.
- Natasha for being such a strong presence in the life of our students and keeping them involved in the life of worship with acolyting.
- The Vestry- for giving us the ability to gather, hang out, and be together.
Rachel Williamson- the best, nay the greatest, Vestry liaison ever?
- Azzari and Claude Jarrett- for being so kind and generous with the use of your beautiful beach house so we could hang out and have a good time over the summer. We loved it!
- Shawn Manning- For high quality beach/shark/boundary patrol at the beach.
- Evan and Julie Scott-Pollock- for high quality beach chaperoning skills and general constant positive good vibes.
- Becky "Betsy" Johnston- for beach chaperone skills, skills in snacks and fun, skills in general shenanigans
- Kristina Mercier- for giving us an opportunity to lean into the Christmas tree/gift buying as a group. What you organize each year is magical and we are so honored to take part in it.
- Every single parental unit for being you and doing the best you can day in and day out. We know it can be a struggle- this world is really...something. But this group of young people is TRULY the most amazing, grounded, magical group I have ever been around. That is a reflection on each of you. We see you, we love you, and we thank you for being exactly who you are.
- Leslie Antos - Ooof. Where to begin. You have been the yin to my yang and so much more. Your steady, honest presence, fact finding/documenting/planning mind, your wisdom and question asking skills, your critical thinking, your support of each of the students in Illuminate and their families, the way you give of your life and skills (and bring Joe along with you ☺) is a blessing that I can never repay or express enough thanks or gratitude for. We will miss you dearly each Sunday in Illuminate but know you are not far away and are so glad the Vestry is getting an incredible leader joining their ranks. Thank you, thank you, thank you.



Communications

Jerry Hansen

Church of the Servant continues to benefit from a newly designed website and regular communications via weekly email announcements. The website provides a point of contact for those in the general community seeking information about COS. Announcements about upcoming events and significant milestones in the life of our community are emailed to parishioners. Our administrative assistant, Sally Peel, plays a central role in managing both communication links.

Thanks to the efforts of Rev. Jody Greenwood, Church of the Servant maintains its presence on social media through the COS Facebook page. Facebook enables COS to participate within the larger virtual network of worshipping communities in the Lower Cape Fear Deanery, the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina, and the Episcopal Church.

Communication projects for 2023 have focused on three areas.

Servants Sharing Stories. This is a new feature of the COS webpage providing short narratives about the life of the parish. Special thanks to Sara Allen and Anita Thomas who have served as editors. Thanks to all who have shared stories and to Sally Peel who posts contributions on the COS website.

Vestry Notes. This 1-page summary provides insights into COS finances and other topics discussed during monthly vestry meeting. These meetings convene many dedicated servants from various dimensions of the parish who “help define and articulate the mission of the congregation”. These notes update the parish on the workings of the Vestry, and it is distributed to the parish through the weekly email announcements.

COS Meetings. Committees and ministry groups gather in many formats as they direct the work and activities of the parish. Some groups have now resumed formal, in-person meetings. Some meet virtually by teleconference or periodically by email. Some function informally on an as-needed basis. For those new to the parish, identifying opportunities to participate can be unnecessarily confusing and even mysterious. To provide a directory of meetings, the weekly announcements have included a listing of upcoming meeting times, locations, and contacts. This has been a challenge. Meeting times change. Notifying the entire parish is an extra step that can be easily overlooked. However, this practice can help everyone find their niche in our community of faith.

Communications at COS have continued to evolve as documented in previous editions of this annual report prepared by Frank Glossl (2022, 2020), Margie Hickman (2021), Geneva Reid (2019), and Robin Hahaj (2018). In some years, we have had a standing communications committee, but the chair position has remained unoccupied as noted in the reports from 2018 and 2019. We continue to adapt as needs and resources dictate, but we at COS must always communicate. “Communication leads to community, that is, to understanding, intimacy and mutual valuing” (Rollo May).

Liturgy

Rev. Jody

Sunday mornings are always buzzing at Church of the Servant. The day begins with the smell of coffee before our 8am worship, and exuberant voices in the hallway and narthex being reminded to “use your inside voice,” but the buoyant conversation just can’t be contained. What follows is the hustling-in of individuals and families arriving just in time (well, almost) for our 9am interactive service - sure to grab a snack from the Holy Barista table on the way. But nothing compares to the cacophony in the sanctuary as worshippers greet one another ahead of our 11:15 service with choir and music, when even my repeated “Good morning” can hardly quell the enthusiasm of being together once again. Having three worship services each week is really unique for a congregation of our size, but COS has never shied away from being *unique*, have we?

