

# 2024 – 2025 Program Year Annual Report



*Approved on August 13, 2025*



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## **From the Moderator**

Jackie Womack

I must have been 9 or 10 years old the first time I noticed that church was not meant for me – or not all parts of church anyway. I remember my little brother going to the front row with the men to get ready for worship to start. Each man on the row would have a role to play – offering a prayer, leading singing, sharing communion. And now my baby brother would be one of those men – he would pick up the member and visitor cards at the end of the service.

Of course I had seen this ceremony play out many times in my life, every Sunday in fact. But until my brother was chosen for the role and I was not, it hadn't occurred to me that I was being excluded. It was confusing. I was a really good girl! And my brother, probably 6 years old at the time, was a stinker! He would sneeze so loudly that everyone in the room would look at him. He was learning his place in the church, and I was learning mine.

We all have experiences that try to define us or shape who we are. At that time, church was telling me a story about myself, a story built on patriarchy and misogyny. I didn't have any language to explain it, but I knew I didn't like the feeling of the narrative that I was "just a girl." It is a story of condemnation, a story of not being fully seen or accepted or affirmed. It is exclusionary, and that type of story is the closest I can come to defining that sin of "blasphemy of the Holy Spirit." It crushes the soul.

And then, decades after that narrative of condemnation began, I finally found my way to Friends. The extravagant welcome was and is so soothing and life giving. To worship, Sunday after Sunday, alongside people who are actively fighting the patriarchy, racism, and homophobia that surround us has been redemptive. All the experiences of my life that were supporting that old story are being replaced with an always expanding view of God's love.

Friends Church has rewritten the story that I tell about myself, and being moderator was like the cherry on top. That little girl version of me, watching her brother and feeling so confused, could not have imagined that I would one day be entrusted with a role like moderator. I am humbled and appreciative that I have had the opportunity.

I know that my story is not unique at Friends – many of us come here weary and heavy-laden, barely holding on to our faith. For so many of us, church has been punishing and cruel. Yet here we are, still hopeful that we will see the goodness of the Lord here in the land of the living. In this Annual Report, you will read about all the ways we as a church are offering that extravagant welcome to each other, to our community, and to the world. I hope you see yourself in these pages – whether in sharing your gifts or receiving from others. May we all be inspired to find ways to serve that heal ourselves and each other.

**Rev. Dr. Dan De Leon, Senior Pastor**  
**Annual Report 2024-25**

September 1st will mark 20 years of me serving the senior pastorate of Friends Congregational Church. With that milestone in mind, I have been reflecting on our journey thus far as a congregation, and where we go from here. Specifically, I have been focusing on the last five-ish years: We hired a consultant and went about an intense strategic planning process, only to have our efforts squelched by the pandemic. We got through that year-plus of physical separation with online and outdoor worship services, followed by several months of wearing masks and adhering to safety protocols that limited our opportunities for fellowship and relationship-building. We emerged from the pandemic and made up for lost time, so to speak, with several small groups (Wonderful Wednesdays with Women, Guyz Breakfast, 20- & 30-somethings), classes for fellowship and spiritual development (Theology on Tap, Linda Coats Book Club, Morning Manna, Social Justice Class), and events (Spring Fling, Grilla-Pride-Palooza, my sabbatical presentation). And then, all of a sudden it had been five years since our last strategic planning process, which is something churches do well to carry out in some capacity every five years. Bearing all of this in mind, I would like for our church family to gather soon for a mini-retreat to revisit the good work we did five years ago, and discern how that pre-pandemic planning does and does not resonate now for the purpose of us mapping out the next several years of our journey as a congregation. I'm proud and grateful beyond words for pastoring Friends Church for nearly two decades, and I hope we can vision-cast together what the next 20 years might look with God's help and regardless of what pastor(s) will be at the helm.

Reflecting on the last year, my day-to-day pastoral responsibilities have primarily included worship planning; mentoring and teaching; sermon study, writing, and preaching; supporting and supervising our staff; providing pastoral care to our congregation and to some outside our church; shepherding our servant leaders; helping newer members and frequent guest get more engaged; social justice work; and my own continuing education. The following is a summary of a few other areas of ministry with which I have been involved since June of 2024.

Youth Group: I took a week off from my sabbatical last year to join the youth group on their mission trip to DC, June 23-30. Earlier, I had coordinated a "Bread for the World" letter-writing campaign to Rep. McCaul addressing key measures in the Farm Bill, advocating for "reducing food insecurity and hunger in the U.S. and abroad." On the mission trip, the youth group got to sit down with McCaul's legislative aide, and talk with him about the Farm Bill's progress. I'm grateful to Brooke for their outstanding leadership on the trip, and to our congregation for everyone's generous support of our church's young people. (Note: I will be going on the youth group's mission trip to Denver, July 5-12.)

Worshipping with Our Neighbors: Peace Lutheran Church invited our congregation to worship with them in their sanctuary on September 8 for their kickoff to "God's Work, Our Hands," the Lutherans' day of service akin to the Aggies' "Big Event." Pastor Rick McLeer and I connected our churches' music directors with each other, confirming that the Peace and Friends choirs would sing together with Chris Hoffman conducting. The service focused on our shared Friday Food Distribution ministry. Our own Anne Wehrly gave a "Temple Talk" (Mission Moment) celebrating the work of that program since it started in June of 2020. In addition to worship

planning, I worked with our Christian Education Committee on an intergenerational Sunday School offering at Friends for any children and youth not attending the service at Peace. In solidarity with Peace, that Sunday School time was spent in service to our neighbors by putting together food items for children for the Food Distribution Ministry.

Servant Leader Summits (SLS): With support from our pastors and moderator, I plan and lead these quarterly gatherings of our Church Council members, pastoral relations team members, committee chairs, and staff. The SLSs give me a platform to communicate with our church's leaders—hearing from them, vision-casting with them, teaching—while giving them the opportunity to get to know one another and their different areas of ministry better. Our most recent SLS gave us the opportunity to assess our strategic planning work from 2019-2020 prior to the pandemic. I resurrected that work with help from former church council moderators Kelly Wellman and Dwight Baker, Pastor Trent, and archival resources from our in-person sessions with Elizabeth Resnick, the consultant for that process.

Mentoring Rev. Kyle Riley: Over the past year I continued serving as Kyle Riley's mentor in his field setting at Friends as required by the Member in Discernment process outlined by our Association's Committee on Ministry (C.o.M.). This entailed assuring that Kyle's ecclesiastical council for ordination would be approved by the C.o.M. for our Association's fall meeting; writing letters of support and affirmation; quarterly 1:1 mentor-mentee meetings; plugging him into monthly worship service leadership (including preaching on June 29 at Friends Church); co-coordinating his ordination service and reception; and working with Church Council to provide ongoing support of Kyle after he completed the MID process and was ordained. Rev. Riley's primary ministerial setting is now with Texas Impact, working as their outstanding Public Witness Mobilizer, and he maintains his membership with and very part-time role serving at Friends Church.

Committee on Ministry (C.o.M.): I serve on the Heart of Texas Association's Committee on Ministry, in charge of ordination, clergy disciplinary issues, etc. I was tasked by the C.o.M. to carry out a fitness review of a minister in our Association, which I did over several months with two clergy peers. I now serve as C.o.M. Vice President.

Texas Impact (TXI): I serve as one of three UCC South Central Conference reps on the TXI Leadership Council. At the council's annual retreat at Trinity United Church of Austin, we decided on our legislative agenda for the year, which emphasizes immigration justice, voting rights, reproductive justice, support for public schools (keeping Christian nationalism out of our schools), and anti-gun violence. At a press conference held by TXI on the Capitol steps in early May that addressed the theodicy being manipulated by members of the Texas legislature, I spoke on the topic of LGBTQ+ justice. An excerpt: "From a Christian perspective, if one member of the body is suffering, the whole body suffers. Oppressing any member of the body is a detriment to the whole. LGBTQ+ people are members of our collective body, and we are here today because we refuse to have them cut off. As a pastor, I'm a shepherd. I care for the flock, for the body. So when a parent in my church tells me that their family has to move to Colorado because it's gotten too dangerous for their transgender child to live in Texas, I've gotta speak up. We've gotta speak up."

Monthly columns: I continue to write for the “Faith” section of The Eagle every third Saturday. I use this platform to speak on matters of faith often overlooked in our community. (Note: My submission for September 20th will make 150 columns that I have written for The Eagle since February of 2013.)

Conversations Retreat: Thanks to the resources and support of our church, I attended Conversations, a retreat for senior pastors of multi-staff UCC congregations, Jan. 12-16, in St. Pete Beach, Florida. More than 50 of us attended from across the country, with me being the only attendee from Texas. The guest speaker led us in lectures, Q&As, and small group discussions on the topic of leadership in our contexts. I was tasked with leading music in our evening worship services. Since then, I have joined the planning team for Conversations 2026 alongside five peers. My biggest task in that capacity has been securing our speaker for Conversations 2026: Rev. Dr. Cody Sanders (<https://www.luthersem.edu/faculty/cody-sanders/>).

South Central Conference Annual Meeting: I attended the SCC Annual Meeting, May 30-31, at Journey HTX, Houston. Martha Newsome and I co-led a breakout session where we shared the history of Friends becoming ONA, how that has shaped our congregation, and how churches considering becoming ONA might go about that process. Big props to Martha for meticulously combing through documents and pictures, and for working with Sean Dudo to put together a video compilation of Friends Church members giving testimonies about what Friends Church being ONA means to them which we included in the presentation.

