



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH



2024 Annual Report

Letter from the Pastor | 2024

Greetings, friends!

It is that time again, and it is my privilege to invite you to celebrate 2024 as you read through the Annual Report of this congregation. As you think back over the past year of 2024, you may note that I have officially been with you for exactly half of the year, beginning on July 1st. However, my heart and my hopes have been with you since the Fall of 2023, when I first saw that you were looking for a new pastor. I am personally so grateful for the dedication of your Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) – Steve Farrow, Leanna Granillo, James Hoskins, Jodi Johnson, and Julie Tharpe – as they prayerfully discerned God’s call to bring the Jiskoots to Dalton.

In last year’s opening letter to the Annual Report, Interim Pastor Ken McKenzie sensed that his time with you may have been drawing to a close thanks to the work of the PNC. I am so grateful to Ken’s ministry during his time with you. After meeting him and talking with many of you, I know that Ken helped make the transition a smooth one, which is the job of an Interim Pastor, yes, but one that not all pastors (or congregations) handle well. It is a tribute to you all that, as he put it, you were such “dear friends.”

God has, indeed, been at work in this congregation over the past year. You have heard God’s call to Love First, Love All, and you have done so at every opportunity. The connections you have built with each other and with the people of Dalton have had ripple effects throughout the community. The list of partnerships with whom you serve those in need is extensive. Your willingness to volunteer your time and resources is beyond generous. Your hunger for intellectual study and spiritual renewal in worship is encouraging. Your careful attention to the pastoral needs of members and visitors is uplifting. In times of uncertainty, this congregation is a ballast against the storm through the wisdom of our Creator, the passion of our Redeemer, and the strength of our Sustainer.

I would be remiss if I neglected to thank our leadership! You have elected a motivated and capable Session. Their passion and attention to detail has been invaluable as they navigate the ways in which this congregation seeks to be God’s hands and feet in the world, as evidenced in the pages that follow. I offer special thanks to Alice Ensley, Sarah McCown, and Kathryn Sellers, for their three years of service on Session. They ran their race well and have worked diligently in the past few months in helping the new class of elected elders transition into leadership moving forward. Please continue to pray for all those on Session in the coming year as they continue their dedicated work in leading this congregation.

Staff members have also worked tirelessly this past year and have shown endless amounts of patience during my transition into the role of Pastor and Head of Staff. I am especially grateful to Erin Witt, our illustrious Office Manager. If this congregation is a ballast, Erin is the mast and sails that keep our ship moving forward. She has been instrumental in orienting me to the logistics of church operations, often solving hiccups before I knew they existed. Similarly, Hye Jeong Kwon has excelled as our Music Director. The quality of music from Hye Jeong and our talented choir is a huge draw for visitors and members alike at each Sunday service. She is an absolute pleasure to work with as we plan services together. We are also so fortunate to have Ellis Stephens as our livestream and sound technician. Ellis brings an element of professionalism and style to our livestreamed services. Finally, Bjorn Jiskoot, Jr., someone especially close to my heart, has joined the ranks with energy and enthusiasm as the Director of Children and Youth Ministries. His passion for children and education makes him a great fit for our church.

As we thank God for 2024 and all its blessings, we look ahead with faith and hope as we continue to find new ways to Love First, Love All. The Peace of Christ be with you all!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Farrow". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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 2024:**

• Active Members	126	
• Baptisms	1	Flannery Alice Jansen
• Births	1	Palmer Swinney
• Gains by Certificate of Reception	0	
• Affiliate Members*	6	
• Deaths	1	Coy H. Temples
• Loss by Certificate	2	Jane Plunkett and Turner Plunkett

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

5. **Session Members:**

- 2024 Session consisted of two male and seven 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 | 2024

