



ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26



THE CHURCH OF
THE HOLY TRINITY
RITTENHOUSE SQUARE



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Esha Bhatia, Alicia Depler, Rob Robinson, Monica Heuer, Phillip Duffy, and Ali Shott,

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The Rev. Rachel Wenner Gardner, Rector
The Rev. John Gardner, Rector

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Esha Bhatia, Alicia Depler,
Rob Robinson, Monica Heuer
Phillip Duffy, and Ali Shott

Simson Hui, Vestry Member



To vote online,
scan the code

Finance Report

Phillip Duffy, Accounting Warden

Property Report

Susan Leidy, Property Committee
Chairwoman

Thank You

The Rev. Rachel Wenner Gardner
Monica Heuer, Rector's Warden

Closing Prayer



Opening & Closing Prayers

OPENING PRAYER

from the New Zealand Prayer Book

Prayer before a Meeting

God our Creator,
when you speak
there is light and life,
when you act
there is justice and love;
grant that your love
may be present in our
meeting,
so that what we say
and what we do
may be filled
with your Holy Spirit.

CLOSING PRAYER

from the New Zealand Prayer Book

For the Mission of the Church

Draw your Church
together, O God,
into one great company
of disciples,
together following
our Lord Jesus Christ
into every walk of life,
together serving him
in his mission to the world,
and together witnessing
to his love.

Rectors' Report



This past year began with intentional preparation as we looked ahead to our sabbatical, made possible through the Clergy Renewal Grant. During the spring, we focused intentionally on strengthening leadership within the parish by developing handbooks, clarifying roles and worship schedules, and empowering staff and Vestry. These efforts created structures that allowed the congregation to flourish and embrace a summer of rest, play, and shared life together, even as we stepped away to do the same.

Our sabbatical was a true gift. We were able to reconnect as a family, travel, settle into new stages of life, by supporting our children as they began college and high school, and John, as he started his clinical training for therapy. We returned rested and rejuvenated, deeply grateful for the time away.

We were welcomed back by a community that had continued to grow in relationship with one another and with God.

In the fall, we saw increased needs in the community and an inspiring response from our members and neighbors. Volunteers stepped forward, donations increased, and new partnerships expanded our outreach. Our doors opened wide for those seeking resources, for concerts and worship, for community gatherings, for civic conversations, and for moments of laughter and fellowship.

The vivid vision we imagined four years ago is truly beginning to take shape. This church is alive with energy and purpose, and we are becoming ever more deeply woven into the fabric of our community.

As we look ahead, we continue to evaluate our budget and staffing in light of both present needs and future opportunities. One significant development has been the integration of operations and outreach into a single role, in which Robyn Schnieders excels. Her leadership has helped us connect and partner with organizations that share our mission. Through these partnerships, we have deepened our commitment to loving our neighbors and honoring the dignity of every human being.

Open Hearts continues to be a place where all our neighbors can find a place of belonging and experience the love of God.

We are also delighted to welcome Inaara Neal-Shiraz into a full-time role as Director of Advancement. She is overseeing development, communications, and restructuring and growing our rentals program. Inaara brings light, joy, and curiosity to all she does and helps us more fully live into our identity as a joyful, fearless, and welcoming community.

We are especially proud to have hired several individuals who were once guests at Open Hearts Cafe, some of whom have moved on to full-time employment. This is a testament to the transformative power of hospitality, dignity, and opportunity.

We remain open most days of the week, with friendly faces ready to welcome all who enter. It is a joy and an honor to be part of such a vibrant and compassionate community.

We are deeply grateful to serve alongside you in this church.

John and Rachel





STAFF REPORTS

Organist & Choirmaster Report



Choir rehearsing for Choral Evensong



Choir members during Celebration Sunday!

The past year has been a time of stability for the music ministries at CHT. The choir sang at most Sunday liturgies and at the special liturgies of Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, Easter, and Christmas. We marked the conclusion of the sabbatical in October with a service of Choral Matins, the first fully sung service of that type at CHT in many years. We hope to offer this on an occasional basis on Sundays through the coming years. In November, we joined the choir of St. Peter's Church for a moving All Souls Choral Evensong service. Other Evensong services were held for Advent, Epiphany, and Lent with one more to come on the Eve of Ascension Day.

Choristers in 2025/2026 were Hannah Bashore, Nathaniel Bear, Gail Caruso, Patricia Conrad, Stephanie DeMane, Will Dowling, Samuel Evans, Franny Geller, Andrew Gutknecht, Justine Hansen, Samuel Keeler, Thomas Kneeland, Alex Mathews, John Miles, Aimee Pilgermeyer, Eddie Rubeiz, Erica Rose Smith, Julianna Smith, Amanda Staub, and Maiya Williams. Our choir is composed of highly skilled, committed, and engaged singers who are a joy to work with. I am deeply thankful for each one of them.