Teaching: Intermittently from November to June, I enjoyed leading and co-leading classes for our adults on Sundays at 10am. For the first three Sundays in November, I taught a class for the combined Morning Manna and Social Justice classes called “The Gospel According to James Baldwin” based largely on a book of the same title by Greg Garrett. For the four Sundays of Advent, I taught the Social Justice Class using Walter Brueggemann’s *Names for the Messiah: An Advent Study*. I taught the Social Justice Class four out of five Sundays in March and April on the topic of “how to end Christian nationalism.” (Note: Amanda Tyler, the author of *How to End Christian Nationalism*, from which I drew content for the class, will be our guest preacher Aug. 17th.) Trent and I co-led the combined classes in May, utilizing content from Brian McLaren’s *Do I Stay Christian?: A Guide for the Doubters, the Disappointed, and the Disillusioned* to teach and facilitate conversation. (Note: 1) People are hungry for community, knowledge, and dialogue. 2) We need more space.)

Supervising Podcast and Social Media Positions: When Jeremy Dudo, former A/V Tech for Friends Church, moved to Atlanta in October, he offered to continue working remotely on our podcast ministry for up to two hours weekly. Jeremy had also been helping us with our social media platforms. Connecting with Jeremy through service with our Evangelism & Outreach Committee, Olive Okoro, a content creator, offered to work up to four hours weekly creating content for us and managing our social media. This created two positions: Podcast Manager & Producer (PMP, Jeremy), and Social Media and Content Creation Manager (SMCCM, Olive). I became the supervisor for those two positions. For the last year, Jeremy has been archiving our recorded sermons since 2017, posting all of them on the Sundays they were preached (e.g., sermons preached on Pentecost Sunday since 2017 are posted the week of Pentecost). Now that we are up-to-date with all of those sermons archived/published, Jeremy publishes two podcasts

weekly: the Midweek Message and the sermon. (Note: the Midweek Message in audio format was launched on May 7th.) Olive had been creating content for and posting on our platforms: Facebook and Instagram. She also started a TikTok for us. Olive vacated the position in May upon her graduation from TAMU with a Masters degree and a move to NYC. Since then, I have been managing our social media platforms (when I have time), and delegating when necessary.

**Advocacy Work:** During my sabbatical last year, I took a trip to the Border with Fellowship Southwest, which resulted in a connection with the outreach director for Bread for the World, “a Christian advocacy organization urging U.S. decision makers to do all they can to pursue a world without hunger.” Bread’s “mission is to educate and equip people to advocate for policies and programs that can help end hunger in the U.S. and around the world.” Over the last 12 months, I’ve been involved in advocacy work with Bread, Fellowship Southwest, Pastors for Texas Children, Just Texas, and Texas Impact, all of which is in line with and an extension of our vision and mission. In February, I was in DC for Bread’s “Nourish Our Future” campaign launch, which included a legislative visit to our congressman. After that, I arranged a meeting with Bread’s outreach director and members of Friends Church and the Faith Leaders for Justice Group (FLJG) cohort of local ministers that I coordinate, where Bread’s legislative priorities and “Offering of Letters” initiative were explained. In May, we collaborated with First Christian Church, Bryan, on the Offering of Letters, producing 80+ letters for the FLJG to deliver to Rep. McCaul’s College Station office the following month, where we sat down with his field staffer to voice our concerns about food justice. Also in June, I returned to DC to attend Bread’s advocacy summit, and Sojourners’ “A Pentecost for a Moral Budget,” which involved a public vigil, march, prayer rally, policy training, and legislative visits. Addressing food justice, immigration justice, reproductive justice, and support for public schools, I participated in three advocacy days in two months at the State Capitol with Fellowship Southwest, Just Texas, Pastors for Texas Children, and Texas Impact. The work continues.

**Rev. Trent Williams, Executive Pastor**  
**Annual Report 2024-25**

The 2024-25 program year has been one of highs and lows, busyness and programs, community and care—and I remain grateful for all of you and the community that is Friends Church. In this past year, I have continued to lead as Executive Pastor in several ministry areas related to our Trustees ministry, as well as contributing to the overall work of our church in worship, pastoral care, and visioning.

In the area of **Stewardship & Finance**, I have continued to lead in both our annual giving campaigns and legacy and special giving initiatives, and have continued to work closely with the Finance Committee, Stewardship Chair, Moderator, and Treasurer in these areas.

*Planned Giving:* I collaborated with Pastor Dan and church leadership to offer Preparing With Purpose: An Estate and End of Life Planning Workshop. Carol Bertsch provided legal perspectives, and I presented an intent form to indicate plans for legacy giving to Friends Church. We have now secured 5 intents to remember Friends Church in will or estate plans.

*Gift Acceptance Policy:* In collaboration with Treasurer Theresa Walker, I led the process of creating a formal gift acceptance policy for Friends Church, drawing on resources from the United Church of Christ national setting and other congregational examples. Council reviewed and refined the document and approved it. Additions on restricted funds were added in recent months through the leadership of the Moderator and Treasurer.

*UCC Special Offerings:* With our Stewardship Chair, I worked to highlight the quarterly special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ, and Friends Church continues to be a “5 For 5” congregation of the UCC.

*End of Year Giving:* This past December, we again sent an end of year giving invitation to invite our congregation to help us end the calendar year in a strong way financially. We are grateful for the generous response that you have given to this appeal.

*Annual Stewardship Campaign:* In close collaboration with Stewardship Chair Martha Newsome, I led our spring stewardship campaign, “Let Courage Rise,” which proved to be our most successful in Friends Church history in terms of dollars pledged. With 84 pledges and over \$494,000 pledged, we remain a generous and faithful congregation. This involved developing the theme, designing the graphics, writing the letters, downloading and analyzing giving data and preparing mailing lists, designing the pledge card, designing the narrative budget, setting up the pledge campaign in Realm, and helping to secure testimonials for worship services.

**Spiritual Life** continues to be an important part of my ministry at Friends Church. I work closely with the Spiritual Life Committee and participate in multiple offerings.

*Morning Manna & Adult Sunday School:* I continue to provide primary leadership to the Sunday morning bible study, Morning Manna, which has explored several biblical books and themes this past year, including a study of the books of Revelation and Galatians. In addition, we have met jointly for several studies with the Social Justice Class. I led a joint series on the book “The Widening of God’s Mercy,” and a joint series called “American Sacred Texts.” Pastor Dan and I also collaborated on a joint series on the book “Do I Stay Christian?”

*Inquire Class:* I have provided pastoral leadership and co-led several sessions of our Inquire Class for those newer to Friends Church in this past year.

## **Operations & Technology**

*AV:* I supervise our AV Tech and help oversee our digital ministry, reviewing worship slides each week and working with AV volunteers. This year, we engaged a consultant to help us assess our needs, recommend upgrades to our systems, and help identify potential problems. We upgraded our sound board, and are working on speaker upgrades. We also added a computer to the AV booth to help with our in-house presentation system.

*Greeter Training:* In August, we offered a greeter training event for our dedicated volunteers, covering the basics of welcoming and Sunday morning logistics, as well as safety protocols. We covered the basics of The Power of Hello and emergency evacuations procedures as well.

*Security Enhancements & Grant Writing:* As part of the implementation process for our Emergency Operations Plan, I have continued to work with Trustees Moderator Fran Duane, Property Chair Steve Robinson, and staff and volunteers to complete the recommendations of that team. At the end of year, we became aware of a grant program through FEMA that offers funding to houses of worship and other nonprofits for security upgrades and enhancements. The Nonprofit Security Grant Program involves an extensive application process which I led through the first part of 2025. We have not yet received notification of next steps, pending congressional funding authorizations, but remain hopeful that we can secure some additional funding for projects that have been identified around the church property.

*Realm Updates & Worship Volunteers:* During the past year, I continued to build out volunteer sign-up opportunities through our Realm system, including greeters, lay leaders, and communion stewards.

*Copier Lease:* In March, our copier lease was up, and I led the process of assessing and identifying an alternative service provider which we engaged at the beginning of the year.

*Personnel:* In collaboration with our Personnel Chair, Trustees, and Council, we have been assessing needs for our childcare center and updating the job description for our Administrative Assistant, as well as preparing for evaluations for staff.

*Sanctuary Ad Hoc Team:* In response to the new presidential administration's changes in the sensitive locations policy around immigration enforcement, Council authorized an ad hoc team to assess our sanctuary policies in our Immigrant Welcoming Congregation resolution and provide guidance on how to proceed.

In addition to these areas, I continue to participate in **Worship & Pastoral Care**, collaborating with the worship staff weekly to plan services, preach regularly, and provide pastoral care and presence to our congregation. I also offer regular midweek message reflections, This Week at Friends pastor's notes, and presence at community events.

Rev. Brooke Dooley, Associate Pastor  
**Youth & Young Adults Annual Report 2025**

According to my July 2024 report, it was a quiet month, so that's splendid. I took advantage of post-mission trip rest and tied up loose ends with expenses and Wall of Giving commitments. The Youth-led worship service was, as always, a really enriching experience for the youth and the congregation. Mission trip planning at the Conference level was not a successful endeavor and that is something I am continuing to experience.

August was the start of our first O.W.L. class for 7th & 8th graders. The Youth Group joined the Pride Community Center for a game night and ice cream party, and took a field trip to see 1776 at The Theatre Company to support some of our Friends thespians. Pastor Dan, Pastor Trent, and others from Friends attended the PCC Gala.

