

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
FORT COLLINS**

# **Dreams and Visions**

**2023 NARRATIVE BUDGET**



# WELCOME

**“In the last days,” God says,  
“I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your youth will see visions,  
your elderly will dream dreams.”  
—Acts 2:17**

Hello Friends,

As Miriam and I celebrate seven years here and begin our eighth at First Presbyterian Church Fort Collins, there is so much for which we are grateful. We are grateful for the warmth and welcome of this congregation, for our vibrant witness as a diverse downtown church, and for the shared vision that continues to lead us towards deeper discipleship and greater impact in our world.

I’m also grateful that our church leaders created and affirmed a new Vision and Mission Statement this year. We believe this beautifully and compellingly captures the vision God has for us today. Having a clear, compelling vision as Christ’s disciples sent into the world matters. It has always mattered. One of the first things Peter told those gathered on the day of Pentecost was that their youth would see visions and their elderly would dream dreams. That has been true for the church across the centuries and I believe it is still true for us today.

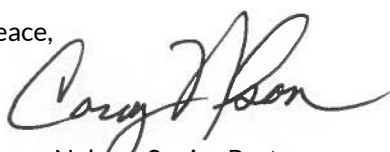
In this year’s Narrative Budget we are trying something new! Here you will find stories of impact—testimonies of God magnificently at work in and through our lives. These stories reflect some of the many ways that we are already living into our Vision and Mission. In addition, we also celebrate:

- Launching a new “first@five” worship service, including musical leadership from our new Director of Music, David Dunbar.
- Welcoming 40 new members, including 5 baptisms.
- Creating new ministry teams, Children & Youth and Adult Education, to better support every age and stage of our spiritual journeys.
- Reintroducing our first (fantastic!) Women’s Retreat since the pandemic and planning for a Men’s Retreat next Spring. We also added a new Lenten Retreat hosted onsite and will be offering this again in 2024.
- Accomplishing all of this, and more, while managing a stable operating budget for the sixth year in a row.

I believe the positive momentum, enthusiasm and faithfulness of our church will continue to move forward this next year and your continued support will make a big difference. In addition to continuing all that FPC is doing today, we are asking you to continue sharing your prayers, your time and talent, and your financial pledge so that we can build on our strong foundation. For those who appreciate “the numbers,” you will find a summary of our current and projected annual income and expense allocations on page 11.

Together, let’s lean into God’s vision for our ministry and mission in 2024. The Spirit of Pentecost is still empowering our dreams for God’s kingdom come.

Peace,



Corey Nelson, Senior Pastor

**GIVING** 



SCAN ME

- ▶ Scan the QR code ...or
- ▶ Visit [firstpresfc.org/giving](https://firstpresfc.org/giving) to download and print a pledge card
- ▶ Bring a pledge card to church on **Commitment Sunday, November 19**

# CHRIST-CENTERED



**This fall we launched a new church-wide initiative entitled, "Feasting on the Word," that invites our children, youth and adults to all read, study and discuss the same scripture lesson each week that is used for the sermon in worship. For our adults, a new Sunday morning Bible study class is hosted by a rotation of church leaders who bring unique insights and facilitate thought-provoking dialogue.**



In my family and life experience, music has been a vehicle that brings people together in community. Whether in sorrow or celebration, when words fail, music speaks. In the context of worship, it does all that and so much more. For me, it is

a vehicle of connection to Christ and to others in Christ, a tool of teaching, and a fulfillment of God's call for us as Christians to sing songs of praise. The musical presentation of praise, offered at an exceptional level, has become one of my most loved parts of the worship experience at First Pres, and I am passionate about continuing that tradition. I'm so excited to experience what is next in that plan and how God will use David Dunbar and his obvious spiritual gift of music to further it!

—Heather Vesgaard,  
member of the Music Director search team



This year, we had 20 youth and 20 adult volunteers provide leadership for 85 kids at our annual Vacation Bible School. We partnered with Westminster Presbyterian Church and Plymouth United Church of Christ for a more vibrant experience for everyone.

This past summer, our Youth Group participated in a multi-day rafting, hiking, and rock-climbing trip. Our 12 students and three adults were asked to push their limits, explore their faith, and deepen their friendships. While this was a grand adventure, and every day was packed with fun, there were also lessons to be learned. Every night around a campfire, we discussed what we learned that day and how it applied to our journey with Christ. Best object lessons EVER!

“My favorite lesson was from the day we went rappelling and climbing, probably because this was my own scariest day. We had to believe that the rope would hold us and that the guides knew what they were doing. I had to trust that the kids could (and would) make it up a cliff and back down again. That night, around the campfire, we applied the lessons we learned that day to our faith. We discussed that even when life is difficult or seems impossible or scary, we have to put our faith in Jesus because no matter what, he is always there to support you, lift you up, and guide you. You have to have the courage to lean wholly into him.”

