

RYE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



882 Boston Post Road - Rye, New York 10580

RYE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF – 2023

The Reverend Daniel H. Love	Co-Pastor
The Reverend Dr. John W. Miller	Co-Pastor
The Reverend Jean-Paul Marshall	Associate Pastor
Maida Robinson	Chief Administrative Officer
Jason Charneski	Director of Music/Organist
Peggy Berretta	Administrative Assistant
Denise LeVan	Pastoral Assistant (<i>retired September 1</i>)
Tangy Linzy	Interim Pastoral Assistant
Aileen Lynch	Clerical Assistant
Juan Velasquez	Head Sexton and Building Manager
Alonso Osorio	Sunday Sexton

INDEX TO REPORTS

Co-Pastors' Reports	Pages 2-3
Associate Pastor	Page 4
Report of the Director of Music	Page 5
SESSION	
Clerk's Report	Page 6-7
Membership Statistics	Page 8
Nominating Committee	Page 9
Christian Education Committee	Pages 10-12
Fellowship & Formation	Page 13
Mission and Outreach Committee	Pages 14-15
Personnel Committee	Page 16
Stewardship Committee	Page 17
All Souls Community Center	Page 17
Worship and Music Committee	Page 18
BOARD OF DEACONS	Pages 19-20
STEPHEN MINISTRY/FRIENDLY VISITORS	Page 21
ORGANIZATIONS	
Rye Presbyterian Nursery School	Page 22
Women's Association	Page 23
TRUSTEES – President's and Committee Reports	Pages 24-25
FINANCIAL REPORTS	
Treasurer's Report/Operating Budget	Page 26
Mission Giving Financial Summary 2022	Pages 27-28
Proposed Clergy Terms of Call 2023	Page 29

CO-PASTOR ANNUAL REPORT 2023

When people ask me what it is like to serve at the same church for 26 years, my typical response is this: “It is never dull!” 2023 lived right into that rule.

The year began as they usually do, with a very busy January - the officer retreat; the end of the fiscal year, new officers on all the boards, and a reshuffling of committees. My normal routines of working with the staff to plan worship, doing pastoral care, leading Bible studies and Confirmation class continued to be a source of joy and meaning. In addition, I began service as co-chair of a presbytery Administrative Commission working alongside the Session of another church in the presbytery. 2023 was busy, challenging, and fulfilling, but quickly there was a sense of something different. A wave of engagements meant there were a number of weddings to be planned for later in the year, and early on, there were quite a few deaths of long-standing church members. It would go on to be a year that saw both the highest number of weddings in our sanctuary and the most memorial services since I’ve been here.

What an amazing thing it has been to serve as your co-pastor with John these past 10 years. Being a co-pastor is a rare thing, let alone the solid number of years we have served. As you did so generously for us in the spring, it was lovely to celebrate the tenures of all the RPC pastors. Thank you for that moment to pause and celebrate!

Yet in the background, John and I quietly began conversation about his retirement and the next steps for the life and leadership of this church. Transitions are never easy, but given the unique nature of the co-pastorate, we knew this one had some added challenges. But we also felt confident in the congregation and the leadership of this church, that together that challenge would be faced – and that RPC would not just “get through it,” but would be able to step ably into the vision God has for this church and its mission in our community for the years ahead.

But then add one more plot twist...

As you now know, a fluke injury led to many weeks of testing, and my eventual diagnosis of Multiple Myeloma, for which I began treatment in late November. It isn’t what any of us had in mind, during this time, or any time. But here we are. The good news is that my treatment is going well. The side-effects have been very manageable, allowing me to continue to work and live nearly as normal. Thus far, my medical team is very encouraged by the results that they are seeing.

Yet with all of this that is before us in the chapter ahead, I remain hopeful. Very hopeful. As the congregational assessment affirmed when the results were presented to the officers in early January, RPC is in a very healthy place. Room to grow, for certain! There is a hunger for better connection to one another – a perpetual challenge in a church of this size and with the amount of turnover in membership that we see. Inflation has taken its toll on the church budget, with added expenses before us in this year of transition along with planned expansion of our church communications. The leadership transition with John’s retirement remains before us. But the energy, enthusiasm, and resources of this faith community, along with the engaged talent of our leaders, put us in a great position to face the challenges before us with faith, wisdom, patience, and hope.

2023 was not normal. 2024 will not be “normal” either. But God did not promise normal. God promised to be with us as we journey together through the landscape of whatever we face together. I remain deeply grateful for the outpouring of support to the Love family, and the privilege of serving this church alongside our talented and dedicated staff and leadership as we take our steps together into the adventure before us.

Looking forward to the journey together,
Dan

CO-PASTOR ANNUAL REPORT 2023

In Romans 12:15, the Apostle Paul invites us to: “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.” In 2023, as we commemorated All Saints’ Day, the list of names that we read during worship was the longest that any of us could remember. Members and friends experienced the death of friends, parents, siblings, partners, and spouses. As a church family, there were empty places in our pews where once dear brothers and sisters in Christ sat. May all of these rest in peace, and rise in glory! Truly we have wept with those who have wept.

Thus for the rest of my report, I want to lift up those things in 2023 which I rejoice over, whether they be personal, or in our corporate life of faith. I invite you to rejoice with me as well.

In February we relaunched our Coming Home program after a three year break due to the pandemic. It was a joy to welcome a new group of participants and to share fellowship dinners together each Thursday evening. (You are welcome to join us this year!) On June 4 we rejoiced at the graduation of six participants. As we begin in 2024, as always, we need mentors and people willing to provide our weekly dinner. Please let me know if you are interested.

As you know, in June of 2022, we acquired the facilities of All Souls Parish (The Presbyterian Church of Port Chester). After a time of discernment by the All Souls Transition Team, we began conversations with the Rye YMCA about the possibility of establishing an early childhood center at The All Souls Community Center. These conversations are on-going as we discern whether or not this is possible due to zoning, etc. This is an exciting possibility. We housed a Ukrainian refugee family in the manse. They found a more permanent home during the summer.

In early May, I attended the “Thrive” retirement seminar offered by our Board of Pensions. This helped to bring some clarity for me and my retirement plans. In September I announced my retirement in September 2024. By announcing well in advance, it allows our congregation to move forward with the transition process. As you know, a few months later Dan Love shared the news about his health issues. Thus, my retirement date at this point is flexible based upon the outcomes of Dan’s treatment. On May 12 the church celebrated your three pastors in a delightful celebration. Thank you to all who helped to plan this event and those who came to it. What a great evening of rejoicing!

In late spring the Session created a new committee, the Fellowship and Formation Committee. This group takes on the work of the former Adult Education Committee, but expands that work to include developing new opportunities for fellowship across the life of the church. We were forward-thinking here as we listened to our members and then heard the results of our Congregation Assessment Tool (CAT) which reinforced this desire among our members.

The personal highpoint of rejoicing for the Miller family was the marriage of our daughter, Charlotte, to Beau Dalton on September 23 in our sanctuary. The reception was held at The Coveleigh Club, and in spite of the rain, it was a day filled with love, laughter, and great rejoicing! It was great to be able to host both family and friends and to rejoice together.

It was my joy to teach again the fall semester for the Rising Hope program in Sing Sing Correctional Facility. This was my ninth time to teach, continuing what is one of the highlights of my life. In 2023 I also began my service on the Committee on Ministry of Hudson River Presbytery. I am the COM liaison to First Presbyterian Church of Goshen and Freedom Plains United Presbyterian Church (Lagrangeville) as they move through the process of searching for their next pastors.

“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”

In Christ’s Peace,
John

ASSOCIATE PASTOR ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Around this time last year, author Sarah Bessey wrote a prayer in the midst of her recovery from Covid that repeatedly stated, “God...it’s just good to know you’re here with us, still, always.” The whole idea behind the prayer was God’s “with-us-ness,” being present in all aspects of our lives – from the times of sickness and exhaustion, of bewilderment and grief, to the times of joy and comfort, of rest and renewal, and all the ordinary moments in between. Looking back on the year 2023, it’s very clear that God is here with us, still, always, moving in and through our lives, weaving us together in love.

God showed up in the warmth and love you showed Susie and me at the baby shower held at the beginning of the year. The notes, the gifts, the advice, the treats – it was all so wonderful and definitely the support we needed as we prepared to welcome Ezra into the world. That same warmth and love was shared once again in May as you celebrated the pastors and welcomed Ezra into the community. We are so deeply grateful for this community and how you continue to make us feel at home.