Despite the loss of the TAMU LGBTQ+ resource center, Friends was still able to table at the Rainbow Resource Fair. The 20/30 Somethings met at my home for a potluck and game night. I began the process for my pastoral evaluation, and joined the planning team for the Annual Meeting, where I was tasked with organizing activities for youth. The pastoral staff organized a Tacos con Pastor for Friends folks to have an opportunity to ask us different questions. That was fun. We should do that again. I preached in drag at All People Unitarian Universalist Church in Fort Worth. Pastor Dan and I discussed changing things up with the youth group to provide more opportunities for fellowship.

Registration opened for Be the Neighbor's summer trips, and I registered the Youth Group for the Denver trip. I attended Rev. Kyle Riley's Ecclesiastical Council and attended my last Beyond Brite retreat. I met Rev. Molly Carlson and began meeting with her regularly to establish more of a structure for my Conference position.

I took time to meet with youth and their families individually to learn more about their schedules, their interests, concerns, etc. These were helpful conversations. The Youth Group participated in the annual CROP Hunger Walk, and the PCC hosted a potluck and pumpkin painting event at the UUCBV. The election happened, we all remember that, and decided to leave the sanctuary open the following day for people to have pastoral presence. This was also when I decided to begin the weekly mental health walks. The 20/30 Somethings had a Friendsgiving potluck, and I began monthly Youth Ministry Support Group meetings for the Conference. We finished off the year with a lovely cantata, and the annual Christmas Pageant. The Youth Group Christmas party was held on Friday the 13th and was thus Nightmare Before Christmas themed.

I started off 2025 by performing my first baptisms, Xari and Henley Hutto-Schultz. It was truly a joyous experience. Jackie and Pastor Dan met with me to discuss the results of my pastoral evaluation, the feedback from which I continue to use as guidance. The Youth Group had a back-to-school gathering and Confirmation plans were being solidified. The Mission Trip Planning Team was established with our first task being the Wall of Giving Fundraiser. We extended an invitation to Trinity Church of Austin to join us on the mission trip. I coordinated with NAMI to have a Youth Mental Health First Aid Training at the church.

The 20/30 Somethings travelled to Houston in February to visit two museums and had a great time. I had the opportunity to preach at the ordination service of Rev. Kyle Riley. I preached in drag once again, this time at Cathedral of Hope. The service itself was lovely, but the aftermath was stressful as news outlets published false information. I continue to be grateful for all those who helped and supported me through that. Ann Rome and I began initial conversations about establishing a support group for families of adopted and foster care children at Friends. PCC hosted a “Palentine’s Day” event for our LGBTQ+ support group. Confirmation classes began, and we took our first field trip to ICBCS to join our Muslim neighbors who were breaking fast during Ramadan. I was able to travel to the RGV for a clergy retreat. Following the retreat, I began communicating with Rev. Ali Lopez-Valcarcel about a potential youth trip to the border to help at a local migrant shelter. We wrapped up the Wall of Giving with almost \$6000 in donations towards the mission trip.

The confirmands’ second field trip was to St. Andrew’s Episcopal in April. The 20/30 Somethings met at Rx Pizza to write an Affirmation of Faith together and it was a meaningful experience for all of us. The affirmation was read during Palm/Passion Sunday. The mission trip group became a full group of 20 participants between Friends Church and Trinity Church and we began preparations for our groups to work together on planning and budget.

During Holy Week, I traveled to Virginia to facilitate my first wedding, and returned in time for the Maundy Thursday service, Good Friday Requiem, and preaching my first Easter Sunday. Rev. Ali and I met with someone from La Posada, the migrant shelter in RGV, to discuss details for a youth trip and select dates. The beginning of May is when most forms and payments are due for the mission trip, so I coordinated with participants and families to get those completed, and the Planning Team organized a trivia bash and silent auction to raise funds for the trip.

The Confirmation Class visited Congregation Beth Shalom and had their last class at the end of May, and we recognized six graduating seniors. The first 7th & 8th grade O.W.L. class completed their courses, and UUCBV and I are scheduling a training to offer classes for K-2, and 2nd-4th graders. The 20/30 Somethings met for a potluck and game night at my home. For the Conference, my salary was increased, and I had seven youth at the Annual Meeting who went to the Houston Food Bank to volunteer. The RGV trip did not have enough people signed up, and I am now currently communicating with the Conference Minister of the Southeast Conference about organizing a joint trip for our Conference youth at Back Bay Mission in the summer of 2026.

In June, I, along with Pastor Dan and other local clergy, delivered 80 letters to Representative McCaul’s office as part of a letter writing campaign for Bread for the World, advocating for full funding of food assistance programs. We confirmed our two youth, and PCC held another game night for our LGBTQ+ youth support group.

I held informational sessions for parents and guardians of the youth attending the mission trip, as well as for the youth themselves. I also hosted a movie night for the youth to watch *Youth V Gov*, a documentary about a group of youth who filed a lawsuit against the United States claiming they knowingly created a climate crisis that will affect their future. Currently I am making final

preparations for the Denver Mission Trip as we are scheduled to leave this coming Saturday, July 5.

**Other Tasks**

- Bi-monthly meetings with Senior Pastor
- Midweek Messages
- Pastor's notes
- Weekly staff meetings & worship planning
- Mental Health Walks
- Weekly Youth Updates
- UCM Board meetings
- SCC Conference Board meetings
- Monthly meetings with SCC Minister Rev. Molly Carlson
- Pastoral care

Chris Hoffman, Director of Music Ministries  
**Music Ministries Report 2024-2025**

The 2024-2025 year was filled with wonderful, moving, and reverent musical offerings. This year also marked my 19<sup>th</sup> anniversary of serving at Friends, and I am continually reminded of what wonderful people we have volunteering their time and talents to augment and uplift the spiritual life at Friends.

*Chancel Choir Activities*

The Chancel Choir started rehearsing in August, after their annual summer sabbatical, and resumed singing in Sunday services on August 18, with the beautiful and poignant “Redeemer of My Heart” by Joseph Martin. The Choir continued to sing for almost every Sunday in the fall and spring, taking the second Sunday off each month for the Handbell Choir to ring. Other anthems performed in the fall and spring that were wide-spread favorites included “Esto Les Digo” by Kinley Lange, “Set Me As a Seal” by René Clausen, “A Covenant Prayer” by Dan Forrest, “Ave verum corpus” by William Byrd, “Steal Away” by Moses Hogan, “Veni, Veni, Emmanuel” by Allen Koepke (a composer from my hometown of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and one in which I have personal stories about), “Long-Expected Dawn” by Karen Marroli, “O magnum mysterium” by Tomás Luis de Victoria (for Christmas Eve), “He Never Failed Me Yet” by Robert Ray, “I Believe” by Mark A. Miller, “O Vos Omnes” by Pablo Casals (for Palm/Passion Sunday), “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” by Ludwig van Beethoven and arranged by Harry Simeone (for Easter), and “I Will Be a Child of Peace” by Elaine Hagenberg.

The annual Christmas Cantata took place on Thursday, December 12, at 7:30 pm. This year, the Choir performed Elaine Hagenberg’s “Illuminare.” The Choir once again collaborated with a Chamber Orchestra. Matt Hoffman sang the challenging tenor solo, and did a beautiful job with it. As always, this Cantata was followed by a fabulous reception. Thank you to all involved, for making this a very special and festive evening. When getting feedback from those in attendance, I was once again humbled and honored that this service brought joy into the hearts of some who very much needed it this year. Those feelings of hope, peace, love, and joy are exactly why we minister through music.

In my 2023-2024 Annual Report, I mentioned how composer Michael John Trotta reached out to me, asking if we would perform his “Requiem” for Good Friday 2025. I agreed to that performance, and even arranged for Trotta to come work with us. Trotta came to College Station in late March and did a short residency with the Choir, workshopping his work before we performed it on Good Friday (April 18). This was such a wonderful opportunity, and the Choir was very excited to perform another of Trotta’s pieces. Normally, Choirs and Choir Directors reach out to composers, asking them if they will come and work with their groups. To have a composer reach out to you directly does not happen very often, and for one to do so is a tremendous honor. The “pinch me for I must be dreaming” spirit even continued after that residency. Trotta was so impressed by our Choir that he invited the group to sing under his direction in Italy during the summer of 2026. This trip will involve our Choir singing with a larger “Festival Choir,” under Trotta’s direction, as well as concert opportunities for us to sing by ourselves, under my direction. Trotta even asked if I would be the pianist for the combined

Festival Choir. This incredible opportunity obviously comes with a price tag, and to help raise funds the Choir will be performing a Benefit Concert on October 5, at 7:00 pm. However, some payments are due between now and that concert. If you are interested in helping support our singers financially for this trip, especially for the payments due before the Benefit Concert, please reach out to me.

As planned, the Good Friday Service on April 18 featured the Chancel Choir and Chamber Orchestra performing Trotta's "Requiem." One of the longest works that the group has performed, this "Requiem" was comprised of ten movements. Two of the movements were a cappella, and two movements featured soloists. Christine Gravelle and Nancy Bertsch performed the soprano/mezzo soprano duet, and Wolfgang Verdegaal sang the baritone solo. All three did such a lovely job, and even Trotta was impressed by them when he worked with us. Much like the Christmas Cantata, this performance moved many. The Chancel Choir gave a wonderful performance, and I was so proud of their hard work, as this was probably one of their toughest pieces to perform to date, due to all of the Latin text, tight harmonies during the a cappella movements, and periods of rhythmic complexity.

