



Dear Congregation Family,

What a year it has been.

As I read through these pages — each committee report, each list of names, each quiet accounting of hours given, meals served, hats knitted and prayers offered — I am struck by something I can only describe as holy abundance. This congregation is alive, and its life is carried in the hands and hearts of each one of you.

When I arrived among you, I came as a stranger hoping to become a neighbor. What I found was a church family faithfully at work — loving its community, showing up for the vulnerable, gathering around word and table with faithfulness and joy. You welcomed my family and me with extraordinary grace, and I want you to know: the privilege of serving as your pastor is one I do not take lightly, not even for a moment. You are now our family, and we are abundantly grateful. In this past year, we have done so much together. We distributed more than \$83,000 to support neighbors in Durham and in Zimbabwe. We served nearly 2,000 dinners to hungry neighbors. We knitted hundreds of hats, stitched quilts with prayerful hands, called members on their birthdays, and visited those who could no longer come to us. We welcomed twenty new members into our family. We educated our children and our adults with seriousness and delight. We ushered, we counted, we prepared and served communion, we gave tours of this magnificent chapel to people from across the world. And through it all, we worshipped and we witnessed.

None of this happened by accident. It happened because of you — because the people of this congregation believe that faith is not something you hold privately, but something you live publicly, together, in community, for the sake of the world.

I also want to pause and say thank you to those who held this congregation steady during the season of pastoral transition. The leadership of our committees, the faithfulness of our staff, and the patient trust of this membership created the conditions for a healthy beginning. I am deeply grateful.

As we look toward the year ahead, I believe we have every reason for hope. Not a naive hope that pretends away our challenges, but the sturdy, resurrection-shaped hope that has always carried the church forward. We are a congregation rooted in a great university, called to think carefully and love boldly. We are small enough to know each other's names and connected enough to change lives far beyond our walls.

The story being told in these pages is your story. It is also, I believe, God's story, told through ordinary people doing extraordinary things in the name of Jesus Christ.

I am honored to walk this journey with you.

Blest be the tie that binds,

Rev. J. Ryan Wilson, Senior Pastor
The Congregation at Duke University Chapel

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAST YEAR

In Memoriam

Each year, the story of our congregation is shaped by those who walk beside us and by those whom God calls home. In this season of remembrance, we pause with gratitude to honor the beloved saints of this church family who have entered into God's nearer presence.

Their voices, prayers, acts of service, and quiet faithfulness continue to echo through the life of this congregation. We give thanks for the ways they reflected Christ among us and for the love they shared so generously. Though we miss them, we trust that they now rest in the eternal embrace of the One who created them, redeemed them, and called them by name.

Remembering them with thanksgiving, we commend them to God's everlasting mercy and hold fast to the hope of the resurrection, trusting that nothing—not even death—can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In loving memory, we honor the lives and gifts of these departed members and friends:

Bert Alexander

Mary Best

Robbie Cox

Marion Eck

Dan Ford

Marilyn Strother

Margaret Via, Founding Pastor

Jeanne Weston

Completed Pastor Search for Ryan Wilson

By Beth Gettys Sturkey

On June 22, 2025, the Congregation voted unanimously to call the Rev. J. Ryan Wilson as our fourth pastor.

We are grateful for the careful and prayerful participation of the Senior Pastor Search Committee members, Kate Courtney, Tamela Davis, Leisa Dennehy, Jane Fellows, Douglas Gallo, Deb Hackney, and Robert Sills who spent countless hours of devoted and faithful work, spanning almost six months of action and discernment.

During the time between Senior Pastors, we as a Congregation took time to look back on our past, listen to each other's hopes and dreams for the future, and envision the next steps in our church's journey. As we were doing so, we had vital leadership, guidance, care, and encouragement from our pastors and staff, Lynn Holmes, Ken Moland, Mindy Erdmann, Karen Rhodes, Nancy Sowa, and Kirsten Ford. During that liminal time, many lay leaders and volunteers continued to live out their faith through service on committees, in the community, and in worship.

Thanks be to God for our church, and for Pastor Ryan's ministry and presence among us this last year!

New Members

By Catherine Scribner & Ryan Wilson

Each year we hold New Member Classes for those exploring membership in the Congregation. The purpose of the classes is three-fold: to discuss and reflect on the Apostle's Creed, to get acquainted with each other, and to introduce incoming members to the unique nature of our Congregation. Once classes are

completed, the Congregation Council votes on the reception of new members, and the new members are welcomed in worship.

A three-week New Member Class met in February/March 2026. The classes were held on three Sundays - in person and via Zoom in the morning and again via Zoom in the evening. Twenty-four potential members attended some or all of the: Folarin and twenty participants were welcomed into the congregation's family as new members on March 15: Folarin Arthur, Connie Fairchild, Gary Fairchild (Affiliate Member), Eliza Ferguson, Linda Guthrie, Thomas Guthrie, Karen Holloway, James Howard, Hugh Knapp, David Moore, Courtney Norrid, James Norrid, Henry Perry, Catherine (Cathy) Ray, Judith (Judy) Richards, Leslie Roberts, Catherine Scribner, Nancy Sears, Mia Wilson and Ryan Wilson . We joyfully celebrate these new members who have joined us in this body of Christ.

CHRISTIAN NURTURE - EDUCATION

Christian Education Committee, including Life Together Groups

By Fran and Jack Steele

She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue ...

Proverbs 31:26

Morning by morning he wakens – wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught ...

Isaiah 50:4

Christian education is not merely an institutional program or activity. Jesus models Christian education throughout his earthly ministry and post resurrection appearances. When we participate as learners and teachers, we are faithful continuators of Jesus' work. The Congregation's Christian Education activities continued this year with classes meeting both in person and via Zoom. Through the faithful participation of several diligent Bible students our Christian Education programs maintained nationwide and international reach.

