



2023 Annual Report

Letter from the Pastor | 2023

Dear Members and Friends of FPC Dalton,

It is hard to believe that another year has passed in our mutual sojourn of faith. The joys and despairs of our community have been etched upon our history and we now pause to reflect upon it all. Welcome to the Annual Report of our congregation!

Purists would hasten to take issue with my use of the word, “our.” Technically, they would be correct in this objection. As your Interim Pastor, I am not officially a member of the congregation; neither will be your next Called and Installed Pastor. Our membership resides with Cherokee Presbytery via the dictates of our polity.

Nonetheless, the locus of membership cannot dictate the focus of the heart. Mine resides here, with you, my dear friends. As I write I have the sense that our time together may be drawing to a close as the Pulpit Nominating Committee continues its task of faithfully discerning the person whom God has already called to lead you into the future. Just a sense, mind you. Nothing more should be read into it. Interim Pastors assiduously avoid interfering with the work of the PNC. That is as it should be.

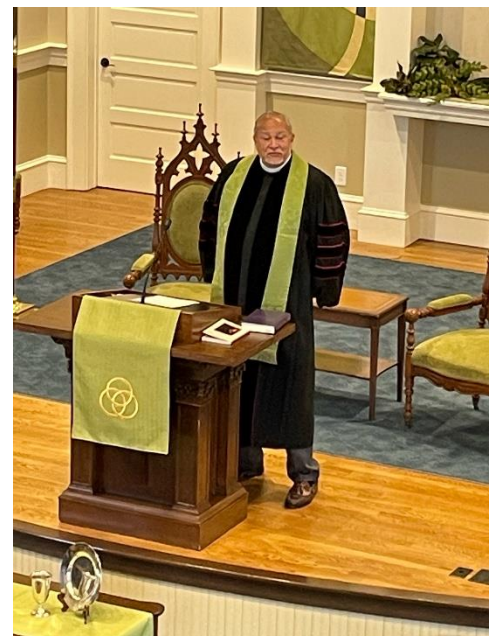
We have done good work this past year. Though we have had some tearful farewells, we have also had many joyful greetings as new friends come among us. Our energy and resources are remarkable and the Holy Spirit of God is working overtime in our midst. All of this is to say that we are well situated for the future call of God.

Many thanks to the Staff who often go unappreciated and work diligently behind the scenes. Erin keeps us organized and running smoothly, often the hidden force behind our work and ministry. Jean is constantly applying her wisdom, education and experience to the task of Christian Education, offering us new and exciting choices in curriculum. Hye Jong, a recent addition to our Staff, amazes us with her mastery of music and choral direction. She inherited a wonderful program from Adam and is nurturing it to new heights. Alex keeps our audiovisual board running and understands the technology behind it all. I still think he needs sunglasses and a satin jacket! My deep appreciation goes to all of them.

Within these pages you will find reports, numbers and statistics which give the ingredients of the recipe which is our community. As with any good recipe, the product is more than the sum of the parts. The joining together of members, officers, staff and the Holy Spirit of God makes us who we are uniquely.

I submit this offering to you and to our Lord. As we remember the year past, let us rejoice in the possibilities of the year which is already begun. Great things are standing on the horizon. I am delighted to have played a part in it all!

Blessings and peace!



1. Clerk Description: To take and preserve minutes of session meetings, congregational meetings, and communications with the congregation; to perform an annual review and approval of documents by Presbytery; to keep the membership rolls; to report the Annual Statistics of the church to PCUSA; maintain by-laws and policies of the church (our Trellis); and to provide for communications within and outside the church.

2. Clerk of Session: Susan Bisson

3. Contact Info: (Cell) 706-313-7494 Email: bisson@optilink.us

4. Membership, end of 2023:

• Active Members:	129
• Baptized Children & Youth:	15
• Births:	1
• Gains by Certificate of Reception	0
• Baptisms:	1
• Affiliate Members*	6
• Deaths	4
• Loss by Certificate	5