Ben Leiby and Wesley Parrott with three organists during Lenten Organ Meditation Series



L to R: Choir members John, Andy, Aimee, and Franny with Frankie, our Dir. of Ops & Outreach's dog

Music Report, cont.

I am also immensely grateful for the support of our principal assisting organist, Wesley Parrott, whose contributions extend beyond his virtuosic playing to critical insights about the maintenance of our organ. I also want to thank our other assisting organists Richard Spotts and Brendan Barker who allow me to take time off knowing I am leaving the music of the church in good hands.

We continued our series of organ meditations during Advent and Lent with some exceptional playing during this season. Philadelphia is blessed with many fine organists, and it has been a pleasure to hear them demonstrate the capabilities of our instrument. My thanks to Erik Meyer, Sarah Palmer, Kathleen Scheide, Bálint Karosi, Wesley Parrott, James Kealey, and Andrea Boudra who have all played this past year. Our organ continues to be a resource for the community and will be a featured instrument in this summer's Organ Historical Society convention.

Our church is blessed to have the oldest manually operated carillon in North America in our tower. In December, we offered two seasonal recitals by Evelyn Sun and Lisa Lonie during the Saturday farmer's market. Evelyn will return to play preludes on Easter Day and Trinity Sunday. My thanks to Lisa Lonie for her guidance on maintenance and expanded use of this resource.

Our primary goal is to offer our musical gifts in worship to the glory of God and for the building up of the body of Christ. If you feel a calling to join the music ministry of CHT, either as a member of the choir or in some other way, please reach out to me by email (bleiby@htrit.org) or see me after church some Sunday. I would be happy to talk with you.

Submitted by Benjamin Leiby

Organist and Choirmaster
Lent, 2026



Director of Operations & Outreach

Submitted by Robyn Schnieders

2025 Highlights-Operations



The Operations team stewards over 15,000 square feet across four core facilities—Sanctuary, Parish House, Rectory, and Centennial Room/Basement—ensuring each space is safe, welcoming, and ready to support worship and community life. Led by Director of Operations Robyn and Operations Coordinator Demetrius, and supported by a dedicated Welcome Team and Operations Assistants, the team takes pride in delivering a seamless, high-quality experience each day. With several capital improvements ahead, Operations looks forward to enhancing our spaces while continuing to support all that the church offers.

- Cleared out all 'unusable' space in Parish House in preparation for strategic use in 2026
- Restructured and renamed our "receptionists" with "Welcome Team" - better displaying the motivation and responsibilities of these important ambassadors
- Identified new snow removal company, saving church in excess of \$10k
- Established beautification schedule for Sanctuary, utilizing volunteers and OHC guests to regularly dust, polish, and ensure a welcoming environment for all



Operations Team (L to R): Robyn, John, and Demetrius

- Improved upon accessibility visibility with new sandwich board signage indicating our ramp access
- Expanded Operations team with additional hours allocated for special projects
- Promoted Demetrius to Operations Coordinator, making him a full-time employee
- Finalized bell tower repairs, including new coping caps
- Re-retained Herman Goldner for all HVAC system needs, resulting in both cost savings and service consistency
- Created 2 employment opportunities within the Operations team for OHC guests- currently serving as Welcome Team ambassadors and Operations support approx 15 hours a week each

2025 Highlights-Outreach

Guided by the theme “Lead with Kindness,” the Outreach team entered 2025 with a clear operational focus: to ensure every guest at The Church of the Holy Trinity and Open Hearts Cafe feels welcomed, respected, and supported. Through thoughtful program growth and a commitment to consistency, the team strengthened its approach to hospitality and care. Building on this foundation, Open Hearts Cafe carries forward the mantra “Safe and Seen” into 2026 as it continues to deepen its impact.



Open Hearts volunteers filling out clothing orders during an evening meal service



Angie from Angie Organizes with Robyn, dropping off clothing donations

- Day program utilization increased over 65%, starting Q1 with under 50 guests a day, and ending Q4 averaging over 110 guests a day
- Implemented community-wide Winter Coat Drives, yielding over 600 winter coats from dozens of drives- affording our guests coats from November 2025-February 2026
- Created new systems around our dinner service, allowing more guests to be served, more volunteers to be utilized, and promoting efficiency and service for all facets of the dinner service.
- Increased dinner service capacity from 80 guests to 145 guests per night
- Embraced OHC guest participation for the holiday giving tree, Sanctuary cleaning & beautification, day service set up, and church-sponsored events, thus promoting inclusion and community
- Secured over \$365k in in-kind donations for Open Hearts Cafe, ensuring adequate supplies of clothing, blankets, and toiletries for our vulnerable guests
- Partnered with over 10 organizations to share resources, outreach, and support for guests and vulnerable individuals across the city
- Continued partnership with Hart of Catering, who provides our Tuesday meal free of charge and also provides employment opportunities for OHC guests
- Inspired by the "Code Blue" weather status, established the "Need a Scarf, Take a Scarf" wall on Walnut Street - engaging the Rittenhouse community this winter and bringing exposure to The Church and its mission. Over 200 scarves were distributed.
- Created partnership with "Insight for All" - an organization providing free mental health care to individuals experiencing homelessness.