HIGHLIGHTS

More than 40 people participated in a well-attended workshop in April organized by the New Pastor Selection Committee and supported by various groups in the Congregation, including the Fellowship and Education committees. This workshop introduced new pastor candidate Ryan Wilson, his wife Mia and their family to the Congregation.

Congregation education offerings Sunday morning and throughout the week allowed members and guests to fellowship as well as learn together.

Two book study groups met for a substantial portion of the year discussing titles related to *Where Do We Go From Here*, by Martin Luther King, Jr., *Sacred Self Care*, by Dr. Chanequa Walker-Barnes (the Lenten Series), *How We Learn to Be Brave: Decisive Moments in Life and Faith* by Mariann Edgar Budde, *The Very Good Gospel: How Everything Wrong Can Be Made Right*, by Lisa Sharon Harper, Tish Harrison Warren's book, *Advent: The Season of Hope*, and, currently, *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi.

One Life Together and one Spiritual Direction group met weekly or biweekly.

Adult Bible Study and Adult Forum members met together for Sundays in Advent and Lent.

Other education activities – including Godly Play, Wee Praise, New Member Classes, Adult Bible Study, Adult Forum, Youth Bible Study, and Youth Confirmation are covered elsewhere in this report.

Thanks to all of those who planned, delivered, and participated in the Congregation's Education Offerings. Special thanks to Christian Education Committee members: Natalie Daniels, Mindy Erdmann, Douglas Gallo, John Geneczko, Carl Hollomon, Daniel Parham, Patience Sowa, Fran Steele, Jack Steele, Nelson Strother, Delilah Twombly, Tony Willms, Ryan Wilson

Adult Bible Study

By Jack & Fran Steele

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (Ps 119:105)

Adult Bible Study appreciates the many clergy, interns, and class members who led and participated in lively and timely discussions in 2025-26. Adult Forum, Adult Bible Study, and other members of the Congregation at Large continued our recent custom of meeting together for the inspiring seasons of Advent/ Christmas and Lent / Easter.

Adult Forum

by Nelson Strother and Doug Gallo

During the academic year, our Sunday morning class continues to hear inspiring messages on thought-provoking topics led by Congregation members as well as guest leaders who are experts in their field. We continue to meet via online video conference sessions (with typically 82% of attendees attending in person in recent hybrid class months), with the median number of participants being almost 17.

We were able once again to have a few inspiring online sessions led by faculty from distant universities without incurring travel expenses to enable their in-person leadership. It is still true that within a few weeks of class materials being available online there are frequently as many or more views (and maybe even viewers or people) as there were attending live on that Sunday morning. Visuals and audio recordings from some past Sundays are available at: http://congregation.chapel.duke.edu/adult_forum_memories#2019

and recordings of some of the more recent Sunday classes are available at:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLhAid8OoXxOw_sNL5MCzOKWqQge7ldxYd

Racial Equity Group

by Mindy Erdmann, MDiv

Two to six people meet monthly for the Racial Equity Group. In the fall we looked back at what the group has done in the past and discussed hopes for the future of the group. We identified two priorities for the group: personal transformation in anti-racism for group members and providing 2-4 church-wide events through the year to encourage growth in this area for the entire Congregation. Group members began reading Rachel Ricketts' *Do Better: Spiritual Activism for Fighting and Healing from White Supremacy* this spring. In April we had our first church-wide event of the year with 20 people in attendance for our workshop *Race and the Bible: How Misuse of the Bible Leads to Racial Division and What We Can Do About It*.

Book Discussion Group

by Mindy Erdmann, MDiv

In the Fall and Winter, I led a Wednesday morning book discussion group via Zoom. We had 2-6 people attending and enjoyed rich discussion on Lisa Sharon Harper's *The Very Good Gospel*, Tish Harrison Warren's *Advent: Season of Hope*, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Where Do We Go From Here?* and Chanequa Walker-Brown's *Sacred Self-Care*.

Wee Praise

by Kate DeAlmeida

Wee Praise is the hour-long Sunday morning class offered by the Congregation for kids 0-3 years old and their parents or caregivers. This year, the lesson guide *God's Wonderful World* from Musikgarten's *God's Children Sing* curricula was used. Every class includes singing, creative movement, instrument playing and exploration, dancing, listening, pitch and rhythm echoing, bubble time, and prayer. This year's lessons focused on God's Creation: birds, oceans, night/day, animals, and weather, along with the concepts of working together and growing up. We believe that every young child has a sense of the sacred and, if it is part of the family model, it has a chance to blossom. Through these shared, sacred experiences, participants, both children and adults, have found that their knowledge of God grows as they become more aware of God's love for them and all Creation.

Kate DeAlmeida, the regular Wee Praise leader, thanks the Congregation for giving her this opportunity. She appreciates all who participate in this ministry, but especially the Cacchio family and the Oliver family, who stepped in when Kate was unable to lead the class.

The following statistics summarize the year in numbers, which shows a significant decrease compared to pre-pandemic years: typical attendance pre-pandemic was 15 total, 7 children and 8 adults, and on no Sunday had fewer than 5 participants. From the pandemic through last year, typical attendance dropped by half, to 4 children and 4 adults. This year, typical attendance dropped again by half, to 2 children and 2 adults.

Participants	Average Weekly Attendance	Median Weekly Attendance	Range of Weekly Attendance
Total	4	4	0 - 8
Children	2	2	0 - 4
Adults	2	2	0 - 4

Godly Play

by Delilah Twombly

We continue to offer Godly Play as our Sunday School curriculum for children aged 4 through fifth grade. When we resumed after our summer 2025 break, we continued to meet as a one-room class. Our lowest recorded attendance this past year was 3 children. Our highest attendance was 11. We typically average 8 children, most of whom are regular attendees.

The Children’s Ministry remains forever grateful for the volunteers who have served Godly Play this year: Megan Cacchio, Lee Guile, Marianna Henry, Cheznee Johnson, Jim Parker, and Carolyn Stoe.