God showed up in all the moments spent with our youth this year at the church and in the community. We grew closer together by playing tons of games, rock climbing, go-karting, reflecting on our faith, leading worship together, paddleboarding and swimming in a lake, roasting marshmallows over campfires, and having fun at pool parties and Christmas parties. We helped out in our community by serving meals at Dinner at Noon, handing out clothes and food on the streets of NYC, planting and harvesting organic garden beds at Jay Heritage, and going on an impromptu trip to Camp Johnsonburg.

God showed up in all the moments spent with our children and families – in the moments of learning and fun in our Sunday School classes, as we gathered around carved pumpkins and messy gingerbread houses, as we packed meals for Rise Against Hunger and breakfast bags for Feeding Westchester, as we sang songs together in Children’s Chapel and Singing Our Faith with Jason, as we gathered together for playground meet-ups, and as we had fun together telling the wonderful story of Jesus’ birth in a new way.

God showed up in the moments I spent outside the church as well. I spent the majority of the summer on family leave, learning very quickly what it meant to now be a father and co-parent, with all the joys, restless nights, and dirty diapers that came with all that. In June I participated in the community’s joyous Pride celebration and parade at Rye Town Park, and in the fall, the clergy of Rye gathered around bagged lunches several times to support one another and envision new ways of doing ministry together. I also finished my work as the chair of an administrative commission put together by the presbytery to close a church and sell its property – the ending of one church’s life and ministry together made space for another church to come in and bring new life to the buildings and the surrounding community.

God in our celebrations of life,
God in our uncertainty and transitions,
God in our laughter and messiness,
God in our dinners, church picnics and bagged lunches,
God in our grief and renewal,
God in roasted marshmallows and board games,
God in our singing and reflections,
God in our homes, in our church, and our streets,
God in yesterday, today, and tomorrow,
It’s just good to know you’re here, still, always. Amen.

Peace be with you all –

Rev. JP

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC AND ORGANIST

The year 2023 was filled with many well-established and new musical offerings. Highlights were:

- The Chancel Choir continued its normal schedule of services through the program year months. In addition, the volunteer summer choir had consistently strong participation (on the order of 12-14 singers most Sundays) and served as a means for recruiting a new volunteer singer for the Chancel Choir. Chancel Choir average Sunday attendance now is in the low 20s. They work diligently and joyfully – it shows each week.
- Our commitment to offerings of new and more diverse music in worship was visible through the continued joys of Jazz Sunday (February 12), the sounds of the brass quartet on Easter (April 8), Cantata Sunday (Part III of the *Christmas Oratorio* by J. S. Bach) and its attendant reception (December 10), and the string quartet – supplemented with a harp – on Christmas Eve. Having a “Gospel Sunday” (June 10), which brought together again the Jazz Sunday band and the Chancel Choir, was a particular joy! We will enhance this new endeavor this coming year.
- In an example of a slogan I have come to know as necessary, “Blessed are the flexible, for they will not be bent out of shape,” we amended the rules of The Knock Internship in Sacred Music so that Collin Miller could stay for a second year. Collin played a stunning organ-and piano recital after worship on May 21.
- Though we tried to restart the Children’s and Youth choir programs in what had been, basically, their pre-COVID formats, it became apparent by the fall that we needed to rethink and retool. Given the large number of pre-K children that now are a part of the regularly worshiping congregation, along with the already-in-place aspect of students enrolled in RPNS, I have focused my attention there. I have started to provide and lead music for the Sunday School’s “Children’s Chapel” days and an every-other-month “Singing Our Faith” session. I had a wonderful time on December 16 with the Saturday Playground Group: We sang some Christmas carols and moved our hands about in simple conducting patterns (I asked the children if they liked to count things; there was a resounding “yes.”). I look forward to continuing these times of connection, education, and building anew a culture of group singing and music-making. What the music ministry to children and youth will evolve into is to be discerned as these youngest disciples-in-the-making mature!
- Ty Bibas and Bryan Lavery (two of our high school seniors) recruited other Rye High School students to join them in an instrumental quintet (trumpet, clarinet, alto sax, and two trombones) that led the carol singing for the annual Tree Lighting ceremony (December 3). Perhaps a new custom has been birthed!
- Many music events outside the immediate purview of the church’s music program occurred in 2023. Rye Country Day School found a new home for its annual Alumni Choir and Orchestra Weekend (January 21-22). The American Guild of Organists’ regional convention (July 3-6) had its opening worship service (Dan Love was the preacher) and closing concert (organ and orchestra) here. Concerts by the Westchester Chordsmen (December 3) and the Westchester Choral Society (December 16) brought additional holiday cheer to many in the region.
- Time flies, especially when what you’re able to do in it is rewarding. This coming September will mark the start of my tenth year(!) as your Director of Music and Organist. Immediately prior to that milestone, I will be on sabbatical leave. Collin Miller will stay beyond the term of his internship in order to serve as the organist during my three months away. I am grateful for this renewal-and-rest opportunity, looking forward to musical immersion and study time that the normal pace of things precludes. Thank you!

Respectfully,
Jason Charneski

CLERK OF SESSION 2023

“I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” Philippians 4:13

This has been a year of self-assessment, reflection, and new growth. We have also prepared for transitions that will affect the life of our church and its members. Through it all, Session has worked together, drawing upon our individual gifts and collective strength as we discern the best ways to continue to do God’s work at RPC.

Reflection allows us to find new space for growth. Elder Sue DeStaebler recognized a need for a place to incubate new ideas, and Session enthusiastically approved her proposal of a new committee called “The Formation and Fellowship Committee.” This new committee provides a centralized resource for adult educational programs and fellowship opportunities for all church members. It seeks to connect church members with one another socially while also providing opportunities for congregants to grow in their spirituality and deepen their connection to God.

In reflecting on our communication efforts, elders Cally Bruce, Sue DeStaebler and Carl Friedrich highlighted a need to improve communications throughout RPC in order to reach the greater community, acknowledging that people are consuming their information differently. The group will be using social media as a tool to further engage with the congregation and to reach more people.

Last January, Session supported the transition from the All Souls Transition Team to an All Souls Task Force. The Task Force is working to establish a licensed, full-day early childhood center to serve the Port Chester/Rye Brook community, where there is a demand for afterschool and summer programs for working parents. Session has continued to support and encourage the conversations with the Rye Y to develop this center. In addition, Session authorized Dr. John Miller to seek approval from the Hudson River Presbytery for RPC to sell the All Souls manse, with the agreement that all proceeds be used for the development of the early childhood center.

Sometimes, self-assessment can lead to difficult conversations in Session meetings; such was the case when we were asked by RPNS to review the current security protocols and to agree upon solutions to ensure the safety of our nursery school, as well as our entire church campus. It is in these times that we draw upon God’s strength as we listen to multiple perspectives and consider all solutions. As a result of the many discussions with Session and with the RPNS Executive Board, there is a new armed security guard at the entrance to the nursery school. In addition, they have added film to the windows, panic buttons in the classrooms, security cameras, and keycards for the staff. Session also approved a review of the RPNS bylaws clarifying that the Session governs the Executive Board of RPNS.

RPC continues to grow by adding new members and inspiring existing members to share their gifts. With joy and thanksgiving, we welcomed 17 new members in the spring and 8 in the fall. This spring, elders joyfully welcomed our younger new members, the 14 confirmands of the Class of 2023. When the two groups met in May to share why they chose RPC, responses included the leadership, the beautiful building, the opportunity for respectful and insightful conversation and debate, service opportunities, feeling connected to God through song, learning opportunities, the loving and mission-driven church community, and finally, confirming that RPC simply “feels like home” for so many of us. The Nominating Committee worked hard to propose a slate of 22 elders, deacons, and trustees, as well as 2 members at large, and we look forward to witnessing how these new officers will help RPC to move forward.

As we reflected on the gifts of the people of this church, we took time to honor two people who dedicated themselves to serving our church and its ministry. With the support of Session, at our Annual Meeting last February our pastors presented the Davidson T. Gordon Quiet Service Award to Alonso Osorio, our long-time sexton at RPC who now gives his time on Sundays as our sexton in addition to working full-time at Community Synagogue. Dan described Alonso as a faithful, steady, hardworking presence. Shortly after, Davidson Gordon, the namesake of this award, passed away, and the Worship and Music committee felt moved to create a plaque to honor Davidson and the many gifts that he brought to our church. The plaque has been affixed to the pew where he always sat for services.

At our Pastoral Celebration in May, we had the opportunity to reflect on the work of our gifted and supportive clergy as we celebrated Dan's 25th, John's 10th and Jean-Paul's 5th years of leadership and dedication at RPC. Session also approved a sabbatical for Jason Charneski and looks forward to hearing of his continued spiritual and professional growth as he spends his summer learning from colleagues across the pond.

