

Annual Report 2024



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH OF PITMAN



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2/11/24 FBCOP Annual Business Meeting

Attendance: 22 members present

12:13 Randy opened in prayer

Fran opened the meeting with encouraging the audience to share in celebrations, good news, and praises.

Audience shared about the church growth, the church being outside in the courtyard, the Lighthouse, Fig Leaf, the good volunteers and helpers who make miracles happen, coming out as welcoming and affirming, the activities going, people who would not go to church are here volunteering and serving community. We see vibrancy that breaks down walls and brings Jesus to people. Meals have grown from 25 to 150+ served each meal distribution.

Review Minutes - all were in favor of accepting the minutes from last year with "I-I-I"

Finances and Budget – Paul Bowen shared

Last year budget was \$146,000, we received \$155,000

What worked?

Monthly updates – shared openly and honestly

Open up other options for giving like VENMO and PayPal

Income comes from parsonage rental, Lighthouse rentals, After School Music

This year's budget is \$156,308.30

What does that include?

Includes elevator maintenance, it is out of warranty.

Cost of living increase for Pastor, Secretary and Sextan

Snow removal contract

Utility costs

Ways to Bring in more Money

Ask Lighthouse for increased building usage funds to help offset increased utility usage – currently only \$100 per month

Continue monthly updates

Tap into Casey's knowledge about to bring the need and accessibil-

ity to the congregation & community

Concerns

Snow Removal was difficult with neighbors' vehicles parked on site.

How do we communicate to them when it does snow so that

Motion to approve new budget - Mat motioned, Sara seconded it - All were in favor with "I-I-I"

Other Business Concerns

Asked Fran to continue on leadership for 1 more year – to extend the term, Casey moved and Sara seconded it - All were in favor with "I-I-I"

Paul Bowen is also staying on leadership

We are officially voting on Rachel, Lorien and Matt to be new members on leadership- Jen motioned it, Gabi seconded the motion . All were in favor with "I-I-I"

Jennifer Williamson stayed as financial secretary, Neil stayed on as treasurer, and Tina stayed as Clerk, Paul is the back-up. Sara motioned, Ross seconded it. All were in favor with "I-I-I"

Breaking Leadership into teams

Children's & youth Min - Lorien

Fellowship/ Care – Rachel & Fran

Financial - Paul

Mission & Outreach – Paul, Matt & Fran

Adult Discipleship – Matt

Children's ministry Safety Plan

Written policy keeps our kiddos safe

Children need to be picked up by the guardian, and other safety measures were included in the document to have clear set of standards

Document approval was brought to the floor - Matt motioned, Jen seconded it, all were in favor with "I-I-I"

Matt closed us in prayer.

First Baptist Church
Report of the Church Clerk

January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024

Membership as of January 1, 2024:

- Active: 52
- Inactive: 75

Membership Increases for Year 2024:

- Rachel Cinelli- 1/21
- Rachelle Cinelli- 1/21
- Chris Ferrarie- 1/21
- Crystal Ferrarie- 1/21
- Cameron Crawford- 2/11
- Kacey Crawford- 2/11

Membership Decreases for Year 2024:

- Barbara Quinter
- Ida Williamson
- Len Eckman
- Nancy Armstrong

Membership as of December 31, 2024:

- Active: 54
- Inactive: 50

Respectfully submitted,
Christina Van Osten
Church Clerk

Pastor's Annual Report 2024

Grace and peace to you in the name of the Divine Love,

As I reflect on 2024, I must admit that it was a very challenging year. Personally, it was one of the most difficult years of my life. As a church, it was just as challenging. We struggled with many losses and financial struggles. We had to make extremely tough decisions. It reminds me that Jesus never said that we wouldn't have problems. In fact, Jesus said that we would have tribulation and trials. However, Jesus also told us to not be afraid, to take heart, and promised to be always with us. Amid the struggles, Jesus was present, and God was at work. It is in the valleys where we see the most growth, not the mountaintops. It may not be the growth that we hope for and desire, but the kin-dom of God does not measure success and growth in the same way that we do. It's not about attendance, buildings, and cash or buildings, budgets, and butts in the pew. It all comes down to loving God and loving others as we love ourselves.