Youth Bible Study

By Mindy Erdmann

Last summer the Youth Class studied the book of Mark. In the fall we began a survey of the Old Testament, using a combination of inductive Bible study, videos from The Bible Project, and experiential activities to give the students a sense of the history of the Israelite people. Our OT study ended in April and since then we have been doing a series called The Old Testament in the New, learning how the story of Jesus in the New Testament connects to what we studied in the Old Testament.

We will take a break from Sunday morning classes this summer but plan to have one or two gatherings for fellowship, including any new students who will be moving up from Godly Play to Youth group in the fall.

OUTREACH MINISTRY

Missions & Outreach

by Lee Tyrey and Robert Sills

The Mission and Outreach Committee serves as the interface between the Congregation and the greater Durham community and beyond. During the past year, the committee planned and coordinated mission and outreach initiatives and provided guidance for the distribution of congregation funds to aid the work of several human welfare organizations. Thanks to the generosity of the congregation, a total of \$71,600 was distributed to eleven local agencies to assist their work in improving the lives of community members in need of assistance. Those organizations were: Durham Literacy Center, Families Moving Forward, Meals on Wheels, Reality Ministries, Religious Coalition for a Non-Violent Durham, Ronald McDonald House, SEEDS, Society of St Andrew, Step Up Ministries, Urban Community AgriNomics, and Urban Ministries of Durham.

Internationally, \$12,300 was contributed to ZOE Ministries to aid the empowerment of two groups of orphaned Zimbabwe youth through provision of a path to economic independence and acceptance into their local communities.

Throughout the year the committee encouraged direct congregation member participation in outreach activities by providing monthly hands-on service projects supporting our partner organizations, as well as twice monthly Back-Pew collections of items needed by those organizations in carrying out their missions. Also, through the ZOE Empowers Gift Market the committee raised additional funds to supplement the congregation's major contribution to that organization noted above. On an ongoing basis, committee members promoted the long-standing tradition of lasagna donations from congregation members to allow them to serve 150 to 225 dinners each month to the hungry at Urban Ministries of Durham.

Many thanks to the dedicated committee members who contributed their time and talent in service to God and our neighbors: Dennis Donahue, Leslie Donahue, Jane Fellows, Lynn Holmes, Maia Keller, Henry Perry, Walker Robinson, Catherine Scribner, Robert Sills, Mary Tyrey, Lee Tyrey, Judi Vos, Dave Vos, Nancy Wawrousek and Ryan Wilson.

Urban Ministry Durham Dinners

by Nancy Wawrousek and Dave & Judi Vos

Once a month, on alternating second Sunday and fourth Wednesday evenings we serve a dinner of lasagna, salad, fruit, roll and cookie to approximately 175 very grateful hungry Durham neighbors at UMD on Liberty Street near the public library. They may be short term residents at the shelter, needy new residents just off the bus, chronically homeless, or just short of grocery money at the end of the month. Urban Ministries does not judge or put requirements in their way. One volunteer shared- "The joy in meeting and serving these grateful neighbors who are trying to put their lives together is heartwarming."

If our supporters volunteered only once, it would take 96 of us. Thankfully most contribute lasagnas repeatedly, up to 6 or more times a year! In fiscal 2025-6 about 30 members and friends participated, serving at least 1925 dinners. This year we had several new volunteers, who each brought lasagnas to serve 24 and/or served the dinner. The Congregation budget provides just over \$3000 for the groceries other than lasagnas. We have adapted to rising grocery costs by changing the signup to allow single lasagnas (12 servings) or just coming to serve the meal.

We always need more new volunteers for this rewarding work! Please sign up by clicking the Signup Genius link in the weekly eNews. Nancy Wawrousek usually brings the groceries and supervises the serving on Sunday evenings, while Dave Vos similarly covers the Wednesday evening dinners. Each meal provided is more than just sustenance. This ministry not only addresses the food security needs of the community but also fosters compassion and service within our own congregation.

Zoe Empowers Support

by Walker Robinson

Our Congregation continues to support groups of orphaned and vulnerable young people in Zimbabwe through ZOE Empowers (zoeempowers.org), helping them achieve financial independence through small business development, financial management, and leadership training.

From 2023–2026, the Congregation committed \$18,000 annually to support two empowerment groups. For the upcoming fiscal year, we will support an additional group with a financial commitment of \$9,500.

This remains our Congregation's primary investment in international missions, and we are grateful to participate in this transformative work as young people move toward long-term stability, self-sufficiency, and hope for the future.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Fellowship and Congregational Care

by Kate DeAlmeida and Laura Nye

The Fellowship Committee hosted nine events during the 2025-2026 fiscal year; additionally, we assisted with four Congregation and/or Duke Chapel events. With enthusiastic assistance by the *dedicated* members of the Fellowship Committee – Greg Beck, Adora Gallo, Douglas Gallo, J Geneczko, Janet Hortin, Sharon Jones, and Susan Ward – we strive to build deeper connections with God and with each other. Additional volunteer support at our events is provided by the *Friends of Fellowship*, and we are truly grateful for their ongoing help!

Following are events the Fellowship Committee hosted and/or events at which we provided assistance:

JULY 2025: (13th) *Sunday* ice cream social (≈80 attendees);

AUGUST 2025: (17th) *Sundaes on Sunday & Farewell to Lynn Holmes* (≈80 attendees); (24th & 31st) assisted at Chapel's Orientation Sunday luncheon and with distribution of LocoPops;

SEPTEMBER 2025: (21st) *Welcome the Wilsons* catered luncheon at the Divinity School's Alumni Memorial Common Room (≈ 80 attendees)

OCTOBER 2025: (19th) *Congregation Annual Picnic* at Piney Wood Park. Catering by Moe's and 43 in attendance.

