

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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2026 Annual Meeting

Christ Church, Middletown

in the

Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey

in the 325th Year of Founding

Sunday, January 25, 2026 9:00 am

- AGENDA -

Call to Order and Invocation.....	The Rev. Dr. Cathy Bickerton
Submission of the 2025 Annual Meeting Minutes	Betty Truscott Warden
Warden's Report	Betty Truscott Warden
2026 Homecoming/Open House.....	Tom Warren Warden
2025 Financial Report and 2026 Budget Presentation.....	Joseph McDonnell Vestryperson, Finance
Nominating Committee Report	Betty Truscott Warden
Recognition of Retiring Office Holders.....	Betty Truscott Warden
Call to Adjourn – Benediction	The Rev. Dr. Cathy Bickerton

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Parish Organization Leadership

- 2025 -

Church Wardens, Officers, and Vestry:

Church Wardens: Betty Truscott, Tom Warren
Church Officers: Cathy O'Flynn, Treasurer
Vicki Schmelzer, Vestry Clerk
Vestry: John Bailey, Linda Barth, Theresa Blackburn-Tuttle, Steven Grieshaber
Cindy McCormack, Joseph McDonnell, Vicki Schmelzer
Vestry Recorder: Stephen Kruff

Staff:

Clergy: The Rev. Dr. Cathy Bickerton, Priest in Charge
Parish Administrator and
Director of Children's Formation: Christine Stockhausen-Butler
Director of Music/Organist: John Balme
Bookkeeper: Trish Thurman
Sexton: Tom Dolly
Maintenance: Jean Lynch

Vestry:

Buildings and Grounds

Vestry Chair: Steve Grieshaber

Christian Formation

Vestry Chair: John Bailey; Tuesday Bible Study: Women of Christ Church; Director of Families and Youth: Christine Stockhausen-Butler; Youth Group: Cynthia McCormack

Communications

Vestry Chair: Vicki Schmelzer

Finance Administration

Vestry Chair: Joseph McDonnell; Pledge Treasurer: Kristin Sparaco; Bookkeeper: Trish Thurman

In reach

Vestry Chair: Theresa Blackburn-Tuttle

Outreach

Vestry Chair: Cynthia McCormack; Annual CROP Walk: Cynthia McCormack & Jennifer Nikolakos

Stewardship

Vestry Chair: Linda Barth

Worship

Acolytes: Linda Barth, George Speidel, Co-directors; Altar Guild: Erna Sottile, Pauline Dawson, Co-directors; Greeters: Ronnie Warren, Scheduling Coordinator; Lectors and Intercessors: Marty Truscott, Scheduling Coordinator; Director of Music/Organist: John Balme; Ushers: Neil Grootenboer, Scheduling Coordinator

Diocesan Convention Delegates:

Robyn Gerin
Michael Cummings
Theresa Blackburn- Tuttle

Diocesan Convention alternates:

Barbara Garrity
Christine Stockhausen-Butler
Linda Barth

Monmouth Convocation Delegates:

Jennifer Nikolakos
Janet Chaballa
Joyce Wright

2025 Annual Meeting Minutes

Jan 26, 2025

324th Annual Church Meeting

The Annual Meeting was called to order at 9:02 am. The Reverend Dr. Cathy Bickerton opened the meeting with prayer. George Speidel followed with our traditional opening joke – this year two jokes.

We took care of an administrative request at the outset. Christine Stockhausen-Butler will be updating our church directory and requested that all send her name, address, cell phone, birth/anniversary dates so that she can update Church Windows (the source document for the directory).

The first order of business was to review the minutes from the 2024 Annual Meeting. No changes were needed. A motion to accept the minutes as presented was made by Don Kovalevich and was seconded by Lauren Badal. Motion passed unanimously.

Betty urged all to read the Annual Report as reference of activities over the past year and for a sense of how the church is governed. In lieu of the Warden's Report, Betty presented an update on the Priest Search. Vestry wardens and Reverend Cathy met with the Bishop last Thursday (January 23) – we had some distractions in 2024 but, 2025 is a new year and a new beginning. Focus is on finding the right clergy partner, that is a priority with the appropriate level of attention to our finances which continue

to be a challenge. We have a sense of optimism that we will be able to move forward more quickly in the new year.

Betty then moved the discussion to the proposed amendment to our bylaws.

MOTION presented by Betty Truscott:

Whereby the current By-Laws of Christ Church Episcopal Middletown stipulate the following:

ARTICLE III, Section II: The qualified voters present at said Annual Meeting shall elect, by written ballot, from among qualified voters in the parish, by a majority of votes cast, one of **two Wardens** to serve a two-year term, and three of **nine Vestrypersons** each to serve three-year terms.

On this day, January 26, 2025 at the Annual Meeting of this congregation, provide for these updates:

ARTICLE III, Section II: The qualified voters present at said Annual Meeting shall elect, by written ballot, from among qualified voters in the parish, by a majority of votes cast, one of **two Wardens** to serve a two-year term, and two of **six Vestrypersons** each to serve three-year terms.

Furthermore, **Article IV, clause 1** shall be updated:

1. A Nominating Committee shall be formed at Vestry's October meeting consisting of the non-retiring Warden as chairperson, and the **two** retiring Vestrypersons, or such other Vestrypersons as the Vestry may wish to substitute, provided that the number of members of the Committee shall not exceed **four (4)**.

Don Kovalevich moved to accept the motion; Jennifer Nikolakos seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

At this point, Steve Grieshaber introduced his intention to create another standing committee which would sit under Buildings and Grounds. He would like to establish a committee focused on the old church and asked for volunteers. Vicki Schmelzer added that she is working with the DAR on repairs to the cemetery and John Bailey pointed out other historical significance. Cindy McCormack suggested that Steve explore community interest as the church is an important landmark in our colonial history.