We love our community, and we show up for them as much as possible. We are a small church with a BIG heart. In April, we hosted our annual Easter egg hunt and had many families and kids present for the fun event. On June 8th, we hosted Pride in Pitman event for the fourth year in a row and it was the best yet. We had the most people from our church attend the event and create a wall of love when the protestors showed up to spew hatred. It was a beautiful sight to see and witness. During the 4th of July parade, we gave out hundreds of hot dogs, bottled water, lots of popcorn and chips. During the Pitman Santa parade, we gave out lots of hot cocoa and baked goods. People at both parades were so thankful for the love. We hosted our annual backpack giveaway on August 18, giving away over 100 backpacks stuffed with school supplies. Fig Leaf Thrift partnered with us to give out free school clothes to any kids that needed them. On April 14 and on October 27, we did church outside the walls by showing up for our neighbors who needed some yardwork done around their property and helped with the community garden in the Grove. In April, Tina and I played music in the church courtyard as part of Pitman's first Buskerfest. Then in October, Tina and I played music for Pitman's Second Annual PorchFest. We hosted a movie night in October bringing many people to our courtyard to watch Hocus Pocus. It is all about building relationships with those outside the walls of the church and allowing the love of God to flow in and through us.

One of the things that I have had the opportunity to do more this year than in years past is to have conversations with people from the broader community about faith. Even though there are some who want to meet to tell me I am wrong and feel the need to “correct” me, there are others who are hungry for truth, desire to learn and grow, who are trying to hold onto their faith or the pieces of what is left of their faith, and who are seeking healing the hurt and trauma that the church has caused them. Although they may never sit in a pew in this church (or any church on a Sunday), the door was opened again, maybe some healing was experienced.

Our biggest challenge in 2024 was our finances. We have struggled over the years (since I’ve been here and even before) to meet our budget, to bring in the money needed to pay our bills. This was the worst of all the years. Halfway through the year, we were over \$10,000 behind what we needed. Out of this struggle was birthed the idea of a giving day. This was a day where we geared the whole Sunday morning service to celebrate the impact that our tiny church has had on this community by inviting people and organizations to share the impact that this church has had. It was a beautiful time together in the courtyard. Leading up to that day, we invited people to donate to the cause. At this point, we raise around \$17,000 and still have a car (1979 MGB Roadster) to sell. Hopefully in the spring when the weather is nice, people will be into a convertible. There were some other small fundraisers including a lemonade sale, Giving Tuesday, and end of the year giving push on social media. The community showed up and rallied behind our church. Many from the community want to see our church not just survive but continue to thrive. Our community LOVES us. That speaks a lot about who we are. They see the difference we are making and want us to continue to be able to do it. Personally, it was one of the most humbling experiences to ask the broader community for help. It almost felt like I had failed. However, it is a blessing to be able to give and what a blessing so many people received when they donated to the church. They were able to find joy and purpose in helping a community of faith that loves their community.

Since we were struggling financially and AfterSchool Music had to find a new home (zoning problems), Leadership and I had to make the extremely difficult decision of letting Julie-Ann Whitely Green go at the end of 2024. Julie-Ann has blessed our congregation over the years with her beautiful voice, her amazing musical skills, her heart for Jesus, and her desire to honor and bless God with her music. She will be missed. We pray that she finds another community of faith where she can use her gifts, talents, and heart

to make a joyful noise to the Lord.