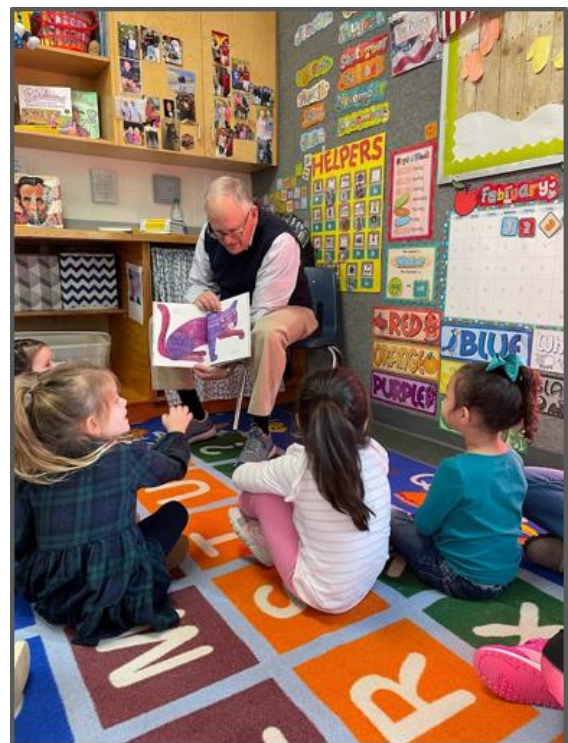
* those who actively participate in our church but have their membership elsewhere

5. Session Members:

- Our session consisted of 1 male and 8 female Elders.

6. The *Trellis*:

- Legal records and copies of session minutes and reports for recent past years are maintained in the church office.



Church Operations and Accounts | 2023

Church Operations

	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget
Income:			
Tithes & Offering	\$ 315,000	\$ 334,800	\$ 312,000
Investments & Other Income	<u>\$ 65,100</u>	<u>\$ 48,355</u>	<u>\$ 70,000</u>
Total Income	\$ 380,100	\$ 383,155	\$ 382,000
Expenses:			
Missions & Benevolences	\$ 55,355	\$ 61,000	\$ 53,030
Pastoral Ministry	\$ 110,950	\$ 72,215	\$ 126,570
Sessional Committees	\$ 18,875	\$ 18,430	\$ 17,425
Music Ministry	\$ 57,800	\$ 41,410	\$ 48,740
Admin & Operations	<u>\$ 137,000</u>	<u>\$ 131,560</u>	<u>\$ 136,220</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 379,980	\$ 324,615	\$ 381,985
Net	\$ 120	\$ 58,540	\$ 15

2023 was year of transition and change, but thanks to the Lord's blessings and your generous giving once our tithes and offerings exceeded the budget. While income for the year was very close to the budget, expenses were significantly below budget. This was primarily driven by the fact we did not call a new minister in 2023, which had been budgeted for, and the fact we were without a Music Director for much of the year. All this combined to create a surplus of \$58,540 for the year. Expenditures for missions totaled \$61,000.

Though in 2023 we lost several members through death and transfer, your generosity during stewardship season allowed us to reach our budget for 2024. The 2024 budget anticipates the arrival of a new minister and the associated costs of relocating that person.

The church has no outstanding loans or long-term debt.

Operating Reserves

Within the church's operating accounts, the Finance Committee has set a policy of maintaining a 3 month to 6 month operating reserve. Currently the church has approximately a 5-month reserve. The reserve is kept in a money market fund and CD's.

Investment Account

The church maintains an investment account separate from the operating account and operating reserves. At the end of 2023 this investment account had a value of \$1,832,000 and will provide \$57,000 toward the 2023 church budget. The account is managed by the church's Finance Team.

Fran Lewis Estate

With Fran Lewis's death in 2023 the church lost one of its most faithful and generous members. Following Fran's death, the church has received gifts from her estate that have totaled \$225,000. This gift has been placed into the church's investment account. This will be a wonderful legacy that will support the work of the church for years to come.

1. **Team Description:** To enhance the environment and opportunities for our congregation to grow in personal knowledge of Jesus Christ through prayer, Sunday School, and fellowship.
2. **Team Chair:** Laura Goins
3. **Contact Info:** (Cell) 404.550.9699 Email: lkgoins@gmail.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - January 13, 2023
 - May 5, 2023
 - July 14, 2023
 - October 20, 2023
5. **Projects Accomplished:**
 - Provided Lenten Devotionals for the congregation.
 - Easter Egg hunt for children and grandchildren of the church for fellowship.
 - Children's Palm Sunday Processional.
 - Wednesday Night Family Dinners in July with Children's Bible Study and Music.
 - Rally Day with Blessing of the Backpacks for all the children and educators.
 - Young Adult gathering and fellowship for children.
 - Reformation Sunday with a Bagpipe History during the Sunday School lesson.
 - Adopted a new curriculum developed and implemented by Jean Lowery and Priscilla Brown for older children to increase Bible literacy including a hand painted rock garden to be displayed at the church.
 - Provided Advent devotionals for children and adults.
 - Family Advent Craft Workshop with carol singing.
 - Return of the Children's Christmas Pageant with children and grandchildren of the church participating.
6. **Ongoing Projects:**
 - Confirmation Class for 2024
 - Hiring a second nursery worker
 - Young Adult Fellowship Events
 - Ready, Set, Worship Class for children