In September, Dr. Miller shared with Elders his plan to retire in September 2024. Elders expressed our profound gratitude for his 10 years of service and friendship, as well as our sadness to see him leave RPC. Most importantly, we support his decision and wish him and Heather the best as they begin a new journey together. While this decision has entered our church into a time of transition, we are certain that the coming year will show our congregation's resilience and faith as we all face challenges and change together.

We are entering this transition in a healthy position, but it is considered a more complicated transition than usual. To prepare us, Session approved the purchase and implementation of the Church Assessment Tool (CAT). In addition, Session approved the recommendation by Trustees to use funding from the Imagine Initiative to hire Michelle Snyder, a consultant for the Presbytery who works with Center for Healthy Churches to help churches going through leadership transitions. In addition, Session supported the decision to allow Rev. Love and Dr. Miller to search for the members of a new Transition Team. Their work will be a touchstone to the Session, but distinctly different from the Pastoral Nominating Committee, which will focus solely on the process of calling a pastor.

As we concluded the year, Session had the opportunity to review the results of the CAT at our Officers Retreat. We were pleased to learn that on the whole, the church's satisfaction and energy levels rated very high. The data showed that our top three priorities moving forward are to form meaningful relationships, to develop strategies to reach new people, and to expand outreach ministries that provide direct services to those living in the margins of society. It is clear from the summary above that Session, and the entire RPC community, have already been working towards these goals.

We are ending the year with continued strength. Our efforts of self-assessment and reflection have allowed us to look inward in order to reach outward so that we can continue to do God's work. members of all ages and experiences.

In closing, I'd like to share an image that exemplifies what it means to be a member of Session. During a November emergency meeting of Session, Dan shared with us the news of his recent diagnosis. After taking time to express our support and prayers for Dan and his family, Session's immediate work was to anticipate the effects of this news on the church community, including how it relates to Dr. Miller's retirement plans and the transition process. Together we had a thoughtful and heartfelt discussion. To close the meeting, elders gathered around Dan for a laying on of hands. We shared our prayers and stood together in silence, each of us drawing upon the strength of one another and directing it towards Dan at the center. As I complete my term as an elder and Clerk, I will hold onto this visual symbol of our collective strength.

As their terms end, we express our gratitude to Margaret Blum, Gary Gibson, Jennifer Reddington, Mary Versfelt, and youth elder Teddy Holtman for their service and dedication to RPC.

Respectfully submitted,
Katy Ridley
Clerk of Session

2023 STATISTICS

1,055 Total Communicant Membership as of December 31, 2022

Gains:

40 New Members received, including Confirmation Class of 2023 (14)

40 Total gains

Losses:

17 Deaths of communicant members

78 Transfers or no longer active at RPC

95 Total Losses

1,000 Total Members as of December 31, 2023

Other 2023 Statistics:

10,197 Total Sunday worship attendance (7908 in person; 2289 online)

2022 - total: 8,822 (6044 in-person; 2788 online)

2021 - total: 8,606 (3810 in person; 4796 online)

9,152 Total in-person attendees (all services) (2022: 7,095)

2,405 Total live online attendees (2022: 3,013)

3,143 Non-live YouTube views (2022: 3,327)

212 Non-summer average weekend attendance (in-person and online)
(2022: 186)

14 Baptisms

13 Weddings

NOMINATING COMMITTEE 2023

The following members of Rye Presbyterian Church served on the 2023 Nominating Committee:

From Session: Mary Versfelt, Chair ('23)
Pat McGunagle ('24)
From Trustees: Christopher Russell ('24)
From Deacons: Addy Park ('23)
Members at Large: Chrissy Connor (Class of 2023)
Elizabeth Parks (Class of 2023)
Cindy Kuster (Class of 2024)
Robin Redd (Class of 2024)
Debbie Zingg (Class of 2024)

Co-Pastors Rev. Dr. John Miller and Rev. Daniel Love participated *ex officio*.

Our church community is blessed to have many talented and engaged members. The Nominating Committee worked for months to seek willing nominees who are well-qualified for positions on the three boards and the Nominating Committee and who reflect the diversity in our congregation. Our slate of candidates was presented at a Congregational Meeting on November 19, 2023, in person and online by Zoom, with a brief bio and photo submitted by each nominee. The congregation voted unanimously to elect the following people to serve as indicated:

Session

Class of 2024: Frank Zingg (youth elder)

Class of 2025: Tony Savarese

Class of 2026: Robert Chesley, Barbara Cummings, Kyla Goodner, Brian Hesse, Brad Parish*, Sarah Snell

Deacons

Class of 2024: Mia Howson (youth deacon), Stephen Kidder (youth deacon)

Class of 2026: Thomas Ausfahl, Sarah Barringer, Denise Denson*, Lindsey Furnary,
Ashley Ginnings, Mindy Grigg, Sarah McGill

Trustees

Class of 2025: Christina Mohraz*

Class of 2026: Bob Connor*, Don Davis, John Holland, Terry Stack

Members-at-Large for the Nominating Committee

Class of 2025: Megan Darrell, Sarah Waters

*Persons noted above with an asterisk are current officers returning to serve another consecutive term.

Members of this year's Nominating Committee worked respectfully and diligently to complete the important work of assembling this outstanding group of members who are willing to serve. We feel confident that all those elected will use their abundant skills and talents to lead our church with devotion and discernment.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Versfelt
Nominating Committee Chair

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE 2023

The Christian Education committee is composed of Elders, Deacons, and interested members of the congregation—under the stewardship of Rev. JP Marshall, Associate Pastor. Together, with God’s Grace, we work diligently and earnestly across a multipronged focus. Our formal purview, from a programming perspective, extends in support of family members—starting with children as young as 3 months.

As a committee, we work to nurture our earliest children, youth, and young adults, throughout each stage of their lives, in faith. We accomplish our work in a myriad of ways—beginning with the Sunday Child Care Program and Sunday School for children and youth, Baptisms, Youth Groups, Confirmations, Service Projects and Trips, Congregation-wide Service Events, fellowship opportunities and stewardship between our Confirmands and Elders, a robust partnership with Mission & Outreach and much, much more.

In a most beautiful way, 2023 bestowed upon us a new opportunity to evaluate our programs and engage our congregation with an eye toward ensuring we consistently meet the needs of families here at RPC. To that end, we introduced a number of initiatives, including—the Playground Meetup Group, a partnership with the newly formed Fellowship and Formation Committee, and a commitment to further expand, and update, our programming in 2024—such as by adding new members to the Christian Education committee and further refining our mission and values.

Sunday School

This year was our first full year back in the classrooms for Sunday School ages 4 (Pre-K) through 8th grade! As of September, 70 students have enrolled in this year’s Sunday School program. This year we averaged around 30 children attending Sunday School each Sunday. Our volunteer Sunday School leaders continue to use the curriculum *Celebrate Wonder*, which engages children's natural sense of curiosity to help them understand God's love. This curriculum continues to provide an easier format for our leaders while also keeping the children engaged with the stories each week. Our middle school youth have been making their way through a curriculum called Follow Me: Biblical Practices for Faithful Living, which is based on practices Jesus did and taught us to live out in our individual and communal lives.

Children’s Chapel returned for a second year! On a quarterly basis, on the first Sunday of the month, our children gather in the chapel to wonder about God’s love through the rhythm and practices of worship by singing, praying, and engaging God’s Word together. In October they focused on World Communion Sunday, and in December they focused on Advent. This year Jason Charneski has joined us to help lead the children in singing new and familiar songs!

Confirmation Class

Rev. Love continues to oversee the confirmation class with Dr. Miller and Rev. Marshall assisting with the teaching responsibilities as well. During the confirmation class, 9th graders explored the questions that lie at the heart of our faith journeys. Their year-long journey includes study, discussion, service, and fellowship. Fourteen young people were confirmed in 2023. The current 2024 class is made up of seventeen 9th graders.

Middle School Youth Group (Connection)

Connections continue to be made within our middle school Connection youth group! This year we held our regular meetings full of fun, fellowship, service, and a variety of spiritual practices within our Youth Rooms, out on the Great Lawn, and out in our community! Right before Lent, Rev. JP sent out hand-written letters once again with Lenten devotional cards to our middle school youth, letting them know that the church was there to support them. In the spring, we helped out at Dinner at Noon and had a conversation with Meals on Main St. about their mobile food pantry. Towards the end of the school year, we continued our new tradition and invited the 5th graders to join us for our “end-of-the-year” picnic. In the fall, we celebrated the saints in our lives, played tons of games, helped with Dinner at Noon again, tried a new meeting time, and celebrated the Christmas season with the high school youth.