Director of Advancement

At the start of April 2026, I transitioned into my full-time role at the Church of the Holy Trinity as the Director of Advancement. My roles intersect fundraising, communications, and the oversight of rentals. With the leadership of our dedicated rectors, staff members, Vestry, and committee members, in this new role, my priority is to best support the church through generating revenue and growing our visibility by collaborating with local leaders, community organizations, and institutions. Many of you have seen me serve in various capacities since November 2023.



Our social media presence highlights our vibrant parish life, Open Hearts ministry, and the contributions of our parishioners and volunteers

By merging our development and communications efforts, we have been able to implement new initiatives and experience tremendous growth:

- **Historic Pledge Campaign:** For the 2026 year, our church congregation pledged, with the support of 57 pledging households, nearly \$255,000, the most we have pledged in the last decade
- **Increased social media presence** with over 130,000 views of our content across Instagram and Facebook; nearly 200 gained followers on Facebook and over 150 new followers on Instagram
- **Launch of Celebration Sundays:** Honoring and uplifting a ministry of our church life every month
- **Stronger visibility of our Open Hearts Cafe** meal and clothing ministry on social media, spotlighting our staff and volunteers
- **Building a robust bank of images** for our church print and digital media

Dir. of Advancement Report, cont.

We especially thank Hart of Catering for their generous in-kind donations valued over \$30,000 of all our Tuesday Open Hearts meals, and the meals they catered for our Summer Sabbatical fellowship dinners!

Upcoming Initiatives: Within the next 12 months, progress will be made on:

- **Growing our Annual Pledge Campaign:** Communicate our development milestones.
 - Develop and disseminate a narrative budget
 - Support Evangelism Committee's efforts to welcome and retain newcomers
 - Collaborate with Dir. of Operations & Outreach to uplift and thank Open Hearts volunteers, and encourage them to financially support the ministry
- **Building Phillips Brooks Legacy Society:** Expand our planned giving efforts to and create a path of ease for parishioners and community members to leave a bequest, and/or participate in other modes of planned giving like Charitable Gift Annuity, qualified charitable distributions from an IRA, etc.
- **Communications:** Expand our print and digital assets that provide daily visitors, tourists, and event attendees to learn more about our church.
 - Build partnerships with Rentals to list a "Welcome Message" from our church within each event program (or as an insert)
- **Systematizing our Rentals and Events Process:** Creating a clear workflow to ensure that each rentals client is aware of the process, information about equipment and set up needs are communicated ahead of time to best allow our Events and Operations teams to prepare for each rental
- **Training Events Staff and Administrative Coordinator:** Support the onboarding of a more engaged events staff that takes ownership of running events, and works in collaboration with the Administrative Coordinator that handles the intake and processing of rentals paperwork

Every project I work toward requires the support of our rectors, staff members, Vestry, committees, parishioners, and community members. I thank each of you sincerely for all the ways you have made possible this work.

Submitted by
Inaara Neal-Shiraz
Director of Advancement





VESTRY
& MINISTRY
REPORTS

A Note from the Rector's Warden



Monica Heuer, Rector's Warden

"It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold." – **Charles Dickens**

This time of year, spring arrives in glimpses. A warm afternoon, coats left at home, the feeling that something new has arrived. And then the cold returns.

It strikes me how much that mirrors the past year. Moments of real progress alongside stretches that asked more of us: patience, resilience, a willingness to keep moving forward. This is the threshold season. Not winter. Not yet spring. And yet beneath the surface, something is always happening. Roots strengthening. Daffodils preparing to bloom long before we can see them.

What I have seen in this community this year is people who stayed. And in staying, they found that something meaningful had taken root.

A Season of Rest, A Season of Growth

From early June through early October, our Co-Rectors, the Reverends. John and Rachel Gardner, stepped into a long-planned sabbatical fully funded by a competitive grant.

Out of thousands of applications, Holy Trinity was one of just 169 churches selected. John and Rachel traveled through Europe, settled their eldest into college and their twins into high school, and returned to us in the fall restored, present, and ready.

And while they rested, we grew. The congregation came alive. We gathered for dinners, walked two hikes through Philadelphia, and held a quiet retreat. Our staff and lay leaders kept Holy Trinity running without missing a beat, showing up every day with the quiet strength that holds a community together.



Rector's Warden Report, cont.

Stewardship: You Answered

Last summer, the Vestry launched a stewardship campaign while John and Rachel were away. We held focus groups, refreshed our messaging, and talked honestly about our building and our future. Last fall, you answered. Our campaign exceeded its ambitious \$250,000 goal by more than 15%. That is a congregation saying “Yes” to this place and to one another.

