



ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH IN THE HIGHLANDS

ANNUAL PARISH REPORT • MARCH 3, 2024 • GARRISON, NY

AGENDA

Opening Prayer

Report of the Nominating Committee

- Presentation of the Slate
- Appointment of Secretary and Ballot Counters

LUNCH

Rector's Report

The Rev. Amanda Eiman

Vestry Report

Sarah Bayne,
Senior Warden
Will Felder, Junior Warden

Nursery School Report

Betsy Alberty, Director

Financial Report

Matthew Illian, Treasurer

Stewardship Report

Smitha Dawson

Results of the Parish Election

Recognition of Service to St. Philip's

Commissioning of New Vestry Members

Closing Prayer and Meeting Adjournment

RECTOR'S MESSAGE

Rev. Amanda Eiman

Dear St. Philip's Family,

Many would say that in 2023 the world experienced a transition truly into "post-COVID" time. While the virus is still very much part of our daily lives, we are now able to gather, sing, worship, and share in fellowship together without routine distancing, masking, or other precautions. Post-COVID life is different, but St. Philip's is adapting and growing in new ways. We are establishing new patterns in our life together as a church, and we remain strongly tied to traditions that have sustained us throughout our 250+ years.

Our strongest moments, I believe, occur in our shared worship, whether on Sundays or during services during the week. There is a vibrancy present among you no matter if the church is packed because of a baptism or special feast day, or if there is lighter attendance due to a weather event or a smaller weekday service like our Wednesday evening Compline. Christ's presence is palpable, and our worship inspires and grounds us in all that we do.

Our commitments to our outreach ministries, our children's ministry, youth group, music ministry, fellowship, pastoral care, our celebration of our 250 years as a parish, our study and learning, and the stewardship of our beautiful buildings and grounds, have allowed us to deepen our spiritual connections with each other and with our surrounding community. Relationships have grown and we have welcomed new individuals and families into our church. We are extremely grateful for all the ways that newcomers and visitors as well as longtime members bless us with love and prayer, and reveal Christ's presence. And our St. Philip's Nursery School continues to hold a special place in Philipstown. We have had to examine our budget carefully this year, yet we move ahead with faith and diligence. Thank you to all who lead ministries and who give to support the work of this church.

I give God thanks for all of you who make up this community. Through your time and treasure, you help St. Philip's be the growing presence we are locally and in the world, and you help us on our mission of transforming lives through Christ. God bless you!

Grace and Peace,
Amanda+



Photo: Daniel Bentley

**ST. PHILIP'S
CHURCH**
IN THE HIGHLANDS

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PO Box 158
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stphilipshighlands.org

CELEBRATING

250

1770 - 2020 years

ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH
IN THE HIGHLANDS

WARDENS' REPORT

This past fall, two events put into perspective St. Philip's historical role in the spiritual life of Garrison. First, we celebrated the life of the Rev. Francis Geer, our pastor for thirty years. During his funeral and burial service, we heard about his remarkable leadership, his love for his family, friends and the strangers among us, and his humble, inclusive theology. Just a few weeks later, we marked the 250th anniversary of St. Philip's founding in Garrison: a simple church – guiding us through conflict, rebellion, war, disease, and recession, but also safeguarding the wondrous joy of another baptism, wedding, or the simple handshake while passing the Peace. We are truly blessed to be called upon to continue the legacy of an institution like St. Philip's and to follow in the example of Frank's leadership.

The Episcopal Church is facing a time of great challenge and uncertainty. Average Sunday attendance is down in the New York diocese from 19,000 worshippers ten years ago to 9,000 today. This is reflective of a nationwide trend in our denomination that has seen declines in participation of 50% nationwide over the past ten years. While many Americans still self-identify as "Christians," active participation in spiritual activity has declined among Generation Z and Millennials as compared to Generation X and Baby Boomers at similar stages in life. All of this is occurring at a time when the message of love and justice that Jesus Christ delivered to the world is more necessary than ever as we watch geopolitical unrest and the ravages of inequality closer to home grow more pressing by the day. Global and national divisions now find us at home as evil messages meant to separate us from each other are sent directly into our homes. Our spiritual community must be ready to answer the call to counter this isolating and destructive progression. It is imperative that St. Philip's continues to provide a refuge to those who suffer, to minister to the strangers among us, and to restore all to unity with God.

We are ready for this challenge! In the following updates, you will see the reflections of enthusiastic lay leadership across a diverse range of activities that make St. Philip's the spiritual center of Garrison. Our volunteers build our thriving parish by cooking and serving meals to the homeless, by

herding a gaggle of children across 9D to get to choir practice, by being on-call 24/7 to answer the call of an exploding boiler or an erupting sewage line, by delivering communion to those who cannot attend services, by celebrating with music, and by participating in countless other acts of selflessness that define a vibrant Church (including the production of this report).