NOVEMBER 2025: No planned event;

DECEMBER 2025: (14th) Brodhead Center Luncheon (≈32 attendees);

JANUARY 2026: (4th) *Epiphany Breakfast* at 10:00 a.m. (≈60+ attendees)

FEBRUARY 2026: (8th) *Souper Bowl of Chili*, plus youth members crafted Valentines for distribution to homebound Congregation members (≈70 attendees);

MARCH 2026: (15th) *Pi(e) Day Celebration*, in honor of St. Ivan of Rila (≈60-70 attendees);

APRIL 2026: (12th) Brodhead Center Luncheon (≈33 attendees)

MAY & JUNE 2026: Assisted with directional signage for Congregation 40th Anniversary Luncheon & Celebration (5/17) and Congregation Annual Meeting (6/14).

Heavenly Hugs Hat Ministry

by Tamela Davis

With talented hands and prayerful hearts together, Heavenly Hugs Hat Ministry provides hand-knitted, crocheted and loomed hats for babies and children in our congregation as well as for agencies in the community. Our faithful members include Padgett Gerler, Mary Eubanks, Claudia Haskins, Jennifer Schrewsbury, Roxanna Bottjen, Eleanor Smith, Suzy Strayhorn, Sara Harper, Susan Brooks, Jane McAdoo, Marcella Harris, Ina McCoy, Karen Heitzenrater, Sally Markham, Kate Courtney, Mindy Erdmann, and Tamela Davis.

This year's gifting included 203 baby hats, twelve baby blankets, nine baby sweaters, five scarves and one baby quilt for Duke Regional Hospital, in celebration of Mother's Day in May. Additionally, a boxful of baby and children's items were sent to Knit for Kids/World Vision whose mission is global gifting to babies and children in need. Last winter, 2025, 164 hats and scarves were gifted to Families Moving Forward, Reality Ministries and Meals on Wheels.

For more information or to offer your hands and heart to this ministry, contact tamelabdavis@gmail.com. Lessons and yarn provided (novices welcomed!). We meet for fellowship lunches each spring and fall.

LGBTQ+ Fellowship

by Tom Link, Fellowship Leader

The Congregation at Duke Chapel's LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Allies and +Others) Fellowship was begun in February 2021 and is in its 5th year of Operation. Our meetings usually have 4-6 core participants, and we greatly appreciated Interim Pastor Lynn being available for most of our meetings, and Pastor Ryan Wilson's interest in our Fellowship. We hope to continue to partner with the Racial/Equity Fellowship and the Education Committee.

Fellowship Mission: The LGBTQIA+ Fellowship, as part of the Congregation at Duke University Chapel faith community, seeks to: WELCOME same-gender-loving people into the life and ministry of the church and provide safe places for our community to be together. PARTNER with other advocacy and LGBTQ+ groups in our community to work for equality and justice for members of our community, and EDUCATE the Congregation at Duke University Chapel and community about justice and equality issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community. This faith-based supportive group is open to all LGBTQIA+ friends, families, and straight allies who wish to share and be heard in a safe, non-judgmental atmosphere. The group offers a supportive, caring, and confidential space for sharing joys and frustrations. The Fellowship meets on the 4th Thursday of each month, via Zoom, from 7-8p. In the past year the Fellowship has appreciated discussions with Chapel Dean Powery, Chapel Staff and Congregation Staff regarding visibility of the LGBTQIA+ Fellowship in the Chapel and in our Congregation. We've continued to be in touch with the Pauli Murray Center in Durham regarding how we might partner in 2026. We changed our meeting logistics to Zoom Only on the 4th Thursday of each month to hopefully provide more access to interested persons.

2026 Continuing Goals:

1. Increase Visibility of the Fellowship
2. Provide Recognition of National June Pride Month and Opportunities during the year
3. Recognition of LGBTQIA Goals and Ministry from the Chapel Pulpit
4. Interaction with other Chapel/Congregation groups and Duke University Students to support each other in our education, racial equity, services and other missions.
5. Seek to address fear of differences, lack of knowledge/information and lack of visibility which separate us on many fronts.

Again, The Congregation LGBTQIA+ Fellowship strives to WELCOME, EDUCATE and ENGAGE to work towards the elimination of fear and prejudice in our communities, and we very much applaud and appreciate the support of the Chapel and the Congregation in our shared efforts!

Loaves & Fishes

by Pam Marcom

The Congregation's Loaves & Fishes Ministry provides delicious meals to Congregation members who have had a baby, are healing from surgery or illness, or grieving a loss. The meals that we send show our love and care to our Congregation members in need. If you or a family member would benefit from having meals provided during a time of need, please don't hesitate to contact the congregation office at congregation@duke.edu.

Quilters

by Anne Recesso

Members of the Quilters Ministry, led by Ann Recesso, provide a very tangible way to let people who are ill or feeling alone know that they are remembered with love and prayer. The quilters lovingly prepared quilts to be handed out to members, at baptisms, and to Meals on Wheels recipients. Even though two members of the group were homebound caring for loved ones, they continued to make these gifts for others. The Quilters also make potholders from quilting scraps. These are given to new members and volunteers to let them know they are appreciated. In this and many other tangible ways, our Congregation members show God's love through fellowship and in times of need.

Visitation & Care Ministries

by Linda Gauger

The goal of the Visitation & Care Ministries is to touch base monthly with members who are no longer able to get to Chapel, those who are having or have had surgery, or members who just need a loving word from a friendly face. We have six members. We keep in contact with an average of 18 members. We said prayerful goodbyes to several senior members; they will be missed, but they are now watching over us all.

Christmas & Easter cards were sent to all our members over 85 years of age (37!). Chapel Poinsettias were delivered to 18 members. We delivered the flower center pieces from the 40th anniversary luncheon to eight members. Thanks to Ken Moland & Ryan Wilson, whose support and care we would not want to be without. THANKS go out to Billie Bauer (co-chair), Barbara Carman, Gary Bauer, Caroline Haynes, David Rendall and Kathi Peindl. Your devotion to our members is such a blessing!