High School Youth Group

At the beginning of 2023, our high school youth helped out with Dinner at Noon at the Carver Center and prepared dinner for the Coming Home program here at RPC. In the spring, they returned to the gardens at the Jay Heritage

Center to help with planting, maintaining, and harvesting the organic garden beds on Sunday afternoons through November. We also partnered with Larchmont Avenue Church once again for Midnight Run, providing clothes and food to the unhoused in NYC. In the summer, due to last-minute flight cancellations, 25 youth took a detour for our annual service trip in June. Rather than returning to New Orleans, we stayed close to home at Camp Johnsonburg in New Jersey, assisting with fence building, cleaning out brush, and spreading wood chips around the rope course. When we weren't working, we spent our time at the lake, around campfires, and playing games in our lodges. In the fall, we continued to serve our community through Midnight Run, Bread of Life, and Jay Heritage while also finding time to have fun through rock climbing, go-karting, and our annual Christmas party.

Church Fellowship & Service

As a congregation, we are so grateful to God for the ways within which we are enabled and empowered to engage our broader communities—both those directly within our reach and those who are oceans away.

From a Fellowship and Service perspective, we had a robust year in 2023—seeing continued engagement in pre-existing programs and bringing new ones to life. We upheld long-standing traditions such as our Fall Picnic in September, Pumpkin Carving in October, and our Christmas Pageant and Gingerbread House decorating in December—to name a few. Throughout the year, Sunday School and Child Care programs were absolutely bustling—a beautiful energy to see as we continue to reinvigorate engagement after the ample disruption spurred by COVID-19.

A small snapshot of impact and engagement across our fellowship and service events can be found below.

- *Cards for College* – Once again, this year, committee members wrote supportive cards for college seniors as they prepared for their next journey ahead;
- *Rise Against Hunger* – Run in partnership with Mission & Outreach, our congregation packed over 10,000 meals—including nutritional supplements—that were shipped in a container totaling 285,120 meals to Convoy of Hope in the Philippines.
- *Fall Picnic* – CE Committee members made floral centerpieces, prepared entrees together in our kitchen (!), and helped to host the RPC family as we embarked upon the dawn of another academic year in September;
- *Pumpkin Carving* – The Assembly Room was packed with children of all ages, a total of 17 families, earnestly engaged in pumpkin carving and decorating—members of our youth group popped in throughout the event to assist with some heavy lifting and pre-event prep;
- *Feeding Westchester* – In partnership with Mission & Outreach, we once again gathered on the Front Lawn to create breakfast bags for local students impacted by food insecurity. In under an hour, we prepared and packed +1,000 bags;
- *Gingerbread House Decorating* – Over 40 Families across RPC and RPNS joined us in December to create beautiful, and sweet, Gingerbread Houses before gathering in the Sanctuary for the annual tree lighting ceremony—this may have been one of our most well-attended Gingerbread House decorating events yet!

Christmas Pageant and Live Nativity

This year Rev. JP and Jason Charneski led the annual Christmas pageant! The pageant was adapted from Illustrated Ministry's Do Not be Afraid: A Christmas Pageant with a cast made up of children, youth, and adults from our church community - the congregation was even invited to join as our "chorus"! It was such a fun time for all, especially during the reception that followed with plenty of treats. Thank you to all the parents who assisted with rehearsals, costuming, snack time and the reception, and the pageant itself! And of course, thank you to all of our pageant participants!

The Live Nativity services were led by Rev. JP and Jason Charneski. The nativity figures and the readers for both services were made up of current high school youth and college students from our church community. Thank you to all participants for making the Live Nativity so beautiful for both services!

In Closing

We are so grateful to each of you for your earnest engagement in our youth and service programs. These programs couldn't have been accomplished without the steadfast and tireless work done by the Christian Education committee: Katherine Olsen, Elizabeth Parks, and José Zeilstra, alongside long-time Chair Denise Denison—heartfelt thanks to each of you for your engagement, vision, and commitment to the propulsion of our youth and service programs. We also thank Revs. Dan Love, John Miller, and Jean-Paul Marshall for their always-on, always enthusiastic, always incredible support, encouragement, and leadership across every single event and initiative. Likewise, we are grateful to Jason Charneski, our Director of Music and Organist, for coming up with new ideas and opportunities to engage our youth through music. As well as to Peggy Berretta, Maida Robinson, Tangy Linzy, Juan Velasquez, and everyone throughout the RPC staff and the RPNS leadership for your partnership in ensuring the seamless flow and facilitation of our programs. Most importantly, we profoundly thank God for each of the gifts and opportunities bestowed upon us.

With Love and In Faith,

Cally Bruce & Amanda Askew Kearney, Christian Education Co-Chairs, and Jean-Paul Marshall, Associate Pastor

FELLOWSHIP AND FORMATION 2023

(Formerly Adult Education)

On March 22, 2023, the Session voted to establish a new committee called Fellowship and Formation. The work of this committee will encompass the role of the former Adult Education Committee as well as create new fellowship opportunities for the church community. In addition, it will build a formal connection to the Session for many of the existing programs that are currently thriving at RPC. We will continue to add new book studies and one-time events or speakers throughout the year, and are eager to cultivate new ideas and opportunities for us to connect with one another socially. We will strive to provide opportunities to socialize, learn, and build our community as we walk our spiritual journey together.

The formal mission statement is as follows:

The Fellowship and Formation Committee provides a centralized resource for adult educational programs and fellowship opportunities for all church members. The Committee is comprised of 2 Elders, 1 Deacon, and members at large, each of whom will serve a 2-year term. The Committee seeks to connect church members with one another socially while also providing opportunities for congregants to grow in their spirituality and deepen their connection to God.

Members of the committee in 2023: Sue DeStaebler (chair), Carolee Brakewood, Addy Park, Sarah Rooney and Bob Clyatt

Fellowship and Formation Opportunities for 2023

- Men's Bible Study, led by Rev. Love, Sunday evenings at 8:00 pm
- Women's Bible Study, led by Cynthia DeSantis, Saturday mornings at 10:00 am
- Bible Discussion, led by Rev. Love, Mondays at 9:15 am online
- Women's Discipleship Group, led by Courtney Bennett and Alicia Baldwin, Tuesdays at 1:00 pm in the library and via Zoom. Every few weeks the group decides on a new book or topic to focus on, so there's plenty of variety and opportunity for involvement.
- Three T's, led by Jane Mickatavage and Nancy Steed, Third Tuesday (or Thursday) of the month at Ten for a discussion of a variety of interesting subjects. Meetings are on Zoom.
- RPC Monthly Playground Meetup (new this year), led by Amanda Kearny and Cally Bruce: an informal catch-up on the RPC playground for kids to play and parents to meet up.

Book Studies:

- Lenten Book Study in February/March 2023: "Being Mortal" by Atul Gawande, facilitated by Dan Love
- Book Study in April/May 2023: "Outside the Lines" by Mihee Kim-Kort, facilitated by JP Marshall, including a discussion on gender and sexuality with Dr. Genevieve Weber, co-founder of pRYEd

As we look forward to 2024, we will be utilizing feedback that we've received both through the CAT survey and by word of mouth. We will take into consideration the areas of interest that stand out and hope to facilitate new groups and create new opportunities for growth and learning at RPC.

Respectively submitted,

Sue DeStaebler, Chair Fellowship & Formation

MISSION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE 2023

*Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion,
for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7*

The members of the Mission and Outreach Committee (“M&O”) during 2023 were: Chad Estep (Session & Chair), Brad Parish (Session), Young Kim (Session), Megan Monaghan (Session), Ed Avery (Deacon), Melissa Belleville (Deacon), Rod Brown, Cynthia Deen, Dinah Howland, Kim O’Connor, Allison Reynolds, Nancy Steed, Linda Otness, and Doug Carey. Dr. John Miller serves as the clergy representative.

M&O’s purpose and objectives on behalf of Rye Presbyterian Church:

Mission and Outreach Vision Statement

Rye Presbyterian Church aspires to transform lives, as Christ teaches, by service with others through mutual partnerships. We seek to deepen the personal engagement of our congregation through service and reflective learning opportunities as we are engaged with others in our church and broader communities. We aim to seek justice for all God’s children by focusing on those most disenfranchised and in greatest need. In outreach and service, we seek to strengthen our faith and understanding of God.