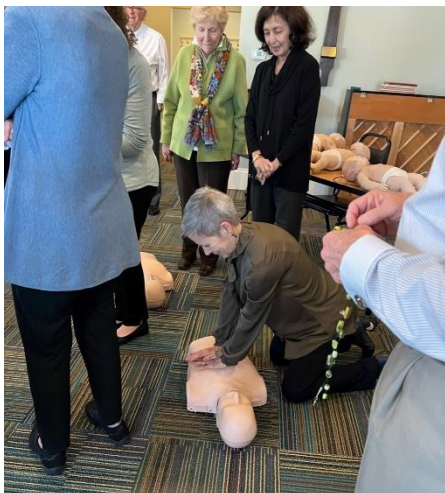
Christian Education Team | 2023



Congregational Life Team | 2023

1. **Team Description:** A team made up of any member of the congregation who wants to participate in any or all of the activities of the Congregational Life Team. The team's goal is to maintain, nurture and increase the spirit of fellowship within the community of faith.
2. **Team Chair:** Laura Allgood
3. **Contact Info:** (Cell) 706-537-8070 Email: cyalja@gmail.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - January 18, 2023 • May 17, 2023 • September 20, 2023
 - March 15, 2023 • August 2, 2023 • November 8, 2023
5. **Ongoing Projects and Project Leaders:**
 - Sent cards to shut-ins monthly
 - Held reception for bereaved families and/or sent food to homes for Fran Lewis, Greg George and Mary Dover
 - Sent Valentine gifts cards from Bruster's to 10 children of the church
 - Sent \$50 gift cards at Valentine's for college students
 - Hosted second Sunday meals (avg. attendance 30)
 - Held training for use of defibrillator (13 attendees)
 - Assisted Christian Education Team with Easter Egg Hunt
 - Fourth Sunday Lemonade on the Lawn/Coffee in the Commons each month
 - Book Club luncheon meetings (average 8 participants)
 - Hosted Church Women United business meetings monthly and hosted May Friendship Day and Christmas Party for CWU
 - Farewell Luncheon for Kristen Sanders
 - Reception for new Music Minister, Hye Jeong Kwon
 - Planned and held Silent Auction to cover expense of new Christmas Tree. Raised over \$3,920
 - Resumed lunch/dinner groups
 - Hanging of the Greens followed by pizza lunch. Returned greens to storage in January.
 - Sent flowers to Rhonda Smith's family upon the death of her father.
 - Delivered poinsettias to shut-ins in December.
 - Provided meal to Hendrix family on the birth of daughter, Maya. Also gave the baby a quilt made by Mary Hubbs
 - A book was given to the Children's Library in honor of the baptism of Pam and Jack Partain's granddaughter, Ann. Also gave her a hand-made baby quilt.
 - Continuing to stock freezer with casseroles, chili, soup, etc.
 - Provided treat bags for ushers to give to newcomers

Congregational Life Team | 2023



- 1. Team Description:** To educate, inform and engage—spiritually, mentally, physically and socially—not only members, but also others in the community and beyond about First Presbyterian Church, Dalton: its mission, beliefs, worship, fellowship, service to others, activities, educational programs, musical offerings, opportunities and acceptance of all in accordance with the church’s directive to “Love First, Love All.”
- 2. Team Chair:** Jean Lowrey **New Chair:** Mike Brown
- 3. Contact Info:** (Cell) 706-459-1447 Email: mikeb9896@gmail.com
- 4. Meeting Dates:**

• January 8, 2023	• April 30, 2023	• August 13, 2023
• March 11, 2023	• June 11, 2023	• November 12, 2023
		• December 20, 2023
- 5. Ongoing Projects and Project Leaders:**