Our Building: Quiet, Steady Work

This 167-year-old building, listed on the National Register of Historic Places and home to five Tiffany windows, the newly restored Möller organ, and the legacy of Phillips Brooks, has had its quiet guardians this year. Our property committee has worked with discipline and remarkable follow-through, carrying out a long-term stewardship plan month after month. Without a formal capital campaign, we have completed more than \$1.6 million in restoration and are now pursuing support through the National Fund for Sacred Places to address the brownstone facade. We preserve it not because it is old, but because it is ours.

Open Hearts: Showing Up

Our Open Hearts Café continues to be one of the truest expressions of who we are, mobilizing over 1,000 volunteers and receiving \$365,000 worth of in-kind donations this year. My daughter has volunteered there for several years now, going on her own each week, bringing friends, delivering clothing to neighbors in need. I have watched her grow in confidence and purpose in ways you cannot manufacture or teach.

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it. — Proverbs 22:6

She is a daffodil pushing through frozen ground. And she is not alone. This community is full of them.

In Community

Spring returns not in isolation but in community. Fields of daffodils bloom together. The same is true for us.

There is much to celebrate in the pages that follow, and even more still unfolding. May we keep showing up for one another, trusting that what we are building together will continue to grow.

With gratitude and in service,

Monica Heuer Rector's Warden, Church of the Holy Trinity 2026

Financial Report

A Year at a Glance

In 2025 and early 2026, our church's finances show real progress and a clear challenge:

- Giving and income are increasing
- Expenses are more controlled than last year
- We are still spending more than we bring in through regular income
- We continue to rely on our endowment to make up the difference

Where We Are:

- We are moving in the right direction, but we are not yet financially self-sustaining.

2025 in Context

	2025	Change from 2024
Total Revenue	\$1.5 M	+11%
Total Expenses	\$1.58 M	+31%
Operating Deficit	(\$78 K)	deficit

Much of the expense increase came from one-time or non-cash items, while contributions went up significantly, which is a powerful sign of generosity and commitment.

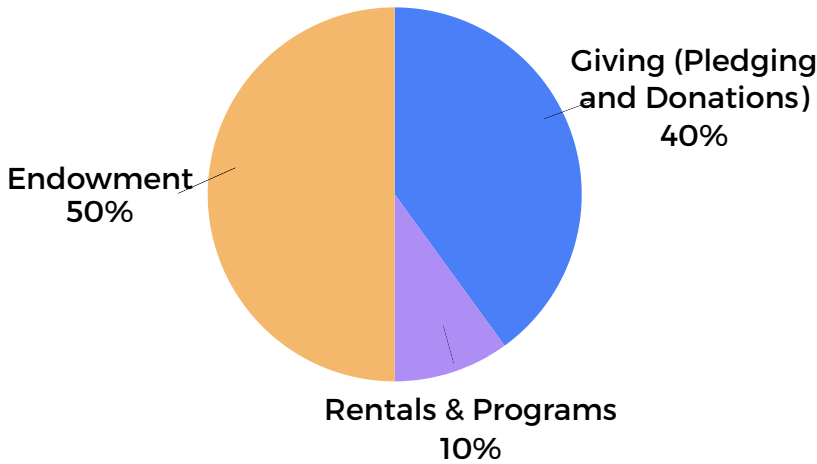
Early 2026: Signs of Progress

	2026 YTD	2025 YTD	Change	Status
Total Revenue	\$55,024	\$44,762	+10,263	Positive
Total Expenses	\$258,297	\$340,209	-81,912	Positive
Operating Deficit	(\$203,273)	(\$295,447)	+92,174	Improving

What this means: Income is rising, expenses are lower, and the deficit is shrinking. This is encouraging momentum.

Financial Report, cont.

Where Our Money Comes From:



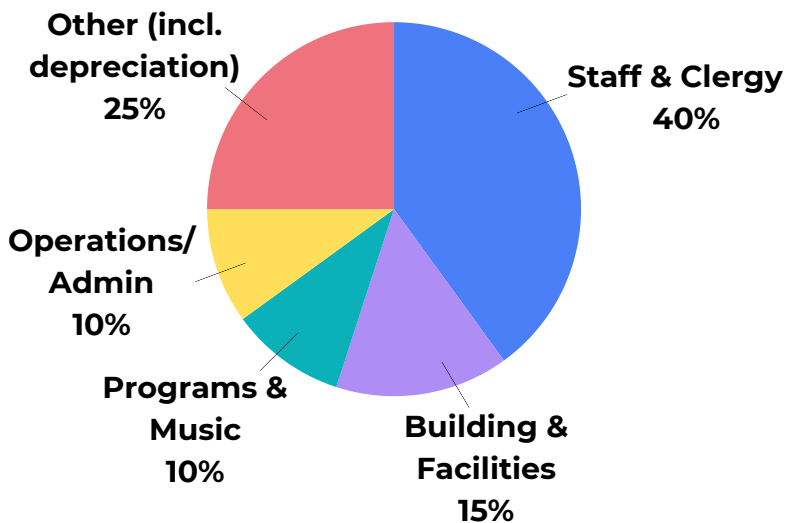
About half of our income continues to come from the endowment, with the rest from giving and church activities.