If we are to continue to be ready for this challenge, then the question for all of us in 2024 is, "What more will you do?" How will you spend your time, talents, and treasure to continue and build the legacy of St. Philip's? What will you do to sustain St. Philip's as the spiritual center of Garrison? We are the beneficiaries of over 250 years of commitment and stewardship to make St. Philip's what it is today, now what more can we do to ensure St. Philip's continues its mission for another 250 years?

The Vestry, responsible for the management of the Church's physical and monetary resources, is grateful to all those who over the past year have served in leadership roles in our community and have given so much of themselves to move our mission forward. We look forward to your continued support, and for a year of service and support of St. Philip's

Sarah Bayne, Senior Warden

sarahbayne1@gmail.com 845-424-3249

Will Felder, Junior Warden

will.felder@gmail.com 301-367-4321



Photo: Ross Conair

Members of the Vestry

Rev. Amanda Eiman, *Rector*
Sarah Bayne, *Senior Warden*
Will Felder, *Junior Warden*
Kari Jo Cates
Jamie Copeland
Charlie Dupree

Margy Gerber, *Clerk*
Paul Kantor
Fred Osborn
Marilyn Palefsky
Jennifer Sandlund
Charity Shumway

LIFE IN OUR CHURCH

SERVICE TO OTHERS

Outreach ministries in 2023 provided numerous ways for St. Philip's Church to extend its Christian mission beyond the church grounds, actively serving those in need in our local community, regionally, and internationally. The committee responsible for organizing our outreach ministries includes both long-standing members of St. Philip's and its various ministries, as well as new parishioners who have found inspiration in our mission. A notable highlight in 2024 was the growing participation in outreach efforts throughout the St. Philip's community and the initiation of a promising new ministry in Peekskill. We also sought to extend a warm invitation to all willing to contribute, as we continuously looked for new ways to invite more parishioners into our outreach efforts.

Ministries. This year, we witnessed significant engagement with several of our ministry priorities. Over the summer, the wardens and vestry generously allocated funds to support three summer camp scholarships for children of migrant families in our region through our partnership with **Rural and Migrant Ministries (RMM)** in Cornwall-on-Hudson. Our collaboration with RMM, led by Rev. Richard Witt and the RMM staff, expanded to include food assistance for recent refugees and immigrants, with over a dozen parishioners working together to donate food at events supporting our newest neighbors in the Hudson Valley. Our enduring partnership with the **Hedgewood Senior Center** featured semi-monthly visits, during which we offered communion and brought music to their Sunday afternoons. In early December, parishioners from St. Philip's gifted over 30 new pairs of sweatpants, sweatshirts, and small presents, bringing warmth and care to their winter celebrations. We also found joy in establishing our newest ministry at **Jan Peek Shelter** (part of CHHOP in Peekskill) with a commitment to serve dinner one Monday evening per month to its residents. Whether you were among the parishioners who prepared an enchilada casserole or among those who engaged in meaningful

conversation while serving dinner, the gratitude expressed by the twenty to thirty residents we served monthly was deeply moving, and we continue to be thankful for the opportunity. We are eager to further our efforts in Peekskill, at Jan Peek, and with CHHOP in the coming year.

In November, we modeled a new effort to highlight our service to the **Philipstown Food Pantry** through a dedicated coffee hour, successfully raising awareness about food insecurity in our Philipstown/Garrison community. This effort was made successful by the generous food donations from so many within our congregation. Our engagement with **InnerChange**, a senior support program in Harlem led by Rev. Chris Lawrence, is a wonderful example of the reach of St. Philip's Church beyond our immediate community. On several occasions throughout the year, InnerChange brought seniors to our church for outdoor lunches, a carol service, and to foster connections between our communities. Our respects to the buildings and grounds team for making our beautiful campus a destination for the spiritual and physical comfort for so many.

Our regional collaboration with **San Miguel Academy** resumed towards the year's end with several parishioners providing specialized tutoring as an extension of the school's curriculum; and seemingly a world away, it was the children's chapel students that communicated our Christian mission in ways only children can with hand-written letters to their fellow students at **ACK St. James School in Lelan, Kenya**, bridging those many miles between us and building on St. Philip's and its parishioners' commitment in 2022 that financed the completion of construction of the girls' dormitory on their campus.

These initiatives and partnerships reflect the vibrant spirit of service within the St. Philip's Church community, embodying our commitment to living out our Christian faith through action. We are grateful for the dedication of our parishioners and look forward to deepening and expanding our outreach in the years to come.

Charles Linsmeier

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ST. PHILIP'S NURSERY SCHOOL

As St. Philip's Nursery School embarked on its 63rd year, we continue to adapt and evolve while keeping our nurturing, play-based curriculum. The summer of 2023 brought hot weather and many happy campers. We were full most weeks with 20 campers at a maximum, for each of the 5 weeks offered. Johanna Asher, our gifted Music teacher, entertained our campers each week with song and movement. We are lucky to have a talented roster of enrichment professionals at St. Philip's. We have Miss Micki who teaches dance, Veronica Morgan, Desmond Fish children's librarian, who volunteers



Serving the monthly dinner at Jan Peek Shelter in Peekskill.

