



2025 Annual Report

Church of the Servant

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Leslie Anttos, **Sr. Warden**

Sally Peel, **Parish Administrator** ~ Catherine Charles, **Music Director**

Jonathan D'Amico, **Director of Youth Ministry**

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2025

Annual Parish Meeting Agenda

I. Call to order and Opening Prayer

For a Church Convention or Meeting

Almighty and everliving God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with those who take counsel for the renewal and mission of Church of the Servant. Teach us in all things to seek first your honor and glory. Guide us to perceive what is right, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

II. Recognition of Outgoing Vestry Members

Jodi Davis, Natasha Clay

III. VOTING

Election of new Vestry members:

Sara Allen, Kenneth Colston (**3 year terms**)

IV. Sr. Warden's Report

V. Treasurer's Report

VII. Rector's Report

VIII. Q&A

IX. Adjourn & Closing Prayer

Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Minutes of 2024 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Call to Order and Opening Prayer

Rev. Jody Greenwood began by thanking Sally Peel for assembling the annual report . Rev. Jody led the opening prayer.

Recognition of Outgoing/Continuing Vestry Members

Outgoing Vestry members were recognized and thanked for their service with applause and a small gift: Jan Christophersen, Kim Deslaurier, and David Smith. Continuing Vestry members were thanked for their service: Leslie Antos, Natasha Clay, Jodi Davis, Kemille Moore, Hap Rogers, and Inza Walston.

Don Anderson was thanked for his service as COS Treasurer.

Election of New Vestry Members

Jackie Anderson made a motion to accept the following new Vestry members: Pam Keeney, Cynthia Sosnowski, and Erin Williamson (3 year terms); and Claude Jarrett (1 year term). Rachel Williamson seconded the motion. The congregation affirmed the motion by acclamation.

Please note: Complete reports are available in the printed version of the 2024 Annual Report.

Senior Warden's Report

David Smith began by saying how delighted he was to have served as Senior Warden and highlighted the following: establishing the Bargain Box Legacy Fund; installing Memorial Garden Plaques; new chairs and seat cushions in the sanctuary; a new street sign (on the way!); and a wonderful Parish Retreat. David thanked the parish, the Vestry, Don Anderson, Rev. Jody, Sally Peel, and Kim Deslaurier for making his year an easy one.

Treasurer's Report

Don Anderson thanked Sally Peel for serving as our bookkeeper. He also thanked the Finance Committee and Vestry Liaison Inza Walston for their help with preparing the monthly financial reports. The 2024 budget had a projected deficit of \$21,340 but the actual deficit was \$16,733. The interest earned by the Bargain Box Legacy Fund will support and/or create dignity-based ministries in our community and beyond.

Don reminded everyone that it is not too late to turn in pledge cards for 2025 as the Finance Committee is still working on the budget. The Vestry will approve the 2025 budget at their retreat January 24-26.

Don thanked all those who volunteered their time and expertise to take care of things around the church that we would otherwise have to hire out and pay for.

Rector's Report

Rev. Jody reviewed our Year of Wonderment, which included Renewal time and our Postlude event. The following questions are among those we have explored during 2024: Where do we see God calling COS? What makes COS unique? Where do we see more energy in ministries at COS? What does getting far enough out from the shore look like?

During 2024, we reinvigorated Hospitality by having 2 Vestry members serve as liaisons. There is also a robust team that helps out.

The COS website is used more by those seeking than by parishioners. Thanks to Sally for updating our website.

Rev. Jody thanked other staff for their service- Jonathan D'Amico, Catherine Charles, Rhonda Thomas, Cheryl Wagner, and Shannon who does a great job keeping our facility clean!

A highlight of 2024 was the unveiling of the mural in the Illuminate room. Youth were able to work with an artist on the design, which complements the cartoon in the sanctuary.

Thanks was given to John Sosnowski for filling in while Rev. Jody was away and for officiating at 4 funerals that occurred during that time. There were 3 baptisms, 1 marriage, 9 confirmations, and 3 received during 2024, along with 7 members who passed away.