Key Takeaways:

1. Giving is growing strongly (up over 60% early in 2026)
2. Rental income is increasing modestly
3. It is important to note that we still rely heavily on our endowment, but we should applaud our Vestry, Finance Committee, Staff, and Rectors for helping to stabilize how we look forward in our Vivid Vision.

Where Our Money Goes:

Expense Breakdown (2025)



Most of our spending supports people, programs, and maintaining our building.

Key Takeaways:

1. Our largest costs are people and buildings
2. Building expenses (especially heat and insurance) are high and unpredictable
3. Some 2025 costs were one-time only

Our Central Challenge is that we are spending more than we bring in through regular income.

- The endowment helps cover this gap
- But it is meant to support, not fully fund, operations

Why this matters: Over time, relying too much on the endowment is not sustainable.

Financial Report, cont.

Our Strengths

- ~\$10 million in total assets
- Very little debt (~\$23K)
- A strong endowment providing stability
- Improving financial transparency

What this means: We have a strong foundation and time to make thoughtful, sustainable changes.

What We're Working on in 2026

- Growing pledged giving and participation
- Expanding rental and program income
- Managing expenses carefully
- Engaging a new independent auditor
- Reviewing clergy compensation
- Evaluating our endowment strategy
- Increasing parish engagement in financial stewardship

Looking Ahead

This year reflects both momentum and transparency:

1. Giving is rising
2. Expenses are more disciplined
3. The deficit is improving

At the same time, closing the gap between income and expenses remains essential. The path forward will require all of us: through generosity, participation, and shared commitment.

With gratitude,

We are deeply grateful to the Finance and Revenue Committees, the Vestry, staff, and the entire parish for your generosity and faithful stewardship.

Finance Committee Members: Brian Conroy*, Phillip Duffy*, Alyssa Force*, Rachel Wenner Gardner, John Gardner, Monica Heuer*, Margaret Hughes*, Simson Hui*, Joshua Karstendick, Frank LaMay, and Daniel Tancredi*

Revenue Committee Members: Brian Conroy*, Ashley Del Bianco, Rachel Wenner Gardner, John Gardner, Margaret Hughes*, Simson Hui*, Jeff McEldowney*, Inaara Neal-Shiraz, Monica Heuer*, *Chair*
(*Vestry members)

Property Committee Report

It was a busy year for the property committee, with a number of major and minor projects undertaken to maintain the church's historic building and make it even more welcoming to the congregation and visitors.

In the beginning of 2025, the Committee received significant support with the addition of Robyn Schnieders as director of operations at the church. Robyn has been a valuable Committee member and essential to the timely and on-budget completion of capital projects.

Throughout the year, the Committee continue to deal with the water damage that occurred during the roof replacement project in 2022-23 with the assistance of legal counsel. In 2026, the damage, in the ceiling and walls of the church's apse, will be repaired. The Tiffany stained glass laylight over the choir area, also damaged during the roofing project, was repaired in early 2025 at the expense of the roofer.

One major project was undertaken in 2025: storm damage to the roof and railing of the church's bell tower caused significant, and potentially dangerous damage, so Premier Building Restoration was hired to undertake the work to repair the affected area. While there was scaffolding on the tower, Premier also undertook to remove any loose material from the upper level of the bell tower façade.



Contractors working on the Tiffany glass in the Sanctuary Dome laylight



Replacing the glass front doors



Repairing damage to the roof of the church's bell tower

Property Committee Report, cont.

A number of smaller projects were also undertaken, including:

- replacement of the railing to the breezeway concrete ramp
- replacement of the glass front doors
- addressing a long “punchlist” of repairs and improvements to the sanctuary
- addressing a backlog of maintenance issues at the Rectory during the sabbatical of the Rectors.

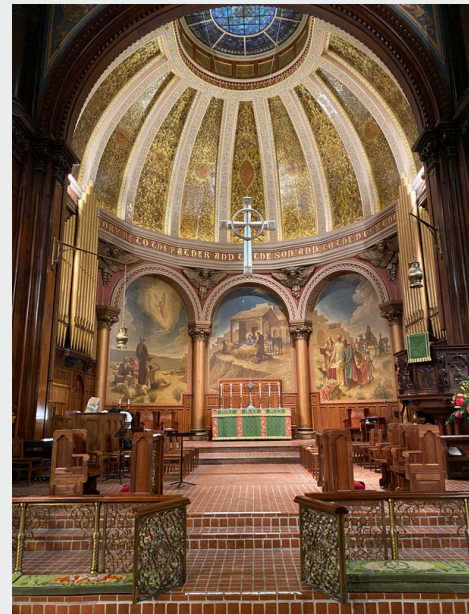
During the summer, the staff undertook a major cleanup initiative for the upper floors of the Parish House, greatly increasing the amount of available space.