If you are interested in joining this magnificent group of singers, please reach out to me. There will be a simple audition process, but it does not require you to be able to read music fluently (although that skill helps); rather, you must be able to match pitch and be able to repeat musical passages back by rote. While the Choir loft is now almost full on most Sundays, please don't let that deter you from joining us. If you have a love for quality choral singing, and wish to sing with the Friends Choir, please come talk to me, and join this wonderful musical family.

### *Handbell Choir Activities*

Our Handbell Choir this year has been absolutely wonderful, and continues to grow and evolve into a cohesive ensemble. They truly get better and better with every passing year. The Handbell Choir resumed their Monday night rehearsals on August 12, and resumed their tradition of ringing every second Sunday of the month, beginning on September 8. They announced their return with a lovely arrangement of "Children of the Heavenly Father" arranged by Matthew Compton. Other pieces performed during the Fall included "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise" arranged by Dan R. Edwards, and "The Water Is Wide" arranged by John Matheny (and conducted by Diane Simpson in my absence).

The biggest project that the Handbell Choir takes on is its pre-Christmas Eve service concert. This has become a beloved tradition at Friends, and the group worked very hard at performing a mixture of pieces that were congregational favorites, along with pieces that were not as well-known. The entire concert was a beautiful way to set up the Christmas Eve service, and for those who come from a background of listening to and/or ringing handbells, this provided a sweet sense of nostalgia.

The Handbell Choir got to have a short break after Christmas Eve, and resumed rehearsals on January 13. The Handbell Choir's Spring 2024 repertoire included "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light" arranged by John A. Behnke, "I'm Just a Poor Wayfaring Stranger" arranged by Tammy Waldrop, "Thine Is the Glory" by George Frideric Handel and arranged by Joel Raney,

“Majestic Alleluia” by Joel Raney, and “Breathe on Me, Breath of God” arranged by Michael Mazzatenta.

Currently, we have four octaves of handbells and four octaves of handchimes at our disposal. However, we only have enough people to utilize three of those four octaves. We would LOVE to have more handbell ringers, in order to fill out the ensemble’s sound even more. If you would like to join us, we would be delighted to have you, and can train you. If you can count, and recognize two notes on a staff (seriously), we can train you with the rest. Despite how impressive the group looks ringing, the technique is not as hard as you think.

### *Other Musical Offerings*

There are Sundays that neither the Chancel Choir nor the Handbell Choir perform. There is an occasional Sunday during the academic year when both groups are out, but the bigger breaks happen after Christmas and in the summer. We are blessed to have various instrumental soloists, vocal soloists, and even small ensembles contribute music during these times. Much appreciation goes out to all of you, for adding to the beautiful and varied musical offerings here at Friends Church.

### *Looking Towards June 2026*

June 2025 brought about my 19<sup>th</sup> anniversary of serving at Friends Church. Before we know it, my 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary will be here (June 2026). A while ago, I was approached by a Chancel Choir member about getting a special piece composed, to celebrate this occasion. After a short bit of contemplation, I reached out to one of my all-time favorite composers, Paul Mealor, to see if there would be even a small chance that he would consider taking on a commission from the Friends Church Choir. For those who are not familiar, Mealor is a Welsh composer who gained international fame in the Choral community when he was commissioned to write a piece for the Royal Wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton. That piece was the “Ubi caritas” that the Chancel Choir performed in the Spring of 2024. Additionally, the Chancel Choir also performed his moving “Stabat Mater” for Good Friday 2024. To date, he has accumulated all sorts of honors and awards for his musical contributions. His musical career has really taken off, and he is considered a “superstar” in the Choral community.

Thanks to social media, I first started following Paul Mealor on Instagram, and to my surprise, he started following me back. We engaged in just small conversations here and there, through direct messages. The social media presence has allowed him to see the musical contributions at Friends Church, and he has “liked” and commented quite favorably on several videos I have posted of the Chancel Choir’s performances.

I reached out to Mealor, asking if we could possibly commission a choral anthem from him, in honor of my 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of serving at Friends. To my surprise, he replied right away with a “yes,” and then we set up a Zoom meeting to discuss the commission. We had a delightful, long Zoom meeting, that didn’t seem long at all. I was able to share more info about myself, the Chancel Choir, and Friends Church – its mission, and why I have stayed with the church for as long as I have. What absolutely stunned me was that he mentioned how he is now very lucky to

be able to pick the projects that he wants to do, and he chose us because he could tell we were good people. Wow.

I am thrilled to officially announce that the Chancel Choir will give a world debut performance of a new piece by the Royal Composer Paul Mealor, specifically written for them, in June of 2026. This is an incredibly exciting event, and I'm hoping that even former Choir members that have moved on would entertain coming back to sing for this. As more details fall into place, we will share any updates.

This exciting new commission does, of course, come with a price tag, much like the Italy trip with Trotta (mentioned above). This means that we have two major milestone opportunities for the Choir occurring around the same time. I've already mentioned how you can support the Choir for the Italy trip; if you are interested in contributing to the fee for the Mealor commissioned composition, please let me know.

### *Final Thoughts*

I say it often, but the sincerity is still there: we are truly blessed to have as many individuals as we do who so graciously give their time and talent to shape the musical life at Friends Church. They bring their gifts, and willingly explore how to grow and diversify their musical offerings. They are not afraid to push themselves, and the congregation gets to be the direct recipient of their hard work. We truly have one of the best programs in town, and it excites me every year to see how we can raise the bar time and time again, bringing our best and authentic selves to praising God and serving others through our music.

Thank you for continuing to put your faith and trust in me as your Director of Music Ministries. I cherish this position, and am so grateful to be a part of the Friends family.

**Treasurer Report 2025**  
Theresa Walker, Treasurer

The Accounting function of the Church is supported by REALM integrated software. The fiscal year 2024-2025 began with summer revenue down for the months of June, July and August. To ensure that all expenditures were met in a timely manner, Council approved a drawdown of \$20,000 from our Reserves. As the year progressed and our fund balance improved, we were able to return \$10,000 of that amount back to Reserves. Our intention is to return the balance early in the 2025/2026 fiscal year.

Other Income received included grant funds from the Pension Board to cover the health benefits of the Associate Pastor, and a payroll tax refund for the Employee Retention Credit enacted during the COVID shut down. Reclass To/From Restricted included funds from the Temporarily One Time funds donation to General Funds to cover expenses from plumbing repairs due to water damage.

Fiscal Year 2024/2025 – July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025  
General Operating Funds

General funds are unrestricted and are used in the general operations of the church. In Fiscal Year 2024/2025, pledges, offerings, and other incomes collected was \$602,093.05 which represented 104% of budgeted revenue. In Fiscal Year 2024/2025, operating expenses of \$571,152.07 represented 94% of budgeted expenditures.

Fiscal Year 2024/2025 ended with a net total of \$30,940.98. Below is the breakdown of the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Income and Expenses:

|                            |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Income                     | 2024/2025 Totals   |
| Pledges                    | \$450,047.55       |
| Offerings                  | \$105,573.84       |
| Miscellaneous Income       | \$ 1,306.71        |
| Other Income               | \$ 24,459.35       |
| Reclass To/From Restricted | \$ 12,482.57       |
| Investment Income          | \$ 8,223.03        |
| Total                      | \$602,093.05       |
| Expenses                   | 2024/2025 Totals   |
| Administrative             | \$ 55,929.73       |
| Programs                   | \$ 16,511.38       |
| Trustees                   | \$ 498,710.96      |
| Total                      | \$ 571,152.07      |
| Net Total                  | <u>\$ 30,940.9</u> |

### Restricted Funds

Restricted funds are monies set aside for a particular purpose as directed by the giver. There are two categories of Restricted Funds: Temporarily Restricted and Purpose Based Restricted Funds. Temporarily Restricted funds are One Time funds which are Council approved projects that have a beginning and end date. Purpose Based Restricted Funds are funds that have a specific purpose and continue from year to year. Below is a breakdown of restricted funds income and disbursements from 7/1/2024-6/30/2025:

| Income                           | Totals       |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| <u>Temporarily Restricted:</u>   |              |
| One Time                         | \$ 9,329.70  |
| <u>Purpose Based Restricted:</u> |              |
| Youth Mission Trip               | \$ 13,100.00 |
| Accessibility Fund               | \$ 2,665.00  |
| Pastors Discretionary            | \$ 1,105.00  |
| Children's Collection            | \$ 67.55     |
| Crisis Fund                      | \$ 450.00    |
| Jubilee Fund                     | \$ 528.24    |
| SCC Christmas Fund               | \$ 2,510.00  |
| SCC Neighbors in Need            | \$ 2,180.24  |
| SCC OCWM                         | \$ 250.00    |
| SCC One Great Hour of Sharing    | \$ 3,101.11  |
| SCC Strengthen the Church        | \$ 455.00    |
| Total                            | \$ 35,741.95 |

| Disbursements                    | Totals       |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| <u>Temporarily Restricted:</u>   |              |
| One Time Fund                    | \$ 13,383.35 |
| <u>Purpose Based Restricted:</u> |              |
| Crisis Fund                      | \$ 4,690.00  |
| Youth Mission Trip               | \$ 9,141.78  |
| Youth Ministry Disbursement      | \$ 29.00     |
| Pastors Discretionary Fund       | \$ 1,423.24  |
| SCC Christmas Fund               | \$ 2,460.00  |
| SCC Neighbors in Need            | \$ 2,130.24  |
| SCC OCWM                         | \$ 250.00    |
| SCC One Great Hours of Sharing   | \$ 3,101.11  |
| SCC Strengthen the Church        | \$ 1,295.00  |
| Total                            | \$ 37,903.72 |