The 2025 budget will be a challenge but it will include \$6,500 for nursery workers. We are looking for 2 coordinators to oversee interviewing, hiring, scheduling, and overseeing staff.

Q & A time

Priss Endo brought up families with teens who have stopped attending COS and asked who contacts people when we haven't seen them at church in a while. Rev. Jody encouraged everyone to reach out to those that are missing and to help us "watch the back door."

Emily Bliss announced the upcoming Red Cross Blood Drive on Monday, February 3rd from 10:00 am-2:00 pm. Please spread the word and sign up online.

Rev. Jody gave several reminders: Bishop Skirving will retire sometime this year; Annual Conventions are now being held in November; and the Vestry will elect delegates for the Annual Convention.

Adjourn & Closing Prayer

Rev. Jody closed the meeting with a prayer.

Submitted by Jodi Davis, 2024 Vestry Clerk

Report of the Rector

The Rev. Jody Greenwood

Hello Fellow Servants! After our Christmas Eve services last month, I just couldn't stop smiling... but honestly, that can be the case most Sundays of the year! It brings me such joy to be a part of this vibrant and loving worshipping community. I've said it to colleagues, and maybe to some of you, that I'm so lucky to have found my way to Church of the Servant and that I get to share my years of ministry – this vocation I have longed for most of my life - in this place and with this amazing group of people. God is generous! It only seems fitting to offer at the outset of my annual report my gratitude.



Our Invaluable Staff

The mission and ministries of Church of the Servant wouldn't be possible without our gifted and dedicated staff. It is really unbelievable how much we do as a church with only one full time and two part time non-clergy staff members, one contract cleaning professional, and three newly hired very part-time nursery care providers! So, when you look at our financial statement and see the total for salaries and benefits, I implore you to not see these as "administrative costs," but instead as "mission and ministry investments," because without our team we'd lose much of what we take for granted on Sundays and throughout the week.

Please take a moment each day to give thanks for:

Sally Peel, our Parish Administrator and Bookkeeper for 8 years (soon to retire)

Jonathan D'Amico, our Director of Youth Ministries for 3½ years

Catherine Charles, our part-time Music Director for 2½ years

Shannon at Carolina Squeaky Clean, LLC our cleaning service for 2 years

Diana, Sharice, and Becca, our newly hired nursery care providers... Woohoo!!

We also give thanks for **The Rev. Deacon Rhonda Thomas** who served at Church of the Servant during much of this year and is now sharing her gifts of ministry at Church of the Good Shepherd.

Thank You Faithful Lay Leaders

While we have a fantastic team, they do not replace the need for YOU to be an integral part of our ministries. In particular, our Children's Catechesis and Illuminate Youth programs depend on adults to be Catechists or Assistants and Youth Leaders. I also give thanks for the countless hours **Jessica Landes, Rene Gouverneur, Jackie Anderson, and Leslie Antos** put in to get our Nursery up and running in 2025, and I appreciate the ongoing coordination Jessica and Rene will continue to provide. (See CYF Report)

I'm enormously grateful for our faithful Vestry. They are an amazing team with diverse gifts and perspectives that come together each month (and in between) to review how the church is doing – financially and otherwise – and they care deeply for the life and vitality of COS. They are: **Leslie Antos** (Sr. Warden), **Jodi Davis** (Jr. Warden), **Natasha Clay, Claude Jarrett, Pam Keeney, Hap Rogers, Cynthia Sosnowski, Inza Walston, and Erin Williamson**. Thank you also to **Don Anderson** who serves as our Treasurer and **Kim Deslaurier** who is the Clerk of the Vestry. Your willingness to share yourselves and your gifts is greatly appreciated and essential for our congregational life.