M&O focuses efforts on three broad areas where our church provides grant funding and service to organizations primarily in Westchester County, addressing those in greatest need:

- 1. Provision of basic human needs (hunger, clothing, homelessness, etc.);**
- 2. Youth education, especially in the areas of social and emotional development; and**
- 3. Restorative justice through prison ministry and re-entry programs.**

We direct our mission effort on a national and international level through the four seasonal offerings of the Presbyterian Church (USA), with the intention to lend support to the work of our denomination. As crises of natural disaster, disease, and political strife occur, we seek to address human suffering through the collective action of our congregation and community.

We serve as a central, coordinated resource for all RPC’s mission-related activities to encourage congregational support and involvement. We coordinate the grants process with the Women’s Association and show a unified presence to our partner organizations and the community. We will thoughtfully manage the financial gifts from the RPC mission budget, special offerings, and contributions in the most impactful ways to lift the disenfranchised and transform lives.

Highlights of 2023

M&O supported the Feeding Westchester and Rise Against Hunger food packing initiatives. We had volunteers take part in Food2GrowOn’s food packing event to support children typically dependent on school meals over a school vacation week. The Baby Box Drive to collect newborn supplies for Open Door Family Medical Center successfully continued for the sixth year. And happily, the Coming Home program was able to resume after pausing during the pandemic.

RPC continued its partnership with ReSET Westchester to address the local influx of refugees from Ukraine, Afghanistan, and other countries, and supplied housing for a Ukrainian family at the former manse at All Souls Community Center for most of the year. And finally, M&O embraced Earth Care (a legacy mission of All Souls Parish) and acknowledged RPC’s continued support of the ministry.

Community Grants

In 2023, M&O provided twelve local organizations with \$92,500 in grant funding. We forged a new relationship with Hope Community Services in New Rochelle, the largest food pantry in Westchester receiving food from Feeding Westchester.

Sources of Giving Funds

In 2023, M&O gratefully received \$100,000 from the RPC budget, with \$18,000 designated for the Coming Home program. Through the Presbyterian Offerings and Disaster Relief gifts, the congregation of Rye Presbyterian Church shared their treasures, giving an additional \$12,896. All sources of Mission & Outreach funding for 2023 totaled \$99,375. For information about the recipients and amounts, please see the Combined Outreach Giving report starting on page 28.

Finally, thank you to all who have served to meet the needs of our community and to those who have given with exceeding generosity, living as Christ teaches us to serve others.

Respectfully submitted,

Chad Estep, Chairperson of the Mission & Outreach Committee

RPC PERSONNEL COMMITTEE 2023

The Rye Presbyterian Personnel Committee is a joint committee of the Session and Board of Trustees. The committee's function is to provide guidance and oversight on personnel matters, while ensuring compliance with Federal, State, Presbytery and Board of Pension guidelines. Activities include maintaining the personnel policy manual, establishing, and overseeing salary and benefit packages, and supporting and participating in the annual staff goal-setting and review process, as well as collaborating on day-to-day personnel matters as they arise.

The 2023 Committee worked behind the scenes all year as we were presented with topics, challenges, and changes affecting the church. The 2023 committee included: John Shuck, Scot Stevens, and Margaret Blum, from Session, and Grace Yoon Kilroy, Sally Beatty, and Trip Sullivan, from Trustees, with John Miller and Dan Love as ex-officio members.

Year Highlights:

The staff continued to step up and help with the logistics at the All Souls Community Center in Port Chester, NY. Once again, we would like to reiterate our gratitude to the staff for their dedicated hard work, positive attitudes, flexibility, and best efforts to keep All Souls functioning and open to the community.

Staff Performance Reviews - The annual review process took place early summer, to coincide with the end of the program year. This year we had the abbreviated review process where staff set goals and reviewed those with their direct supervisor and a member of personnel during the summer months.

Administrative Duties – Each year brings various personnel-related topics to review. These occur due to staff needs, updates in Presbytery guidelines, or other federal or state regulations that the church must address in order to stay current. Topics included:

RPC Director of Music, Jason Charneski's proposal for a sabbatical during the summer of 2024 was reviewed and approved by the Personnel Committee and Session.

Additionally, the committee reviewed the staff cost of living (COLA) increases. This year the Hudson River Presbytery recommended a 3.2% COLA increase.

Jean-Paul & Susie Marshall welcomed Ezra Marshall in February 2023. Jean Paul was approved to take family medical leave during the summer months.

Denise Levan, Pastoral Assistant, chose to retire this year. Tanganika Linzy was hired to take on the responsibilities of the assistant position on an interim basis.

John Miller announced his decision to retire, and the committee reviewed the recommendation for a smooth transition process to find a new Co-Pastor for RPC.

During November, Dan Love shared his recent health challenges with the committee. Our prayers are with Dan and his family.

Sexual Harassment Policy and Training – Now an annual requirement, the staff completes the training for New York State's mandated sexual harassment policy and compliance procedures. The training is required to be completed by all staff, including part-timers. It was also highly recommended by Session that all church board members be familiar with the policy.

Thank you to the committee for their thoughtful insight, wisdom, compassion, and responsiveness when doing our committee work this year, with special thanks to Dan and John for their thoughtful guidance.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret Blum
Personnel Committee Chair

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE 2023

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”

-John 1:5

This year we launched our Stewardship Campaign in January to link it to the season of Epiphany. The theme of light is an apt one as God has blessed our congregation with many gifts. Stewardship is not just about gifts of money, though. In January we also acknowledge gifts of service as new deacons, elders, and trustees are ordained and commissioned. January is also the start of many new resolutions or promises and a period of optimism and hope.

The church saw a decline in pledging over the past few years and we ended 2023 with a budget deficit for the first time in over a decade. While this is sobering news, let us not be overcome by darkness. Through our actions, we can give thanks to God for his many blessings. Early results of our Stewardship Campaign for 2024 are promising. We have received 175 pledges totaling \$939,000 towards our budgeted goal of \$1,650,000. Of those 175 pledges, 17 were new and 81 households increased their pledges from last year.

With your support in this new year, the church will be able to invest generously in the future of its mission and continue to be a bright light within our community.

We would like to thank our committee for their gifts of time, energy, and talent: Dick Bott, Molly Boxford, Paul Knight, and Scot Stevens, as well as Lisa King for her work in creating the materials for our 2024 campaign.

Respectfully submitted,
Young Kim & Christina Mohraz
Stewardship co-chairs

ALL SOULS COMMUNITY CENTER

During 2023, we refocused our efforts to find the best use for the All Souls Community Center, acquired by the RPC in mid 2022. We continue to house two worshipping communities, an early childhood literary program, a school feeding program, and an Alcoholics Anonymous Group.

In February, in reviewing the strong need for preschool education in the Port Chester-Rye communities, and our classroom facilities at ASCC, we decided to focus on preschool educational opportunities, and formed the All Souls PreSchool Task Force, led by Patrick McGunagle. By April we initiated discussions with the Rye YMCA, and in July the Trustees and Session approved a joint Memorandum of Understanding with the Rye Y to develop a preschool facility on our ASCC site. A preschool facility operated at All Souls until early 2020 when COVID hit. By the end of 2023, a detailed design, an engineering assessment, and a traffic study were underway.

With our support, the Rye Y obtained a grant from New York State to assist with the funding of the site. We continue to work on this project through 2024, planning toward an opening of the preschool facility in the fall of 2025.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat McGunagle

WORSHIP AND MUSIC COMMITTEE 2023

The committee members include Elders (Gary Gibson, chair; Carl Friedrich), Deacons (Julianne Laverty, Connie McBroom), Choir members (Gail Langeloh, Gail Willis, Katrin Naelapaa), Clergy (Dan Love; John Miller), Music Director (Jason Charneski), and Members-at-large (Susan Morison, Elizabeth Parks)

The committee reviews and recommends positive change to all aspects of worship and music at RPC. A major goal has been to increase the number of congregants interacting in worship and music.

The committee recruits ushers and communion servers for all regular services, as well as some funerals. For example, on Christmas Eve this required 16 individuals. Signup is accomplished with the Sign-Up Genius program. The number of participants increased dramatically this year.

Serving communion has also become more inclusive because all members can now be servers and sit with their families for most of the service. The people flow for communion has changed as attendance recovers slowly from the effects of the Covid pandemic.

Attendance increased considerably over the year; of note is that nearly 1,200 attended Christmas Eve services.

The committee spent considerable time considering the replacements for the green lectern and pulpit paraments for the Sundays in "Ordinary Time." The paraments were then gifted to the church by the confirmation class.

The committee had a plaque created in memory of Davidson Gordon and his 40 years of commitment to Worship and Music at RPC. The plaque is affixed to the rear-most side pew of the north aisle.

The committee has implemented security policies for the ushers to minimize the risk during emergency situations.