Calling Ministry

by Linda Gauger

Every month, 7 faithful members of the Calling Ministry contact other members for whom we have birthdate information on or around their birthdays. We average 45 names per month, so about 4-5 names each. Members might receive a call, a card in the mail, a voice mail or an email. If you haven't given your birthdate to the office please do so, or you will never know how much a "Birthday Blessing" could brighten your day! Thank you, Barbara Carman, Janet Hortin, Diane McOmie, Joe Krenicky, Billie Bauer, and Caroline Haynes. THANK YOU to all the birthday callers.

Membership

Our current membership statistics are below.

The Congregation at Duke University Chapel												
Membership Statistics												
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	
Active membership as of May 1												
Number of member households	347	358	361	355	348	361	329	322	306	305	313	
Number of active members	490	494	474	480	496	495	456	435	423	420	432	
Membership Gains:												
By confirmation or youth affirmation of faith	1	1	6	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	
Adult transfer or affirmation of faith	18	26	23	19	10	18	21	16	7	13	20	
Membership Losses:												
Deaths	7	11	7	4	7	4	11	7	8	10	5	
By transfer of membership	15	4	1	2	3	0	3	3	3	2	0	
To inactive status	0	0	26	0	15	0	7	13	0	0	0	
Withdrawal of membership	11	11	8	13	29	17	18	7	8	11	2	
Active Membership by Age*												
Children up through age 11 in member household	65	67	62	66	50	63	61	52	45	44	50	
Youth age 12-17 in member households	24	19	18	21	15	19	19	13	19	17	33	
Adults age 18-39	117	102	120	128	106	92	90	90	73	73	72	
Adults age 40-64	203	171	185	149	156	158	130	122	119	118	120	
Adults age 65-84	153	163	188	181	179	189	180	190	182	185	196	
Adults age 85 and older	45	40	42	44	49	50	49	48	45	42	44	
* incomplete as some members choose not to disclose their birthdates												

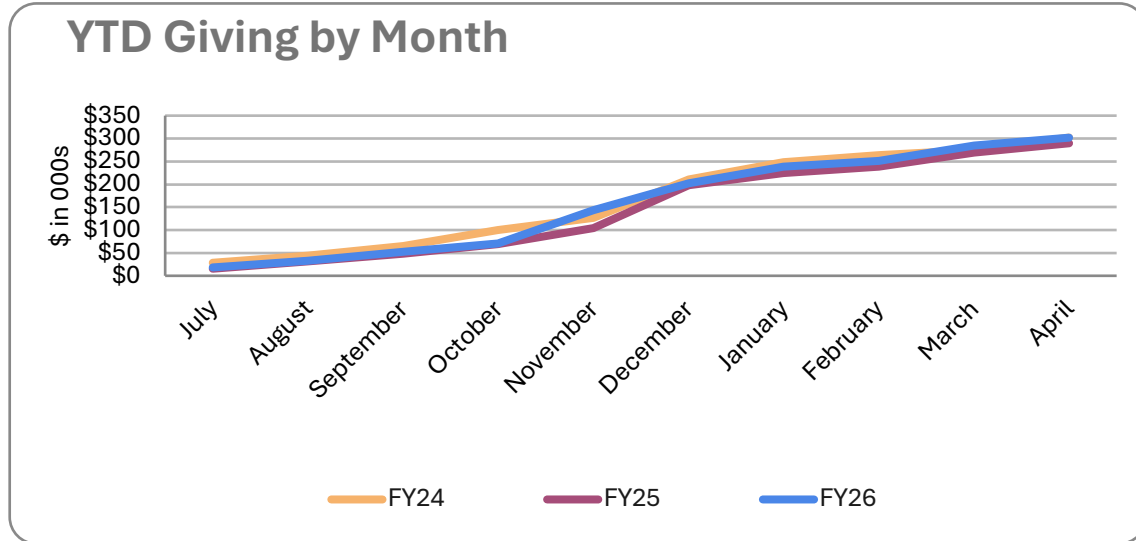
CONGREGATION SUPPORT

Stewardship & Finance Committee

by Bunny (Barbara) McClure, Chair

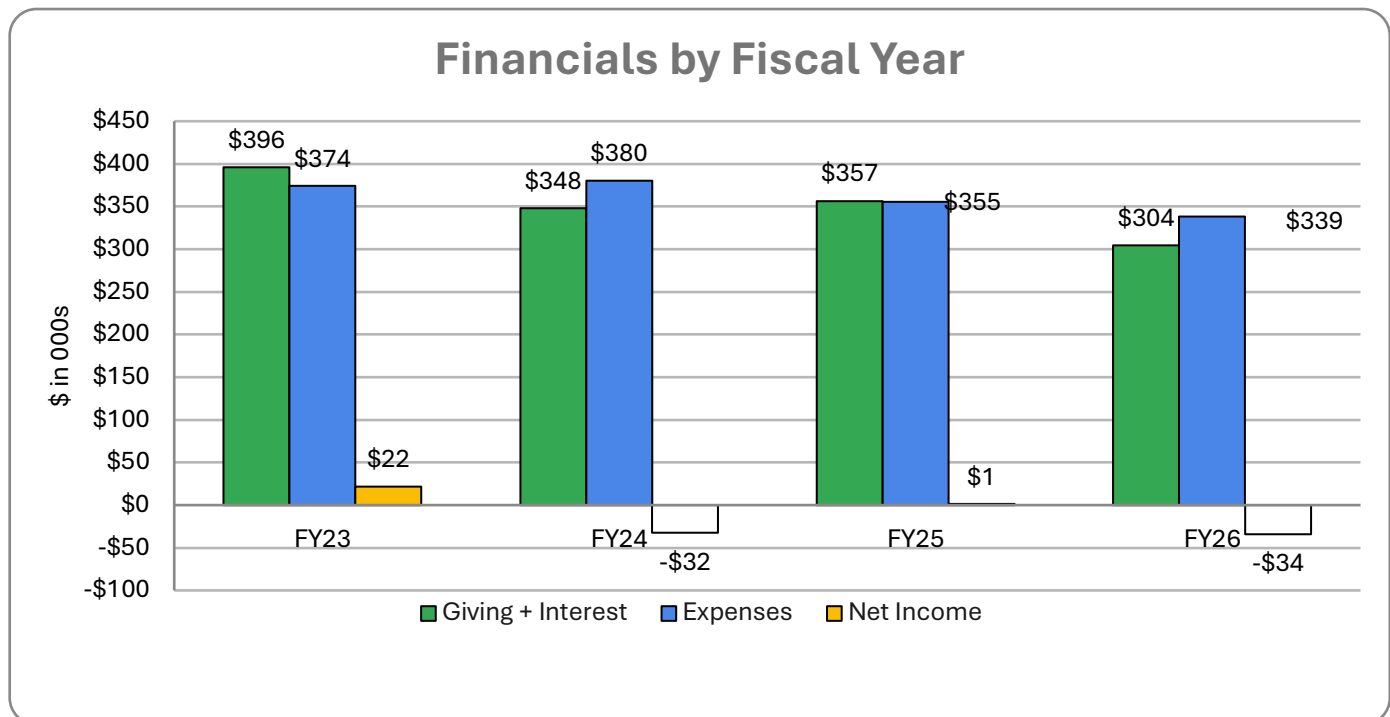
Stewardship & Finance Committee 2025-2026 Activities