### Non-Profit Support

Throughout Fiscal Year 2024/2025, the congregation has financially supported many non-profits and causes. This support came through Crop Walk, Annual Dues, Love collections, Directed Giving as well as other efforts. Below is a list of those non-profits and our financial support:

|                                       |             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Brazos Interfaith Immigration Network | \$ 500.00   |
| Brazos Church Pantry                  | \$ 860.00   |
| Brazos Valley Food Bank               | \$ 250.00   |
| Crop Walk                             | \$ 632.00   |
| Family Promise of College Station     | \$ 500.00   |
|                                       |             |
| Tiny Hope Village                     | \$ 1,481.00 |
| United Campus Ministry                | \$ 3,000.00 |
| Texas Impact                          | \$ 100.00   |
| Be The Neighbor                       | \$ 500.00   |
| OCWM Dues                             | \$ 7,500.00 |
| United Church of Christ Disabilities  | \$ 100.00   |
| Heart of Texas Association            | \$ 2,508.00 |
| Back Bay Mission                      | \$ 689.00   |

### Operating Reserves

The Reserves Account is Friend's Emergency Fund and is managed by the United Church Funds. In July 2024, Church Council authorized \$20,000 to be drawn down to cover operating expenses. \$10,000 was returned to the fund in June 2025. The balance at 6/30/25 was \$67,274.40.

### Investment Funds

The balance of the endowment investment account with Charles Schwab at 6/30/25 was \$68,688.93

The Jubilee Fund Balance at 6/30/25 was \$13,825.07

**Account Balances**  
As of June 30, 2025

|                                  |               |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Available Funds</b>           |               |
| General Operating                | \$ 40,279.55  |
| Operating Reserves               | \$ 10,000.00  |
| UCF Cash Reserves                | \$ 67,274.40  |
| Miscellaneous                    | \$ 30.89      |
| Restricted                       |               |
| <u>Temporarily Restricted:</u>   |               |
| One Time Funds                   | \$ 4,938.78   |
| <u>Purpose Based Restricted:</u> |               |
| Youth Mission Trip               | \$ 4,438.14   |
| Children's Collection/Playground | \$ 5,344.57   |
| Property & Bldg.                 | \$ 2,466.64   |
| Spiritual Renewal                | \$ 2,136.48   |
| SCC 5x5                          | \$ 455.00     |
| Pastors Discretionary            | \$ 1,729.21   |
| Accessibility Enhancement        | \$ 17,195.00  |
| Crisis Fund                      | \$ 16,089.00  |
| Music Ministry                   | \$ 815.88     |
| Youth Ministry Fund              | \$ 369.23     |
| Technology/Audio/Visual          | \$ 2,251.00   |
| Total Restricted                 | \$ 58,228.93  |
| Charles Schwab Fixed/Equity      | \$ 68,688.93  |
| Jubilee Fund                     | \$ 13,825.07  |
| Total                            | \$ 258,327.77 |

Note: There are two promissory notes held by the Local Church Ministries of the UCC. The amounts are approximately \$20,000.00 and \$86,293.00. We will only be required to repay these notes if we sell our land and building, leave the UCC, or no longer use the facility for our ministry. In 2024/2025, we did not make a payment toward this commitment.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail at [treasurer@friends-ucc.org](mailto:treasurer@friends-ucc.org).

## **Deputy Moderator of Programs Report 2024-25**

Cecelia Hawkins, Deputy Moderator of Programs

Our Friends Church Mission is to live faithfully, love limitlessly, and serve boldly. What follows below is a picture of our church's efforts through each of our program areas to fulfill that mission. As you look over this impressive list, we hope that you'll find one project or program that appeals to your passions and talents and will consider joining us as we serve one another and our community.

### **All-Church Events**

To close out our celebration of Pride Month this year, Friends held the third annual Grilla- Pride-Palooza on Friday, June 27 with grilled sliders, sides and desserts—karaoke and lots of good fellowship.

### **Justice and Mission Committee**

**Co-Chairs:** Anne Wehrly & Dana Bearce

**Committee Attendees:** Becky Burks, Cady Engler, Pam Engler, Linda Fitzwater, Mary Howell, Kathy Martin, Sally Manthei, Peggy Vitek, Kelly Wellman, Mo Bertrand, Cecelia Hawkins, Robin Miller, Jodie Robinson

MINISTRIES UNDERTAKEN in 2024-25 with identified leadership

### **Churchwide Awareness**

Coordinated a series called "Mission Minded—Living our Faith in Action"

During Sunday worship a brief presentation was given for each of the ministries. A bulletin insert was available. A link on the church website leads to a video of each presenter with accompanying information.

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Ministry</b>                       | <b>Presenter</b> |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Aug 25      | Peace/Friends Food Distribution       | Anne Wehrly      |
| Sept 8      | Family Promise                        | Mary Howell      |
| Sept 22     | Tiny Hope Village                     | Cady Engler      |
| Sept 29     | Crockett Elementary                   | Jodie Robinson   |
| Oct 13      | Brazos Church Pantry                  | Becky Burks      |
| Oct 27      | Brazos Interfaith Immigration Network | Linda Fitzwater  |
| Nov 10      | Soul Care                             | Lanette Schulte  |
| Nov 24      | Festival of Giving-Angel Tree         | Dana Bearce      |
| Jan 12      | Jane's Due Process                    | Cecelia Hawkins  |
| April 27    | Creation Justice Church               | Kelly Wellman    |

### **Food Insecurity**

- Brazos Valley Food Bank Produce Distribution with Peace Lutheran – Anne Wehrly (weekly) This distribution served 5739 families during 2024. Twenty-two Friends were regular volunteers. The site also provides further connection points for families, including registering to vote, Know Your Rights bulletins, info on low cost/no cost health care.
- In August we distributed donated Healthy Snacks to all the families who had school age children as part of our regular Friends/Peace Produce Distribution-Dana Bearce.
- On September 9th we held a combined Sunday worship service with Peace Lutheran to celebrate our ongoing food ministry with them. This ministry started in June 2020.
- Feast of Caring - donation to Brazos Food Bank
- Crop Walk – Pastor Brooke and youth
- Anne Wehrly and Ann Wild served on the core team for a newly formed group called Brazos Hunger Solutions that has leadership with St. Andrew's Episcopal, the Brazos Valley Food Bank, and Twin City Mission. The goal is to fill gaps in providing food. 501-C3 status was obtained and a grant for \$10,000 was received from the Baylor Hunger Collaborative. During July 2025, funds will be collected from Friends to serve children who do not have access to summer feeding programs.
- Brazos Church Pantry—Friends supplied a team of volunteers the first Saturday of every month. The church Pantry fed 19,245 families in 2024. Becky Burks served as our representative.
- The Bread for the World letter writing campaign was held in May. This was a joint effort with First Christian Church, Bryan, to advocate for legislation that addressed hunger needs in our community, state and nationally. Letters were written to Congressman Michel McCaul, and eighty letters were delivered to the Congressman's office by Dan DeLeon and other local clergy in early June.

### **Affordable Housing/The Unhoused**

- Family Promise- Friends provided 4 weeks of support (prepared evening meals, breakfast & lunch food, and overnight support) for families in the Family Promise program. Anne Wehrly, Mary Howell, and Sally Manthei were our church coordinators. Friends fielded a cook-off team. Over 25 members from Friends attended this fundraiser.
- Back Bay Mission identified the need for underwear for adult men and women who were unhoused. The budgeted \$200 was used to purchase underwear and it was delivered by Friends to South Central Conference Annual Meeting in Houston.
- Tiny Hope Village was supported by workday volunteering & donations through the men's Breakfast group, coordinated by Cady Engler. THV has completed homes for families 3 and 4.

### **Supporting Children And Families**

- Pam Engler and Jodie Robinson led Crockett Elementary School staff/teacher appreciation and no cost book fair. This included on-going support to the Crockett teachers including September Kolaches, Thanksgiving treat bags, and Valentines Day treats. In June, the no-cost book fair was held and each child attending Crockett was able to select 5 books to take home as their own.
- Anne Wehrly and Mary Howell coordinated our Festival of Giving Tree (Angel Tree). Sixty-five children were sponsored through Child Protective Services. This was our 5th year of sponsorship and each year the response from Friends is overwhelming.

- Through the Angel Tree \$1,340 was donated in the form of gift cards to be used by our pastors as folks stop by Friends with needs for food or gas and other needs.
- Barb Lorraine, Theresa Walker, and Anne Wehrly coordinated the UPAVIM –Fair Trade Craft Sale supporting children and women in Guatemala. \$2665 was raised during the craft sale. This amount was up \$1200 from 2023.

**Immigration/Immigrant Welcoming Congregation - Cecelia Hawkins and Linda Fitzwater**

- Linda Fitzwater served as the Friends representative to Brazos Interfaith Immigration Network.
- The first Family Preparedness Clinic was completed, serving 50 families with 13 additional late arrivals scheduled for the next clinic.
- The first Vigil of Silent Witness for Justice and Dignity was held February 7 with over 100 in attendance.
- The Second Vigil and Third Vigil held March 7th and April 4th had good turnouts.
- We conducted Workplace Raid Rapid Response team training at Friends.
- The "Know Your Rights" training was completed for volunteers to make presentations in Spanish. Hundreds of KYR flyers in Spanish as well as red cards have been distributed in churches, businesses, food pantries/distribution points, etc.
- Legal Defense Fund Presentations were completed to several church congregations. Over \$8000 has been raised for this fund so far.