For “Sunday” to happen, many people are involved before, during and after worship. I am grateful to the Liturgy Committee who comes together bi-monthly for planning and to stay coordinated. They include: Natasha Clay (Convenor/Altar Guild/Acolytes), Sara Allen (Flowers), Ginny Lundeen (Altar Hangings), Mary Ellen Stokes (Choir), Catherine Charles (Music) and Deacon Rhonda.

There are many people in the various ministry areas that support worship, and though I'm not listing all by name, please know how important your serving in these ministries is to me and to making "Sunday" happen. These include: Flower Guild, Altar Guild/Altar Hangings, Bread Bakers, Schedulers" of worship participants, Acolytes, Choir, Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Eucharistic Visitors, Vestry Person of the Week, and special musicians (on occasion).

We had some liturgy changes this year as well:

- Our Music Director and Organist, Matt Rosendahl, retired in January, and the search for a new Music Director ensued. I am grateful to Joe Antos, Joan Geiszler-Ludlum, Robin Hahaj, and Mary Ellen Stokes for your work as the search committee, and for the choir for being involved in the process. I am also deeply grateful to Joe Hickman who served as Interim Music Director from January through Pentecost, and provided counsel to me along the way. In August we welcomed Catherine Charles as our new Music Director and Organist!
- Out of our Vestry retreat came the idea of having a way to remind ourselves that as followers of Jesus we are meant to shine the *light* we are meant to be in the world. So, we began hanging the Epiphany star on random (or not so random) Sundays during the liturgical year, regardless of the season, and on these Sundays, we end worship by singing "This Little Light of Mine" as a reminder to spread Christ's light of love beyond our walls, with the wider world.
- In another step of our "return" from the COVID pandemic, we returned to providing homemade bread for Holy Communion. What a gift this is for our worshippers!

While Sunday morning is the primary time for worship, COS also has offerings at other times. In 2023 we had our Epiphany Celebration on January 6, our Liturgy of Light (Catechesis of the Good Shepherd) in May, and Saints Remembered (Stephen Ministers) on All Saints Day (Nov. 1). During the third weekend of each month the Labyrinth was open of walking on Friday evening and Saturday morning as well as New Year's Eve. We also opened the Labyrinth each Friday during Lent, and offered Stations of the Cross on those Fridays as well.

During 2023 we had two baptisms at COS (Rosalie Scott-Pollock & Hannah Sorensen), and welcomed the newly baptized, Harrison Mullaney who was baptized in Tyler, TX. We also had seven Life Celebrations and/or Interments (Val D'Auvray, Ken Byrd, Carol Whitehill, Frank Reid, Peter Makuck, Clara MacMillan, and Luleen Anderson).

Thanks to all who share your gifts, seen and unseen. It just wouldn't be worship without you.



Music Catherine Charles

From the moment I played my first service on August 13, I knew I had found my new church home with a warm and welcoming congregation, a wonderful staff that patiently answered all of my questions, and a loving choir that made me feel right at home. I am especially grateful to Dr. Joe Hickman for his guidance and advice during the transition. His help was invaluable during the first few months of my arrival.

The many cards that were given to me in August showed an outpouring of that love Church of the Servant is known for, and I enjoyed reading all of the welcoming comments, as well as suggestions, for what you, the parish, were interested in (and maybe not interested in) for the music of the church as we move forward under a new music ministry. Suggestions are always welcome.

As we move forward into a new year, plans are in place to continue work on maintaining the organ and piano as well as incorporating more instruments into services throughout the year. If you have an interest in adding your voice to the choir, or your instrument in a service, please feel free to talk with me.

Outreach Jodi Davis

"At Church of the Servant, we consider Outreach to be the primary purpose, giving of our freshest energy to live out God's promise. The outreach efforts of our church are vital components of a Christian life fully lived" (COS website). COS parishioners donate time, food, clothing, and supplies to many local charities. We are grateful for your support and participation in assisting these ministries! Year-to-date financial contributions are shown in parentheses below. To learn more about how you can help support these ministries, please contact Vestry liaison Jodi Davis or the new Outreach chair Martin Posey.