Church Operations

	2024 Budget	2024 Actual	2025 Budget
Income:			
Tithes & Offering	\$ 312,000	\$ 321,024	\$ 312,000
Investments & Other Income	<u>\$ 70,000</u>	<u>\$ 78,632</u>	<u>\$ 72,500</u>
Total Income	\$ 382,000	\$ 399,656	\$ 384,500
Expenses:			
Missions & Benevolences	\$ 53,030	\$ 71,190	\$ 68,030
Pastoral Ministry	\$ 126,570	\$ 103,520	\$ 111,021
Sessional Committees	\$ 17,425	\$ 20,688	\$ 28,800
Music Ministry	\$ 48,760	\$ 37,748	\$ 40,370
Admin & Operations	<u>\$ 136,220</u>	<u>\$ 132,529</u>	<u>\$ 135,980</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 381,985	\$ 365,675	\$ 384,201
Net	\$ 15	\$ 33,981	\$ 299

2024 was a year of transition as Nicole assumed the position of pastor mid-year. Thanks to the Lord's blessings and your generous giving once again our tithes and offerings exceeded the budget. Investment and other income were also more than the budget. Our overall expenses were less than the budget. This resulted in a \$33,981 surplus for the year. For 2024 our mission spending totaled \$86,500 with \$71,190 coming from the operating budget and an additional \$15,310 coming from Designated Accounts.

In the fall we had a successful stewardship season where we received 41 pledges totaling \$286,000 toward the 2025 budget.

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 a little more than a six-month reserve. The reserve is kept in a money market fund and CD's.

Church Operations and Accounts | 2024

Investment Account

The church maintains an investment account at Schwab separate from the operating account and operating reserves. At the end of 2024 this investment account had a value of \$2,116,000 and will provide \$61,000 toward the 2024 church budget. This account has grown nicely over the past several years thanks to favorable market conditions and generous gifts from individuals and estates. The account is managed by the church's Finance Team.

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:** Rob Lively **New Chair:** Leanna Granillo
3. **Contact Info:** (Cell) 423-710-5934 Email: leannagranillo@gmail.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - January 2024
 - May 2024
 - September 2024
 - December 2, 2024
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.
 - Blessing of the Backpacks for all the children and educators.
 - Reformation Sunday with a Bagpipe History during the Sunday School lesson.
 - 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.
 - Hired Bjorn Jiskoot as Director of Children Ministries
6. **Ongoing Projects:**
 - Confirmation Class for 2025
 - Hiring a second nursery worker
 - Young Adult Fellowship Events
 - Ready, Set, Worship Class for children
 - Sunday School for all ages
 - Nursery care available
 - Adult Bible and Book studies offered throughout the week

Christian Education Team | 2024



Congregational Life Team | 2024

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 17, 2024 • April 3, 2024 • September 11, 2024
 - February 18, 2024 • May 8, 2024 • November 6, 2024
 - March 20, 2024 • July 21, 2024
5. **Ongoing Projects and Project Leaders:**
 - Provide Second Sunday Lunch; share leftovers with City of Refuge
 - Shut-ins:
 - Send cards; conduct visits; provided meals as needed for Jean and Dan Strain following her hip surgery and months-long recovery. Deliver Sunday flowers from church service to those needing TLC.
 - Poinsettias delivered at Christmas to shut-ins.
 - Fourth Sunday coffee or lemonade and snacks provided in the Commons or on the porch
 - Provide Brewster's gift cards to young children for Valentines Day
 - Send gift cards or boxed gifts to college students for Valentines Day
 - Ladies' Book Club meets monthly during the school year.
 - Hosted Presbytery in February serving coffee and snacks prior to the meeting and catered lunch at noon
 - Assist in filling eggs for the annual Easter Egg Hunt. Assist as needed with the hunt.
 - Recognized high school graduates, Ian Lively and Alex Andrews and college graduate Amanda Karge with gifts and a reception following the church service in May.
 - Planned and implemented farewell events for Ken and Vickie McKenzie including gifts and the reception.
 - Made plans to welcome our new minister, Nicole Jiskoot and her family who arrived in June. Volunteers were at the church during Nicole's first week to assist in her transition. The team provided food and other assistance to welcome our new pastoral family.
 - Provided help to Sue and Dick Neely in their move to Royal Oaks. Also lent support to them during Sue's recovery from surgery during this same time.
 - Contributed cookies and brownies to Friendship House to assist with their annual Spaghetti Supper fundraiser.
 - Planned dates for decorating the church at the beginning of Advent. Team members and many other volunteers decorated the church and enjoyed our annual pizza lunch afterwards. Removed and stored decorations after Christmas. It was noted that two wreaths need replacing before next Advent.