At this point, Cathy O'Flynn presented the 2024 financial summary and 2025 projections both of which had been presented and discussed at the January 19 meeting focusing on this topic. In light of the detailed discussion already on record, she presented that we will end 2024 with a slight surplus due to staffing issues. Additionally, the 2025 plan may be slightly overstated as we planned for a PIC as of the first of the year – this was to illustrate what a full year with this vacancy filled might look like. As long as the vacancy remains unfilled, we will realize a small budget surplus monthly (that surplus to be confined to PIC-related expenses lines). As there were no further questions, we moved to reporting from the Nomination Committee.

The Nominating Committee, comprised of Cindy McCormack, Cathy O'Flynn, Trish Thurman and Betty

Truscott presented the following slate for vestry positions:

For Vestry:

Warden (2 yr) – Elizabeth Truscott

Finance (3 yr) – Joseph McDonnell

Outreach (3 yr) – Cynthia McCormack

Additional nominations from the floor were sought. There being none, Don Kovalevich made a motion to accept the slate by acclamation. Clint Badal seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Diocesan Convention delegates: All nominations from the floor:

Robyn Gerin

Michael Cummings

Theresa Blackburn- Tuttle

Diocesan Convention alternates: All nominations from the floor:

Barbara Garrity

Christine Stockhausen-Butler

Linda Barth

Don Kovalevich made a motion to accept the slate by acclamation. Elias Nikolakos seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Monmouth Convocation delegates: All nominations from the floor:

Jennifer Nikolakos

Janet Chaballa

Joyce Wright

Don Kovalevich made a motion to accept the slate by acclamation. Lauren Badal seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolutions of appreciation were presented for the retiring vestry members Trish Thurman and Cathy O’Flynn.

A motion to adjourn in advance of closing prayer was requested. Mary Hasler made the motion, and Don Kovalevich seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Reverend Dr. Cathy Bickerton lead us in closing prayer, Meeting adjourned 9:41 am.

Priest-in-Charge Report

Dr. Reverend Cathy Bickerton

In June 2025, Bishop Sally French approved Christ Church's and my decision to become THE Priest in Charge rather than the Acting Priest in Charge. As I have said before, becoming the Priest in Charge at Christ Church is the fulfillment of a hope of over fifty years. This was the ministry I was educated for in seminary. This was the ministry I had grown up loving. But, my path led elsewhere. Now it feels as though I am doing what God called me to do so many, many years ago.

After the announcement of my appointment to the role of Priest in Charge, I was given a beautiful afghan knitted by the Members of the Prayer Shawl Ministry. It is a blanket of many colors and I LOVE IT!!! I love it, in part, because it represents my ministry here at Christ Church. The vibrant colors represent the people I've come to know more deeply because I am your priest. Many years ago, I prayed to see the face of Jesus. As you know, there are many representations of Jesus in art from around the world. But I desperately wanted to see the REAL face of Jesus. I prayed and prayed. And my prayer was finally answered. I saw the face of Jesus in face-after-face-after-face of people I knew. The faces scrolled through my mind, and I knew I was truly seeing our Lord. Now I see Jesus every time I look out at the congregation on Sunday morning. You may see me smiling sometimes. It's because of the joy I feel seeing YOU, each of you, being present and bringing into my mind the presence of our Lord.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of ministering to you. And thank you for all the love and care you give to me. I pray we may continue to "walk in love as Christ loves us" and work toward the healing of the world.

Submitted by the Rev. Dr. Cathy Bickerton, Priest in Charge

Church Wardens' Report

Betty Truscott, Tom Warren

2025. Another year of shared joy, celebrations, health challenges, loss, and moments of sadness. Another year of what we do so well, reaching out to our community, building fellowship, holding one another up on the good days and bad and being good stewards of our buildings and countless blessings.

Please, please take the time to read the portfolio reports that have been submitted by our vestry persons. They each are passionate about what they do, and they do their jobs with a deep commitment to Christ Church. Your reading and recognition of the summary of their work is the best way we can think of to thank them for all that they do.

As for us, it has been a topsy turvy year – fretting over the priest situation to the release of much anxiety when Cathy stepped up to be our priest. Her ministry perhaps tops the list of our many gifts this year. We are so grateful for her service and dedication to Christ Church and while we all got to take a deep breath of relief, her contracted service runs through May of 2028 so it's got to be a quick breath and then we must turn to focus on planning for our future. There is more to talk about on that

front - we will talk about it at the Annual Meeting – then we can gauge your reaction, and you can ask questions in the moment.

And with that, we shall conclude but please know how very much we treasure your faces, your kindness, patience, forgiveness, warm embrace and from time to time, a little bit of spice.

PARISH STATISTICS					
At Year End:	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
Members Active/Inactive	**	288 active	269/662	268/654	268/661
Households Active/Inactive	107/	120 active	124	125	124
Church School Enrollment	**	32	28	15	15
<i>*The church database was purged.</i>					
<i>**This data is unavailable due to the pandemic.</i>					
NOTE: 2022 data is estimated subject to upcoming audit of Church membership database					
For Full Year:					
Pledging Units	82	72	75	72	70
Total Active Households Pledging (%)	77%	60%	60%	58%	56%
Total Pledged (\$)	\$ 268,532	\$ 263,094	\$ 266,367	\$ 264,632	\$ 280,580
Mid Year Fill the Gap (35 pledges)		\$ 32,030	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total Received (\$)	\$ 267,632	\$ 301,367	\$ 265,512	\$ 261,685	\$ 272,952
Pledge \$ Received (%)	100%	102%	99.7%	98.9%	97.3%
<i>**This data is unavailable due to the pandemic.</i>					
For the Year:					
Baptism	6	7	9	7	9
Confirmed/Received	11	0	0	7	0
Marriages	2	3	0	1	0
Burials	6	12	0	5	7
Membership Increase *		6	14	10	3
Membership Decrease *		3	11	2	3
Average Sat/Sun Attendance (in person)	**	75	74	74	87
<i>**This data is unavailable due to the pandemic.</i>					
2024 member data reflects audit completed in Jan 2024					

Building & Grounds - Steven Grieshaber

- Installed emergency lighting and signage throughout the church property as required by Middletown Fire Department.
- Cut back the overhanging trees behind the church property in preparation for gutter cleaning and gutter guards.
- Cleaned out church and historic church gutters. Installed gutter guards.