Selected Highlights from the Year

The liaison reports will shed light on many mission and ministry focal points during 2025, so I hope you will take some time to read through all of them. Some of the themes that will carry over to 2026 include:

Who is Our Neighbor? – reimagining our relationship with the neighbors around us - College Park Elementary School (CPES), UNCW, the neighborhood itself - to build collaborative relationships and genuine connection. In 2025 we took steps to develop a stronger relationship with CPES and will strive to do more to deepen our connection with UNCW as well as our actual "neighbors" in 2026 – including the Pollinator Garden. (see Outreach and Vision & Vitality Reports)

Threads of Connection – In our Vision & Vitality discussions this year one thing that came up repeatedly is that many in our COS community are *doers*. Many are self-starters who have found organizations in our community to which they give their time and energy. So, for these *doers*, church isn't necessarily where they come to find a place to volunteer, as much as a place to be spiritually fed – through the Word and the Bread – to refortify themselves for another week of faithful service beyond our walls. The Threads of Connection was created, and is displayed in a narthex, to illustrate this reality. It also provides an opportunity for those who are looking for a way to get involved in the community, to know someone at COS can help connect them. (Liturgy, Outreach, Vision & Vitality Reports)

Sign, Sign, Everywhere a Sign! - After over a year of having a damaged sign in front of our property, members of our congregation designed the new sign and had it installed. The old sign was refurbished and relocated the original sign to make the church more visible. Though not as physically tangible, through the creation of the Communication committee, we also hope find other ways to make our presence known in various ways and help those already attending COS know how they can get involved. A "Welcome Audit" is on the horizon. (See Building & Grounds, Communications, Hospitality, and Vision & Vitality Reports)

Mutual Ministry Review - Diocesan Canon for Leadership Development, Stephanie Allen, came to COS on October 4 to facilitate a Mutual Ministry review with me, the Vestry and Treasurer. It was a worthwhile endeavor as we considered three questions, each with a context of "over the last few years":

- 1) What are you grateful for about this COS?
- 2) What has been disappointing about COS?
- 3) What are you hopeful for?

Based on responses, we were asked: **What did you hear?**

- A. Liturgy and Music came up several times in various ways. It's clear there is an interest in looking at how to better align both our liturgy and music to the core values of COS.
- A. Considering the many activities and ministries we do and the concern that we are over-stretching our members, an Energy Audit would be a helpful exercise to undertake, out of which we hope to identify 3 Core Ministries we can and want to do and align our energy there.

Church as Training Ground - In order for clergy (deacons and priests) to fully discern their call to ordained ministry, and to become better prepared for what that entails, each postulant has time in a field placement site. In 2024-2025 Cheryl Wagoner, who has now been ordained a vocational deacon, was with us for her field placement. Currently, Carla Shores is with us as she prepares to be ordained a priest. I am grateful to the members of COS for being a place of welcome, and also a group of individuals who will give caring and constructive feedback – about sermons, presence, pastoral care, special liturgies they create, etc. - to better prepare them for ordained ministry. Keep it up!

Celebrations of Life

While we had no Baptisms, Confirmations or Weddings at Church of the Servant in 2025, I was honored to officiate the marriage of N.C. State Representative Deborah Butler to Isabela Lujan in March of this year. It was a joyous occasion!

Two beloved members of our COS Community moved beyond this earthly realm in 2025: Patrick (Pat) Lane and Liz Bryan. There were also several in our community who lost loved ones dear to them, including me, with the death of my mother, Cody. I give thanks for the staff and vestry for stepping in as I dropped everything to go and be with my mom and my family in her final days and thereafter. I'm also grateful to **The Rev. John Sosnowski** for not only leading worship while I was away but caring for the congregation, too. Your cards and condolences gave me much comfort. We hold in our hearts the light of those we've loved and see no longer. Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted.

Report of the Senior Warden Leslie Antos

As a first-time Senior Warden I knew that I would be learning many things during this year, including the answer to "Mom, what do Senior Wardens actually do?". Thanks to support from many parishioners who were able to gently turn me around and keep me heading in the right direction, I now know at least one big aspect of being Senior Warden is walking around being so proud to be a part of this community:

The work of our committee chairs is inspiring; they have turned their passions for those in need in our parish and our community, for the growth and development of our young people, for the intersection of art and worship, and for fostering stronger connections within and outside our walls into leadership of efforts that are the lifeblood of our parish.

There are too many individuals to name who stepped into a new role this year, some who are new to COS and some who are long time community members, but each of them said "Yes!" (or maybe just "Mmmm, ok") to a chance to fill a need. Whether it was agreeing to suddenly start scrambling eggs at the Shrove Supper or offering to teach an Adult Education class, joining the choir or leading the resumption of our Nursery, I'm so proud to know so many folks who were willing to, well, just go for it.