Congregational Life Team | 2024



Connection Team | 2024

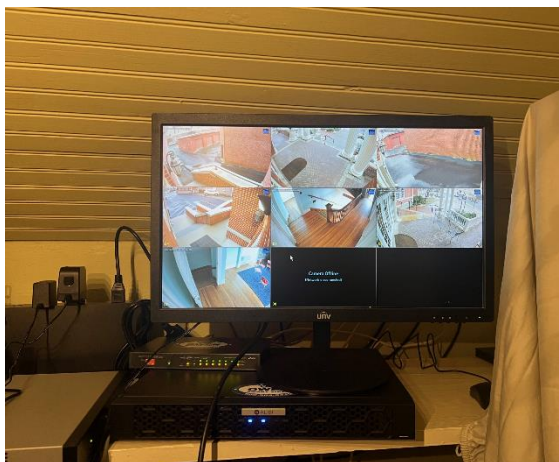
designed and purchased during 2025. A significant budget increase was requested and approved to cover this expense.

- **Selvidge Street Forum:** This project has involved much thought and discussion throughout 2024 under the leadership of Pam Partain. It has been refined to involve “Quarterly programming designed to foster stimulating conversation on topics of broad interest among a community of lifelong learners.” (Pam). The first event will be on January 30th and will feature Dalton State College Associate Professor Jerry Drye discussing the importance of humor in everyday life.
- **General Responsibilities:** We continue to provide proofreading for the Mid-Week News, encourage use of the Tag Board in the Commons and participation in “Presbyterians at the pub”. During 2025 the Team expects to acquire a phone app which will allow mass texting to the congregation for concerns such as



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 **New Chair:** John McPherson
3. **Contact Info:** (cell) 703-216-3663 Email: johnmcp1@me.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - Business conducted by email or when needed
5. **Projects Accomplished:**
 - Continued repairs to equipment/furnishings throughout the buildings
 - Installed carpet runner and railings on Martin house stairs
 - Hearing assist equipment added to the sanctuary
 - Sanctuary Cameras and lights repaired
 - Roof maintenance accomplished, including repairs to cupola and dormers
 - Exterior windows and brick/concrete surfaces cleaned
 - Draperies in Martin cleaned
 - Water leak in parlor repaired including plaster/sheetrock repair
 - Appliances were repaired as needed
 - HVAC units repaired several times
 - New fire extinguishers purchased
 - Light fixtures in Hollis Hall upgraded to LED
 - Typical inspections continued – fire suppression system, elevator, HVAC
 - Exterior pathway lights replaced
 - Surge protector installed for entire buildings
6. **Projects in the planning stages or projects desired:**
 - Continue to replace outdated fluorescent light fixtures with LED fixtures/bulbs.

Facilities Team | 2024



1. **Team Description:** To administer all financial matters of the church.
2. **Team Chair:** Julie Tharpe
3. **Contact Info:** (cell) 706-280-7795 Email: jltharpe52@gmail.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - April 24, 2024
 - August 14, 2024
 - December 3, 2024
5. **Projects Accomplished:**
 - 2025 Budget has been reviewed and approved by the Team and has been presented to the Session with the recommendation that it be approved.
 - The Finance Team reviewed the Charles Schwab account and decided to remain with Charles Schwab based on its performance and investment fees. The Team also recommended that the bond investment accounts be moved to government bond invested in a four-step ladder of \$70,000 bonds maturing at one year interval.
 - The 12-month CD at Bank of the Ozarks has been renewed.
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
 - Efforts are on-going to obtain information concerning the advantages and disadvantages of establishing an endowment.
 - The team oversees the yearly stewardship campaign, the results of which are used to determine future budgeting. The Narrative Budget used with this year's campaign was very informative and well received and helped connect people during this difficult time.
 - 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).