The Committee also undertook two important planning efforts for projects to be undertaken as funding is available:

- Charles Loomis and Charris McAfee, Architects, were retained to formulate a plan for building physical accessibility with the goal of making access to all areas of the church equitable. The plan will be available in 2026.
- Klein and Hoffman, Engineers, were retained to create a proposal for the first phase of building envelope stonework repair.



*Top: Robyn, Bevan, and Susan meeting with architects Charles and Charris
Right: Church chancel space*



Property Committee

Bevan Lawson, Sally Griffith, Emily Stromberg, Ali Shott*, Phillip Duffy*, Josh Karstendick, Simson Hui*, Rob Robinson, Jeff McEldowney*, Rachel Wenner Gardner, Robyn Schnieders, Susan Leidy*, *Chair* (*Vestry members)

Welcome Table

Submitted by Andy Gutknecht

Every Sunday, just before we pass the peace, someone from the Welcome team extends a welcome to the congregation and invites anyone interested to connect more deeply at the Welcome Table after the service.

The welcome table serves as a visible and central place where newcomers and regular attendees can form connections and obtain information. It doesn't take the place of natural informal greeting/conversation amongst regular attendees and newcomers, but for those newcomers who may find it difficult to naturally begin conversation with strangers, it provides a dedicated space where they can ask questions and make themselves known.



Ashley Del Bianco welcoming parishioners after service

When we meet new people at the table, we invite them to sign our guestbook (either paper or via the iPad), which allows us to collect their contact information and stay in touch. We also do our best to introduce them to at least one other member or clergy member. It's been incredibly rewarding and energizing to welcome so many interesting, seeking, and curious people over the years!

As we look to the future, we need to take a more structured approach to staying in touch with those who stop by the table, and give everyone opportunities to become incorporated into the deeper life of the church. This means ensuring that visitors know about opportunities to meet other parishioners, grow in their faith, and give back through volunteering. We need to do a better job of ensuring that we have all necessary information at the welcome table, and that our welcome table attendants have ready access to the information.

Welcome Table, Cont.

I'd also love to expand the welcome table from the Sunday morning services to more of a community outreach approach – meaning we might consider having our welcome table outside during community events (think art show, farmers market, etc.) Perhaps we could offer coffee, conversation, and welcome, and have a small group of people at the table ready to share how they were drawn to Jesus the Christ, why they love the Episcopal tradition of worship, and why they're a part of the CHT community.

Does this sound exciting to you? Without additional volunteers like you, we won't be able to take on these additional activities, which are so critical to growing our congregation and drawing people into the rhythm of the Christian life.

I welcome your comments, and more importantly, your participation. If you'd like to volunteer at the table, please contact me at andrew.gutknecht@verizon.net or 215-478-3901. Apart from volunteering at the table, simply attending church every Sunday in person and actively engaging with others after the service will go a long way to building our community.

Lastly, I'd like to express my heartfelt thanks to the dedicated group of people who regularly staff the table: Sally Griffith, Peg Mertz, Ashley Del Bianco, Jeannie Welsh, and myself. Thanks to Nancy Rasmussen who served faithfully until she moved out of the area, and to Amy Arcarro, who recently volunteered to serve.



Don, Veronica, John, and Karen enjoying Shrove Tuesday in the Parish House



Brian, Rachel, and Jim after Choral Evensong



Submitted by
Andy Gutknecht

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” —Hebrews 13:2

Evangelism Committee

Our church continues to grow and serve as a community hub. We are proud not only of the increase in our size, but also the ways in which we have deepened our relationships with one another, to our faith and worship practices, and with and through God.

Some of the ways that Evangelism Committee has helped nurture the spiritual life of the congregation includes:

- **Sabbatical Retreat:** Inviting parishioners to go on a silent retreat during our rector's sabbatical
- **Fellowship Dinners:** Having the opportunity to go over to one another's homes, gathering around a delicious meal from the Hart of Catering, that we may better know one another.
- **Liturgical activities:** We've implemented programs related to the celebrations of the liturgical calendar, like hosting Advent Wreath Making, Shrove Tuesday, and the Easter Egg Hunt.



We especially thank Rachel for continuing to offer mid-week Healing Eucharist and starting the Centering Prayer practice that follows the Thursday Eucharist. Many parishioners have found great strength and solace through this practice.

Looking forward, we are excited to offer even more opportunities for our parish to continue evolving and nourishing our faith with one another. You'll be learning more about the launch of our summer fellowship dinners, as well as offerings like getting to hike with one another as we did during summer last year.

Altar Guild

Submitted by Don McKenzie

The Altar Guild is responsible for setting up the church communion services.

After the service, we clear up the chancel area. The communion elements are removed, washed, and put away. The Eucharist candles are refilled with oil. If necessary the altar frontal and the hangings are changed as required by the seasons of the year. This takes about 15 to 20 minutes after the Sunday service.

On the occasion of a baptism there are additional items to be set up and wash and put away. We are also responsible for laundering and ironing the communion linens and ordering supplies for the services such as communion wafers, wine and oil for the candles. Periodically all the silver must be polished.