2Share (\$2400). Contact person- Don Arabian

This ministry provides furnishings and household items to families in need and seeks to turn dwelling places into real homes. The clientele is mostly families with single parents, but more seniors, homeless, and victims of human trafficking are also being helped. The October 14th Stuff the Truck event collected around \$1700 in cash and \$3000 in household items. 2Share served over 800 people this year and were able to provide over 250 beds, at least 750 other pieces of furniture, and over 350 lamps to clients.

Christmas Families (\$1500). Contact person- Kristina Mercier

COS parishioners generously provided Christmas gifts for 12 families from College Park Elementary and Rachel Freeman Elementary. The Illuminate group also took a field trip to shop for gifts.

College Park Elementary (\$1400). Contacts- Jackie & Don Anderson

COS members helped our neighboring school by volunteering in the library (Don Anderson), serving as classroom tutors (Jeannie & Mark Hellman and Maslin Kain) setting up their Fall Book Fair, providing 40+ coats last winter, donating school supplies to begin the 2023-2024 school year, and giving money for a Teacher/Staff Appreciation Lunch in May.



Episcopal Farmworkers Ministry. Contact person- vacant

This ministry headquartered in Dunn, NC serves agricultural workers as well as immigrant families. They have services and programs to provide for the spiritual, educational, and cultural aspects of this community while offering leadership development and advocacy for farmworker and immigrant rights. Church of the Servant collects items such as shirts and hats plus gives financial donations.

Environmental Stewardship. Contact person- Martin Posey

This is a new area that was added to Outreach in the Fall of 2023. Be on the lookout for opportunities to help with taking better care of our planet in 2024.

Good Shepherd Center (\$400). Contacts- Clint & Betty Robertson

On the First Friday of each month, we provide cooks/food servers for dinner for 50-100 people experiencing homelessness. We no longer collect & transport chili supplies each time, but if you sign up and want to do chili, we can make that happen! Signups are on the COS website.

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard. Contact person- Paul Smith

Once a month, those in need can receive a 3-5 day supply of groceries from MHC. COS has an ongoing collection wagon for donations of food and personal hygiene items. COS provides volunteers who collect empty boxes and who help at the warehouse.

Nourish NC (\$2113). Contacts- Andrea Carson & David Smith

Nourish NC gives food to the 1 in 5 children in New Hanover County who experience food insecurity. COS helps this ministry by packing weekend food bags, making breakfast bundles, collecting food staples, and by selling Christmas wreaths.

Prison Ministries. Contact person- Rhonda Thomas

Rev. Deacon Rhonda, along with Kim Deslaurier and David Smith, visit LINC (Leading Into New Communities) twice a month as a part of Yokefellow Prison Ministries. This important listening ministry connects those who were recently released from prison or drug rehab to a group of folks who love them and will happily listen to whatever is on their heart. Rhonda also visits New Hanover Correctional for Bible Study twice a month, which is led by New Life Prison Ministries.

Thanks to all who serve on the Outreach committee:

Don & Jackie Anderson, Don Arabian, Mike Bliss (Christmas Wreaths), Andrea Carson & David Smith, Jeannie & Mark Hellmann, Michele Mendes, Martin Posey, Clint & Betty Robertson, Paul Smith, and Rhonda Thomas.

Special thanks: We are grateful for the 5+ years that Clint Robertson served as the chair of the Outreach Committee and celebrated his leadership in June with a time of fellowship at Johnny Luke's.



Good Shepherd Center dinner



Parish Care

Kim Deslaurier & Harriet Forbis

Our Parish Care Committee has a lot to celebrate this year. We continue to minister to our parish in the following ways with the Monday Prayer Group, Prayer Chain, Prayer Shawl Ministry, Stephen Ministry, Visitation, Meal Ministry, Transportation, Hurricane/Disaster Teams, Accessibility, Memorial Garden, and just recently, making sure people are safe in case of medical emergencies with the new AED program. The Parish Care Committee watches over and discerns the needs of our parishioners by listening and responding. We celebrate the opportunities that arise in serving our parishioners and God.