Mission and Service Team | 2024

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 \$86,325.92 for mission and service projects. This was possible due to our budgeted and designated mission funds, special offerings, and additional Matthew 25 funding.

2. **Team Chair:** Alice Ensley **New Chair:** Priscilla Brown
3. **Contact Info:** (Cell) 706-459-8140 Email: priscillahbrown@gmail.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - January 24, 2024 • May 1, 2024 • September 18, 2024
 - February 28, 2024 • July 24, 2024 • October 16, 2024
 - March 27, 2024 • August 21, 2024 • November 20, 2024

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 explore our calling to service. Alice Ensley attended the **Matthew 25 Summit** in Atlanta in order to learn more about the initiative, meet leaders from other Matthew 25 churches and hear inspirational speakers.

Our team offers 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, Life Journey Ministry, Church Women United, The Green House, Dalton State Bird Feeder, CLILA (Coalicion de Lideres Latinos), Books for Change USA, and BLOOM (Building Love On Opportunities and Mission) and the Sewanee Office of Civic Engagement.**

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** to help raise awareness of and donations for the pantry.

Our church volunteers serve our community by reading to students and serving holiday meals at **Friendship House**. Other volunteers participate in **Meals on Wheels** and **Saturday Sacks**. Members continue to knit **hats for newborns** at Hamilton Medical Center. Under the leadership of Roger Rollins, our congregation provided and served meals to the participants of **Camp AIM**. Many of our members attended the **Dalton-Whitfield NAACP Juneteenth Celebration** as representatives of our Mission Team. Many members also began volunteering at **CLILA English Classes** on Saturday mornings. Our **Amigo Day** volunteers provided an opportunity for adults learning English to practice their conversational skills with native speakers.

First Presbyterian provided Thanksgiving meals to the staff and participants of the Treatment and Accountability Courts. Students at **Dalton State College** received gift cards to help with food over the winter holiday break.

Mission and Service Team | 2024

Volunteers rang the bell for the **Salvation Army** kettle donations. Finally, our church packed and delivered 100 food boxes to 50 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** and **Hurricane Helene Relief Efforts** were generous and reflect the giving spirit of our congregation.

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.'

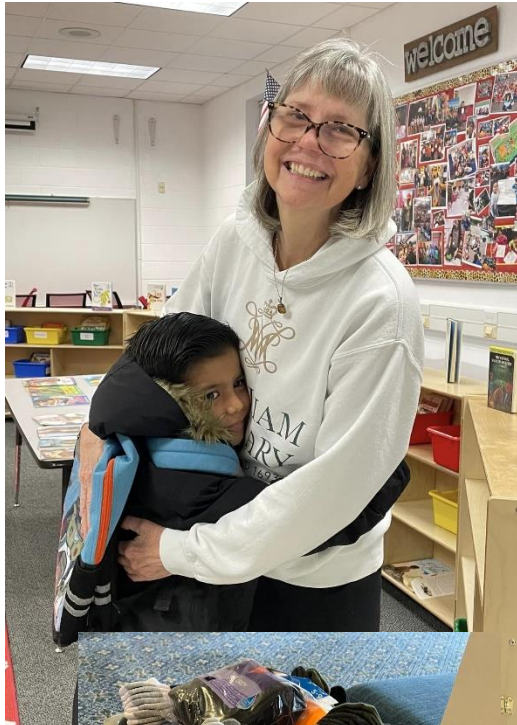
2024 Mission Team Funds and Distributions	
Mission Expenditures	2024
Cherokee Presbytery	\$4,830.00
Pastor Designated	\$512.45
Special Offerings	\$15,894.00
Matthew 25	\$10,709.46
Mission Designated	\$2,254.24
Food Pantry	\$2,437.46
Mission Budget	\$49,688.31
TOTAL	\$86,325.92
Grants and Distributions	2024
Sharing is Caring -Whitfield Family Connections	\$5,000.00
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance	\$8,000.00
The Emery Center	\$3,000.00
The DEO Clinic	\$5,000.00
Treatment and Accountability Courts	\$5,500.00
Mental Health Court Holiday Meal	\$500.00
Camp Aim-Family Support Council	\$3,000.00
DOC UP	\$6,000.00
Dalton-Whitfield NAACP Juneteenth Celebration	\$1,050.00
Life Journey Ministry	\$1,000.00
Church Women United	\$250.00
Dalton State College Bird Feeder	\$1,500.00