Photo: Rev. Amanda Eisman

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her time on a monthly basis to enrich our students with literacy, and our very own Reverend Amanda who teaches chapel once a week. In addition to this, we invite myriad individuals from throughout the community to visit the students and enrich their learning experience.

In September we were able to give our 2s, 3s and 4-year-old students their own class with built-in time for a multi-age learning environment on two of the five school days. We hosted our “Meet the Teachers” Open House where families learned more about our program and signed up for events on our school calendar coordinated by our engaged Parent Committee. We successfully enrolled 23 out of our projected 25 students for the school year. We also had our most successful Parents Night Out in November hosting 25 children. The theme of the first half of the school year involved plenty of outdoor education based on the extensive space of our beautiful campus. Highlights from 2023 include our Pajamas & Pancake Breakfast, White Elephant Sale, Summer Fling, visit from the Garrison Fire Department for Fire Safety Month, Pumpkin Patch for Halloween, Three Sisters Garden plantings in the fall, Our Halloween and Winter Holiday Song & Dance, Mystery and Guest Readers, Parent Committee’s First Indoor Picnic, and more.



St. Philip's Nursery School students dance with Miss Micki.

This past fall, the staff took advantage of several Professional Development trainings. We had Putnam Child Care Council in to talk more about Learning through Play and it gave our teachers the confidence boost in knowing that what we do at St. Philip's is how children learn and grow best. Our second training will be led by church member, Catherine Illian, where we will discuss the Personality and Self-Discovery Guide, the Enneagram and how it can benefit staff collaboration, positive communication, and supportive interpersonal relationships. In concert with our trainings, we have monthly staff meetings to discuss curriculum, upcoming events, and a host of early childhood topics. We completed our first of two Parent Teacher Conferences of the School Year.

Our talented and dedicated staff consists of Director and Duck Teacher, Betsy Alberty, Assistant Director & Lead Blue Rabbit Teacher, Mary Ellen DeAngelis; Blue Rabbit teacher, Jessica Johnstone; Lead Red Rabbit Teacher, Pat Weigman and Red Rabbit Teacher, Melissa Angier.

Looking ahead, we will have our next Spring Fundraiser Cocktail Party on 4/13, Parent's Night Out 4/26, Graduation, and “Summer Fling” camp. This area has many pre-school options, including the advent of multiple local Universal Pre-K programs, but we at St. Philip's continue to provide a unique, nurturing, and enriching learning environment. Open enrollment has begun with a lot of children returning with us for next year. We thank the Nursery School Committee, the vestry, and the entire congregation for your sincere and continued support.

Betsy Alberty, Director

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ST. PHILIP'S NURSERY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The Nursery School Committee is a group of twelve volunteers composed of the school's director, members of the St. Philip's parish, parents of current students, parents of alumni, vestry leadership and our rector. The committee meets monthly to discuss the school and a broad variety of topics including community events, fundraising, enrollment, programming, tuition and more.

As expressed in the Nursery School Director's report, the school, now well into its seventh decade as a vibrant center of the broader community, is a place where children learn, explore, grow, and build lifelong friendships. The reality is that multiple UPK programs are now a staple in the area, along with a new wave of myriad preschool options opening up in recent years, but the committee feels more committed than ever to maintaining St. Philip's Nursery School's place in the community as a program that begins welcoming students at the age of 2 and offers a nurturing, play-based environment and enriching preschool experience on our unique campus. To that end, this spring, committee members will be pursuing an in-depth and honest strategic evaluation of the school as it currently stands and our goals and vision going forward. The school depends on volunteer support, both from parents and friends in the community.

We will host a spring fundraising benefit on April 13. The funds from that event will support the enrichment and operational expenses of the school, just as last year's successful June fundraiser did, along with last spring's White Elephant sale. Looking ahead, we have made the decision along with church leadership to shift the traditional White Elephant sale into the fall season, in order to offer the community an event consisting of a fall festival family

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day, outdoor activities, and the tag-sale component of the traditional White Elephant sale. We are grateful for the support of this St. Philip's community as we continue our efforts as a ministry for the children and families of the Philipstown area, and an important facet of the broader St. Philip's family.

St. Philip's Nursery School Committee

Betsy Alberty, *Director*
Allison Pataki, *Chair*
Kate Calligaro, *Vice Chair*
Sarah Bayne
Kari Jo Cates
Erika Cooper
Rev. Amanda Eiman, *Rector*
Fred Osborn
Anita Prentice
Kimberly Ruperd
Julia Wynn
Travis Yuengst, *Treasurer*

MUSIC MINISTRY

Our music ministry has grown tremendously since last year. Last summer we offered a Sunday afternoon recital series that showcased our magnificent Schoenstein pipe organ, Steinway grand piano, and excellent instrumental and vocal acoustics. Our recitalists included Anthony Rispo, Malik Jardine, Markus Kaitila, Ruth Garcia, Todd Kennedy, Thomas Hobson Williams, Dr. Liya Petrides, Eddie Zheng, Jim Hopkins, and Gabriel Evans. All the recitalists were spectacular.