The committee has encouraged efforts to create a Christian Music culture in the children and youth. This program was affected adversely by Covid and is recovering more slowly than anyone thought or hoped.

The committee has encouraged Jason Charneski as he plans his sabbatical in the summer months of 2024. His goals are to explore educational, enrichment, and research opportunities that will further enrich Worship and Music at RPC.

Zoom and YouTube broadcasting have become an important part of worship and music at RPC.

In addition to inspiring choir music and amazing organ music each Sunday, Jason Charneski has continued and expanded multiple special music programs, such as Jazz Sunday, Gospel Sunday, and Cantata Sunday.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the committee,
Gary Gibson
Chairperson

BOARD OF DEACONS – 2023

The Deacons serving Rye Presbyterian Church during 2023 were as follows:

<u>Class of 2023</u>	<u>Class of 2024</u>	<u>Class of 2025</u>
Molly Boxford Denise Denson Davidson Gordon, <i>In Memoriam</i> Krysta Holland Gabby McCree Addy Park, <i>Vice President</i> Rebecca Pedone, <i>Treasurer</i> Bryan Laverty, <i>Youth</i> Leigh Smith, <i>Youth</i>	Claudia Asgeirsson Ed Avery Camilla Hofmann Amanda Kearney Steve Loveless Connie McBroom Hollis O’Rorke, <i>Secretary</i> Sue Parish, <i>President</i>	Melissa Belleville Sue Carriero Mary Ann Haines Julianne Laverty Julia Thomas Suzy Yarrow

The Board of Deacons is a caring arm of Rye Presbyterian Church. We share God’s love in our efforts to serve the RPC community in a variety of different ways. As parish representatives, deacons participate in worship services and coffee hour, plan and facilitate fellowship opportunities, and reach out to our congregation in times of need or joy. Each term of service is three years. Each year, there are two youth deacons who serve for one-year terms. Deacons have the opportunity to renew a term to serve a total of two consecutive three-year terms.

There were 21 deacons supporting each of the 21 parishes in 2023. In each parish, the deacon’s primary function is to communicate with the members of their assigned parish and to respond to the members’ different events and needs. These events include births, baptisms, deaths, hospitalizations, illnesses, temporary incapacitations and other concerns. Deacons provide solace, meals and communication when appropriate. The support of the deacons during a crisis provides invaluable service to the church. Deacons represent the heart of the church by supporting parishioners in their life journey.

Sadly, we lost one of our deacons, Davidson Gordon, in March. As a dedicated member of our church community he touched so many lives with his kindness and gentle compassion. His devotion to RPC was an inspiration and he is greatly missed.

In addition to parish work, the deacons perform regular roles within the life of the church and community at-large. These are organized and carried out under the following Deacon committees: Congregational Care, Name Tag Sundays, Coffee Hour, Congregational Fellowship, Dinner at Noon, Flower Delivery, and Gifts. Each of these committees is chaired by deacons.

Congregational Care

Deacons order, organize, and maintain booklets, which are displayed at all three entrances to sanctuary and are available free of charge to church members and visitors. The booklets, called CareNotes, deal with a variety of topics, such as illness, grief, divorce, and mental health and are tailored to every age group. Additionally, the Deacons maintain the various supplies for the flower room used to arrange and deliver the Sunday chancel flowers to two parishioners each week.

Coffee Hour

Coffee hour was moved around to different locations around the church in 2023 and by the end of the year it was back in the Assembly Room. During coffee hour deacons welcome visitors and new members and foster fellowship. Additionally, the deacons are responsible for keeping the snacks and beverages stocked. We look forward to coffee hour participation continuing to grow in 2024!

Congregational Fellowship

Deacons are responsible for the following congregation-wide events each year: two New Member Desserts, mid-summer fellowship event, Fall Picnic, Christmas Tree Lighting and Dessert, and other ad hoc events that may arise. The mid-summer event was held at Rye Town Park and church members were able to casually get together, enjoy some bites, and listen to live music being played over near the beach. Next up was the Fall Picnic, held on “Tent Sunday” in September. It was very successful with both new and old church members sharing fellowship and enjoying treats from an ice cream truck. Lastly, the Christmas Tree Lighting dessert was held at the Millers’ festively decorated manse.

For the first time, the Board of Deacons hosted a baby shower! Associate Pastor, JP Marshall, and his wife, Susie, were expecting their first baby, which was also the first baby born into an RPC manse. In February the deacons turned coffee hour into a festive baby shower where the congregation showered the Marshalls with blessings, love, and well-wishes, all while enjoying some cake and fellowship together among the baby blue decorations. Congratulations again to Susie and JP!

Dinner at Noon

Dinner-At-Noon is under the direction of the Carver Center and operated by volunteers from several local houses of worship. It is held at the Carver Center in Port Chester each Saturday for the noon meal and is attended by up to 40 people. RPC serves the meal (prepared by a Carver Center chef) on a rotating basis, about every fifth Saturday, except in the summer. The Deacons in charge of Dinner-at-Noon help serve the meal and recruit other volunteers from the church to participate. This service work is opened to all ages and is perfect for both individuals and families. RPC volunteers served meals five times in 2023.

Flower Delivery

Each week, deacons arrange and deliver chancel flowers to two members of the congregation whether they are facing a challenge, like limited travel, hospitalization, or suffered a recent loss, or celebrating a joyful event, such as a birth or baptism. For a birth, a white rose is delivered to the family. With the flower deliveries, the deacons include the weekly bulletin as well as a special card and, occasionally, a CareNotes booklet. In addition, deacons delivered Easter lilies and Christmas poinsettias to those who experienced a death in their family during the year or are currently ill or homebound.

Gifts

Deacons purchase and deliver gifts to commemorate special occasions, such as baptisms and confirmation. Deacons assist at baptisms and a prayer book is given to each baptized child. This year high school confirmands received gift cards to Jerry’s. Additionally, the Gifts committee assembles and mails care packages to college freshman in time for their first semester final exams. This committee is also responsible for printing and distributing child-drawn Easter cards for all deacons to mail to their parish members.

Name Tag Sundays

Name Tag Sundays gives congregants the opportunity to “put names with faces” on the first Sunday of every month. The date is sometimes moved in order to incorporate Name Tag Sunday with a post-worship event like a congregation-wide service project or meeting.

The Board of Deacons also maintains representation on the following RPC committees: Christian Education, Fellowship and Formation (new), Mission and Outreach, Worship and Music, Stewardship, Officer Nominating, and the Rye Presbyterian Nursery School Board.

The Deacons look forward to continued service to and fellowship with the people of Rye Presbyterian Church in 2024!

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Parish
President

STEPHEN MINISTRY 2023

“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ”

Galatians 6:2

RPC has been a Stephen Ministry church since 2004. 20 years!!! Since that time, 124 Stephen Ministers and 26 Stephen Leaders have been trained and well over 140 Care Receiver/Stephen Minister matches have been made. Care Receivers are identified by clergy, Stephen Ministers and Stephen Leaders as well as RPC congregants. Some are self-identified. They come from both within our congregation and from the broader community. The types of issues that care receivers are dealing with include bereavement, loss associated with aging, family stress, illness, chronic health issues, job loss and a variety of other challenging life situations. Increasingly we are seeing needs associated with aging and cognitive decline.

Fourteen Stephen Ministers were commissioned on January 22, 2023, having completed a weekly training beginning in September of 2022. These dedicated and caring individuals have agreed to serve as caregivers for a minimum of two years, and one of our currently serving Stephen Ministers is beginning her fourth year of service. Five Stephen Ministers underwent additional training to serve as Facilitators for Supervision sessions.

Since January 2023, ten of the fourteen commissioned Stephen Ministers have been matched with Care Receivers and have devoted themselves to meeting regularly with individuals in need, as their Christian faith enables them to relate to and care for these individuals in a truly meaningful way.

In addition to meeting regularly with their Care Receivers, the Stephen Ministers meet monthly for Continuing Education (topics such as Rest and Renewal, How to Close a Relationship, Confidentiality, Personality Types, Empathy, Self-Disclosure Dos and Don’ts) and Supervision, where they find support for their own needs as they care for others. This group has developed a strong bond and are truly committed to the process of supporting and encouraging one another in the caregiving process.

Stephen Leaders Becky Ruegger and Mary Versfelt welcomed Debbie Zingg to the Leader Team this fall following Debbie’s completion of a 20-hour Stephen Ministry Bridge Leader’s Training Course. Two of the Stephen Ministers who are not currently matched with Care Receivers have helped the Leader Team with Publicity for the program and the distribution of Journeying Through Grief booklets, for RPC individuals who have experienced a recent loss.