- Very successful fall clean-up day.
- Installed a new fire suppression system in the kitchen as required by the Middletown Fire Department. The old system was obsolete and required replacement.
- Cut down 5 trees in the cemetery which were deemed a threat to the Historic Church and neighboring properties.
- Installed new lights around the church property. Areas included the office entrance sidewalk, main church entrance veranda, the steps to the parking area across the street and rear entrance to the building (rear entrance to the kitchen, handicapped entrance and entrance to the boiler room).

[Christian Formation – John Bailey](#)

CHRISTIAN FORMATION FOR YOUTH

Following a short hiatus after the Fall 2024 Confirmation, Youth Formation began in March of 2025. We started quietly during Lent with classes meeting at 9:00 in the church library, following a teen version of the Episcopal program “Lenten Madness”. We helped at the Mardi Gras Pancake Breakfast, filled eggs and made bags for the Easter Egg Hunt. We celebrated all the fathers in the parish by hosting a special Father’s Day coffee hour and once again helped with Christmas in July. Later in the fall, Christ Church youth and families, with the help of a very generous parish, raised over \$4,000 for the Red Bank CROP Walk and delivered multiple carloads of food to CROP. At the end of the year, our youth assisted with both holiday gatherings and as spirited server “elves” for the parish Advent Spaghetti Supper. Special thanks to Rev. Cathy and Maggie DeGroat for their leadership and our youth, and their families for always stepping up to volunteer and serve.

– Cynthia McCormack

CHRISTIAN FORMATION FOR CHILDREN

The lessons of this year cover the story of how we become God’s people and part of the household of God, the Communion of Saints. The theme is Once we were no people, but now we are God’s people. The New Testament lessons focus on the Gospel of John, with its stories of the encounters of individuals with Jesus and their transformation in the light of his love. Later lessons will focus on the “Easter people,” the saints in the Church up to the present time.

– Christine Stockhausen-Butler

KNIGHTS OF PANERA MEN’S GROUP

The Men’s Group has seen an increase in regular attendance in 2025. The venue is Panera Bread in Kohl’s Plaza, Middletown which creates opportunities for “observers” most of which are non-Church members. These Panera Bread “regulars” will occasionally get involved from a distance. All are welcome!

We implemented a system of rotating discussion leaders. As such, topics and perspectives vary. Discussions are centered around spiritual and religious themes but are not limited to these topics.



– John Bailey

ADULT CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Most notably in 2025, we read and discussed a book about forgiving others and humbly asking for forgiveness ourselves, both central disciplines for all Christian believers. *Forgiveness: A Lenten Study* by Marjorie J. Thompson was read during Lent, an appropriate time to deepen our understanding and practice of forgiveness.

WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDY GROUP

We read together various books, including *Forgiveness: A Lenten Study* as well as *Soul Feast*, also by Marjorie J. Thompson.

– Rev. Cathy Bickerton

Communications - Vicki Schmelzer

Each week, the 10 am Sunday service was live streamed on Facebook and later posted on Christ Church’s YouTube channel. We now have over 50 subscribers on YouTube, so we can live-stream there as well as on Facebook. Both platforms have seen increased viewership in the past year.

Pictures were taken at various events (the Easter Egg hunt, Christmas in July, Crop Walk, Ladies Luncheon and the annual Spaghetti Dinner in December) and later posted on Facebook and/or used in the quarterly *Crier*. Christine Stockhausen was a great help in posting pictures and creating posts/events on Facebook.

In April, the Middletown DAR instructed Christ Church members and friends on how to safely clean the gravestones in the historic cemetery, where four known Patriots are buried.

For the second year, in 2025 Christ Church took part in the “Weekend in Old Monmouth” celebration of historic Monmouth County sites. In 2026, the church plans to again be part of this special weekend. Christ Church is working with the Middletown DAR and the Middletown Landmarks Commission in planning for other events related to the U.S. 250-year anniversary in 2026.

Communications works closely with the Finance Committee Chair to update the master Excel sheet of on-line logins for Christ Church utilities and services. Having an updated centralized list of providers makes it easier to access these portals when there is an issue.

Late in 2025, our IT gurus Clint Badal and Mark Ahearn began working on upgrading our audio and visual systems. They have spent myriad hours getting rid of old equipment, running wires and testing new cameras. We hope to have the work finished by the end of February. As a temporary fix, they recommended, and we purchased, a separate lapel mic for Rev. Cathy Bickerton to use so that viewers at home can hear the service more clearly.

[Finance – Joe McDonnell](#)

We continued to ensure diligent oversight over Christ Church finances. We are supported by Treasurer Cathy O’Flynn, Bookkeeper Trish Thurman and Pledge Treasurer Kristin Sparaco – they are each commended for their collective attention to their responsibilities and the control processes in place. Thanks also to the members of the Finance Committee, Stephen Krufft, Cathy O’Flynn, Vicki Schmelzer, Herb Spaulding, Betty Truscott and Drew Wilson.

Appreciation is also extended to the current Audit Committee, chaired by Paul Dawson and supported by Barbara Garrity and Marty Truscott.