The following are some highlights from 2023:

- **Membership:** We have added 6 new members to our ministry. Eight members have completed the requirements for "Safe Church."
- **New Group:** Sara Allen initiated the offering of "Journeys Through Loss," a confidential support group. Members reflect on and share their experiences with all types of loss and grief. There have been two groups, and a third group, open to the community, starts in 2024.
- **Serving our Community:** Mike Bliss and Bernadette Michaels have planned a Red Cross Blood Drive at Church of the Servant scheduled for February 2, 2024, 10:00 - 2:00 PM.
- **Accessibility:** Our latest "accessibility" project is purchasing a limited number of sanctuary chairs with arms for those for whom standing from a seated position is difficult. This project is underway, and we are seeking grant money to fund the project. The Assistive Listening Devices continue to be used every Sunday, as well as at memorial services and special events in the sanctuary. People have become more comfortable using this gift of technology.
- **Memorial Garden:** We have addressed maintenance needs in the Memorial Garden and are maintaining a list of the names of those in the garden and where their markers are located. Thanks to the work of an ad hoc team, the design and plan for a plaque has been completed and approved by the Vestry. It will be installed listing the names of people who have been interred in our memorial garden. The group included: Ron Knopf, Alfreda Gee, Rebecca Blake, Phil Jorgensen, Katie Larkin, and Ginny Lundeen. Peter Mudar will do the construction of the plaque and Coastal Engraving will be our engraver. It will be quite attractive and a wonderful addition to our garden.
- **The Hurricane/Disaster Team** remains active and we were fortunate to only have one tropical storm impact our community in 2023.
- **Emergency Response:** An AED machine has been purchased. David Schultz organized a training that took place in the Parish Hall on Tuesday, December 5th. Twenty people are now trained in using the device and it has been mounted on the wall in the narthex.
- **Challenge:** One challenge is making sure Parish Care members are certified "Safe Church." We have offered sessions here at church to help provide assistance to people, but we still need to complete more certifications.

Parish Life

Lekeshia Jarrett

The Holy Baristas are doing a great job with Sunday hospitality led by Priss Endo. They are: Don Arabian, Emily Bliss, Emilia Boyette, Robin Hahaj, Margie Hickman, Ellison Hunter, Shawn Manning, Karen Sorenson, Kim Sincox and Indiana Wiley.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper was hosted by Illuminate on February 21, led by Jonathan D'Amico and Leslie Antos. Thanks to others who helped with cooking, including: Jackie Anderson, John Bauerlein, Kim Deslaurier, Jerry Hansen, Rey Smith and Rhonda Thomas It was well attended.

The Pentecost Picnic was held this year, spearheaded by Emily Bliss. She had help from many people including the Illuminate group, Mary Ellen and Dan Stokes, and our grill-chefs: Mike Bliss, Toby Kasell, Wayne Deslaurier and Don Hickey. Jerry Surprise and Ginny Lundeen were also very helpful in carrying out the Pentecost Picnic. It was truly a team effort and many people in the church pitched in.

The members of Parish Life were able to organize a birthday party for Rev. Jody. She was on vacation at the time but decided to worship with us on her 60th birthday. She provided her own cake, but Parish Life was able to pull together a joy-filled reception.

Parish Life under the leadership of Emily Bliss held a reception following the combined service on November 5 to commemorate the 51st church anniversary.

Our social groups continued to gather in 2023, with Retired Old Fellows having lunch together on the second Tuesday of each month at Olympia Restaurant, and the Supper Sisters meeting monthly at different restaurants. The Busy Women's group was created and tries to meet monthly as schedules allow, headed by Pam Keeney. Clint and Betty Robertson organized the Supper Groups this fall, allowing those in the congregation to gather from time to time to share a meal and fellowship.



Thank you to all members and leaders in Parish Life.

Racial Equity Project

Rachel Williamson

Thank you to our members! They are Alfreda Gee, Azzari Jarret, David Schultz, Erin Williamson, Ginny Lundeen, Julie Potter, Karen Rogalski, Karen Sorenson, Kenneth Colston, Kim Deslaurier, Laura Hickey, Laura Schultz, Mary Ellen Stokes, Michele Mendes, Natasha Clay, Pam Keeney, Rachel Williamson, Rhonda Thomas, Sally Peel, Sara Allen, Shawn Manning and Tamara Dossin.