We believe that the Stephen Ministry Program at RPC truly embraces the church’s vision to do Christ’s work in the world.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Ruegger

RYE PRESBYTERIAN NURSERY SCHOOL 2023-2024

Kristin Kumar and Margaret Sculti began their eighth year as Co-Directors of RPNS. The school is highly regarded in the community and continues to have a large wait-list each year. RPNS is dedicated to providing a warm and loving environment for young learners to thrive.

New hire Molly Cacase joined the three teaching team for the 2023-2024 school year. Molly attended RPNS as a child! Mrs. Mytych who is a current RPNS teacher and beloved member of our faculty was her teacher in 1998! Molly has been an amazing addition to our staff. RPNS continues to offer professional development opportunities for new and returning faculty to expand their knowledge about best practices in early childhood education.

Rye Presbyterian Nursery School celebrates its 65th year with young children and their families. The nursery school continues to teach children ages 2-5 in twelve beautiful classrooms. Our staff includes two co-directors, an administrative assistant/nurse, twenty-four teachers, and three support teachers.

RPNS is a progressive preschool inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy providing a play-based, half-day program. As teachers listen to children's ideas, they build their curriculum. Faculty works collaboratively with children to create long-term projects and investigations around their ideas, delving deeper into what interests the children. Goals for each child are integrated into the studies, so every child is nurtured, supported, and challenged.

Community events are a wonderful part of the nursery school experience at RPNS. In September, RPNS hosted their annual parent social outside under a tent on the Great Lawn. In November, families enjoyed coming out for Movie Night, and in December, the annual Holiday Caroling Party took place! RPNS will host a Scholastic Book Fair in February and a Spaghetti Dinner/Bingo Night in May.

The Nursery School Advisory Board is made up of 13 dedicated individuals, six of whom are church members.

Scott Snell is our Trustee Representative, Jennifer Reddington represents the Session and Krysta Holland is our Deacon Representative. Sarah Richardson who is a church member is our Board Chair and Jennifer Reddington is also our Personnel Chair. Other church members include Katie Fagan and Sarah Lynch. The remainder of the board includes Matthew Cognetti, Jennifer Soliman, Elizabeth Nace, Ashley Pritchard, Emily Cawley, Jaelyn Shanahan, Michael Wood. The continued support of the Board has enabled RPNS to provide the best possible preschool education for the little ones that attend school each day!

The Nursery School derives income solely from tuition and each year it contributes a portion to RPC's Operating Fund. This year's \$180,000 contribution is calculated by the Trustees and Board to cover all RPNS expenses (heat, electricity, insurance, some custodial services, supplies, and grounds maintenance, etc.) as well as an additional contribution to RPC. We are indebted to the congregants of Rye Presbyterian for their support, participation on our governing board, and the beautiful facility that we are blessed to enjoy daily.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristin Kumar and Margaret Sculti

WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT 2023

The RPC Women's Association is the inclusive umbrella organization of our congregation of women, and the volunteers of the Thrift Shop and Grants Committee. Our purpose includes fun fellowship and raising funds for local charities for women and children. We are an amazing group of dedicated volunteers with an equally dedicated, bargain-hunting clientele. Our Thrift Shop is open Thursdays 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. during the school year. We accept local and Church member donations Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 to 11:30am to help our communities reuse, recycle, repurpose and reduce. Our Thrift Shop is a real community service and resource.

In 2023, our first full year back after Covid, we returned to the assembly hall and downstairs to the acclaim of all. Through the dedication of our many volunteers, we gave over \$63,000 in grants to 10 local charities supporting women and children.

We presented the Joan Kellogg Award, honoring our VIP Volunteers, to Peggy Berretta and Denise LeVan of the RPC staff for their continuous and invaluable assistance to our organization.

One of our 2023 charities, The Youth Shelter Program of Westchester, which focuses on criminal justice and alternatives for at risk youth, honored the RPCWA and Thrift Shop at their 2023 Gala. Church members and volunteers attended this special evening of recognition and fellowship.

In addition to our regular Thursday sales (10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.), we conducted Saturday Drive-by Drop-off Donations, and Wednesday Evening Shopping Events 5-7pm. Our fellowship included International Luncheons at different restaurants; a "Pi Day" at Noble Pies on March 14; a trip to Christies; "A Bloomin' Garden and Patio Party"; a "Bee There, Bee Happy" bee lecture and demonstration; our inspiring Grants Luncheon in June in the courtyard under the Grape Arbor and Tulip Tree; and our cheerful Christmas Volunteers Party.

Thanks to our partnerships with the leaders of RPC, our dedicated volunteers, our loyal customers and Grantee charities, we can dream of greater connection and greater impact with those who need us the most. Please join us for fellowship and at our meetings in the RPC Library the first Friday of every other month at 9:30 a.m., and our Grants Luncheon on June 11, 2024; or contact any of us.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Stack and Terry Ann Weil, Women's Association Co-Presidents
Suzanne Davies, Thrift Shop Chair

RPC Women's Association		
<i>Balance Sheet</i>		
<i>as of December 31, 2023</i>		
Assets		
	Checking Account	\$ 64,647.51
Liabilities		\$ -
Equity		\$ 64,647.51
<i>Income and Expense Report</i>		
<i>1/1/23 to 12/31/23</i>		
Income		
	Membership Contributions	\$ -
	Thrift Shop Receipts	\$ 77,831.46
	RPC Fellowship Income	\$ -
	Total Income	\$ 77,831.46
Expenses		
	Administration	\$ -
	Benevolences and Grants	\$ (63,000.00)
	RPC Fellowship	\$ (576.16)
	Thrift Shop	\$ -
	Total Expenses	\$ (63,576.16)
Total 2023 Income less Expenses		\$ 14,255.30

BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2023

Financial Overview and Budget

The 2023 budget called for revenues and expenditures of \$1,892,722, approximately \$34,400 higher than actual revenues in 2022. Our revenue in 2023 totaled \$1,823,623, and expenses were \$1,892,722, resulting in a \$69,100 deficit.

Looking forward to 2024, we have budgeted \$1,993,905 in expenses. The most significant expense increase will be our insurance costs, which our carrier has advised will increase by approximately 13%, consistent with industry-wide premium increases. Several other expense categories increased due to the Cost-of-Living Adjustments for all staff.

On the capital side, the church is supported by a healthy balance sheet that provides annual funding for capital improvements and maintenance of all our facilities, including the sanctuary, education wing, and the three pastors' manses. The Trustees may draw up to 5% from the general endowment each year to support the capital budget.

With most of the original Imagine Initiative objectives completed, the Board continues to contemplate the best use of the remaining funds. Given the need to begin a search for a pastor to replace Rev. Miller when he retires in the next year or so, the Board has authorized the expenditure of Imagine funds to retain a Congregational Consultant to advise and guide the church and the search committee in that process.

Buildings and Grounds

The Buildings and Grounds committee continued to be very busy in 2023! The B & G committee oversees the maintenance and restoration of all of the RPC properties, which now include the All Souls Community Center (ASCC) and manse. All of the existing not-for-profit users of the ASCC remain in occupancy and have had their use agreements extended through June 2024. Users include the Seventh Day Adventists, IPUL Evangelical Church, AA, Five Steps to 5, and other community support groups that focus on food insecurity.

Various maintenance projects have been undertaken at ASCC and the manse, including computer and alarm system upgrades. We are also exploring the possibility of partnering with the Rye Y to start a nursery school at ASCC. The investment account previously maintained by All Souls has financed all of the projects we have completed.

Major capital projects completed at RPC include the restoration of all of our stone walkways and the courtyard, the installation of a new floor in the Assembly Room, the restoration of the Assembly Room doors, significant computer system upgrades, various painting projects in RPC and the manses, security system upgrades, installation of new boiler pumps for the sanctuary and school heating system and the installation of sprinkler systems at the manses. We also completed improvements at RPNS including the installation of new dismissal patios on the Great Lawn and in the grape arbor as well as interior improvements and lighting. RPNS shared the expense of the interior work and lighting.

We will continue to stay abreast of all needed maintenance and repair as well as any capital improvements recommended in the property inspection reports received in 2021. We are blessed to be able to actively maintain and restore our property as a result of the general endowment and the generosity of our congregation.

Year End 2023 Investment Report

After a shaky start early in 2023, the bond and stock markets seemed to get their footing, leading to a strong return environment for the year. As the year progressed, the markets started to believe that the Federal Reserve's interest rate raising efforts were coming to an end. Tame inflation indicators throughout the year enabled the Fed to pause any further rate rises until they could assess the longer-term effect that a 5% rise in rates in a one year timeframe would have on economic activity and inflation.