In 2025, the following documents were developed, and policies updated to comply with Christ Church process enhancements and audit recommendations:

- Documentation specifically citing and defining the roles and responsibilities of finance staff – specifically Bookkeeper, Treasurer, Pledge Treasurer and Finance Vestryperson.
- A new liaison role for Fundraising efforts has been drafted and is under review.
- A process governing Capital Campaign check requisitions (and accompanying form) was documented and approved.
- Updates to the Policy governing Gift Acknowledgement have been drafted and will be presented to Vestry for approval

The following policies were updated and presented to the Vestry for approval (all have been approved):

- Policy 8.0 – Access to Various Platforms updated to align with the formally defined roles and responsibilities of finance staff as noted above.
- Policy 9.0 – Disbursements from the RDF was updated to include a form designed to capture all confidential information requirements (note: this form is accessed only by the PIC and the sole resource responsible for account reconciliation).
- Policy 10.0 – Investment Policy updated to address disbursement of non-cash donations and gifts (this is in response to an audit finding).

FUND RAISING

Janet and Kate Chaballa and their army of volunteers and Barbara Garrity and Karen Peck and their dedicated band of skillful bakers have done it again. The annual Rummage Sale and Heavenly Bake Shop was our primary fundraiser of the year, raising over \$7000 for our General Fund. This is an event with a months-long ramp up as treasures are collected, juried, sometimes cleaned, and all priced for sale. The same holds true for baking – I know my kitchen becomes a sea of softening butter, flour and sugar in the days leading up to the sale as I scour files and internet for just the “right” recipes. For me one of the most rewarding sights to behold is on the actual days of the sale – I am sure virtually every Christ Church member makes an appearance, sometimes to shop, perhaps to nibble, but more often to work side by side. We may end the two days exhausted, but hearts are full of joy and accomplishment. Many thanks to our organizers for this and more.

Another important fundraiser this year – and one that fills our bellies – is the fancy dinner. Headed by head chef Jim Murphy and a few deputized sous chefs and other willing hands, this is a wonderful meal that raises us a couple of bucks but more than that, provides yet another opportunity for fellowship and camaraderie.

– Betty Truscott

Inreach – Theresa Tuttle

Transportation Service

The Inreach team volunteers drove parishioners to church, to medical appointments, to dentist appointments, to vet appointments and to ladies’ lunches. Many thanks to all our drivers: Lauren Badal, Barbara Garrity, Jeanne and Steve Grieshaber, Maria Kerfoot, Cindy McCormack, Peggy and Sarah Noecker, Cathy O’Flynn, Pat Robertson, Christine Stockhausen-Butler, Erna Sottile, and Joyce Wright.

Soup Ministry

Our Inreach team cooked many meals last year. Many thanks to all our Inreach volunteers who cooked soup, meals and baked goods for parishioners who were recovering from illnesses or homebound. Special thanks to Sarah Noecker cooking large quantities of delicious soup and other meals for parishioners. Many thanks also to Christine Stockhausen and Sue Murphy for cooking or baking for sick parishioners and to Linda Barth for delivering that food.

Card Writing Ministry

Our Inreach team wrote many cards last year to show support to our parishioners. Whether parishioners had moved away and were missing their church family, or someone had experienced a loss in the family or other challenge, we sent out cards to let people know their church family was thinking of them. Many thanks to all our Inreach volunteers who wrote cards and letters to parishioners last year. Thank you to Lauren Badal, Judy Forys, Barbara Garrity, Jeanne and Steve Grieshaber, Judy Kelso, Maria Kerfoot, Cindy McCormack, Sue Murphy, Jennifer Nikolakos, Peggy and Sarah Noecker, Cathy O'Flynn, Pat Robertson, Melinda Rudnicki, Kristen Sparaco, Christine Stockhausen-Butler, Erna Sottile, and Trish Thurman, and Ronnie and Tom Warren, Joyce Wright.

Flower Ministry

In the fall, our Inreach team began to deliver altar flowers to parishioners. Many thanks to Cathy O'Flynn and Betty Truscott for delivering these beautiful bouquets to homebound parishioners or to parishioners celebrating a special occasion.

Outreach – Cynthia McCormack

Outreach at Christ Church attempts to live out the Gospel's message of loving our neighbor by serving those here in Monmouth County and around the world. Led by a dedicated Committee of dozens of church members, we organize projects for parish involvement based on the current needs of the community, determine disbursement of Outreach funds, sponsor fundraising events, and provide the Annual Meeting continental breakfast. In 2025, the committee was busy spreading God's love into the greater community. Some highlights of the year:

- As a member of the Community Outreach Group (COG), our members serve on the board, help to staff the Calico Cat Thrift Shop and Pantry, organize a Household Goods Drive, provide clothing and school supplies through COG's Back to School Drive, and periodically collect food and other essential items for the Pantry.
- Forty-four total blood products were collected at a January 2025 American Red Cross Blood Drive held at Christ Church. Four boxes of sample size toiletries were donated to the Seamen's Church Institute for mariners who are miles away from home.
- Staffed by a number of volunteer teams, cooking and serving meals at St. Mark's Center for Community Renewal in Keansburg continues to be a core ministry for Christ Church members.

Support is also given to St. Mark's through shopping for groceries not supplied to them by larger food banks.

- Our Lenten Alms Campaign sent \$2,701 to Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD), Gifts for Life campaign. Gifts this year focused on Disaster and Emergency Food Relief Kits. The parish also sent relief funding through ERD for the LA Wildfires, Texas Floods, and Hurricane Melissa.
- The Thanksgiving Ingathering provided 40+ boxes of food to St. Mark's. The Christmas Ingathering furnished three carloads of toys for the children of St. Mark's. Some of these were collected during Christmas in July, celebrated mid-summer with beautiful Christmas music from our Christ Church Choir and a very festive Coffee Hour.
- The Prayer Shawl Ministry lovingly distributed 37 items in 2025: including shawls, afghans, and baby blankets. They distributed fourteen to the Care One Nursing Home. The group also started a Crochet Club for all ages. Judy Kelso "retired" as coordinator and was recognized for her leadership of the group in November.
- Four Coffee Sales netted the Outreach Committee over \$1,100 in 2025. Thanks to all who supported our work through your purchases from a great local business, Jersey Shore Coffee Roasters. And special thanks to Erna Sottile, for her tireless work making these sales so successful.