And I am so proud of and grateful for this year's Vestry. We are a real-life example of Paul's teaching that the many parts of the body each have their own abilities and roles and that the body works best when each contributes fully and in its own way. Vestry meetings can get a little tangled when a member who is a "foot" is talking to a member who is an "eye", but it is so heartening to see how we consistently use humor, respect, and a shared conviction that Church of the Servant is one of our best means of living our Christian faith to find our best way forward.

Our Vestry team collaboration began at our retreat last January, when we reflected on the portion of Luke's gospel where Jesus told Simon to go back on the lake to drop his nets again despite the boat having already put in a full night with nothing to show for it. Jesus told Simon to "Put out into the deep water", and Simon, probably with more hope than faith, did so; and we know the result – nets so full of fish they were nearly bursting.

Our contemplation led us to thoughtful conversations about who Church of the Servant is, who we want to be, and what it means for COS to fish in deeper waters. We decided to re-open the Nursery to be ready for young families who might not be with us yet but who we believe are making their way here. We decided to plan again for a year where we spent more money than we took in because we believe in the necessity of the people and programs that our spending supports... and that we can find ways to fundraise to close the gap. We made a commitment to form deeper partnerships with our neighbors starting with College Park Elementary, and through the leadership of Jackie and Don Anderson we and the school community have reaped the benefits of actively listening to each other's needs and capabilities. Who knew that something as simple as scanning classroom books into an iPad app could be so monumentally helpful? Or that jumping on their existing bandwagon for Trunk or Treat could be so much fun?

The 2026 COS Vestry is already committed to analyzing opportunities and to intentionally evaluating them for alignment with our values and sustainability given our resources. We know we can't do everything, so we want to ensure we are doing the things that help us to be Church of the Servant: the church that has drawn us all in, the church that holds us together, the church that makes it so easy for us to welcome others to join us. I hope you, like me, are proud to be a member of this community. Many thanks to each of you for the role you have played in making this group so special.

Report of the Treasurer

Don Anderson

As Treasurer of Church of the Servant, I work with Sally Peel in her role as Bookkeeper, to review monthly financial statements and prepare monthly Treasurer's reports for the Finance Committee and Vestry. I also work with Rev. Jody, Inza Walston, the Finance Committee, and Vestry liaisons to prepare budget recommendations for the upcoming year and provide recommendations on financial matters.

2025 Budget Overview

At the beginning of 2025, after much thoughtful discussion, the Vestry approved a 2025 annual budget anticipating \$382,730 of revenue, 91% of which comes from parishioners' pledges, and operating expenses of \$409,936 resulting in an expected deficit of \$27,206. The Vestry approved this deficit budget recognizing that certain costs - insurance, building maintenance, and utilities - would continue to rise, yet also felt it was important to provide cost-of-living salary increases for our clergy and staff and to reinstate the Nursery staff for the growth of our church.

In order to minimize the deficit, the Vestry made the decision to:

- Fund our operating Outreach expenses using earnings on the Bargain Box Legacy Fund
- Fund the Nursery staff expenses using earnings on our Endowment funds
- Return to the pattern of funding part of our budget using fundraisers, adding that line item
- Utilize designated funds that have accumulated from past designated giving for expenses
- Continue to carefully manage controllable expenses

The Vestry also knew that there were funds in our banking and investment accounts to cover the projected deficit and committed to look for other ways to increase future revenues.

2025 Financial Summary

The good news of 2025 is that we ended not with a deficit—but with a budget *surplus*—of just over \$4,600. This was the result of operating expenses being \$12,984 *lower* than budgeted, and revenue being almost \$18,900 *higher* than anticipated. We are grateful for the generosity of our congregation who give financial gifts to the church. A very high percentage of individuals/ households who worship with us regularly are regular givers, which is wonderful! We are also grateful for the efforts of our Vestry, staff, and volunteers to contain costs to the extent possible. All these combined efforts enabled us to run a surplus, instead of a large deficit, in 2025. (Table 1 next page shows additional details of the 2025 budgeted and actual revenues and expenditures.)