Our current members are Donald McKenzie, Karen Vannasdall, Monica Heuer, Susan Leidy. We are always looking for additional help. If you are interested in the work of the Altar Guild and can spare 15 minutes, after the the Sunday service come to the Sacristy through the red doors on the right of the church.



Don helping with Altar Guild responsibilities after service

Lectors



Submitted by
Jeannie Welsh

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

—Collect of the Day for the 25th Sunday After Pentecost

Our team of lectors assist in our corporate worship by reading the lessons and intercessory prayers at services and the services are streamed so our voices carry outside the church walls.

Lectors: Veronica Aplenc, Gail Caruso, Anna Maria DiDio, Margaret Dowling, Sally Griffith, Andy Gutknecht, Joshua Karstendick, Frank LaMay, Thomas Lipscomb, Marshall McMMain, James Otwell, Mark Ritter, Ali Shott, Shreve Simpson and Jeannie Welsh (coordinator).

If you are interested in serving, please contact the church office.

Ushers and Refreshments

The church usually has two ushers for the 11:00 a.m. service - greeting arrivals, handing out bulletins, passing the offertory plates, and directing the congregation for communion. These volunteers are integral to the welcoming presence of the church and the smooth operation of the service.

We also thank our dedicated “snack providers” that bring in cookies, fruit, and even baked goods to share with our parishioners. Each person who offers these refreshments ensures that our congregation is welcomed and feels the warmth of our church hospitality.

Flower Guild

The Flower Guild provided floral arrangements for Christmas, Palm Sunday, the Sundays of Easter season, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, and several other Sundays during the Fall. The Sunday team in 2025/2026 included Sally Griffith, Gail Caruso, Donna Cassidy, Andy Gutknecht, and Ben Leiby. Many members of the congregation also assisted with the greening of the church in preparation for Christmas. We are always eager to add new members to our team. Those with or without previous experience are welcome to join us. If you have an interest, please contact the church office.

Acolytes & Chalice Bearers

Acolytes and Chalice Bearers play an important role in our liturgies, assisting with the preparation and smooth flow of our services. Their presence in the church, lighting candles, helping to serve communion, and leading the procession with the cross, helps to set a reverent presence for the congregation. We have 8 acolytes, and could use more - please reach out if you're interested.



Rachel and John administering communion



Tabernacle during Holy Saturday service of Holy Week



Margaret and Mike serving as Easter Vigil ushers



VESTRY
NOMINEES

Core Values



INCLUSION/WELCOME

We believe that no one should feel left out or alone. We embrace our differences and respect each person within our community. This allows everyone to bring their unique and authentic gifts to further the mission of the church.



INNOVATION

We are not afraid of trying new things or changing things when necessary. If things do not work out, we are open to re-evaluate, learn from our mistakes, and try again.



COLLABORATION

We listen to and support one another, working and evolving together. We build upon each other's strengths and lift up each other's gifts.



COMMUNITY MINDEDNESS

Church is not an individual endeavor, but a community experience. We believe that we cannot each succeed or be whole, unless everyone finds success and wholeness.

THANK YOU

Four of our Vestry Members will be ending their service on Vestry as of the Annual Meeting. We are deeply grateful for all that you have done!

Simson Hui has been an invaluable member of the Vestry, serving as Rector's Warden and playing a central role in shaping a strong, engaged lay leadership. His institutional knowledge, steady guidance, and genuine care for this community have been a gift to the Vestry and to the church. We are deeply grateful for his service and his leadership through many significant moments in our church's life.

Margaret Hughes is completing her term on Vestry. In her service on Vestry she has offered her guidance and support through Finance and Revenue Committee, assisted with property projects, and brought together the fun events and gatherings we have as a community. Thank you for sharing your knowledge of this city, and for helping us to become the church we are today.

James Otwell has been a member of this church since before he could walk! He has served on Vestry for several years, and even with a young child, has been generous in sharing his time, talents, and wisdom to the church. While on Vestry, James has helped to explore new ways to engage families, expand our welcome and fellowship with the neighborhood and church community, and build on the growth we've seen in the community. Thank you, James for your service and steadfast support of this church community.

Karen Vannasdall brings a spirit of warmth and welcome wherever she goes. A dedicated member of the altar guild, she finds deep spirituality in the quiet, faithful work of caring for the church linens—cleaning and pressing them with intention and care. She is often the first to rise and greet someone new, even in the middle of a class, helping others feel seen and included from the start. Karen is a steady and loving presence in this community, bringing light to those around her. We are grateful for the ways she has strengthened our culture of welcome and for the consistent, service-oriented care she brings to every part of her church life.



Vestry Nominees



Esha Bhatia

1st Term (2026-2028)

Esha was raised in Hong Kong and has made Philadelphia her home since 1996. She relocated from Washington, DC to accept a position at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP).