 - Continuing to improve the Church website, FPC Facebook public site and FPC Connect private Facebook site with more features, more photos and more names- Team/Staff
 - FPC Midweek News online and printed and mailed by request - Team/Staff
 - FPC Biography Project - Walter Jones
 - Card Ministry–Birthday card and special event cards - Sue Spivey
 - Refreshing the Membership Roll - Team/Staff
 - “Presbyterians at the Pub” - an avenue through which our members and friends can connect informally - Pam Partain
 - Proofreaders for the bulletin and the Midweek News - Team/Staff
 - Newspaper Publicity - Team/Staff
 - Encouraging regular use of the Tag Board in the Commons that was initiated during the Church’s 175th birthday celebration on October 31, 2022. Prompts for its use to include: change, memory, recognition, compliments and humor. -Team/Staff
 - Seeking ideas for marketing First Presbyterian Dalton. The Connection Team earlier endorsed these words combined into a phrase: “affirming, inquiring, engaging.”
 - Pew Cards in the form of bookmarks that express who and what FPC is.
- 6. Special Projects Accomplished:**

 - Membership Roll Refinement with the next stage being to communicate with inactive or rarely-active members through upbeat, encouraging letters inviting them to return to our fellowship or to let us know if they have decided not to remain active members.
 - Hearing Assistance System in the Sanctuary that can be moved to other locales within the church facility.
 - Live-Stream Worship and for Audio-Visual Equipment and A/V Budget Responsibility officially handed over to Connection Team from various tasks being handled by Connection, Facilities, and Worship Teams as needed. The livestream originated with the onset of Covid-19 and was implemented and coordinated by individuals, but never assigned to a specific team.

Connection Team | 2023

- Further Defining Team Responsibilities to Avoid Overlaps in Duties Led to The Trellis Revisions. Among the items being definitively assigned to a team were responsibilities for planning and management of the Attendance Pad (Worship) and of Events and Activities (Congregational Life).
- A section of the Connection Team responsibilities pertaining to Evangelism has been removed from this team's responsibilities in The Trellis pending further consideration and further discussion by The Session and the new minister (when one is called) about how to define and handle the concept of "Evangelism" in the PCUSA Church.
- Proposed Two Ideas for A "Magnet" for Mission and Members." Acknowledging the need to create a "magnet" of some sort to attract new and younger members while serving the community, the Team listened to two proposals. Both would provide a "Magnet" or unique project/offering/service from our church to fit in with the Matthew 25 Mission to meet needs in our community while attracting new members to our church. Discussions are ongoing with the Session having been informed of both ideas and showing interest. At this point, the general consensus is that it will be better to wait until a new minister is onboard before taking further actions to implement either or both of the proposals to assure that the new pastor is in agreement with the ideas and willing to participate in the creation of either or both.
- A new Christmas Banner that hung in front of the Martin House to Welcome the Community to FPC.
- Fellowship Luncheon Church History Scavenger Hunt



1. **Team Description:** To maintain all church facilities and property in good order and repair, to provide for the safety and security of buildings and church activities conducted on or within church property, to provide for aesthetic additions, and to assist in making church facilities available to outside groups upon request.
2. **Team Chair:** Kathryn Sellers
3. **Contact Info:** (cell) 706-217-8962 Email: kosellers@optilink.us
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - Business conducted by email or when needed – One face-to-face meeting was October 30, 2023
5. **Projects Accomplished:**
 - Yamaha Studio piano gifted, repaired, tuned and placed in the parlor for lessons and use by the congregation (thank you to the Inglis family) Stabilized the spinet piano used in Hollis Hall (thanks to Christine Pope for technical services).
 - Hearing assist equipment for the sanctuary after generous gifts is in place for use.
 - Repairs were made to the sanctuary AV and lighting system, an ongoing issue.
 - A “knox box” was installed near the front Martin door. The box holds a key to the church for firemen in case of a fire.
 - Exterior doors were adjusted and repaired.
 - The large front lawn sign was repaired and updated. (thank you to Mike Brown)
 - The toilets in the men’s and women’s restrooms were changed to be manual flush instead of the troublesome automatic.
 - Swinging doors were added to the kitchen entrance to Hollis Hall so that noise from the hallway doesn’t disturb Sunday school classes or other events. Adjacent door trim was repaired.
 - An inventory update was completed with help from other teams and Erin.
 - The parlor ceiling was repaired after a water leak.
 - A stairway runner and a railing on the Martin stairs were installed. A new rug was installed in the library and at the front door.
 - Owen security repaired the fire system issues.
 - Light fixtures in the Martin foyer were replaced with LED fixtures.
 - Roof damage was researched and maintenance and repairs were made.
 - Roger Rollins designed, constructed and managed the installation of the new bell tower. A big thanks to Roger and to the Hubbs family for donating the bell.
6. **Projects in the planning stages or projects desired:**
 - Replace the light controls in the sanctuary
 - Add a surge protector to building’s circuit breakers.
 - Continue to replace outdated light fixtures with LED fixtures/bulbs.
 - Aesthetic additions to complete the décor and furniture needs.