**Reproductive Justice – Cecelia Hawkins and Kristin Harper**

- We hosted an informational program for community members on the state of abortion in Texas, including self-managed abortions.
- We formed the Reproductive Health Access Group (RHAG) as a committee of Justice & Mission with the purpose of improving access to local information, resources, and products related to reproductive health, particularly for the underserved.
- We continued to support the work of Jane's Due Process by hosting volunteer training, serving as a pickup point for emergency contraceptives, and soliciting volunteer drivers.
- We cooperated with Texas Impact in lobbying efforts related to reproductive health policy during the legislative session.

**Faith Inclusion And Disability Awareness –Robin Miller**

- We have been working on Providing Mental Health Awareness workshop.
- Brooke Dooley organized a Youth Mental Health First Aid Workshop conducted on January 26, 2025.

**Creation Justice Church – Kelly Wellman/Dana Bearce**

- Organizational meetings to create a Green Team in order to obtain UCC Creation Justice Church designation were held virtually on March 24th and May 25th.
- In early June, groups will be assigned to one of four dimensions of a Creation Justice Church in order to review what we have already done and future plans to increase the positive environmental impact of our church and our world. This work will include filling out the application to become a Creation Justice Church with a goal to accept the covenant and submit the application in April 2026.

**LGBTQ+--Mo Bertrand**

- An ongoing Gender Affirming support group takes place on the second Monday of each month.
- We continue to work with Texas Impact to work on LGBTQ+ issues on a statewide basis.

- In conjunction with the Outreach and Evangelism Committee, we took part in outreach opportunities such as Outoberfest in Bryan during October, 2024.

## **Spiritual Life Committee Annual Report 2024-2025**

Becky Burks

The Spiritual Life Committee assists and co-coordinates spiritual growth opportunities for individuals, small groups, families, communal settings, and with the Wider Church.

**Committee Chair:** Becky Burks

**Committee Members:** Jodie Robinson, Linda Fitzwater, Lanette Schulte, Jacque Halverson, Senior Pastor Dan De Leon and Executive Pastor Trent Williams

### **Individual Devotional Opportunities**

- Daily and Seasonal Devotionals –
  - UCC Devotionals were purchased and provided for those who desired one for Advent 2024 and Lent 2025
- Our labyrinth is located behind the church and is open daily to all. We honor this space as "holy space."

**Small Group Opportunities** - Small group ministries offer deeper connections and relationships with each other in our faith community while exploring, nurturing, and growing in our spirituality together. Small groups give us an opportunity to nurture spiritual growth in a supportive and safe setting and to share the joys and concerns in our lives. Small groups form around monthly book studies, short term special interest studies, and contemplative prayer groups that broaden and deepen our relationship with God.

- **Linda Coats' Book Club** – has met on the last Thursday evening of the month every month from June 2024 through May 2025, with the exception of the summer months and November and December, 2024.
- **Seasonal Weekly Meditation Group** – was held on Tuesday mornings at 7:30 during Advent 2024 and Lent 2025 and was led by Spiritual Life Committee members.
- **Social Justice Class:** This adult Sunday School class continues to meet weekly and explores how spiritual beliefs inform our daily life and our interactions with the world. Various speakers plus class-led volunteers prepare for the Sunday morning discussions.
- **Morning Manna Class:** This class meets weekly and explores scripture-based and lectionary studies and is led by Executive Pastor Trent Williams.
- **Joint Sunday School Classes:** The Social Justice Class and the Morning Manna adult classes met jointly a few times for special studies; Pastor Dan led Names for the Messiah during Advent 2024, Pastor Trent offered a series on the book The Widening of God's Mercy in Lent 2025, and the two jointly led Do I Stay Christian in May, 2025.

### **Communal Opportunities**

- **Inquire + Connect** – The former Inquiry Class was reimagined and became Inquire + Connect in 2023. The Inquire class is designed to provide information to people that are interested in knowing more about Friends Congregational Church and the larger United Church of Christ. It is a place for learning from current members and asking questions in a welcoming environment. Participants are invited to share their individual faith journeys, to learn about and discuss the UCC Statement of Faith, and to explore the concept of Spiritual Locations. The Spiritual Life Committee provides a meal, schedules at least two current members as panel members and facilitates the discussion. These meetings occur at Friends church after an 11:00 service. This year, participants in each Inquire class were offered an opportunity to Connect, a second and subsequent gathering occurring over a meal at a Spiritual Life member's home. This offered opportunity for a more intimate discussion, more questions, and authentic connection to Friends Church. Inquiry classes are generally quarterly and were held on 9/8/24, 11/3/24, 2/16/25 and 5/4/25; Connect gatherings followed each, typically the following week.
- **SoulCare Ministry** – SoulCare is a ministry and opportunity for service of Friends Congregational Church to the residents of Fortress Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. This ministry offers a time of singing, prayer and a short devotional, on the first Thursday of each month. Spiritual Life Committee members Lanette Schulte and Linda Fitzwater coordinate with devoted volunteer Shellie Lyons.

## **Fellowship**

Jan Patterson

### **Programs**

- A Back-to-School Taco Breakfast was held August 11, 2024. Representatives from Christian Ed and Fellowship planned and organized it. Restaurant-prepared food was purchased and served. Fellowship budget paid for it.
- Friendsgiving Dinner – Friends held its annual FriendsGiving potluck dinner on November 24 in the sanctuary with overflow in the double classroom for 144 participants. Worship/Communion began at 5:45 with dinner starting at 6:00pm.
- Advent Church Decorating refreshments (11/30) – Pastries, coffee, hot chocolate, apple cider was available to the volunteers.
- Christmas Cantata Reception was held on Thursday, December 12 utilizing the right third section of the sanctuary utilizing three high top tables, buffet table and beverage table. Hors d'oeuvres, sweets/cookies and several gluten free items, wine, punch and water were available for the 164 people in attendance.
- Ash Wednesday Soup Supper was held at 5:45 on March 5 prior to the evening service at 6:30. Approximately 65 people participated.
- Easter Finger Food Potluck was held following 11 am service on April 20. An estimated 80 people participated. Food was donated and served from the buffet tables and beverages from a table by the kitchen window. The five high top tables were set up in the far right section of the sanctuary.

### **Coffee Service**

Coffee Crew and Kitchen Angel volunteer duty sign-up has moved from Signup Genius to Realm. A limited number of people have used it instead of the signup sheet in the kitchen, and finding volunteers continues to be a challenge. Most Sundays we use both the percolator (40 cup) and one or two carafes (approximately 10 cups each) of regular coffee, one carafe of decaf, two carafes of hot water (mostly for hot chocolate, but some tea) each week.

### **Cleaning and Organizing**

Tablecloths have been sorted into different bins according to color or theme and labeled and stored in the buffet tables with the rectangle tables. The five high top tables are stored behind the buffet tables. The cracked baptismal font has been wrapped in bubble wrap, glass wine glasses have been wrapped and stored in 2 plastic storage tubs, and extra communion chalices and plates, along with two containers of punch cups, are stored in the shed. The kitchen and refrigerator are regularly cleaned and the pantry and cabinet drawers organized.

### **Purchases**

Fellowship purchased three and had two high top tables donated. Five white 90” round tablecloths were purchased for the high top tables. Additional knives, soup spoons and teaspoons to meet the demand needed for Friendsgiving Dinner were purchased and donated. An inventory of plates, bowls, drink dispensers, punch cups, flatware, tablecloths and tables is located on the share drive and in the hard copy three ring binder.

### **Administration**

Post-event reports for each of the programs sponsored by Fellowship have been written and added to the Fellowship Committee notebook and share drive.

## **Nurture Committee**

Clarissa Kennedy

The Nurture Committee coordinates and assists the care and nurture of Church members and friends of the congregation. The Committee has not held formal meetings in the past. However, many individuals have taken leadership of programs and events, as listed below.

### **Groups and Events**

**Guyz Breakfast** – Held the second Saturday of the month, at 9:00 a.m. at the church. Eli Vasquez has taken over leadership of this group. Guyz sign up a few months in advance to set up and make pancakes and coffee. Attendance varies from 5-20.

**Fabulous at Any Age** –There were two FAA events in the fall and one in the spring. All three were well attended. Other successful events included rock painting, led by Lanette Schulte, held at the church using our own supplies. We also had a holiday-themed glass art class at Brazos Glassworks. In the spring we had breakfast after the 7 a.m. Ash Wednesday service.

**Wonderful Wednesdays with Women** – On the second Wednesday of the month, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., we meet in a local bar, restaurant or someone’s home for “happy hour” type activity. The locations vary, with establishments in Bryan and College Station. Stacy DeLeon schedules and promotes these events.

**First Friday with Friends** – Jon Taute leads this monthly event held in downtown Bryan. We have a “meet-up” at Blackwater Draw on the first Friday of every month in conjunction with Downtown Bryan’s First Friday activities. The owner/operator of Blackwater Draw has given his blessing. Folks stop by for a beverage or stay for the evening. The event is well attended.

**Adoption and Foster Care Support Group** - This is a new group led by Ann Rome. This group supports parents of adopted or foster children. Meetings are held every second Sunday of the month following the 11:00 am service.