In 2025, Outreach made the following annual financial contributions to: St. Mark's Center for Community Renewal - \$1,000, COG - \$1,000, Aslan Youth Ministry - \$1,000, CROP Walk - \$300, Westside Food Pantry - (Dean Henry SW Harbor, ME) - \$300, Fairview First Aid - \$75, Old Village Fire Company - \$75.

The Outreach Committee is funded and supported through the generosity of our parish. Specifically, we receive our funding from the Outreach portion of the annual church budget (\$3,000), our quarterly coffee sales, and parishioner donations throughout the year. We give thanks to God for all who faithfully give their time, talent, and treasure in service to our brothers and sisters, both here and throughout the world.

[Crop Walk 2025](#) - *Cindy McCormack and Jennifer Nikolakos*

On October 19th, Christ Church continued to show its support for the Red Bank CROP Walk. On a beautiful autumn day, after a fall-themed coffee hour, we transported two carloads of food to the 45th Annual Red Bank CROP Walk. About 20 parishioners, representing three generations of Christ Church members, enjoyed a 5 mile walk through Red Bank. With the help of a very generous parish and our family and friends, we raised \$4,035 for CWS and our local partners in the Red Bank Area. Special thanks to Theresa Tuttle for her dedication to the RB CROP Walk FB page, and Christine Stockhausen for always stepping up to help. The Red Bank Walk is one of the largest CROP Walks in the nation and in 2025 raised over \$140,000 and collected 15,000 lbs. of food.

Community Outreach Group (COG) – Marty Truscott

Christ Church is one of the founding members of the Community Outreach Group, referred to as “COG.” The Community Outreach Group (COG) is an ecumenical and interfaith organization which offers “outreach, support and hope” to those in need in northern Monmouth County with a food pantry, emergency financial assistance and operation of the Calico Cat thrift shop. It is a 40+-year-old organization comprised of 12 participating congregations in northern Monmouth County including Christ Church. A Board of Trustees oversees all activities and meets quarterly. Janet Chaballa and Marty Truscott attend the Trustee meetings on behalf of Christ Church. Our Parish Administrator, Christine Stockhausen-Butler, serves as a Vice President of COG.

Thank you to the members of our congregation who in 2025:

- Faithfully volunteered with other COG volunteers in the Thrift Shop, Sorting Department, Emergency Food Pantry, and the Cupboard.
- Donated clothing, shoes, bric-a-brac, jewelry, accessories, small furniture, small household appliances, linens, sheets, jewelry, blankets, books to the Calico Cat. The Thrift Shop sales funds many of the COG activities, including the Food Pantry and Emergency Assistance Fund that provides rent and utility support. During 2025, 6,950 individuals (2,290 families) received food supplies at the Food Pantry, an increase of 41% over 2024 recipients.
- Gave financial donations to COG, individually or through our Outreach Committee, for their various programs - Back-to-School Contributions, Backpacks, Christmas Giving Tree Donations, and Food Pantry donations.

Parish Life

(this function will be absorbed into the Parish Engagement portfolio effective January 2026)

Parish Life in 2025 was manned by a dedicated group of volunteers, committed to ensuring our robust traditions carried on. Many thanks to Lauren Badal for managing the coffee hour schedule and for attending to the Annual Picnic and Spaghetti Supper. Thank you to Barbara Garrity for managing the Shrove Tuesday breakfast and to Sandra and Nick Casci, the Chaballa sisters, Drew Wilson, our youth and so many more for our festive Spaghetti supper. Shout out to all of my fellow Summer Friday hosts – Erna Sottile, Christine Stockhausen, Lauren Badal, Frank and Maria Kerfoot and Elias and Jen Nikolakos. And thank you to Maria Kerfoot for continuing to spearhead the Ladies Lunches, so many look forward to and enjoy that get together every month.

It is in Parish Life that there are so many helpful hands – it is virtually everyone of you so to all, a heartfelt thank you.

- Betty Truscott

Stewardship – Linda Barth

On October 26, we launched our 2025 pledge drive. As of December 31, 2025, we have received 62 pledges. Thank you to everyone who helped with our successful Stewardship season. “All of the Good Works with God's Love,” from the entire congregation, has made us stronger together.

So far, the total amount raised is \$290,829. Please, look at the breakdown in the comparative Stewardship Report for further explanation. We celebrated the Stewardship drive with a festive brunch on November 23 after the 10 am service.

I appreciate all the help that I received during this season and I look forward to working with all Christ Church members and friends this year to keep us strong, both financially and spiritually.

<i>Comparative Stewardship</i>							
PLEDGES	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Received	104	82	72	75	72	70	62
Increased	73	35	35	23	23	25	24
Unchanged	22	33	27	16	32	30	28
Decreased	9	14	4	27	9	11	7
New	16	1	6	9	8	4	3
Amount	\$274,743	\$268,766	\$263,094	\$266,367	\$264,632	\$ 280,580	\$ 290,829
Average	\$2,642	\$3,277	\$3,654	\$3,552	\$3,675	\$ 4,008	\$ 4,691
2023 patterns influenced by mid year campaign							

Worship

We now offer two Sunday worship services, both of which have strong and loyal attendance with live streaming of the 10 am service.

At 8 AM, we celebrate the Rite I liturgy and Michael Cummings, Colette Morris and Pascaline Tran serve faithfully as lectors, intercessors and Eucharistic ministers. Immediately following our 8 AM service, Father John leads Holy Trinity congregation in worship, sharing with us our beautiful worship space on selected Sundays.