Facilities Team | 2023



1. **Team Description:** To administer all financial matters of the church.
2. **Team Chair:** Tommy Johnson **New Chair:** Julie Tharpe
3. **Contact Info:** (cell) 706-280-7795 Email: jltharpe52@gmail.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - September 5, 2023
5. **Projects Accomplished:**
 - The 2023-24 Budget was reviewed and approved by the team and presented to the Session for approval.
6. **Ongoing Projects:**
 - The team continues to meet as needed to review and discuss church financial information to ensure that funds are being spent and managed properly. The church treasurer provides regular reports to the team. The team's review includes:
 - Review of income
 - Review of expenses
 - Consideration of future expenses
 - Monitoring of any special giving opportunities (i.e. organ fund, hymnals, etc.)
 - Discussion of insurance
 - The team oversees the yearly stewardship campaign, the results of which are used to determine future budgeting.
 - The team reviews and considers on an ongoing basis the financial benchmarks for the church and makes recommendations for any changes to session.
 - Managing the weekly deposit and maintaining procedures for that deposit.
 - Review and consideration of the yearly budget. (December of each year).



*"Feed My Lambs"
- Jesus of Nazareth*



1. **Team Description:** The team is to have as members an active elder and not fewer than six members at large. Its responsibilities are to communicate foreign and domestic mission opportunities to the congregation, to sponsor specific mission projects directly involving the congregation, to encourage the congregation to respond to the needs of the greater church and outside our community, and to try to involve members of the congregation in mission projects “so as to make known the good news of Jesus throughout the world.”

On behalf of the congregation of the Church, the team disbursed almost 100,000 for mission and service projects. This was possible due to our budgeted mission funds, matching funds donations, and additional Matthew 25 funding.

2. **Team Chair:** Alice Ensley
3. **Contact Info:** (Cell) 706-280-2213 Email: ensleyalice@gmail.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - January 11, 2023 • April 12, 2023 • September 20, 2023
 - February 8, 2023 • May 10, 2023 • October 26, 2023
 - March 8, 2023 • August 18, 2023 • November 15, 2023

5. **Projects Accomplished:**

First Presbyterian Church is part of the **Matthew 25 initiative** created by the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) to focus congregations on three pillars of mission:

- I. Building congregational vitality
- II. Dismantling structural racism
- III. Eradicating systemic poverty

This continues to be the focus of our work as we offer grants to local agencies supporting the neediest in our community. Grants were awarded to **Sharing is Caring, the Family Support Council, The Emery Center, The DEO Clinic, the Treatment and Accountability Courts of Whitfield County, DOC Up, Laps for Luis, Life Journey Ministry, Church Women United, The Green House, and the Dalton State Bird Feeder.**

Our church reached out to the youngest members of our community by providing free books to the students at Park Creek Elementary School. Each Friday, **The Book Spot** is open to give students the opportunity to swap and select books to help grow their at-home library. Volunteers also read to students and serve holiday meals at **Friendship House**. Other volunteers participate in **Meals on Wheels** and **Saturday Sacks**. Members continue to **knit hats for the newborns** at Hamilton Medical Center. Under the leadership of Roger Rollins, our congregation provided and served meals to the participants of **Camp AIM**.

Much of our focus in 2024 has been on helping those who find themselves experiencing food insecurity. **Our Little Free Pantry** has been a blessing to both our congregation and those in need. Pantry Pals keep the pantry stocked and it is utilized by our neighbors on a daily basis. In March, we celebrated Fred Rogers birthday with a **Love Your Neighbor Worship service** and in April, a **benefit concert** was held to help raise awareness of and donations for the pantry.