—Carlie Hoskins, Director of Youth Ministry



# OPEN AND WELCOMING COMMUNITY



My family loves the ongoing opportunity to Livestream worship services from FPC. During COVID, my parents in California started watching FPC's Livestream worship services because their local church was not online. As my mother, Nancy, has continued to have difficulties with her Multiple Sclerosis and its progression, she is so grateful that she is still able to "go to church" here. They look forward to it all week! Mom even makes it a special occasion by dressing up and putting on her jewelry. They gather in the family room where my brother-in-law and sister can cast the service to their TV.

My heart is happy she can still worship from home as her mobility declines. She's lost so much, and worship with FPC gives her a sense of normalcy and engagement. They love the messages and the music. We can even talk on the phone about the service afterward. We greatly appreciate First Presbyterian Church's continued efforts to provide this blessing to our family.

—Carrie Holmes

I realized that after seeking and finding refuge for several years in the quiet waters offered by this church, I should no longer be “adrift.” Now is the time to tie my boat to the dock—the dock that is FPC Fort Collins. It is time for me to stop going it alone and embrace a spiritual home with those who have offered me their outstretched arms of welcome without ever expecting anything in return. I don't know where the winds and currents will take me on this passage, but I do know God, as always, will provide and steer me on the right course. I want to be known for my commitment to God and to a community known for its commitment to God and serving others.

—Shared by a new member of FPC

Our annual Bells of Christmas concert, now in its 38th year and following two pandemic-impacted years, once again fills our sanctuary to overflowing with hundreds of people—most of whom are not FPC members. This beloved holiday tradition is one of our most significant outreach events—sharing the Christmas story, the joy of our faith and the blessing of our music ministry with our community.



# ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME

The Matthew 25 Initiative of our denomination has inspired us to strengthen our congregation's vitality and work to address and alleviate poverty and discrimination of all kinds in our community. Two impactful responses to our commitment are shared below.

In September, we invited FPC to donate and sort new coats, hats, gloves, hygiene products, and financial gifts to be used by ISAAC, one of our local mission partners, who distributed these items to Newcomer Youth in Poudre School District. These students are often recent immigrants or refugees who have arrived without winter clothing or the resources to purchase these items themselves.

This initiative was born out of the intersection of our Wednesday evening immigration series, "The Border is Here," and our October FPC Reads book, "Just Like Us," about immigrant women living in Denver.

Arpi Miller, the Executive Director of ISAAC, shared the experience of these students receiving their new gear:

"Today, we are grateful for the givers and the healers, for those who provide welcome and care in ways big and

small. Last week, five groups of Newcomer Youth visited our team at the PSD Future Ready Center. Ecstasy would be a good descriptor of the mood in the room. Students tried on coats of all sizes, colors and styles. They posed for themselves and each other in front of the floor-to-ceiling mirrors. They picked hats and gloves to match and discerned which hygiene bag was just right for them.

**"It's healing to be just a bit of love and light in the world when so much feels heavy and hard. We do what we can when we can. And it makes a difference."**

**—Arpi Miller**

“None of this joy was possible without you. Thank you to those who donated gear, those who organized mini drives in your faith space, and those who served as drop-off sites and worked hard to organize donations. Thank you to those who donated the funds necessary for us to fill in all the gaps. We wouldn’t have made it without your generosity!”



The day after Christmas 2022, the church received an email: “I have just been notified by RIP Medical Debt that First Presbyterian Church has paid my medical debts in full. I am in Sierra Rehabilitation Center in Lakewood for a head injury I received years ago. I have no way of paying my bills right now, and I wanted to say thank you! God bless you!”

This person was one of more than 1,200 individuals and families whose medical debt was retired due to a \$5,000 donation our congregation made to RIP Medical Debt. In total, our gift led to over \$1.2 million of debt being forgiven in our local region and across Colorado. Our example has also led others to consider retiring medical debt, including a proposal currently being championed by two members of the Denver City Council.

—Dave Campbell, chair of Mission & Outreach Team



"Many times, there are FPC Reads books on topics I might not have had the incentive to pick up. I find that I want to share the books and ideas with family and friends, which also gives me a good reason to stay in touch with them. I value the encouragement at First Presbyterian Church to keep learning, thinking, and asking questions."