At 10 AM the Choir, under the direction of John Balme, offers glorious music for which our parish is so well known. John’s skilled interpretations of organ and piano music along with the much-loved hand bell and recorder ensembles continue to enrich our worship services. Special Easter, Christmas and Lessons and Carols services demonstrate the choir’s considerable gifts and talents so generously shared with this Parish. George Speidel and Linda Barth serve faithfully as Acolytes and Eucharistic Ministers and are often joined by Sandra Casci and Erna Sottile as Chalice Bearers. This year welcomed Dylan and Sydney Sparaco as our youth acolytes, and it is an absolute delight to see these young

people serving on the altar. Marty Truscott continues to schedule lectors and intercessors, and the ushers, under Neil Grootenboer's leadership, welcome all parishioners, old and new.

Linda Barth and Pauline Dawson continue to offer the Daily Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer on Mondays and Fridays. The ministry of offering the Daily Office – now for nearly six years - has proved to be a much-loved aspect of our community's worship life with a loyal following. Christ Church is very fortunate to have such dedicated and spirit-filled leaders willing to take on this role.

Ronnie Warren convenes our Greeters. This is an essential role as we welcome newcomers and we look forward to expanding this as we develop an effective shepherding program for potential new members and those who may have wandered elsewhere.

As we embrace worship here at Christ Church, our need for more volunteers to serve grows. We are always happy to welcome newcomers to our worship guilds. Parishioners may serve Christ Church as lectors (those who read the lessons), intercessors (those who read the Prayers of the People), ushers/greeters (those who welcome and assist worshippers – especially visitors) and members of the Altar Guild who lovingly prepare the altar for worship every Sunday. These are important ministries that are essential to our worship services and are a wonderful way for newcomers to meet people at Christ Church and for existing parishioners to share time and work with one another.

The lectors, intercessors, ushers and greeters and Altar Guild faithfully serve our congregation at the 8:00 am and 10:00 am Sunday worship services as well as at our special services during Christmas and Easter. The following are our Guild leaders – please reach out if you are interested in helping.

Acolytes	Linda Barth (buzzer613@comcast.net)
Altar Guild	Erna Sottile (elsottile@comcast.net) and Pauline Dawson (pzd732@gmail.com)
Eucharistic Ministers	Church Office (office@christchurchmiddletown.org)
Greeters	Veronica Warren (misscrabtree@comcast.net)
Lectors	Marty Truscott (mtruscott@aol.com)
Music	John Balme (Jbalme5788@aol.com)
Ushers	Neil Grootenboer (ngrootenbo@aol.com)

- Betty Truscott

Altar Guild – Erna Sottile and Pauline Dawson

Altar Guild prepares both the Main Church and the Historic Church for weekly services by setting up the Altar, polishing the silver and brass as needed, dusting inside the altar rail area, and caring for the Altar linens. We also prepare both churches for baptisms, weddings, and funerals. The Greening of the church before Christmas and decorating the church with lovely spring flowers for Easter are particularly pleasant events on the Altar Guild schedule.

Members of the Altar Guild in 2025 were: Linda Barth, Barbara Brown, Pauline Dawson, Menay Drake, Willam Drake, Judy Forys, Rita Grootenboer, Susan Hoffmann, Judy Kelso, Vicky Mariocca, Colette Morris, Sue Murphy, Melinda Rudnicki, Erna Sottile, George Speidel, Pascaline Tran and Betty Truscott. Thank you to the husbands, children and grandchildren who have been brought in to assist at times.

Altar Guild always welcomes new members, and we hope that you will consider joining us. We serve on teams and the commitment is just one weekend a month with on-the-job training provided! No invitation is needed, merely a desire to serve God and Christ Church by tending to His Altar.

Erna Sottile
Pauline Dawson
Co-directors

2025 Financial Summary and 2026 Projections

<u>2025 Budget Report and 2026 Budget</u>			
<i>2025 Budget to Actual Report and 2026 Budget</i>			
General Operating Accounts - Summary of Receipts and Disbursements			
Description	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2025 Budget	FY 2026 New Budget
Marks of Mission (Fair Share)	35,000	35,000	35,000
Total Diocesan Support	35,000	35,000	35,000
Rector Salary	10,417	38,416	25,938
Rector Soc. Security/Medicare	1,594	0	4,000
Rector Housing Allowance	10,417	14,015	25,938
Rector Prof Exp	0	4,500	2,250
Assisting and Supply Clergy	1,625	6,000	3,000
Acting PIC	29,167	29,169	-
Sexton	7,776	8,640	9,120
Cleaning	2,391	3,900	4,080
Bookkeeper	3,056	6,480	5,040
Music Director	21,000	21,000	22,000
Musicians-Historic Church & Subs	450	300	450
Nursery Monitor	287	1,560	1,620
Dir of Parish Services	28,000	28,000	29,000
Total Parish Staff	116,179	161,980	132,436
Social Security/Medicare	7,013	13,300	5,500
Workers Compensation	635	1,000	1,000
Rector Pension Fund	0	21,200	-
Rector Continuing Ed and Training	0	1,075	538
Health Insurance	0	14,000	-
Life Insurance	0	222	-
Supply Clergy related expenses (Travel)	141	0	-
Total Related Staff Expense	7,790	50,797	7,038
Oil (Historic Church)	5,196	7,000	7,000
Natural Gas	14,791	11,376	16,000
Electric (Historic Church)	601	500	600
Electric (Main Church)	4,702	5,175	6,000
Water	2,400	2,400	2,400
Sewer	1,012	700	1,200
Waste Disposal	1,168	960	1,200
Buildings Upkeep	10,382	5,000	5,000
Grounds Upkeep	6,440	5,000	6,500
Consumable Supplies	126	350	350
Property & Liability Insurance	30,927	30,000	33,000
Elevator	2,123	2,500	2,500
Total Plant Operations	79,870	70,961	81,750