First Presbyterian also provided **Thanksgiving meals** to participants of the Accountability Courts and students at Dalton State College. Those students also received gift cards to help with food over the winter holiday break. Volunteers rang the bell for the **Salvation Army** kettle donations. Finally, our church packed and delivered 80 **food boxes** to 40 families at Park Creek Elementary School and Dawnville Elementary School.

Throughout the year, our congregation also supported efforts to help those in need across the globe whether from natural disaster or conflict. Our donations to the **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance** program reached those in Turkey, Syria, Maui, and Gaza.

Mission and Service Team | 2023

The Mission Team of First Presbyterian is truly grateful for the generosity of our congregation and the blessings we have received. We continue to listen to how God is calling us to serve in the world.

Matthew 25: 40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Mission Giving in 2023	
Sharing is Caring- Christmas in July-2000.00 Sharing is Caring in December-3000.00	5000.00
Family Support Council	500.00
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Turkey and Syria-2000.00 Maui-3000.00 Gaza-3000.00	8000.00
The Emery Center	2500.00
The DEO Clinic	5000.00
Treatment and Accountability Courts Holiday Meal	6000.00
Camp Aim	3000.00
DOC UP	5000.00
Dalton-Whitfield NAACP Juneteenth Celebration	1,050.00
Laps for Luis	1,000.00
Life Journey Ministry	1,000.00
Church Women United	250.00
Dalton State College Bird Feeder Holiday Meal Holiday Gift Cards	2,250.00
The Green House	2000.00
The Little Free Pantry	1500.00
The Book Spot	500.00
Total	44,550

Mission Service Projects and Volunteer Opportunities in 2023
<p>The Book Spot at Park Creek School Little Free Pantry Pal Friendship House Reader Meals on Wheels Saturday Sacks Newborn Hat Knitting Camp AIM Salvation Army Bell Ringing Packing Food Boxes</p>

Mission and Service Team 2023



Staff & Administration Team | 2023

1. **Team Description:** To provide the Session an organized approach in fulfilling its responsibilities to all the staff employed by the church
2. **Team Chair:** Sarah McCown
3. **Contact Info:** (Cell) 706-217-5118 Email: sjmccown@optilink.us
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - January 17, 2023
 - March 28, 2023
 - April 25, 2023
 - September 10, 2023
 - October 8, 2023
 - November 6, 2023
 - November 28, 2023
5. **Projects Accomplished:**
 - Reviewed Staff and Administrative Team section of the Trellis; made recommendations for changes; submitted those changes to Clerk of Session for Session approval
 - Oversaw Interim Music Director and Accompanist
 - Established a Search Committee for the Director of Music position and oversaw the search until hire was made in October 2023
 - Conducted Staff Reviews with Staff for 2023
6. **Ongoing Projects:**
 - Will assist with Pastor Nominating Committee as needed; assess and assist with Staff as needed



1. **Team Description:** To relate our worship life to the total work and witness of our congregation.
2. **Team Chair:** Leanna Granillo
3. **Contact Info:** (Cell) 423-710-5934 Email: leannagranillo@gmail.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - January 29, 2023
 - April 12, 2023
 - November 5, 2023
 - March 12, 2023
 - May 3, 2023
5. **Projects Accomplished:**
 - Provided additional support and planning for worship services with Interim Pastor, Rev. Dr. Ken McKenzie
 - Review and revise Communion procedures to ensure all are included
 - Provided feedback and ideas for particular worship services
 - Assisted in the revisions of the Worship Team Responsibilities in the Trellis
 - Assisted in the planning of Mr. Rogers Day during Worship on 3/19/23, the Sunday closest to Mr. Rogers's birthday.
6. **Ongoing Projects:**
 - Revising the Visitor Cards
 - Revising and updating the checklist for Funeral preparation
 - Working to bring Matthew 25 initiative awareness and practice into our worship
 - Providing ushers/greeters, liturgists, communion preparers, and communion servers
 - Provide flower arrangements for worship
 - Plan for changing of banners and Paraments for appropriate seasons and services
 - Maintaining all candles with liquid wax
 - Maintaining all objects used in worship
 - Maintaining hymnal racks with pens, pencils, cards, fellowship pads
 - Welcoming, introducing and assisting visiting pastors and organists
 - Meeting at least four times a year to plan new tasks and to evaluate worship

Worship Team 2023