We started 2023 with an asset allocation of approximately 68% in equities, and 32% in cash equivalents and fixed income. We did reduce our equity holdings and short-term cash equivalents, throughout the year, and invested the

proceeds in intermediate fixed income. However, our allocations ended 2023 with a similar equity exposure at year-end as we began the year, due to the explosive rise in equity prices in the 2023 4th quarter.

The Investment Committee believes that we have concluded our "asset rebalancing" effort at this time but with one caveat. If geo-political or economic events occur to cause a further rise in intermediate-term Fixed Income, we would likely further re-allocate to that investment sector.

Respectfully submitted,
Katherine Olsen, President
Van Siler, Investment Committee Chair

Treasurer's Report
Rye Presbyterian Church
Operating Fund
2023 Actual / 2024 Budget

	2023 Budget	2023 Actual (Unaudited)	2023 Actual vs. 2023 Budget		2024 Budget	2023 Budget vs. 2024 Budget	
INCOME:							
Contributions	\$ 1,666,150	\$ 1,551,575	\$ (114,575)	-6.88%	\$ 1,651,655	\$ (14,495)	-0.9%
Occupancy Income	\$ 240,000	\$ 252,047	\$ 12,047	5.02%	\$ 251,250	\$ 11,250	4.7%
Interfund Transfers		\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000		\$ 91,000	\$ 91,000	
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 1,906,150	\$ 1,823,623	\$ (82,527)	-4.33%	\$ 1,993,905	\$ 87,755	4.6%
EXPENSES:							
Pastoral	\$ 533,111	\$ 527,037	\$ 6,074	1.14%	\$ 548,532	\$ 15,421	2.9%
New Initiatives	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 37,500	\$ 30,000	400.0%
Christian Education	\$ 29,313	\$ 18,342	\$ 10,971	37.43%	\$ 29,313	\$ -	0.0%
Congregational Life	\$ 34,446	\$ 23,660	\$ 10,786	31.31%	\$ 14,946	\$ (19,500)	-56.6%
Mission & Outreach	\$ 183,132	\$ 183,132	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 184,000	\$ 868	0.5%
Worship & Music	\$ 237,506	\$ 207,207	\$ 30,299	12.76%	\$ 248,209	\$ 10,703	4.5%
Buildings & Grounds	\$ 290,807	\$ 316,087	\$ (25,280)	-8.69%	\$ 293,955	\$ 3,148	1.1%
Administrative	\$ 426,483	\$ 456,673	\$ (30,190)	-7.08%	\$ 429,598	\$ 3,115	0.7%
Insurance	\$ 144,952	\$ 149,898	\$ (4,946)	-3.41%	\$ 163,952	\$ 19,000	13.1%
Other	\$ 18,900	\$ 3,187	\$ 15,713	83.14%	\$ 43,900	\$ 25,000	132.3%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,906,150	\$ 1,892,722	\$ 13,428	0.70%	\$ 1,993,905	\$ 87,755	4.6%
OPERATING							
SURPLUS/(SHORTFALL)	\$ -	\$ (69,100)	\$ (69,100)		\$ -	\$ -	

Respectfully Submitted By:
Robert Zahm, Treasurer

RPC COMBINED OUTREACH GIVING - 2023

SOURCES

Mission & Outreach Funding	\$99,375
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	\$30,271
Women's Association Thrift Shop	\$63,000
Church Budget for denominational support	\$42,000
Special Offerings	\$15,168
Total	\$249,814

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

A House on Beekman	\$7,500
Mission & Outreach Committee	
Five Steps to Five	\$6,500
Women's Association	
Rye Presbyterian Nursery School Scholarship Fund	\$1,000
Women's Association	

FOOD, CLOTHING, AND SHELTER OUTREACH

Caritas/Meals on Main Street	\$14,000
Mission & Outreach Committee \$10000	
Pastor's Discretionary Fund – Christmas \$4000	
Carver Center	\$11,500
Women's Association \$7500	
Pastor's Discretionary Fund – Christmas \$4000	
Feeding Westchester Event	\$3,000
Mission & Outreach Committee	
Food to Grow On	\$6,000
Mission & Outreach Committee \$5000	
Pastor's Discretionary Fund – Christmas \$1000	
Furniture Sharehouse	\$6,500
Women's Association \$6500	
Helping Hands for the Homeless and Hungry	\$13,000
Mission & Outreach Committee \$5000	
Women's Association \$8000	
Local individuals in need	\$10,263
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	
Sharing Shelf of Port Chester	\$6,500
Women's Association	

HUMAN SERVICES OUTREACH

Community Resource Center	\$6,500
Women's Association	
El Centro Hispano – White Plains	\$1,500
Pastor's Discretionary Fund - Christmas	
Hope Community Services – New Rochelle	\$10,000
Mission & Outreach Committee	
Human Developmental Services of Westchester	\$750
Pastor's Discretionary Fund – Christmas gift cards	
Lifting up Westchester	\$6,500
Women's Association	
ReSET Westchester	\$530
Fall Peace and Global Witness Offering	

Soul Ryeders	\$6,500
Women's Association	
SPRYE	\$4,000
Mission & Outreach Committee	
Victims Assistance Services	\$10,000
Mission & Outreach Committee	

INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

Rise Against Hunger event	\$3,875
Mission & Outreach Committee	

MEDICAL OUTREACH

Open Door Family Medical Center	\$11,741
Mission & Outreach Committee \$10000	
Confirmation Class gift - Baby Boxes \$1425	
Pentecost Special offering for Baby Boxes \$316	

PRESBYTERIAN OUTREACH

Christmas Joy Offering	\$5,643
Christmas offering	
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$5,200
Lent offering	
New Life Faith Community – Mission Presbytery	\$500
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	
Presbyterian Pentecost Offering	\$474
Spring offering	
Presbyterian Peace and Global Witness Offering	\$1,580
Fall offering	
Presbytery of Hudson River, Synod and General Assembly	\$42,000
Budgeted Mission Support	
Support for Food Pantries through ten churches in the Presbytery	\$5,000
Pastor's Discretionary fund – Christmas gift	

PRISON OUTREACH

Hudson Link for Higher Education	\$10,000
Mission & Outreach Committee	
Lilac House – Mt. Vernon	\$500
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	
Sing Sing Certificate in Ministry Program – Rising Hope	\$5,000
Mission & Outreach Committee	
Sing Sing Project of New York Theological Seminary	\$5,000
Mission & Outreach Committee	
Youth Shelter of Westchester	\$7,758
Women's Association \$7500	
Pastor's Discretionary Fund \$258	

YOUTH OUTREACH

Johnsonburg Camp & Retreat Center Campership	\$2,500
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	
Rye Youth Council	\$11,000
Mission & Outreach Committee \$11000	

2023 Total: \$249,814

CLERGY TERMS OF CALL 2024

2024

Co-Pastor, Reverend Dr. John Miller

Compensation :

Cash Salary	\$ 111,750
Housing Allowance	\$ 10,000
Benefits and Reimbursements :	
Medical (including deductible)	\$ 39,255
Pension	\$ 14,174
Dental, Life Insurance, Death & Disability	\$ 4,170
Auto Expense	\$ 2,000
Study Leave and Book Allowance	\$ 1,750
Social Security Allowance	\$ 12,757
Fellowship Allowance	\$ 1,000
	<u>\$ 196,856</u>

Vacation : 5 weeks

Study Leave: 2 weeks

Co-Pastor, Reverend Daniel H. Love

Compensation :

Cash Salary	\$ 111,750
Housing Allowance	\$ 10,000
Benefits and Reimbursements :	
Medical (including deductible)	\$ 39,255
Pension	\$ 14,174
Dental, Life Insurance, Death & Disability	\$ 5,047
Auto Expense	\$ 2,000
Study Leave and Book Allowance	\$ 1,750
Social Security Allowance	\$ 12,757
Fellowship Allowance	\$ 1,000
	<u>\$ 197,733</u>

Vacation : 5 weeks

Study leave: 2 weeks

Associate Pastor, Reverend Jean-Paul Christian Marshall

Compensation :

Cash Salary	\$ 57,347
Housing Allowance	\$ 10,000
Benefits and Reimbursements :	
Medical (including deductible)	\$ 32,070
Pension	\$ 8,700
Dental, Life Insurance, Death & Disability	\$ 3,157
Auto Expense	\$ 2,000
Study Leave and Book Allowance	\$ 1,750
Social Security Allowance	\$ 7,830
Fellowship Allowance	\$ 1,000
	<u>\$ 123,854</u>

Vacation : 5 weeks

Study Leave: 2 weeks