In Advent we used Rite I liturgy and sang service music from the Missa Marialis, as well as Gregorian chant for the Psalms and Lord's Prayer. We participated in the Ecumenical Evensong series with other Philipstown churches. Unlike the traditional Anglican Choral Evensong, we focused on congregational singing and sourced our hymns and service music from The Hymnal 1982.

Our Children's Choir, under the collegial leadership of Stacy Labriola, sang monthly in our Sunday 10am services. Our Adult Choir rehearsed every Sunday at 9am and sang in the 10am services. Some extra after-church rehearsals took place in preparation for the Advent Evensong.

Thanks to Charity, Colleen, Smitha, Sally, Janine, Tobi, Nzaba, and Chris for their continued commitment to the Adult Choir. Thanks to Stacy for her collegiality and leadership of the Children's Choir.

Christopher Fasulo

chris@christopherfasulo.com 646-342-4836



St. Philip's Adult Choir.

Photo: Chris Fasulo

YOUTH CHOIR

It is hard to believe it has been a whole year since I started working with the youth choir at St. Philip's. What a joy it has been! The St. Philip's community has welcomed me so warmly. I have seen and heard a lot of growth from the children. We meet once a week to rehearse and make a once a month offering at a Sunday St. Philip's church service singing our selected hymns.

We have come a long way in just a year as the children are more mature, listening to each other and singing more cohesively, working on starts and ending, memorizing lots of text, and learning to make a chord with their voices. These exercises and the choir experience at large will be helpful not only to their overall musicality but also if they join the adult choir when they are older.

I am very grateful for the support and encouragement the parents of the choir have given me—especially Amanda, Allison, Charity, Era, and Kari Jo. Music director Chris Fasulo has been a great help providing piano & organ accompaniment as well as suggestions for hymns that correlate to our Sunday service offering.

Stacy Labriola

musicwithstacy@icloud.com



The children's choir performs during the 10 am church service.

Photo: Allison Pataki

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WORSHIP

Worship has continued at 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM on Sunday mornings. In the fall, we shifted from a weekly Wednesday Evening Prayer service at 6:00 PM to a Weekly Wednesday Compline service at 7:00 PM. A rotation of clergy and lay people take turns leading. Other worship services include the Ecumenical Evensong during Advent, Longest Night service, Ash Wednesday, and services of Holy Week.

Rev. Amanda Eiman

rector@stphilipshighlands.org 845-424-3571

CHILDREN'S CHAPEL

As the banner we hang out front on special occasions says, 'St. Philip's Loves Families.' As we reflect and celebrate another year of life together with the children and families of our church community, we find this to be true in many ways.

Sunday morning **Children's Chapel** has enjoyed a new rhythm this school year, with our children now beginning worship with the congregation in the Chapel and then joining Reverend Amanda in the front of the church for a Children's Sermon before pouring out of the church doors and energetically migrating to the Parish Hall for our time together. There is often singing, followed by the day's Scripture lesson and developmentally-appropriate activities to help bring the key points to life. We are grateful for the many adult and parent volunteers who help make this ministry possible.

August welcomed our third-annual week-long summer camp, **Creative Arts Camp**, to St. Philip's campus where almost thirty enthusiastic children gathered daily to learn, sing, play, create and explore God's faithfulness through the Biblical story of Joseph. Campers were greeted with live music by our very own Jorge Caraballo on guitar and vocals, a highlight. Our storytelling and daily art lessons expanded on the story, including painting canvas capes like Joseph's 'Coat of Many Colors.' We earnestly played outside in the late-summer



Children's Chapel students work together on their weekly activity based on the scripture lesson.

Photo: Kari Jo Cates

sunshine on our beautiful campus, and ended the week with a 100-foot slip and slide on the Rectory lawn.

During Advent, we talked about waiting and anticipating Christmas. Families enjoyed a take-home coloring-game with a meditative daily word-prompt to help them, even briefly, countdown the days until Christ's birth. The **St. Philip's Christmas Pageant**, under the spirited direction of Carolyn Copeland, saw our young thespians perform the Nativity story to a packed church on Christmas Eve. The poignant gathering included Christmas carols, festive costumes, and an enthusiastic cast, with the service concluding as children, family members and the entire congregation processed outside into the winter evening for a candlelit singing of "Silent Night" around our beloved St. Philip's creche.