- Monthly financial review including:
- Current performance to budget
- Financial statements
- Donations received



- Annual stewardship campaign oversight and monthly updates to Congregation
- Annual audit oversight, review and acceptance
- Annual budget compilation, review, and recommendation for 2026-2027

Financial Status 2025-2026 - (10 months FY26, unaudited)



Stewardship & Finance Committee 2025-2026 Members - Many thanks to the dedicated Committee members:

Robin Deihl

Carl Hollomon, Treasurer

John Mackessy

Bunny (Barbara) McClure, Chair and
Assistant Treasurer

Karen Rhodes

Dan Thomas

Lucy Worth

Catherine Scribner, Ex Officio

Ryan Wilson, Ex Officio

Nominations and Leadership Development

by Ken Arneson

The Nominations and Leadership Development committee believes that, by call of baptism, every member of the Congregation is invited to offer their God-given gifts, skills, talents, and work for the church through participation in church ministries. It takes all of us to grow and sustain our church body as we seek to deepen our relationship with God and others. We appreciate all who have answered God's call, and hope others will do the same by answering phone or email requests and prayerfully considering the opportunities we present.

This year the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee again sought to grow its support and encouragement of those in lay leadership roles in our church, such as coordinators of ministries or chairs of committees. To that end, we reviewed the lists of those currently serving in the Congregation and reached out to members, new and experienced, with opportunities to engage more deeply. We established the slate of new Council Members and Committee chairs which we will present at the Congregation annual meeting in June. May God bless those who serve our church in such a myriad of ways!

Great gratitude to the committee members: Meredith Bryson, Jane Fellows, Adriana Doi, and Harry Rodenhizer

Administration

by Kate Courtney

The Administration Committee serves to ensure the smooth operational functioning of our church community, managing the essential behind-the-scenes tasks that enable our ministries to flourish. The Administration Committee continued its vital work of maintaining and updating the congregation's website. This ongoing effort included:

- Regular content updates to keep members informed of current staff and ministries
- Ensuring accurate service times, contact information, and ministry descriptions

Staff-Parish Relations

by Lucy Worth

The committee members for the 2025-2026 year were Lucy Worth (Chair), Peppi Browne-Armstrong, Kenyon Davenport, Lauren Goetzl, and Deb Hackey

Highlights of the year's activity:

1. The committee appointed a transition team to support the new senior pastor during his first year. That team is chaired by Karen Rhodes and includes Luke Oliver, Carolyn Stoe, Kate and Craig DeAlmeida, Ken Arneson, Diane McOmie, Bruce Puckett, and Mary Tyrey.

2. One or more committee members participated in interviews for the Office Administrator position and in the restructuring of two budgeted part-time positions into one broader part-time position.

3. In preparing the wage and salary request for the FY 2027 budget, the committee used data from a Living Wage project at MIT, current as of February 2026, and for this region, in recommending pay adjustments for two positions. In addition, in recognition of the increased costs of living, SPRC recommended a pay increase of 2.8% (estimated federal COLA for 2027) for eligible staff positions. We are grateful for the excellent work and dedication of all staff.

4. Committee member Lauren Goetzl, Esq. led the work of the committee in rewriting the employee manual to support the work of the Congregation's employees and meet all applicable NC and federal labor laws.

CHAPEL SUPPORT

Chapel Support

by Greg Beck

Congregation members providing Chapel Support are an essential part of Sunday morning worship services at the Chapel, helping to provide a welcoming environment for all who enter on Sunday mornings. Whether serving in highly visible roles as ushers, greeters, communion servers, lectors, and cross and torch bearers (known affectionately as the Gospel Quartet), or behind the scenes as offering counters and members of the altar guild, these volunteers ensure that Sunday services provide a meaningful and deeply felt worship experience for both Congregation members and thousands of visitors, yearly.

Not to be overlooked is the work of choir engagement volunteers, who make sure that on major holidays, our magnificent choristers are well "fed and watered." One cannot overlook the specialized skills of our knowledgeable docents, who, upon conclusion of the Sunday worship service, provide curious visitors with a tour of the Chapel, inside and out. Docents provide tours and information during weekdays too. In addition to knowledge of the history and architecture of the Chapel, the role of docent requires excellent presentation abilities. Due to the talents required for this position, there is always a need for more docents.