Our Vision:

A church in which members are actively seeking education and spiritual growth in matters pertaining to racial equity and discerning how and where this knowledge is utilized to best serve the needs of our community.

Our Mission:

To follow the Episcopal Church's Becoming Beloved Community directives whereby we commit to racial justice, healing, and reconciliation.

Our **Parish-Focused Group** led by Julie Potter, continues to work through Dr. Catherine Meek's book of meditations: The Night is Long, but Light Comes in the Morning. They also pull from Dr. Howard Thurman's Jesus and the Disinherited and James Baldwin's The Fire Next Time and White Women by Regina Jackson and Saira Rao. They have 14 members attending regularly and meet twice a month.

Our **Community-Focused Group** is led by Rachel Williamson. This branch of Racial Equity Project is focused on finding and engaging activities in our area that further the mission of racial equity while representing COS, leveraging the time and talents of the church and this group. By virtue of the need to be outward-facing and oriented toward finding partners in the community to do this work, this group is intended to be smaller and comprised of participants who have either participated in antiracism education, such as Sacred Ground, or have come to understand racism through their own lived experience.

Using funds generously offered by a few church ministries, COS donated \$1,500 to support the research project of MedNorth Health Center and UNCW entitled “The Lived Experience of Perinatal and Infant Care among Black Women in Southeastern North Carolina.” Our contribution will be used to fund professional interviewers.

Community Events attended, sponsored, or hosted on behalf of REP at COS in 2023:

- Attended Cape Fear Public Utility Board meeting in support of Rock Hill Community’s issues securing clean water
- Had coffee with YWCA CEO Velva Jenkins to discuss how COS might partner around racial equity and justice
- Attended YWCA Until Justice Just Is: Conversations for Peace
- Attended YWCA and UNCW Empowering and Building Healthier Communities- focus on Black Maternal Health
- Attended It’s All About Love Conference in Baltimore hosted by the Episcopal Church focused on racial and environmental justice
- Participated in Equity Matters Live: Black Maternal Health
- Attended “Freedom On The Line” at St. Stephen AME to learn about redrawing NC voter maps
- "Let Freedom Read" event at NHC Board of Education in opposition to the banning of the book Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You
- Hosted the snack table and attended Race and Jazz Symposium
- Hosted and sponsored Beyond Walls: 5 Films and Discussion about Prison Industrial Complex Abolition
- Sponsored and attended Cape Fear Region Racial and Health Equity Summit at Sokoto House
- Vendor at Ecology Event an annual racial and environmental justice event
- Attended court hearing of community member
- Met with Daquan Peters of Lived Experience Voices to figure out how we can host and support Court Watcher trainings at COS
- Hosted discussion during Adult Christian Education on Black Maternal Health and local efforts to improve outcomes
- Attended a press conference held by our local National Black Leadership Caucus chapter to respond to the New Hanover County School Board’s decision to dissolve the school board’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee

New Hanover County NAACP chose Church of the Servant as 2023 Church of the Year. COS was presented with the honor at the annual NAACP MLK Breakfast on January 13, 2024. This shows the beginning of trusted relationships between Church of the Servant and Wilmington’s wider racial justice community. We cannot take this for granted.



Julie Potter & Rachel Williamson “with” Bishop Curry at *It’s All About Love* Conference

Following Jesus in the work that Racial Equity Project has done over the last two years have been first steps on a long journey towards racial justice. With more people who are willing to do the difficult and necessary work of becoming anti racist we can support additional ways to create equity for people of all races and ethnicities. This slow sometimes painful effort is nothing less than God's call to us. We hope you will join us.

To learn more about Racial Equity Project please visit our updated page on the COS website.
<https://www.cosepiscopal.com/racial-equity-project/>

Vitality

Rev. Jody Greenwood

When I looked up the definition of *vitality*, I found this description: "the state of being strong and active; energy; the power giving continuance of life, present in all living things."

This annual report is filled with evidence of a very active congregation, which is wonderful! The members of our worshiping community have a lot of energy and use that energy to support our ministries and the ministries of numerous other non-profit organizations that serve our community and beyond. Yet this year, in facing another year with a significant deficit budget, it caused the Vestry and me to consider how to ensure the "continuance of life" for our church for generations to come!