Table 1. 2025 End of Year Budget Details

| 2025 Treasurer's Report | 2024 Actuals | 2025 Budget | 2025 Actuals | Over (Under) | % Diff |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Income | | | | | |
| Pledge Income | \$ 349,113 | \$ 350,000 | \$ 376,363 | \$ 26,363 | 8% |
| Plate and Undesignated Gifts | \$ 15,562 | \$ 4,200 | \$ 8,247 | \$ 4,047 | 96% |
| Fundraiser Income | | \$ 7,500 | \$ 3,156 | \$ (4,344) | -58% |
| Building use | \$ 1,334 | \$ 1,330 | \$ 1,120 | \$ (210) | -16% |
| Misc. income | \$ 3,312 | \$ 3,300 | \$ 4,633 | \$ 1,333 | 40% |
| Money Market Interest | \$ 12,923 | \$ 3,000 | \$ 2,840 | \$ (160) | -5% |
| SEAL Fund for Qualifying Exps. | \$ 1,764 | \$ 2,900 | \$ 400 | \$ (2,500) | -86% |
| BB Legacy Fund for Outreach | | \$ 4,000 | \$ 3,887 | \$ (113) | -3% |
| Endowment Funds for Nursery | | \$ 6,500 | \$ 950 | \$ (5,550) | -85% |
| Total Ordinary Income | \$ 384,007 | \$ 382,730 | \$ 401,596 | \$ 18,866 | 5% |
| Expenses | | | | | |
| Salaries and Benefits | \$ 256,284 | \$ 269,389 | \$ 262,504 | \$ (6,885) | -3% |
| Office Administration/Vestry | \$ 18,949 | \$ 17,730 | \$ 18,719 | \$ 989 | 6% |
| Bldg. Maintenance/Insurance | \$ 72,644 | \$ 70,166 | \$ 65,360 | \$ (4,806) | -7% |
| Diocesan Expenses | \$ 37,100 | \$ 39,851 | \$ 39,111 | \$ (740) | -2% |
| Programs | \$ 12,203 | \$ 10,700 | \$ 8,702 | \$ (1,998) | -19% |
| COS Bldg. Loan Interest | \$ 1,451 | \$ - | | | |
| Misc. Expenses | \$ 2,108 | \$ 2,100 | \$ 2,556 | \$ 456 | 22% |
| Total Ordinary Expenses | \$ 400,739 | \$ 409,936 | \$ 396,952 | \$ (12,984) | -3% |
| Net Income (Deficit) | \$ (16,733) | \$ (27,206) | \$ 4,644 | \$ 31,850 | |

2026 Outlook

The Finance Committee and Vestry will review and approve the proposed 2026 budget in the coming weeks, with preliminary forecasting of a *deficit* of between \$4,000 and \$8,000. While we may experience the same over/under dynamic that resulted in a surplus in 2025, our budget must be based on our best forecasts that we have at this time.

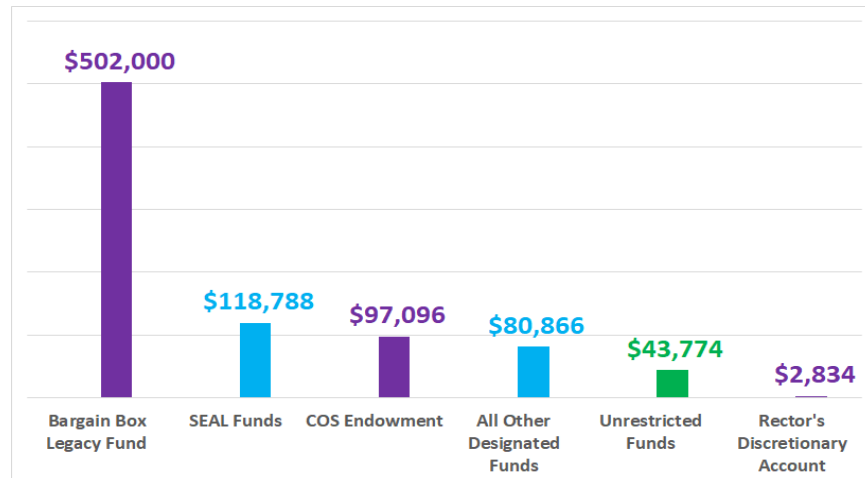
In drafting and approving the 2026 budget, the Finance Committee and Vestry also need to consider that while we \$845,357 in liquid assets, only about 5% of these funds (\$43,774) are "unrestricted" and hence available to cover expenditures such as salaries, building maintenance, and insurance.