2025 Budget Report and 2026 Budget

General Operating Accounts - Summary of Receipts and Disbursements

Description	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2025 Budget	FY 2026 New Budget
Office Supplies	1,329	3,600	3,000
Marketing	0	0	2,750
Vanco Fees	854	850	850
Telephone & Internet	5,015	4,130	4,730
Equipment Maintenance	4,280	3,960	4,296
Financial Management	2,399	2,040	2,400
Total Parish Office	13,877	14,580	18,026
Worship - Altar Supplies	1,023	2,350	2,350
Altar Guild Expense FLWRS	9,503	8,000	8,000
Worship - Choir & Music	1,262	1,350	1,350
Community Outreach Expense	3,000	3,000	3,500
Parish Programs - Inreach	95	250	250
Comm. - Postage	234	550	550
Communications	72	250	250
Adult Christian Growth & Development	0	200	200
Children's Christian Development	628	750	750
Parish Life	718	1,000	1,280
Membership Dev	69	250	250
Stewardship	1,491	700	1,200
Total Parish Programs	18,096	18,650	19,930
Misc. & Contingencies	8,354	2,500	6,100
Rector Search	0	10,000	-
Total Parish Other	8,354	12,500	6,100

2025 Budget Report and 2026 Budget

Summary and Notes

General Operating Accounts Summary of Receipts and Disbursements

	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2025 Budget	FY 2026 New Budget
Plate Offerings/Donations	24,613	20,000	20,000
Prior Year Pledge Payments	4,805	1,000	1,000
Current Year Pledge Payments	272,952	271,000	276,200
Building Usage Donations	11,041	9,500	9,500
Investment Income PR	1,912	600	600
Altar Guild Income Flowers	9,025	8,000	8,000
Fund Raising	11,345	17,500	7,500
Life Events offset	1,050	-	-
Total Receipts	336,743	327,600	322,800
Marks of Mission (Fair Share)	35,000	35,000	35,000
Total Parish Staff	116,179	161,980	132,436
Total Related Staff Expense	7,790	50,797	7,038
Total Plant Operations	79,870	70,961	81,750
Total Parish Office	13,877	14,580	18,026
Total Parish Programs	18,096	18,650	19,930
Total Parish Other	8,354	12,500	6,100
Total Disbursements	279,165	364,468	300,280
Receipts in excess of Disbursements	57,578	-36,868	22,520

Notes:

1) Receipts for 2025 are above budget. 2026 contributions calculated based on pledges received by early January. Fundraising includes White Elephant/Bake Shop event only.

2) Expenses for 2025 are below budget.

Parish Staff and Related Staff Expenses are about \$88,800 under budget; PIC difference and non salaried staff costs lower than projected plus reduced Workers Comp Ins. Plant Operations includes vestry approved one-time charges, not in the budget, for gutter maintenance and exit lighting installation.

Parish Other includes a Bishop's Discretionary fund contribution.

3) In 2025, the Vestry approved the transfer of \$66,200 to the Capital Campaign Account from the surplus.

4) 2026 Budget reflects increases in Plant operation in line with current costs, Parish Office for a 250th celebration and Parish programs to Outreach and Stewardship.

Parish Staff and Related Staff Expenses reflect the following reductions:

- PIC costs at an annual rate for our PIC
- Budget for Supply Priests; no budget for Assisting Priest
- All other salaries and hourly rates reflect vestry approved increases for 2026.

5) The 2026 Marks of Mission payment to the Diocese is unchanged. This is just over a 10% contribution rate.

<u>2025 Summary of Parish Accounts</u>			
Summary of Fund and Liability Account Balances - YE 2025 vs YE 2024			
			Change FY24 to FY25
	12/31/24	12/31/25	
Pre Paid Pledges ¹	15,600	33,000	17,400
Outreach Gift Liability	1,000	1,000	-
Outreach Fundraising Fund	3,471	2,901	(569)
Coffee Sales for Outreach	298	211	(87)
St. Mark's Support Fund	1,627	1,296	(331)
Prayer Shawl Ministry	-	150	150
Outreach Related Subtotal	6,395	5,558	(987)
MEM-G/U Fund balance	6,249	6,159	(90)
Altar Guild Fund Balance	-	600	600
Gift Auction Donations	1,364	1,364	-
ASLAN Youth Ministeries	-	-	-
Godly Play	700	700	-
J2A Pilgrimage Fund Balance	9,384	9,384	-
RDF Fund Balance	-	5	5
Rector's Retreat Fund Balance	-	-	-
Tent Fund Balance	2,200	2,200	-
Major Improvements Fund Balance	(4,455)	(4,455)	-
Extraordinary Repair Liability	-	-	-
Community Garden Grant	-	-	-
Steeple Fund Balance	-	-	-
Special Building Liability	-	850	850
Designated Landscaping	-	-	-
Insurance Reimbursement Fund	-	5,792	5,792
Undercroft Renovation Fund Balance	10,938	6,043	(4,895)
Kitchen Imp. Fund Balance	732	732	-
Building Related Subtotal	7,215	8,962	1,747
Other Funds Net	4,078	3,536	(542)
Net Fund Balances	53,184	71,468	18,284
Operating Fund Balance	68,220	96,796	28,576
Reserved for Negative Fund Balances			
Invested Funds ^{2*}	364,826	392,878	28,052
Net Investments	364,826	392,878	28,052
Total Operating Funds	418,010	464,346	46,336

1 - Pre-paid pledges, of the total paid in 2025, 72% of it is 2026 contributions.
2 - At the end of 2025, 44% in cash/fixed income and 56% in mutual stock funds.