Esha began attending CHT in the early 2000s, where she found a welcoming spiritual community in Center City, especially under the leadership of former rector Terry Roper. In November 2005, Esha received the sacrament of Holy Baptism at CHT. Over the years, she has actively contributed to the church, serving on the Altar Guild, as a Vestry member, and as part of the Rector Search Committee that helped bring Rachel and John to CHT. Esha is a graduate of Georgetown University, where she focused her studies on Government. She continued her education in Philadelphia, earning her MA in Communications at the Annenberg School at the University of Pennsylvania.

Outside of her professional and church commitments, Esha is the proud owner of a small dog. She enjoys cooking, binge-watching Sci-Fi and British mysteries/thrillers, and is an enthusiastic fan of the Phillies and Eagles.



Alicia Depler

1st Term (2026-2027)

Alicia grew up in Colorado but has lived in Philadelphia since graduating college (with a brief stay in Los Angeles). She has been attending Holy Trinity since 2024 and is happy to have found a vibrant church home that aligns with her values.

Alicia has been very involved in the church throughout her life, as her father and both grandfathers were pastors. She is newer to the Episcopal tradition and particularly appreciates the liturgy and the beauty of the services.

Alicia graduated from Franklin & Marshall College with a degree in History and currently works in Business Development for the law firm Fenwick & West, supporting their intellectual property group. In her spare time, she loves to cook, read, play with her cats, and explore the city.

Vestry Nominees

Rob Robinson

1st Term (2026-2029)

Rob was raised in Wallingford, PA and Lincolnshire, IL. He holds a BA from Swarthmore College (with High Honors) and a JD from Harvard Law School. Rob spent most of his legal career as a partner in the finance practice of international law firm Sidley Austin LLP's New York office.



Rob and his wife SueAnne have lived in Center City for over four years. Rob was Senior Counsel for Philadelphia-based investment advisory firm Newmarket Capital during this time, before retiring in June 2025. SueAnne is an avid needlepointer and reader who volunteers with Women's Connection. Daughter Hayley (31) lives in Phoenix, AZ and works as a legislative research manager for Progress Arizona. Son Patrick (29) lives in Portland, ME, where he is Senior Manager, Financial Security Programs, for United Way of Southern Maine.

Rob was baptized and confirmed at Trinity Church, Swarthmore, PA. His Episcopal church homes have also included St. Giles' Church (Northbrook, IL), St. John the Divine (Houston, TX), and St. Luke-in-the-Fields (New York, NY). Rob has recently been involved in the work of the Property Committee and Revenue Subcommittee at CHT. He's also interested in the church's music ministry and in extending the parish's outreach throughout the Diocese of Pennsylvania.

Monica Heuer

2nd Term (2026-2029)

Monica Heuer has lived in Philadelphia for over 20 years and has been a member of the church for nearly 15 years. Born and raised in Germany, she has built her career around a passion for serving communities and has worked with nonprofits throughout her professional life.



Monica is a VP for Enterprise Strategy at Penn Medicine and helps leaders build successful programs and develop strategic plans. She has served on the Vestry for three years and has served as Rector's Warden for the past year. Beyond the Vestry, Monica is an active member of the CHT community as a member of the Altar Guild and an usher. Outside of work, she enjoys baking, traveling, and surfing. Monica holds a bachelor's degree from Princeton University, a master's degree in Public Policy from The Johns Hopkins University, and an MBA from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. She and her husband have two children, Emily and Jonathan, and two German Shepherd dogs.



Phillip Duffy

2nd Term (2026-2029)

For almost a decade, Phil has been a member of Korn Ferry's Global Life Sciences Practice, specializing in partnering with entrepreneurial biotechnology, pharmaceutical, and life science focused Venture Capital/Private Equity funds.

Phil's primary focus is on C-Suite Biotechnology and Pharmaceutical Executive Recruitment, with expertise in Chief Executive Officer, Research & Development, Investment, Non-Profit, and other key leadership related engagements. Phil joined Korn Ferry in 2013, leading research strategy efforts across multiple life science verticals. Prior to joining Korn Ferry, Phil worked as a Summer Associate for Merrill Lynch. Phil received his bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the Rawls College of Business at Texas Tech University. He currently serves on the Life Science Cares Philadelphia Board of Advisors and Rawls College of Business Recent Alumni Board. Mr. Duffy is a former member of the Susan G. Komen Board of Directors.

Ali Shott

2nd Term (2026-2029)

Ali grew up in western Montgomery County and lived across DC, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Scotland over 15 years before moving back to PA in 2016. She and her husband, Joshua, live in East Passyunk with their corgi and tuxedo cat. Ali grew up in the United Church of Christ, but has attended CHT since 2017 and was a Sunday School teacher from 2019 to 2022.

Ali is a senior advisor in community development at the Philadelphia Fed, where she leads strategic initiatives to build more inclusive regional economies. In her free time, Ali is an avid reader, swimmer, and board gamer, and attendee of Phillies games.





**THE CHURCH OF
THE HOLY TRINITY**
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