Figure 1 on the next page shows how the Church's liquid assets (cash and investments) are divided between three categories: restricted (purple bars), designated (blue bars), and unrestricted (green bar). As mentioned above, only about 5% of our liquid assets are unrestricted, another 24% are to be used for a specific purpose based on the giver's designation, and 71% is restricted based on Vestry directives and/or endowment best-practices.

The principal of the Bargain Box Legacy Fund is *restricted* for investment, and a portion of the earnings are allowed to be used to support ministries in the community and potentially fund a new COS dignity-based ministry in the future. The Spiritual Enrichment and Lay Leadership (SEAL Fund) is *designated* for lay-leader development, lay-led church programs and/or speakers, special music, partial camp scholarships, and similar activities.

I look forward to continuing to serve as the Treasurer of Church of the Servant in 2026.

Figure 1. Restricted, Designated, and Unrestricted Liquid Assets (Total = \$845,357)



Adult Christian Life Formation

Jodi Davis

Highlights and Thank Yous

On Sunday mornings from September through May, there are two wonderful educational options for adults: Continuing the Conversation and the Adult Christian Life Formation (ACLF) class.

Continuing the Conversation meets in the Lounge Library and has lively discussion of the current week's Gospel lesson and its impact on us today- facilitated by Erin Williamson. Thank you Erin!

- The **ACLF class** meets in the Parish Hall and has varied topics. For 2025, topics have included: Morality Plays (Elizabeth Wellman)
- Jesus in Film (Bill Davis)
- Hurricane Preparedness (Eric Davis)
- Sharing Stories of Mothers and Mothering (Rev. Jody)
- Biodiversity in Our Backyard (Martin Posey)
- NC Assistive Technology (Ja Mendicott)
- Spiritualities in India (Tom McKnight)
- Pollinator Garden (Rene' Gouverneur and Martin Posey)
- An Overview of the Bishop Election process (Rev. Jody)
- NAACP convention highlights (Rachel Williamson)
- The Bible With and Without Jesus (Phil Stine)
- What Happened at Christmas? (Kim Sincox)
- Local NAACP leaders (LeRon Montgomery and guests)

Thank you to all of these wonderful people for leading our Sunday morning sessions! Your time is greatly appreciated!

Once a month, our educational time concludes with fellowship - aka Coffee Time - graciously provided by our Baristas and Hospitality team!

A book discussion group is currently reading The Gift of Years by Joan Chittister. This is facilitated by Kim Deslaurier. Thank you, Kim!

Big thanks go to all of the adult students who participate in these various ways to grow our faith!

Needs

Adult Christian Education is in need of someone to coordinate/schedule the ACLF offerings and to make sure that A/V equipment is set up if presenters need it. Please contact Jodi Davis at jodiannandavis5001@gmail.com for more information about helping with Adult Christian Education or if you have ideas for ACLF sessions.

Buildings and Grounds

Claude Jarrett

The Buildings and Grounds Committee is pleased to report on the following completed projects, ongoing initiatives, and items requiring Vestry consideration.

Completed Projects

New Church Signage - The updated Church of the Servant sign was fabricated and installed earlier this year. The new sign provides improved exposure and curb appeal for our grounds to those in and around our community. The original sign was refurbished and re-installed adjacent to the front door of the church. Thanks to Bill Davis, Ray Smith, Doug Erikson, and the Art Committee for your help throughout the process.