Mission and Service Team | 2024

Dalton State College Holiday Meals	\$1,000.00
The Green House	\$2,500.00
Holiday Food Boxes	\$4,000.00
Student Supply Closet at Sewanee Office of Civic Engagement	\$500.00
CLILA-Coalicion de Lideres Latinos	\$4,000.00
Books for Change USA	\$3,000.00
BLOOM-Building Love On Opportunities and Mission	\$3,600.00
Special Offerings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chattanooga Area Food Bank ● Presbyterian Church USA: Joy Offering ● Cherokee Presbytery Hurricane Helene Relief <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Montreat Conference Center ● Beloved Asheville ● Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church ● Swannanoa Valley Christian Relief ● Southern Smoke Foundation ● Southside Community Farm ● Giving Hands of North Georgia 	\$15,894.00
These numbers do not reflect the generous private donations made by members of the congregation.	

Mission Service Projects and Volunteer Opportunities in 2024
Little Free Pantry Pal Friendship House Reader Serving Meals at Friendship House Meals on Wheels Saturday Sacks Newborn Hat Knitting Camp AIM CLILA English Classes and Amigo Day Salvation Army Bell Ringing Packing Holiday Food Boxes

Mission and Service Team | 2024



Staff & Administration Team | 2024

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 **New Chair:** Mike Brown
3. **Contact Info:** (Cell) 706-459-1447 Email: mikeb9896@gmail.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - April 1, 2024
 - April 20, 2024 (email)
 - June 5, 2024
 - June 26, 2024 (email)
 - September 12, 2024 (email)
 - October 2, 2024
 - October 22, 2024 (email)
 - November 15, 2024 (email)
 - November 16, 2024 (email)
 - November 18, 2024 (email)
5. **Projects Accomplished:**
 - Filled the position of Audio/Visual Technician
 - Conducted exit interview with Interim Minister
 - Filled the vacated position of Director of Children's and Youth Ministry following the retirement of Jean Strain
 - Conducted Staff Reviews Feedback meetings with Staff for 2024 – December 19, 2024
6. **Ongoing Projects:**
 - Search for a paid Nursery Worker



1. **Team Description:** To relate our worship life to the total work and witness of our congregation.
2. **Team Chair:** Leanna Granillo **New Chair:** Rob Lively
3. **Contact Info:** (Cell) 706-537-2064 Email: pyc.lively@gmail.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - January 28, 2024 • October 9, 2024
 - August 28, 2024
5. **Projects Accomplished:**
 - Provided additional support and planning for worship services with Interim Pastor, Rev. Dr. Ken McKenzie and then new Pastor, Rev. Nicole Jiskoot
 - Implement and continue to revise Communion procedures to ensure all are included
 - Review and revise Usher instructions to include both a narrative and easier to implement checklist
 - Provided feedback and ideas for particular worship services
 - Reviewed Wedding Policy
 - Assist in planning and gathering additional volunteers for particular services including Reformation Sunday and Lessons and Carols
 - Supported Director of Music in planning the first joint Maundy Thursday Service with Dalton First Methodist Church
 - Revised Visitor Welcome pew cards in conjunction with Connection team
6. **Ongoing Projects:**
 - Updating the checklist for Funeral preparation
 - Working to bring Matthew 25 initiative awareness and practice into our worship
 - Brainstorming new worship experiences to include and providing support for Pastor in implementation of all services as needed or requested.
 - Providing ushers/greeters, liturgists, communion preparers, and communion servers
 - Providing flower arrangements for worship
 - Planning 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 four times a year to plan new tasks and to evaluate Worship

Worship Team | 2024