Altar Guild

by Ellie Ferguson

The Altar Guild teams are responsible for setting up Communion on a twice-monthly schedule, except during the summer when it is once a month. The Chapel staff is responsible for Communion offered in the Memorial Chapel on those Sundays when it is not in the main body of the Chapel. The annual volunteer luncheon was in May with Pastor Ryan Wilson attending.

Our duties begin at 9:30 a.m. in the Memorial Chapel when we set out the chalices, pour in the wine or grape juice, count out the napkins for the chalices, pitchers, and reserve bread patens, wrap up the pita bread packets, and prepare the gluten-free wafer patens. When the service is over, everything is gathered up and returned to our workspace where the linens are carefully counted, silver washed and polished, and any leftover consecrated bread, wafers, and wine returned to the earth. The linens are laundered and ironed by a team member who passes them on in time for the next Communion.

In addition, the team members polish the processional cross and torches, the altar candle holders, and the baptismal font.

At present there are eleven members of the Altar Guild: Billie and Gary Bauer, Roxanna Bottjen, Brenda Brodie, Ellie Ferguson, Cindy Gass, Linda Gauger, Beth Owen, Patsy Willimon, and Sarah and Reid Weissinger.

Offering Counters

by Drew Middleton

The past year witnessed a significant number of individuals joining the congregation at the Chapel, not only as part of the worshipping community but also in their service, particularly in offering counting. The continued support of numerous highly dedicated individuals enabled the continuation of offering counting for the 2025-2026 academic year. Their continual dedication is truly praiseworthy.

Volunteers were Roxanna Bottjen, Gregory Beck, David Sauer, Kenyon Davenport, Bunny McClure, Tamela Davis, Jane Fellows, Leisa Dennehy, Billy Chow, and Robin Diehl.

Children's Christmas Eve Service

by Delilah Twombly

The annual Children's Christmas Eve Service held on 12/24/25 was coordinated by Mindy Erdmann, Delilah Twombly, and Ryan Wilson with great help from last year's coordinators, Megan Cacchio and Kate DeAlmeida, as well as the help of numerous parents and volunteers.

This year's script was updated to include greater usage of Holy Scripture while continuing the beloved Congregation tradition of costumed children portraying the Nativity scene. The service also continued last year's addition of involving youth as readers and musicians. A total of 19 children, 7 youth, and 4 adults had roles in the service.

Docents

by Tamela Davis

As one of the most visited places in the southeastern United States, Duke Chapel stands as a beautiful example of Gothic architecture. Over 300,000 visitors enter to look at its magnificent stained-glass windows, listen to one of its four pipe organs, or climb the 139 steps to the top of the 210-foot bell tower. Guiding visitors with the history, art and architecture of the Chapel are a faithful team of docents who greet visitors during the week as well as on Sundays after the 11 a.m. ecumenical worship service. Tours can also be scheduled on the Duke Chapel website, chapel.duke.edu.

Chapel docents are Denise Waters, Kenyon Davenport, Beth Gettys Sturkey, Linda Sutton, Linda Gauger, Margot Wuebbens, Steve Harper, and Tamela Davis. Docents meet twice yearly for fellowship lunch.

Nursery

by Delilah Twombly

The Nursery operates with a limit of 16 children, ages infant through 6-year-olds, beginning at 10:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings. The average number of children per Sunday is around 4.

The Chapel continues to reimburse the Congregation for one Caregiver position's salary, while the Congregation covers the expense of three Caregivers' salaries. Since October 2025, the Nursery has been well-staffed with a scheduled rotation of five regular Caregivers and one occasional Caregiver.

Ushers

by Ken Arneson

We believe it's an honor and privilege to support the Chapel. We strive to be a friendly, Christian presence. Among our duties are distributing worship guides, answering questions from worshippers and visitors, attending to and accommodating special needs and requests, ensuring that offertory and communion run smoothly, and ensuring all who enter the sanctuary know they are very much welcome.

We are present at all weekly services, generally from the hours of 10:30-12:30, and we assist during all the Christmas, Holy Week and All Hallows Eve services. With 8-10 ushers at each service, we clock roughly 1,000 hours on an annual basis.

We were delighted to add Dan Thomas and Debi Halabis to our team this year, and Liz McMahon is taking a sabbatical. Other regular ushers on our current roster are: co-head usher Peter Acker, Judy Arneson, Billy Chow, Leisa Dennehy, Francis Donaie, Mark & Cindy Gass, Drew Middleton, Eileen Mitchell, Nolan Puckett, Guy & Mindy Solie, John & Mary Dawn Krege, and Gabby Walker.

On behalf of all the ushers, we are grateful for the opportunity to serve the Congregation, the Chapel, and the broader community in this way.

STAFF

Office Administrator

by Karen Rhodes and Catherine Scribner

This past year brought two staff transitions to the Office Administrator role. Nancy Sowa decided the role was not right for her at this point in her life and left the position in September. We thank her for her time with us and for her thoughtfulness in enabling a smooth transition. With our gratitude, Karen Rhodes stepped back in to assist on an interim basis until a replacement was found. We welcomed Catherine Scribner as the new Office Administrator in January 2026. Karen has now returned to her retirement, although, thankfully, she is happy to answer questions and assist as needed.