January brought our second-annual **Epiphany Feast**, with almost forty participants risking the roads of our first snow to trek to the Parish Hall dressed as royalty or Wise Ones. After feasting and engaging in an eager discussion of the importance of the Wise Men seeing the star and returning by a different route, we ate traditional homemade king cakes together.

Through exchanging pen pal letters with a sister church in Kenya, we hope to foster a sense of global connectedness and understanding among our children. Our children's choir, under the enthusiastic direction of Stacy Labriola, sings monthly and planning has begun for this year's Creative Arts Camp, August 12-16, 2024, exploring the life of King David. All are welcome.

We are grateful to see our community growing in relationship to God and to each other as our children come to know and experience God's love for them through the welcome and connection they feel at St. Philip's.

Era Porth, Kari Jo Cates, Allison Pataki Levy

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Photo: Kari Jo Cates

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YOUTH PROGRAMMING

After last year's fruitful and productive exploratory meetings, the Philipstown Youth Group is finally up and running. Currently, the youth group leaders are Rev. Amanda Eiman and Tracey Hughes. The group, consisting of three to nine youths, meets monthly in the parish hall for fellowship, games, and pizza. The youth have also participated in activities outside our regular meetings. The first service project was at the Jan Peek homeless shelter where the group members helped reorganize their library, prepared and served lunch, cleaned around the walkway into the shelter, and planted flowers. The busy day ended with an ice cream social. More activities and service projects are being planned by youth leadership along with the youth.

Tracey Hughes

tas814@gmail.com 845-416-6840

ADULT EDUCATION/FORMATION

Our Adult Education offerings in 2023 included a zoom Lectionary Bible Study during the season of Epiphany, zoom Complines during Lent and Easter, the annual fall newcomer class, and an Advent Study on *Watch for the Light Readings for Advent and Christmas* with readings by Aquinas, L'Engle, Luther, Underhill and others.

Rev. Amanda Eiman

rector@stphilipshighlands.org 845-424-3571

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

The fellowship committee focuses on two areas of ministry: building community and newcomer incorporation. In regard to building community, the committee creates opportunities to do so outside of the worship service by inviting our community to gather socially and to connect and build relationships. One of the major opportunities in this regard is our weekly coffee hour, which the fellowship committee oversees. Kate Calligaro has been faithfully leading the coffee hour ministry for over a year, coordinating the sign ups, and generating themes like the chili cook-off, Christmas cookie coffee hour, and other enjoyable potlucks on designated weeks.

In 2023, other fellowship events included the annual meeting potluck lunch, the parish picnic in June, Sunday breakfasts and receptions for new members, the lunch reception for the 250th anniversary of St. Philip's, and the annual ecumenical evensong in Advent. The fellowship committee also supports other events throughout the year hosted by other ministries, such as the Mardi Gras Open House at the rectory, and the fellowship following the October animal blessing.

The greeter ministry is also under the umbrella of fellowship as greeters welcome all congregants to worship services, hand out bulletins, and are the first point of contact for newcomers

and visitors.

The committee meets as needed by Zoom every other month and welcomes new members and suggestions at any time.

Bridget Drury

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LAY READERS GUILD

Members of the congregation participate in the service each Sunday by reading lessons, psalms, and prayers. Please contact Sarah Bayne if you are interested in joining this ministry.

Sarah Bayne

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ALTAR GUILD

The altar guild prepares the altar and arranges the memorial flowers for services at St. Philip's. The guild also cares for the linens, vestments, silver, pewter and brass used in services. In addition to the head (Margy Gerber), currently active volunteers include Marianne Benjamin, Wendy Bickford, Sara Breen, Jackie Grant, Rodman Neumann, and Jennifer Sandlund. Emerita members include Judi Dixon, Judy Hayes, Karen Lindros, and Belle Newton.

The guild welcomes new members. If you are interested in joining, please contact Margy and she will arrange tutorial session(s) for you with experienced guild members.

Margaret (Margy) Leahey Gerber

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COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The communications committee's main focus is to ensure effective communications within the church and between the church and the wider community. To achieve this objective, St. Philip's utilizes our weekly e-News, social media (YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram), our website, our internal Realm database, our newsletter *The Messenger*, and the message board on the sign along the road.

One key goal for 2024 is to raise St. Philip's profile in the community. We will be looking for ways to share our mission and remind people that ALL ARE WELCOME!

Please reach out to any member of the committee if you have thoughts or ideas regarding our parish communications. Please send photographs of church events to the church office so that we can share examples of our vibrant community on social media. Committee members include Terri Akbas, Chair; Rev. Amanda Eiman, Rector; Chris Fasulo, Parish Administrator; Chuck Linsmeier; Joe Plummer; and Jennifer Sandlund.