—Karen Eelman



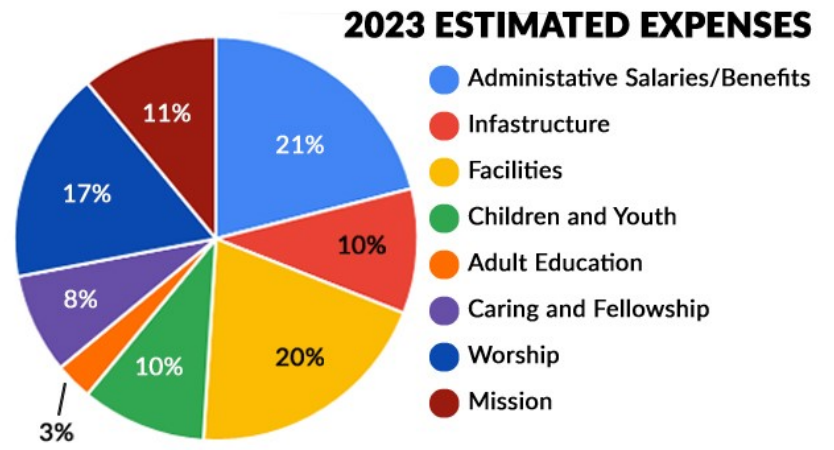
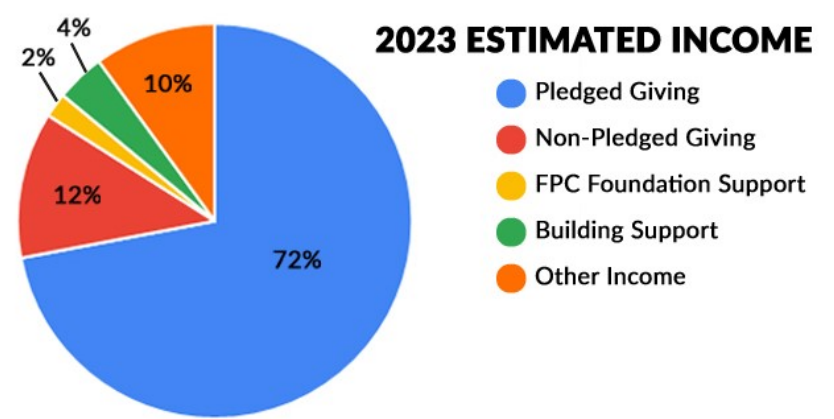
"We moved to Colorado 10 years ago from Florida, another state with a large immigration population. After watching several news stories on the number of immigrants climbing over the border wall in the Texas area, I felt strongly about what our government should do in response. However, after reading the FPC Reads book for October, "Just Like Us," I was struck by how little I knew about the issue, especially as it relates to immigrant children. As a result, my own views have changed as I continue to learn and reconsider these issues through the lens of my Christian beliefs."

—Patty Baker

# FINANCIAL

For those who appreciate "the numbers," we offer this overview of our anticipated income and expenses for 2023 by category. We anticipate similar allocations in 2024.

The majority of our income is received from those who make an annual pledge. This provides leaders at FPC with valuable information as they prayerfully and responsibly create a balanced budget for the coming year. The FPC Foundation supports both the operating budget ....(shown here) and additional designated ministries. Our expenses represent the core values and ministry areas of our church. Program staff salaries, including the Senior Pastor, are represented proportionately within the ministry area(s) that they serve.





# **WE SEEK TO BE A CHRIST-CENTERED, OPEN, AND WELCOMING COMMUNITY, ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME.**

## **CHRIST-CENTERED**

- We follow Jesus on our journey of faith, joyfully sharing the Good News that God is revealing while humbly confessing that we do not have all the answers.
- We find unity and purpose in our common identity as brothers and sisters in Christ, drawing strength from our varied experiences and perspectives.
- We encounter God's truth and mercy through vibrant worship that features excellent music, communal prayer, and preaching that is grounded in scripture and made relevant to our lives today.

## **OPEN AND WELCOMING COMMUNITY**

- We are a family of faith composed of people of all ages with a variety of backgrounds and traditions, including those who are new or returning to faith or church.
- We extend God's love and hospitality to one and all, offering belonging, connection, friendship, and compassionate care.
- We nurture opportunities for people to gather, learn, grow in faith and discipleship, and deepen relationships with one another.

## **ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME**

- We generously commit our financial resources, our campus facilities, and our time and talents to serve our community and world.
- We strive to bring God's justice and mercy to a world still broken by poverty, inequity, and discrimination of all kinds.
- We work to nurture, protect, and restore God's beautiful creation.
- We are a heart for the city: a historic, downtown church standing on the shoulders of the saints who have gone before us and endeavoring to serve the common good.



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