Over the past several years we have made commitments to provide market wages for our staff, to maintain our facilities, and to support the ministries and programs that we believe are not only important, but essential to individuals and families that call COS their faith home. As of yet, however, we have not been able to find ways to increase giving that will match those expenses. With a significant portion of our worshiping community already giving each year, an increase in our congregation size itself is another way to ensure our long term vitality.

So, in the spring of this year I made an appeal for "creative envisioners" to step forward to help us explore the possibility of finding fresh pastures that could sustain COS and allow us to grow in the years ahead. Interestingly, of the seven individuals who responded - Jonathan D'Amico, Jerry Hansen, Mark Hellmann, Becky Johnston, Karen Sorenson, John Sosnowski, and Steve Turner - all but one have been at Church of the Servant for less than three years, so had not been part of COS prior to the COVID pandemic. As such, this group brought not only an enthusiasm for all that is unique about COS and the desire to share this with others, they've also shared insights about their experience of COS from a new-arrival's perspective, which has been invaluable.

In our time together, this Vitality Team asked questions about mission and priorities that we don't have as clear an answer for as we need to in order to ensure our collective time, talent, and treasure are being used effectively toward a common purpose. I plan to include some of these insights as the foundation for our vestry retreat in 2024. We'll then explore these questions with the wider congregation as we embark on a time of renewal and discern more fully what new wine God might be calling us to carry in our spiritual wineskins.

And while not the original intention, the Vitality Team also stepped up to guide the annual pledge drive in the fall of 2023, for which I am grateful. We leaned into the "*What makes your heart sing?*" theme in anticipation of the time of clergy and congregational renewal, and rejoiced in the response of our chorus of singing hearts, with an increase in number of pledgers as well as giving amounts over the prior year.



While we still have more to do to ensure our vitality remains strong as we move into our second 50 years, there is much promise for *the power giving continuance of life* to and for this worshiping community - a community serving on behalf of the Servant we follow, Jesus Christ. I am excited about what it to come, and look forward to walking the journey together!

HOLY LANDS, HOLY LISTENING, HOLY LAUGHTER

2024 Clergy and Congregational Renewal

The Lilly Grant – Our Proposal

Clergy & Congregational Renewal

"[No one puts] new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved." (Matt. 9:17, NRSV)

- Rev Jody will be away for 14 Weeks (Apr 29-Aug 5, 2024)
 - Personal Renewal
 - Congregational Renewal
- A Shared Journey

START HERE

A Shared Journey - The Labyrinth

PRELUDE EVENT: ~~Early April~~^{12 & 13} 2024 – **Labyrinth Workshop**

Sunday, April 28: **Sending Forth** / Shared Journey Prayer

Rev Jody

- May 3rd in Chartres, France
- Walk Labyrinth at Cathedral



COS Congregation

- May 3rd in Wilmington, NC
- Walk Labyrinth at COS



A Shared Journey – Re-New-ed Experiences

Rev Jody

- May 1st thru May 10th
- 10 Days in France with Alice
- Loire Valley Chateaux
- Northern France & Paris



COS Congregation

- May 19th Pentecost Sunday
- Youth-Led Worship
- Parish Picnic / Family Day
- Illumin8's Mural Design



A Shared Journey - The Holy Land

Rev Jody

- May 11th thru June 12th
- 14-Day Holy Land Pilgrimage
- 2 weeks of additional time for Discovery & Reflection



COS Congregation

- June 2024 – Bible Seminar
- Dr. Bob Royalty, Wabash College
- "Rediscovering the Gospel as Stories for the Church"



A Shared Journey – Rekindling Connections

Rev Jody

- July 1st thru July 20th
- Time in Texas with Family
- Connecting with Nieces & Nephews who've Grown Up!

My Nieces & Nephews in 2010



COS Congregation

- In July (date not set yet)
- Fun & Food with COS Family
- BBQ Brawl (Say what?!)



Together Again!

Sunday, August 11: **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

POSTLUDE EVENT: Sept 2024 – **Renewed Spirit Workshop**

What
"NEW WINE"
is God calling us
to CARRY in our
FRESH Wineskins?





Church of the Servant
Christmas Pageant - 2023