Terri Akbas

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BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE

The volunteers who comprise the Buildings and Grounds Committee provide coordination, planning and project assistance in managing the five buildings and beautiful landscape that comprise St. Philip's in the Highlands campus. This committee decentralizes many responsibilities among the volunteers, many of these duties are informally coordinated, the committee's work is overseen by a vestry member, the two wardens, and the rector who meet regularly. In this way, the Buildings and Grounds Committee strives to bring good management practice and collective stewardship to St. Philip's historic buildings and picturesque churchyard. The addition of two new volunteers during the past year has added to the capacity of the Committee to do its work. The Committee enthusiastically welcomes more new volunteers to assist in this effort!

During 2023 the Buildings and Grounds group has actively pursued dual goals: improving the preservation and use of existing buildings and grounds while seeking ways of economizing on the costs of keeping the campus looking its best. Preservation activity included more regular inspection and better routine maintenance of all properties by professionals and volunteers. One volunteer has assumed primary responsibility for supervising the entire church building. This permits better monitoring of the complicated heat and humidification systems in the church and helps ensure that minor repairs are undertaken quickly and well. Another volunteer now supervises the Parish House and its maintenance. Many responsibilities are allocated to outside

contractors or part-time custodial assistants in order to provide more systematic routine maintenance of trees, garden areas, footpaths, roadways and drains throughout the year. During 2023 much preservation work was occasioned by the need to meet unexpected challenges that are normal in an old campus like St. Philip's. Urgent repairs to buildings, dealing with failed aging boilers, burst pipes, leaks in walls and roofs, and the removal of damaged or hazardous trees were among the projects attended to by volunteers working in tandem with contractors at various times.

Preservation of the new organ has been an ongoing priority. Modification and constant monitoring of humidity and heating systems within the church building are undertaken to ensure the organ's proper care as a valuable instrument and to meet all the climate control warranty requirements of the organ manufacture. This special effort was required after findings of serious climate deficiencies within the church, after which a water line trench to the church building was constructed to help maintain correct humidity standards. There are ongoing plans to further improve humidification in consultation with the organ manufacturer in order to find the best ways of protecting and preserving our magnificent organ.

The Committee participated in St. Philip's 250th Anniversary celebration by planning and installing an impressive memorial rock and plaque near the churchyard's lychgate. A clothing donation shed was located on campus that also provides some income to St. Philip's. Current budgetary realities have discouraged new building projects. Yet the Committee has been formulating plans for future improvements to important buildings in order to enhance their usefulness to the St. Philip's community. Going forward, the Parish House will require more attention in order to preserve and upgrade its function as a community center, office complex, and nursery school. Among the future needs for this building, upgrading its heating system, providing office air conditioning, and installing storm windows are high priorities. Another major project is providing better access to the Parish House and making it ADA compliant. A comprehensive plan was completed for this that envisions improving pathways, adding a ramp, and reconstructing the Parish House bathroom so it is usable by those with disabilities.

Paul Kantor, Chair

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CHURCHYARD COMMITTEE

Through the devoted work by a number of volunteers our Francis H. Geer Memorial Garden at the St Philip's Columbarium underwent a major transformation. Lots of weeding and trimming of bushes made for a successful cleanup. We thank Anne Symmes for keeping a vigilant eye



Photo: Terri Albias

The Rt. Rev. Allen Shin, Bishop Suffragan, visited St. Philip's and participated in the 250th Anniversary celebration.

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on this area and our campus in general.

This past December with the enthusiastic participation of our local Cub Scouts, wreaths were laid at the stones of our St. Philip's veterans. We thank the Felder family for sponsoring this Wreaths Across America tribute.

We encourage families to use cremation. This makes the most sense from the standpoint of the remaining space in the churchyard and the general environment. All monument plans/sketches must be shown to the Churchyard Registrar and approved by the vestry. No mausoleums are permitted. Please obtain approval from the Churchyard and Columbarium Committee before installing any plantings or placing urns or statuary.

2023: **Sales:** Two columbarium niches
Burials: Six cremains

David C. Gordon, Jr., Churchyard Registrar
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HISTORY AND ARCHIVES

History/Archives has played a vital role as the parish celebrates 250 years of St. Philip's in the Highlands. For the October 22, 2023 commemoration ceremony, David Gordon and Jamie Copeland conducted tours of the church and the grounds. A bishop's crozier that had been stored in the Archives Room was placed on display in the Parish House during the reception held after the service and the dedication of the Lych Gate Stone. The crozier, found under the church porch by a building contractor during the renovation project, was used during the dedication of our current church building in 1862. The Lych Gate Stone and Plaque project was spearheaded by Junior Warden Will Felder.

This past year David Gordon identified archival photos that appear in E. Clowes Chorley's *History of St. Philip's Church in the Highlands* as well as other early photos, all in the form of "Magic Lantern" slides. David had the slides transcribed into digital form for easier viewing.

David Gordon, Charity Shumway, and Margy Gerber are working on updating the history of the parish, reviewing fifty-some years of minutes of vestry meetings, for example. They also hope to do oral histories, interviewing people whose families have long associations with the parish as well as interviewing more recent members. The goal is to produce a printed document.