### **Care**

**Prayer Requests** – Prayer cards are collected after each service and placed in the office. Our pastors go through the cards and deliver them to responsible committee members or reach out to those who request pastoral care. Those requests are added to any requests that are submitted via email/Facebook to the church community by Tuesday morning.

**Meals** – Church members and friends provided meals to families experiencing life challenges, such as a death in the family, illness, birth of baby, or health issues. The meals are coordinated using the free service “Meal Train.” This year, due to a change in chairs for this committee, a complete count was not available.

**Welcome Letters** – Pam Engler sends letters of welcome to visitors. Visitor cards are collected at the Offertory. On Monday, Administrative Assistant Michael Rangel sends names and addresses to Pam who sends visitors a personal note of welcome. The exact number of letters is not known at this time.

**Calls of Care** – This ministry was handled by Doris Simpson, who provided calls and checked on members and friends as requested by the Nurture Chair. This year, a call went out to the general membership requesting assistance in providing calls to those who are shut in, those who would like a call, and those who would like prayer.

**Sympathy Cards and Memorials** – When a friend or member experiences a death in their family, the Nurture Chair sends them a card of sympathy on behalf of the church. If the death is of an immediate family member, the card includes the offer to make a donation in the deceased person’s name to one of three charities selected by the Church Council.

**Youth Mission Trip Care Packages** – To support their mission work in Washington, DC in 2024, the Nurture Committee provided our youth and adult volunteers with a fanny pack. These were useful for keeping track of metro passes, snacks, water bottles, etc. while they traveled throughout the city.

### **Visits, Comfort and Support**

Over the past year, we have provided rides to church and to doctor appointments and procedures, stayed with a member while hospitalized, and assisted with packing and moving. We continue to provide ongoing care to members who live in assisted living communities and those who are living in their own homes. We check on members who are hospitalized or need care in other ways, such as meals, cleaning, and visits.

### **Additional Notes**

This year, as the new chair, I started in March 2025. As resources are identified and gathered, I am looking forward to working with the pastors, program chairs and other programs to enhance the care provided to our members and families.

## **Evangelism and Outreach**

Megan Alvear

This year has been one of deep engagement, joyful witness, and intentional connection-building for Friends Congregational Church in our Evangelism and Outreach efforts. Our work has centered on living into our Open and Affirming identity by showing up, both literally and spiritually, in spaces where our presence as a progressive, inclusive faith community makes a meaningful impact. A central focus this year was our involvement with local Pride events, alongside broader outreach opportunities that embody the radical welcome of Christ.

### **Pride Events**

Our presence at Pride events this year was a testament to our ongoing commitment to LGBTQ+ affirmation and advocacy. We participated in the Pride Community Center's OUToberfest, with a booth representing Friends Church. We offered free rainbow pins, inclusive Christian resources, and a space for conversation, prayer, and affirmation. Many attendees expressed deep gratitude for our presence—some were even moved to tears to see a church proclaiming, "God is Still Speaking." Additionally, members of our congregation participated in an event on Texas A&M campus, radiating joy and solidarity. Our involvement wasn't just symbolic—it was pastoral. We made real connections, provided spiritual support, and witnessed to a vision of Christianity that is healing, loving, and just.

### **Texas A&M Queer Empowerment Council's Rainbow Resource Fair**

September 4, 2024 – Memorial Student Center, Texas A&M University

We were honored to take part in the Rainbow Resource Fair, hosted by the Queer Empowerment Council (student organization) at Texas A&M. This event gathered LGBTQ+ affirming organizations to share resources and encouragement with students. Our table was set with rainbow-inspired decor, a bowl of Skittles, and candy labeled with our Friends Church QR code linking to our Linktree—a sweet invitation to explore faith in a community that truly affirms all.

The presence of Pastor Brooke, Doris Machinski, and Jeremy Dudo gave our table both warmth and witness. Many students paused, smiled, and expressed surprise—some even relief—to see a church visibly and joyfully standing with them. A few lingered in conversation, opening up about their spiritual journeys and appreciating a safe space to ask faith questions without fear.

### **Pride Community Center's First Annual "OUToberfest"**

**October 12, 2024 – Downtown Bryan**

For the inaugural "OUToberfest" hosted by the Pride Community Center, Friends Congregational Church joyfully sponsored a booth with a \$500 contribution—further deepening our covenant with the LGBTQ+ community of the Brazos Valley. Set in the heart of Downtown Bryan, the event was filled with energy, music, and color, and we were grateful to be a visible beacon of God's love in the midst of it all.

Our table was once again adorned with rainbow-themed décor, and we offered Skittles, bracelets, mini pride flags, enamel pins, and candy wrapped with QR codes leading to our Linktree. By the end of the day, we had shared over 110 pieces of candy and giveaways—each one a small seed

of welcome and joy.

Doris Machinski, Mo Bertrand, Caleb Klemt (accompanied by Ellie), and Megan Alvear helped bring life to our presence, making heartfelt connections with attendees. Some visitors recognized the name “Friends Church” and shared affirming stories; others were hearing of us for the first time and were drawn in by the bold welcome we embody. The conversations were rich, curious, and Spirit-filled—planting seeds that may bloom in ways we may never see, but trust God will water.

### **Destination Bryan’s “First Friday: Pride Month”**

#### **June 6, 2025 – Downtown Bryan**

In celebration of Pride Month, we were blessed to participate in Destination Bryan’s First Friday event, thanks to the generous hospitality of Pride 100. Sharing a tent downtown, we joyfully welcomed folks on one side and shared about the wonderful offerings of our neighbors on the other—embodying the spirit of collaboration and inclusive welcome that defines our ministry.

Friends Congregational Church came prepared with a rainbow of resources: Skittles and QR-coded candy, pocket hearts, bracelets, stickers, more than 250 Pride flags, a speaker, a bubble machine, and two bubble wands. We gave out over 130 candies and 29 handmade hearts, each gifted with kindness and intention. These weren’t just giveaways—they were tokens of belonging and belovedness.

We are especially grateful to Mo Bertrand and Megan Alvear for staffing our table with grace and good humor, and to Adrian Capetillo and her family for their generosity and shared witness. The event was vibrant, the energy contagious, and the Holy Spirit present in every moment of laughter, curiosity, and conversation. As with similar events like OUToberfest, our presence here affirmed something essential: Friends Church must continue to show up in these spaces—to proclaim and embody a Gospel of radical love.

### ***Lessons Learned***

The First Friday sign-up process is now first come, first served, requiring earlier planning and coordination.

### **Church Sign Ministry**

Pastor Dan is truly a magician when it comes to creating meaningful and timely church signs. We are fortunate to have a strong team of new and returning volunteers, and there is deep gratitude for everyone who contributes to this visible ministry.

The Evangelism & Outreach Chair is also currently working on a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to support sign planning and implementation. This will help generate fresh ideas and relieve Pastor Dan of this routine.

### **Goals for Next Year**

Looking ahead, the Evangelism and Outreach Team will continue building bridges within the community and beyond. Planned goals include:

- Establishing a more frequent community presence at local markets and events to table -- more opportunities for tabling at events that align with our mission, values, and affirming message.
- Deepening partnerships with LGBTQ+ groups for year-round collaboration—not just during Pride Month.
- Welcome Bags for Visitors: Updated and distributed welcome bags with information about our church, mission, and inclusive theology.
- We would love to see more opportunities for our pastors to offer invocations at community events—bringing a spiritual voice of inclusion and welcome to public spaces.

### **Special Thanks**

A special word of gratitude to Martha Newsome for her continued support throughout the entire year. While she wasn't able to attend the events in person, her passionate and fierce spirit for all our LGBTQ+ siblings lifted us continually. Her institutional knowledge, idea-sharing, and genuine kindness helped shape our outreach in lasting ways. Thank you also to Olive Okoro, who faithfully took over all things social media for the year. Her work lifted a huge burden from the Evangelism & Outreach Chair and amplified our message to a wider, digital audience with grace and creativity.

This work is only possible because of the Spirit moving through this congregation. I give thanks for every volunteer who showed up to Pride, every member who shared a post online, and every soul who welcomed a stranger into our midst. Evangelism at Friends isn't about conversion—it's about conversation, compassion, and community. And this year, we've lived that out in three beautiful ways.

### **Worship Committee**

Charity Stokes

**Members:** Andy Ambrus, Anne Nichols, Charity Stokes, Ryan Womack, Jin Soon Sagong, Kim Witt, Wolfgang Verdegaal (Banners), Senior Pastor Dan De Leon

The Worship Committee is responsible for coordinating with the ministerial staff in preparing all the details for regular and special worship services. The committee is tasked with making all the elements available for communion (including baking the bread); scheduling Greeters, Lay Leaders, and Communion Stewards for services; changing out liturgical cloths and banners appropriate for each season; keeping the altar candles ready for services; preparing the baptismal font and/or baptistry for services; providing special decorations for Advent, Christmas, and Easter; making sure the sanctuary or other worship spaces are prepared and welcoming for each service, including placement of chairs; and making sure that Welcome, Pray, Give envelopes, Note Cards, pens, and hymnals are easily accessible for our church family and guests. They also assist with arrangements for funerals, vigils, ordinations, and other special services.