* Gains/(losses) are unrealized and change in market value of the underlying securities.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Committee Members: John Bailey, Theresa Blackburn-Tuttle, Betty Truscott and Tom Warren

Presentation of Candidates for:

Vestry – Monmouth Convocation – Diocesan Convention Delegates

For Vestry:

Warden (2 yr) – Joyce Wright

Membership Development (3 yr) –and Maria Kerfoot

Parish Engagement (3yr) - Jennifer Nikolakos

Diocesan Convention delegates: 3 Nominations from the floor

Diocesan Convention alternates: 3 Nominations from the floor

Monmouth Convocation delegates: 3 Nominations from the floor

Vestry Candidate Introductions

Warden – Joyce Wright

Christ Church has been my home for the past 48 years, and I have been an active member since 1974. I have served on Vestry previously for two terms in the position of Membership during 2002 and 2007, this position on Vestry is a natural fit for me. One of my significant accomplishments on Vestry was the implementation of the Christ Church Nursery for the care of children for young families. The many other activities I have been involved in at Christ Church are the following: spearheaded the Gourmet Dinner, hosted the Christ Church Picnic, (remember the Bounce House?) taught many grade levels of Sunday school, and a Eucharistic Minister for the home bound and a previous member of the outreach committee. Currently I am a team captain for St. Mark's Soup Kitchen and a member of the Rummage Sale crew.

Christ Church and the Christ Church Family are my home, and the church has supported my family, through many difficult times. The strength of Christ Church is that it embraces and enacts the phrase, "what would Jesus do". My goal is to continue to build fellowship and increase our community visibility. In my spare time, I am a tenured professor teaching Nursing at New Jersey City University and Georgian Court University. In my spare time, I am an Uber for Conor's many activities

Membership Development – Maria Kerfoot

I moved here from Point Pleasant Beach about 20 years ago after marrying Frank, we both lost our spouses and were blessed to find each other. Frank, being an engineer and Methodist and I being a

Mental Health Specialist , CADC and Catholic, created many interesting conversations about life. One of the many things that we did agree upon was our need and desire to worship together.

Roughly 8 years ago we started to visit churches in the area in order to find the right fit. During our visits, we came across Christ Church in Middletown and were greeted very warmly by Father Bill, and many of the parishioners. I was very touched by the sincerity of their greeting, at no time did it feel pressured or that I was just another body to put in the pews. On our way home, we discussed our impression of the church, the people and just how involved we wanted to be. It was not a hard decision, we indeed had found the perfect fit. We are so happy that we made the decision and therefore having met some of our best friends.

Nearly every Sunday I sit and wonder where all the people are; why aren't there more people in the pews. I complain to Frank about how we need members in order to grow, how we need more people to share the many things that need to be done. There are so many volunteer duties that need to be filled in order for us to keep reaching out to the community and helping those in need. It's time for me to stop complaining and get involved .

It is my honor to be asked to fill this important role. I will do my best to listen to our Church family and any suggestions they may have; remember, some of the best ideas can come out of the blue during friendly conversations. May we all keep working together towards our common goal of helping those who need us the most

Parish Engagement - Jennifer Nikolakos

My husband Elias and I joined Christ Church two years ago. As a cradle Episcopalian, I felt at home almost immediately, but it has been especially meaningful to see how deeply Elias was moved by this community—so much so that he took the step to be formally received into the church.

We moved to the area five years ago during the pandemic with our dog Zoe Ella, and like many, it took time to truly settle in. Once we did, we began watching Sunday services through the livestream. It was Elias who was searching for “something more,” and that search ultimately led us to Christ Church. With our nieces and nephew having grown up in this parish, the church already felt familiar even before we officially became members.

I have always been passionate about fundraising, community outreach, and creating opportunities for connection. One of the things I love most about Christ Church is its vibrant parish life—events like the annual Spaghetti Supper, the church picnic, Easter Egg hunts and Summer Socials, just to name a few, truly bring people together. I am honored to be asked to serve the church; especially in a role that speaks directly to my heart and my love for bringing people together and strengthening our church community.

We have made so many wonderful friends here and feel truly blessed to be part of such a welcoming and supportive parish. I look forward to many more years of faith, fellowship, and growing together with our Christ Church family.

Resolution of Appreciation for Faithful Service

Resolution of Appreciation for Faithful Service to Christ Episcopal Church as Vestry Members

John Bailey
Theresa Blackburn-Tuttle
Thomas Warren

Whereas, this marks the last meeting and term completion of Vestry members John Bailey, Theresa Blackburn Tuttle and Tom Warren and

Whereas, these persons have fulfilled their duties as Vestry persons with exemplary faithfulness and a sense of service to Christ and His Episcopal Church in Middletown, New Jersey, and

Whereas, these persons have willingly shared their unique gifts, their time, and their energy in positions of leadership, this community of Christ has increased in souls and spirit, and

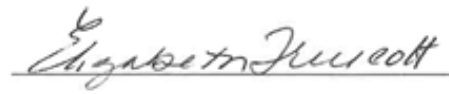
Whereas, these persons have given themselves to build-up the Body of Christ for its individual and collective ministries in the world, and

Whereas, these persons have been instrumental in the clarification of God's mission, the collection of ideas, the formulation of long and short-range objectives, and the planning of budgets to pursue our congregation's ministries, and

Whereas, these persons have made significant contributions to the growth and nurture of our parishioners **in the areas of Christian Formation, Inreach and Warden,**

NOW THEREFORE, Be it resolved, the Vestry of Christ Episcopal Church voting on January 13, 2025 expresses its sincere appreciation and gratitude to John Bailey, Theresa Blackburn Tuttle and Tom Warren for their committed and good service to our Lord, His Church, the Diocese of New Jersey and our Bishop, and to each of us who have been witness to their faithful example as Vestry persons and fellow members of Christ's Body.


The Rev. Dr. Cathy Bickerton,
Priest-in-Charge


Elizabeth Truscott, Warden