This is the third full year of The Lighthouse Community Center. Fig Leaf Thrift, our pay as you can thrift shop, continued to be open four days a week (plus the first Sunday after brunch church and fourth Fridays) providing clothing, housewares and more for a reasonable price. The money raised from those sales went back into the community. Throughout the year, we continued to provide a place where people could shop for free with dignity for whatever needs they had. We continue to have connections with local addiction rehab facilities including Maryville, Gloucester County Department of Children and Family Services, Division of Social Services, and other non-profit organizations who regularly send people in need our way so that we can help provide clothing, housewares, and more for them. Fig Leaf Thrift is also known in the community, so people are starting to spread the word that if someone has a need, they can come to Fig Leaf Thrift. It is a rare occurrence to not have multiple customers when we are open. Katy Hoh is our amazing volunteer manager and has an awesome group of volunteers who put their hearts into this work. Fig Leaf Thrift hosted its second annual fashion show. The free toy event on the Saturday before Christmas was a huge success, helping parents and guardians provide presents for their 200+ kids. They have hosted other events and continue to bring more and more people into the store and raise more money for the work The Lighthouse Community Center does.

The free hot meal distribution continues to grow. We had to put a cap on the number of meals and turn the Google Form off many times over the year, because we can only handle so many meals. Towards the end of 2024, we were averaging between 230 and 240 meals. Food insecurity is on the rise. We are continuing to have problems with having enough volunteers but ended the year having more than enough volunteers. We will continue to provide delicious, nutritious meals to those who need them. If you have not joined us in the kitchen in 2024 or helped in some way, now is the time. Nothing should be holding you back.

Our youth center continues to offer a safe haven for the youth in our community. For most of the year, we were still able to offer the Rainbow Room a safe space for LGBTQIA+ teens and young adults in the community. However, it ended in September when the leader “retired” from this position as they graduated from college. Dungeons and Dragons, a role playing game, continues to happen at least once a month with dedicated dungeon masters who create amazing campaigns for the interested kids. Weekly, we

host a pop-in night where kids can hang out, eat snacks, create art, play games, and talk. We are really hoping in the new year to create an after-school program even if it is only one day a week. We are still trying to spread the word about what we are doing, so that we can reach more kids. In time, we hope to add more activities, events, and programs for the youth.

Nothing that I have shared thus far would have been done without the time, effort, and support of volunteers. Even though we are not a big group, we accomplish many things. There are committed volunteers who want to love God and others through serving our church and community. They spend countless hours helping in different capacities. Thank you! You are all rock stars!

2025 is full of lots of opportunities. I am excited for what lies ahead. As long as we continue to listen for the Divine Love to lead us, love God with all that we are, and love others as we love ourselves, there will be great things in store. I am not naïve enough to believe that we will not have any problems or challenges. However, I believe that Jesus is with us and will continue to provide. Let's continue to pour ourselves and our love into our community of faith and the broader community. Continue to pray for the church, the community, and each other. Then ask yourself this question, "what part can I play in this?"

Much peace and love,

Rev. Randy Van Osten



Moderator Report January, 2024

Fran Yearwood

This past year, 2024, was a busy year for First Baptist living out our mission to love and serve others sharing God's love everywhere and with everyone. First, we are extremely thankful for our pastor, Randy Van Osten and his leadership. His love of the Lord, prayer power and teaching of biblical truths make our spiritual lives and connections stronger and authentic. Pastor Randy has a high energy level that allows him to not only do pastoral work but shoveling snow, maintenance, cooking, cleaning and of course coffee making just to mention a few things that stretch him thin. Whatever it takes to keep us going is what you will find Randy doing. Thank you, Pastor Randy!

We have also lived out our mission to be a welcoming and affirming church family that provides a safe and comfortable pace for all to worship and serve. We are proud of this philosophy and enjoy a great relationship with the Pride Alliance in Pitman.

We believe in serving our community! Once a quarter, we do not have a worship service but work outside our walls—visiting shut-ins, raking leaves for neighbors or other helpful tasks. We continue to offer refreshments at the Fourth of July parade and the Christmas parade. Our Back Pack Drive in partnership with two businesses, gave out over 100 back packs this year.

Our partnership with Lighthouse helps us extend our work deeper into the community. Fig Leaf Thrift, Free Hot Meal Distribution and the Youth Center are vibrant parts of Lighthouse and First Baptist. We have many community members who work with these programs and volunteer many hours. Thank you to all who work in the Lighthouse projects.