## **Attendance records for July 2024-June 2025**

### **Average attendances:**

Sunday, 9:00 am service - (In person 7/7/2024 - 6/22/25) 31

Sunday, 11:00 am service - (In person 7/7/2024 - 6/22/25) 105.5

### **Special Services:**

Christmas Cantata - 164 with 18 virtual

Longest Night - 33

Christmas Eve - 186

Ash Wednesday (morning) - n/a

Ash Wednesday (evening) -n/a

Maundy Thursday - 29

Palm Sunday (9:00) - 40

Palm Sunday (11:00) - 163

Good Friday - n/a

Easter (9:00) - 154

Easter (11:00) – 175

On Feb 2, 2025 Kyle Riley was ordained. Challah bread was obtained by the committee chair at Kyle's request.

### **Note about Worship Volunteers**

This year, we had issues with the signup for communion stewards. People are not using Realm to sign up, especially for the 11:00 services. This has resulted in the church administrative assistant having to ask for volunteers the week of communion to recruit someone. As a result, the same people are often serving as communion stewards.

We are always looking for members of our church family who are interested in helping to make the worship experience even more welcoming and meaningful and are willing to make the commitment to help make that possible.

### **Thank Yous**

Special thanks go to the coordinators of specific areas: Anne Nichols, Andy Ambrus, Ryan Womack, Jin Soon Sagong, Kim Witt for their continued help with the following: taking care of our banner needs, candles, baptisms, new members, special Sundays, baking our communion bread, and for general help anytime I needed help! Also special thanks to Wolfgang Verdegaaal for hanging our upper banners through the year.

Special thanks goes to those that helped with Hanging of the Greens: Dan DeLeon, Andy Ambrus, Sue Ambrus, Brent Paterson, Jan Paterson, Chris Hoffman (playing of Christmas Carols), Cecelia Hawkins, Parker Stephenson, Pam Fitzpatrick, Charity Stokes, Evan Ballweg, Henry Ballweg and others.

Finally, for those that helped take down the Greens: Andy Ambrus, Anne Nichols, Ryan Womack and Jackie Womack.

## **Christian Education**

Abby Burley

**Committee Members:** Robin Miller, Tami Dudo, Kathy Roblyer, Hannah Alexander, Anne Wehrly, Mary Howell, Pastor Brooke Dooley, Doris Machinski

The Christian Education Committee plans and provides Sunday School for our children and youth, community service projects, and youth group activities. This year we provided weekly Sunday School and youth group activities, along with providing the following annual events:

- Back to school fellowship breakfast/Blessing of the Backpacks
- Pumpkin painting party
- Children's Sabbath Sunday
- Christmas Pageant
- Palm Sunday palm distribution
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Graduate Recognition
- Confirmation Class: Held January-June 2025 with two youth confirmed
- Youth Mission Trip: Our youth missionaries and sponsors will leave July 5, 2025 for Denver, CO. The trip is focused on environmental justice.

Vacation Bible School was held early June 2025 with the theme "All Aboard the Faith Express." We had an average of 19 children from ages PreK-5th grade attend each day. It was a huge success due to the planning of Amanda & Drew Bowen and the whole Christian Education Committee and volunteers.

## **Deputy Moderator of Trustees Report 2025**

Fran B. Duane, Deputy Moderator of Trustees

### **Personnel**

Ryan Womack, Chair

Over the past year, the Personnel Committee has continued to address staffing needs, with a particular focus on the part-time Childcare Worker position. While the position is currently filled, we continue to explore ways to improve and create a safe, and nurturing environment for the youngest members of our congregation.

In the coming year, we also plan to search for a Childcare Supervisor who can provide leadership and support to our childcare program and assist Morgan in her role. This additional position will help ensure continuity, provide guidance for volunteers, and enhance the overall quality and coordination of childcare services.

To further support childcare coverage, we recognize the need to establish a list of trained volunteers who have completed background checks and are willing to assist in the childcare room. This volunteer support will allow us to uphold our policy of having at least two adults always present when children are in our care.

The childcare room continues to be a valuable resource, particularly for families with infants under the age of one. Given the consistent use, we anticipate future conversations about how to better accommodate infants—potentially by designating a dedicated space specifically for their needs.

### **Ongoing Human Resources Functions**

Throughout the year, the committee focuses on essential HR functions, including:

- Reviewing and updating the Human Resources Handbook (formerly known as the “Personnel Handbook”) to ensure policies remain up to date and in alignment with best practices.
- Drafting policies and procedures for the childcare program to promote a safe, consistent, and welcoming environment for children, families, and volunteers.
- Assisting in the review and development of a staff performance appraisal program to support professional growth and organizational health.

We are grateful for the continued support of the congregation and leadership as we strive to build a strong, effective, and compassionate team that serves our community well.

### **Note from Deputy Moderator of Trustees:**

The task of a Child Safety Policy was completed, and an account has been established with [https://www.praesidiumacademy.com/learn/sign\\_in](https://www.praesidiumacademy.com/learn/sign_in). This is to be compliant with the liability insurance. The Child Safety Policy is consistent with the safety training of the Liability Insurance. All persons who work with children, adolescents or adults with disabilities are

required to complete 4 classes prior to their volunteering or being hired for a paid position. It is also important to note that we will continue and enforce the 2-deep supervision where a trained adult will not be alone with anyone under the age of 18.

### **Property**

Steve Robinson

I want to thank all those who volunteer their time to keep the church property in good condition.

### **Lighting:**

- Light fixture was replaced in the west side parking lot light.
- Dusk-to-dawn lights were installed in front of the office and in front of the narthex. Outside lighting has greatly improved.
- Received estimate to install a third parking lot light toward middle of parking lot. Estimated cost is \$15,000.

### **HVAC:**

- Replaced pulley on the air handler above the kitchen. Vibration and noise were significantly reduced.
- Emergency drain was plugged in HVAC system above kitchen causing a water leak in a closet. Repairs were made.
- Other minor repairs were made throughout the year.

### **Foundation:**

- A drainage system in the courtyard behind the sanctuary was installed. This resulted in improved water drainage away from the slab.
- While there are many cracks in the drywall in the office wing, slab movement seems to have subsided. We'll continue to watch for further movement before making repairs to drywall.

### **Plumbing:**

- A hole developed in a pressure tank above the women's restroom, causing significant water damage. Repairs were made.
- A water pipe broke beneath sidewalk leading to church office and concrete had to be removed. The water line and sidewalk were repaired.

### **Miscellaneous:**

- Fire alarm in the air duct above kitchen was replaced.
- Wireless panic buttons were installed in the sanctuary and near the exit door in front of the church office.
- Dishwasher in kitchen right of the sink was loose. This was addressed by installing new clips.

## **Stewardship**

### **Stewardship Annual Report 2024-25**

Martha Newsome

As the new Stewardship Chair this year, I have learned the timeline and detailed work of a stewardship campaign requires great diligence, and it was an honor to accompany Pastor Trent through this process. The 2025 campaign focused on Courage in time of national and global anxiety and fear. In the letter to the Galatians (6:9), Paul shared “let’s not get tired of doing good, because in time we’ll have a harvest if we don’t give up.” We recalled the courage of a small Friends congregation nearly five decades ago who faithfully started this church, and the courage of Friends nearly thirty years ago to become the first Open & Affirming church in the South-Central Conference. Our 2025 theme, “Let Courage Rise” was a perfect fit for this challenging season. Our courage and our generosity do make a difference!

Many thanks to the wonderful group of Friends who shared their stewardship stories in inspiring testimonies at both services during the May stewardship campaign. In response, church members said the stories reminded them of the many reasons they love this church. And once again, Friends Congregational Church has broken another record with 83 pledged commitments of \$492,463 for the 2025-26 budget. It is truly a gift to experience this time of resounding courage and promise in this season of great challenge.

In addition to the commitments shared during our stewardship campaign, Friends also contributes to the United Church of Christ special offerings. As a delegate at the South-Central Conference (SCC) Annual Meeting this year, it was inspiring to learn that in 2024-25 Friends Congregational Church “Five for Five” designation placed the church in a group of 17 out of 45 SCC churches and one of only four Heart of Texas churches (out of 16). This Five for Five designation is given to churches who give to five different funds as indicated below. These special offerings provide support for many different local, national and global needs. The offerings and the total donations from Friends for 2024-25 are given below.

Our Church’s Wider Mission: \$250  
One Great Hour of Sharing: \$3,101.11  
Strengthen the Church: \$100.00 (in progress as of 6/20/25)  
Neighbors in Need: \$2,130.24  
The Christmas Fund: \$2,460.00

## **Financial Secretary**

Alex Cannon

The primary duties of the Financial Secretary are to:

- Collect, categorize, and post all church income from checks, cash, and Venmo on a weekly/monthly (Venmo) basis to the Realm Connect software system. Recurring gifts

from credit and automatic drafts are handled automatically through the Realm system with the Financial Secretary notified of these donations through the Gmail account.

- Prepare a manual collection counting sheet and a computer-generated bank deposit each week and take the weekly deposits to Brenham National Bank.
- Communicate any necessary information regarding “one time” gifts to the church treasurer monthly letting the treasurer know the intended fund or special account.
- Transfer the monthly Venmo giving to the bank account at the end of each month and post the monthly Venmo donations to Realm. A monthly spreadsheet is prepared for use in posting Venmo donations to individual givers in Realm.
- Prepare and distribute annual giving statements to church membership and other givers as well as answer any question. Prepare and distribute quarterly Pledge statements for pledging donors.
- Maintain a roster of members to serve in a backup capacity on Sundays when the Financial Secretary is not available.
- Serve as a member of the Trustees Committee and the Finance Committee and attend meetings as needed.

The transition to Realm has made the position of Financial Secretary significantly smoother and eliminated the need for the weekly reports to the Treasurer that were necessary under the old software system.