Catherine has leveraged her many years of experience to quickly learn the regular administrative tasks needed to support the Congregation and work with the accounting firm that handles the Congregation's finances. Additional highlights this year include:

- Meeting with staff from the Divinity School to better understand the classroom and meeting spaces available
- Expanding the use of the Breeze membership database to include event registration and payments
- Organizing the Congregation's 40th Anniversary Celebration in May and the Annual Business Meeting in June
- Reinstating the use of the Duke and Duke Chapel Events Calendar to advertise Congregation events and classes to the Duke community at large and the Duke web audience
- Coordinating creation of Weekly News pamphlets which are available at all Chapel entrances on Sunday mornings to encourage visitors to learn more about the Congregation's activities

Pastoral Care Ministry

by Ken Moland

My role is to assist the senior pastor in the pastoral care of members of the congregation. Generally, I keep in touch with the more senior members of the congregation, and the senior pastor does pastoral care among the congregation more broadly and in more acute pastoral care needs. There is always some overlap in these areas of responsibility, and I cover all pastoral care needs when the senior pastor is away. My ministry includes phone visits, emails, texts, note cards, in person visits and private communion services. On occasion, I also preside for memorial services in consultation with the senior pastor. I also occasionally assist on Sunday mornings as requested by Chapel staff. Our care for our members is greatly enhanced by our volunteers who serve by keeping in touch with members as a part of the Visitation and Care Ministry. Their service is so valuable in maintaining regular contact with those who are unable to attend worship in person because of limitations. So many of our senior members are wonderful examples of living in the blessing of a mature Christian faith and worldview. We are fortunate to have each of them as vital members of our fellowship, and it is valuable to foster their connection with our broader membership. I also serve as our congregation representative on the board of **Growing Thru Grief**, a valuable ministry we have supported for a number of years. We continue to seek ways to develop this ministry and increase awareness of its benefits for our members in dealing with grief.

I have enjoyed sharing this ministry with Ryan Wilson and so appreciate his support. Thanks also to Catherine Scribner for administrative support, always so helpful. I have also felt completely supported by the congregation and its leadership and I greatly appreciate that. Finally, God has supplied our needs and continues to care for all our members. We together rest in His care, and in the care of one another.

Children's Ministry

by Delilah Twombly

My first day as Children's Minister for the Congregation was 7/29/25. While much of my time has been spent learning and adjusting to my role, there are a few areas of growth I have focused on this past year. The first area I have focused on is family fellowship. Our first family fellowship event was co-led by Mindy Erdmann

and me on 8/31/25. We held a family social prior to the Sunday service to kick-start our new education year. In October, the Children's Ministry was invited by the Fellowship Committee to bring children's activities to the annual picnic. We painted figurines, had a scavenger hunt, and handed out goodie bags. The annual children's Easter egg hunt was expanded to an Easter party for all Congregation members. Our Easter party was held on Palm Sunday before the worship service. We had the Easter egg hunt as well as a light breakfast and games. We plan to continue family fellowship into the summer with two scheduled gatherings off campus.

. Another area I have focused on is welcoming children and families during Sunday services. We have primarily fostered this hospitality through reimplementing Worship Bags. Worship Bags are for all children to use during the service. Each bag has an activity/craft that pertains to that Sunday's Scripture reading and multiple sensory/comfort items. Carmelita Chadwick-Gallo and her son, Alexander Gallo, have helped tremendously in passing out our Worship Bags. I hope to further foster a welcoming environment throughout the years by working on ways to make Chapel services a more inclusive space for children and other folks who may feel underrepresented or out of place in the Chapel.

A final area of focus of mine this past year has been on volunteer and Nursery Caregiver appreciation. Our Children's Ministry could not continue without their service.

Our Nursery Caregivers were given gift cards for Christmas. Children's Ministry volunteers were gifted cross ornaments. This summer we will have a Children's Ministry volunteer appreciation luncheon.

Many thanks to our incredible Nursery Caregivers: ZiYan Britt, Cypress Darden, Tammy Darden, Natasha Njuki, Ngoc Tran, and Madelynne Van Roekel. Thank you to our volunteers who continue to bless our Children's Ministry in a myriad of ways: Megan Cacchio, Carmelita Chadwick-Gallo, Kate Courtney, Kate DeAlmeida, Linda Gauger, Lee Guile, Marianna Henry, Cheznee Johnson, Luke Oliver, Jim Parker, Catherine Scribner, and Carolyn Stoe. Thank you to my predecessor, Phyllis Snyder. Phyllis's legacy is a testament to her gift and heart for teaching all of God's children.

I am honored to be the Children's Minister. Serving the Congregation this past year has been a beautiful gift. I pray we can be blessings to each other for many more years to come.

Youth and Young Adults Ministry

by Mindy Erdmann MDiv

I joined the Congregation staff as Pastoral Assistant for Youth and Young Adults in May 2025 and have been teaching the Youth Sunday School Class since then. We have a core group of 5 students and have occasionally had as many as 8 on a Sunday morning (same numbers as last year). At the beginning of the school year last August a couple of students from the Godly Play class attended Youth Sunday School for a time or two but they ultimately decided to stay with the Godly Play class another year.

Last summer the Youth Sunday School did not meet. In the fall we began using the book Holy Things for Youth Ministry for our Sunday School curriculum. This book helps youth understand the various elements of worship based on Fred Edie's framework of Book (The Bible), Bath (Baptism), Table (Communion), and Time (the church year). In late fall we studied baptism, leading into some lessons on how through our baptism into the Church we are prepared to join Jesus in his ministry to the world. Through a process of study, prayer, and discernment, the youth sensed God calling us to focus on economic inequality as an issue to address. In the winter we learned about economic inequality using material from United for a Fair Durham and invited a speaker from that organization to join us for a joint youth/adult forum discussion. We also had a Lenten study from Illustrated Ministry that focused on Jesus's last week, and his focus on service and justice.

The Youth again participated in the Chapel's Christmas Eve Children's Service. Calliope DeAlmeida played cello again, and Jasper Brown, Mabel Cacchio, and Adora Gallo read. In addition, the Youth partnered with the Children's ministry to hide eggs for the Congregation's Easter Egg Hunt outside the Chapel on Palm Sunday.

Communications and Outreach Assistant

by Kirsten Ford

The Congregation's social media presence has seen a 50% increase in viewership, reflecting strong growth in audience engagement and reach. Additionally, our newsletter continues to maintain steady readership, with increasing interaction and engagement from subscribers.