We do need prayer as we go into 2025. We had to make a change to our music ministry as we could no longer afford our dear friend, Julie Ann. Thank you to everyone that is willing to help with our worship through music. Please join us in prayer for God's guidance on growing our membership/ attendance, financial security, spiritual growth of our members and friends, new ways to serve our community, and caring for our aging building.

Thank you to each of you who give your time and talents to our church family. We have an amazing group of folks who love the Lord!

Fran Yearwood



2024 Music Ministry Annual Report

The music ministry burst with growth this year. Performing two cantatas, one for Easter and one for Christmas, as well as incorporating various instruments and singers. When needed, we found new voices to stand in when Julie-Ann needed respite.

Unfortunately, this year we also had to release Julie-Ann from her contract due to budgetary concerns. Her myriad contributions during her tenure are very much appreciated and will be sorely missed.

With Julie-Ann's absence, a new team has been formed to manage the worship music. Please keep this team in your prayers as we find our footing.

Submitted by Gabrielle Bowen on behalf of the Music Ministry Team



Children's Ministry Report

The past year in the Children's Ministry has been another one of growth and change. The number of older children we're serving has decreased, while the number of younger children has increased. Praise God, the number of dedicated volunteers we can call on has increased as well.

The new curriculum has been working out well, and even being included in Lovefeast days.

New leadership for our Children's Ministry has stepped up and implemented safety policies in safe and effective ways.

Again, praise God for our growth, and pray that we remain mindful in how we manage it.

Submitted by Gabrielle Bowen on behalf of the Children's Ministry Leadership Team



	Proposed 2025
BUILDING & OFFICE	
Utilities/Fuel	\$18,500.00
Atlantic City Electric	
South Jersey Gas	
Verizon	
Hartford Steam Boiler	
Borough of Pitman Water/Sewer	
7 Oil Co/Fuel	
Maint/Repairs	\$9,500.00
Zack's Termite	
Briggs Security	
C&Z Fire	
State NJ - Lift & Boiler	
Snow removal	
Contracted Maintenance Electric	
Line Of Credit (LOC) Payments	\$3,000.00
**Still Owe ~\$5,000	
Insurance	\$15,000.00
Office supplies	\$500.00
Website	\$500.00
Bank fees	\$132.00
Total Building/Office	\$47,132.00
CHURCH STAFF	
Pastor Salary	\$30,575.00
Pastor Housing Allowance	\$31,926.02
Pastor's MMBB	\$2,400.00
Pastor Expense Acct.	\$2,500.00
Social Security Offset	\$5,078.36
Secretary Salary	\$3,576.98
Custodian Salary	\$5,314.55
WT, SS, Medicare	\$1,840.00
Total Church Staff	\$83,210.91
** Pastor Secretary, and Custodian 3% COLA Raise	
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY	
Curriculum & Supplies	\$1,000.00
Youth activities	\$1,000.00
Total Children's Ministry	\$2,000.00
WORSHIP	
Music	\$0.00
Honorariums	\$0.00

Copy Right License	\$350.00
Sanctuary Décor	\$0.00
Total Worship	\$350.00
FELLOWSHIP	
Supplies/Paper products	\$150.00
Total Fellowship	\$150.00
DISCIPLESHIP	
Leadership Development	\$0.00
small groups/book studies	\$500.00
workshops/seminars	\$0.00
publications	\$0.00
Total Discipleship	\$500.00
CHURCH ORGINIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP	
ABC-NJ	\$1,000.00
Pitman Council of Churches	\$200.00
Greater Delaware Valley Assoc	\$200.00
Total Church Org Membership	\$1,400.00
MISSIONS	\$5,782.22
** 5% of the 2024 Tithes and Offerings	
Mission ICP	
Urban Promise	
Life in Abundance	
For Dignity	
Family Promise	
Total Mission	\$5,782.22
2025 Total Budget	\$140,525.13
2024 Total Budget	\$149,475.56
2025-2024 Variance	-\$8,950.43