Margaret (Margy) Leahey Gerber, Vestry Liaison
margretleahey@gmail.com 845-216-0885

NURSERY AND CHILD CARE

Supervised child care for infants and young children is provided most Sunday mornings from 9:00 am - Noon, and other scheduled times, on the lower level of the Parish House. Our main focus is to care for the little ones while their parents are in church, taking a class, at choir rehearsal, or other ministry. There are plenty of activities to entertain and engage multiple children, and we strive to ensure that they each have a positive and nurturing experience. We play with the children, do puzzles and read books, and when it is nice outside we visit the playground. We make every effort to tidy up the playroom with the children prior to their parent's arrival, and we thank everyone for ensuring the space remains neat and clean

Eliza Paris
914-621-6583

CHURCH OFFICE

We thank Johnna Locoparra who was with us from January through September of 2023 as our parish administrator. As of October 1, Chris Fasulo and our rector have assumed the duties of the parish office. Chris' gifts align well with the increasing demand for skills in technology and social media.

Christopher Fasulo, Parish Administrator
office@stphiliphighlands.org 845-424-3571

Rev. Amanda Eiman
rector@stphiliphighlands.org 845-424-3571



The congregation gathered outside to sing Silent Night at the conclusion of the Christmas Pageant.

Photo: Chris Fasulo

TREASURER'S REPORT

2023 Budget Review

In 2023, a budget of \$411,204 was approved. Total expenses of \$467,338 exceeded the budget by \$56,134. These overages were primarily due to a nursery school deficit, higher than usual building repairs and additional investments in the music ministry (youth choir).

2023 Income/Expense Review

Total income for 2023 was \$314,440. Pledging and general support for the church (~\$300k) was flat relative to 2022. The church also generates revenue from Parish House rentals and graveyard/ columbarium income. Total expenses were \$467,338. This led to a \$152,898.46 deficit. Budgeting restraint is necessary to ensure large deficits do not become structural.

2024 Budget Considerations

The 2024 budget continues to invest in core ministries of St. Philip's while also emphasizing fiscal restraint. We did not hire a new person to fill the Parish Administrator role and these responsibilities are now covered by Chris Fasulo who also serves in the dual role of Music Director. We are budgeting to begin repaying a \$150,000 Small Business Administration Economic Disaster Recovery Loan. The Vestry has decided to not pay the Diocesan assessment for 2024 until Parish giving is better able to cover all expenses. The Nursery School is expected to run a break even budget. No cuts were made to Music Ministry, Outreach or Children's/Youth Ministry. However, we would like to be able to grow these ministries and this will depend on growing both the number and amount of supporters to St. Philip's.

Matthew Illian, Treasurer

ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH - 2024 BUDGET

Rector's Salary	\$78,110
Rector Health and Pension	\$60,737
Other Salaries	\$0
Other Health & Pension & Benefits	\$20,949
Payroll taxes	\$24,000
Total Compensation	\$183,796
Buildings & Grounds	\$100,000
Diocesan Assessment	\$0
Office Supplies	\$21,787
Professional Fees	\$14,223
Other	\$12,146
Total Other	\$48,156
Youth Choir Director	\$8,400
Main Music Program	\$18,600
Music Ministry	\$27,000
Outreach Ministry	\$3,000
Children & Youth Ministry	\$2,500
Loan Repayment	\$7,692
Contingency	\$17,500
Nursery School (Deficit)	\$0
Total Expenses	\$389,644

ST. PHILIP'S INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

St. Philip's has a tradition of good stewardship that was inherited from the members of the church who came before us. The operation of the church over the years has been supported by the existence of a permanent endowment, which has been called on from time to time to support operations and capital projects that secure the church's future.

The value of the endowment was virtually unchanged in 2023 ending the year in the amount of \$1,018,055. The asset allocation within the endowment started the year at 37% in Fixed Income securities and 63% in Equity securities and ended the year at 38% in Fixed Income and 62% in Equities. Although there was little change in the endowment balance, activity within the endowment was high in 2023. Strong market conditions allowed the endowment to generate \$147,000 in interest, dividends and investment gains. This increase was offset by net withdrawals of \$148,000 to fund Church operations, representing an annual draw of 14.5% of the endowment's beginning 2023 balance. The performance in 2023 was in stark contrast to 2022 when the endowment declined by \$126,000 (-11%). Negative market conditions in 2022 led to a decline in investment value that exceeded interest and dividends by \$150,000. However, the effective combination of stewardship and expense management facilitated a net addition to the endowment of \$24,000 (+2%). The 2023 net withdrawal percentage of 14.5% was more than twice the 7% maximum limit imposed by the Investment Policy suggesting a need for extra diligence in executing the 2024 Budget to ensure that 2023's operating deficit does not become structural.

The church has an investment committee, which is comprised of five parishioners (Smitha Dawson, Vestryman Charlie Dupree, Evan Hudson, Vestryman Fred Osborn, and Nat Prentice), the rector, the wardens, and the treasurer. The committee reviews the investment of the endowment, its asset allocation, quality constraints, liquidity reserves, diversification and concentration, and anything else relevant to prudent management of this portfolio. The committee does not pick individual securities for investment, relying instead on a professional manager (Lazard Asset Management) to make those decisions within our general portfolio guidelines. The committee meets quarterly to review the financial situation of the church and the recent performance of the endowment and to discuss any potential changes to the investment guidelines. We are approaching the 9th anniversary of St. Philip's relationship with Lazard (initiated in May 2015), which is coordinated by our parishioner, Dyke Benjamin. Our Investment Policy Statement, recent performance reports, and the minutes of our quarterly meetings are available for any parishioner's review. Questions and new members are always welcome.

	2022	2023
Starting Balance		
M&T Bank Account	\$26,903	\$22,000 (est.)
Fixed Income Account		428,634 (37%)
Equities Account		725,372 (63%)
Total Investments	1,275,373	1,154,006 (100%)
Total Endowment	1,302,276	1,176,006
Loan from U.S. Government	(150,000)	(152,063)
Net Endowment Starting Balance	1,152,276	1,023,943
Change in M&T Bank Account	(4,903)	(13,882)
Stock Gifts to Endowment	79,014	64,663
Withdrawals from Endowment	(50,266)	(199,014)
Net Additions (Withdrawals)	23,845	(148,233)
Net Draw as % of Starting Balance	+2.1%	-14.5%
Ending Balance		
M&T Bank Account	\$22,000	8,118
Fixed Income Account	428,634 (37%)	448,201 (38%)
Equities Account	725,372 (63%)	717,980 (62%)
Total Investments	1,154,006 (100%)	1,166,181 (100%)
Total Endowment	1,176,006	1,174,299
Loan from U.S. Government	(152,063)	(156,244)
Net Endowment Ending Balance	1,023,943	1,018,055
Change in Endowment	(128,333)	(5,888)
% Change	-11.1%	-0.6%

Charlie Dupree

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Nat Prentice

natprentice@mac.com

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

As the St. Philip's congregation emerged from the pandemic, much like rest of the country and the world, we faced many changes. Many new members and visitors abounded, seeking a new church home and place of community. Many others moved on to different congregations, moved away and some passed on. The only thing that's constant is change, they say - and our parish was no different. Therefore, we embraced the changes and started new plans.

In 2023, The Stewardship Committee formed with a group of new members, setting up plans and ideas to reach the wider parish members for financial, spiritual and community giving. The committee pioneered and participated in a New Member Program set up twice a year (Spring and Fall), seeking to make new members feel welcome at our parish, and offering thoughtful insight on the concept of tithing and giving. Today, the responsibility for this program has been passed on to the Fellowship Committee, with participation from members of our committee. We also participated in the annual Every Member Canvas Program, reaching out directly via phone or email to each parishioner, seeking their needs from St. Philip's and inviting year-end tithes and gifts, noting a small, yet strong percentage (~20%) of these folks provided giving in some form as a result of the canvas. Though we started on a good path in 2023, we did not meet our annual budget (please see Treasurer's report for 2023 budget, shortfall and other details). We attribute this mostly to unexpected repair expenses raising our budget, as well as insufficient transparency to the parish as a whole regarding our budget needs on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

As we kick off 2024, the Stewardship Committee, now a good mix of old and new faces, has embraced a data-driven approach to helping our congregation meet our church's budget needs. We have and continue to reach out to our members to commit to annual pledging of tithes, by clearly communicating our budget needs via the weekly church bulletin, in service reminders, weekly e-news letters and periodic email reminders during the first quarter of 2024. Aiming for a budget of approximately \$400k, we are currently half-way there, thanks to the hard work, financial and spiritual commitments of our parishioners. We continue to work on ideas and programs to engage the wider community and other interested parties, to support the ongoing development of St. Philip's parish, as well as the perpetual existence of this iconic and spiritual structure in the community.

We continue to ask for your support in meeting our budget needs. If you haven't already, please consider providing an annual pledge or gift to St. Philip's for 2024. And to those who already have provided their financial commitments, we ask you to consider increasing your pledge by 25% - a group effort will help us keep our programs going strong through the rest of this year.

Let us continue to be stewards of God's love to our neighbors and our communities near and far.

Smitha Dawson

smithadawson@gmail.com



Our 2024 theme is "Walk in Love". How do we love? We start with each other - our community here at St. Philip's. Supporting one another in our physical, emotional and spiritual needs. We continue to spread that love outside these walls, to our wider community through outreach into our neighborhoods, into our workplace, our cities and into the world.



St. Philip's children share a meal at the Annual Epiphany Party.

Photo: Kari Jo Cates