Kitchen Sink Resolution - The persistent kitchen sink drainage issue has been successfully resolved. The problem was identified as a partially clogged sub-trap below the main grate, which had accumulated grease buildup. Moving forward, we will be posting reminders in the kitchen that the sink does not have a garbage disposal and cannot handle large quantities of grease or larger food particles. We ask all church members and groups using the kitchen to be mindful of what goes down the drain.

Wireless Thermostat Installation - Thanks to Rey's expertise and efforts, a new wireless thermostat installation is currently in process, which will provide improved climate control and energy efficiency for our facility.

Tree Removal - After inquiring multiple quotes, we secured an excellent quote from a tree company to remove three dead trees. As an added benefit, they agreed to remove the remaining wood from the tree that was previously taken down in the back area, providing comprehensive cleanup at no additional cost. This was successfully completed.

Repair of Security Cameras and Window Damage - After unexpected damage to a security camera system and forced entry window, Rey was able to reinstall the security camera and it is back up and running. Secure window hinges were also installed.

Protecting Property after Broken Window - Thanks to Wayne Deslaurier who met Rev. Jody at the church late one night after a break-in. After the scene had been cleared by law enforcement, Wayne prepared and affixed wood across the exposed window to secure the building and protect our classroom from weather impacts until a replacement pane could be installed.

Hurricane Protection for Double Gate Doors - The installation of barricade brackets on both sets of outside double gate doors completed. These heavy gate doors can swing free during high winds and hurricanes, placing tremendous pressure on the posts that hold them. Previous summers, repairs to these posts cost a couple of thousand dollars. Barricade brackets would serve the dual purpose of protecting our infrastructure during severe weather and providing an additional security measure. The cost to outfit both sets of doors was less than a hundred dollars — a minimal investment compared to potential repair costs.

Upcoming Projects and Events

Spring/Summer Grounds Cleanup - We hope to resume in 2026. We are actively recruiting volunteers—those with green thumbs or thumbs of any color are welcome! This is an excellent opportunity for fellowship while caring for our church property. More details on specific tasks and timing will be forthcoming.

Items Requiring Vestry Discussion and Decision

Sanctuary Light Bulbs Replacement - Several light bulbs in the sanctuary need replacement. After consultation with Rey, we have identified two approaches for Vestry consideration:

Option 1: Incremental Replacement - Replace only the bulbs that are currently out with special-order bulbs. This approach requires lift rental for safe access to the appropriate height and will likely lead to continued piecemeal replacement as additional bulbs fail over time.

Option 2: Complete LED Conversion - Replace all sanctuary bulbs with energy-efficient LED bulbs in one project. This approach requires only one lift rental, avoids future incremental replacements, provides long-term energy savings, but involves a higher upfront cost.

The committee seeks Vestry guidance on which approach aligns best with our budgetary priorities and long-term facility management goals.

Butterfly Mural Installation - The proposed installation of panels for the Butterfly mural requires careful consideration. The primary concern is the placement of the mural and, if needed, the method of attachment to the stucco wall. Proper installation would require drilling through the stucco wall to reach the studs behind for secure mounting without cracking the stucco. The exact placement of the panels has not yet been finalized. Due diligence and possibly professional consultation are needed before proceeding with this project.

Acknowledgments

We extend our gratitude to Rey Smith for his continued technical expertise and hands-on assistance with multiple projects throughout the year. His contributions have been invaluable to our maintenance and improvement efforts.

Children, Youth & Families

Erin Williamson

CYF Committee: David Hoolihan - Chair, Jonathan D'Amico - Director of Youth Ministry, Kim Deslaurier, Leslie Antos, Rev. Jody Greenwood, Jessica Landes and Rene Gouverneur - Nursery Coordinators, Erin Williamson - Vestry Liaison

This ministry of the church serves church attendees from infant to high school graduation.

Safety and security has been highlighted this year at COS. The CYF committee has set up guidelines and information for parents and guardians in an effort to ensure the safety of children while they are on the church campus. Also, all adult leaders and regular volunteers that work with the children and youth have put in several hours to stay up to date with their Safe Church Training through the national Episcopal Church.

The finale to a great CYF year, our Christmas pageant was another success. Each year is a little different and it is always a beautiful service. The pageant was organized and led once again by Azzari Jarrett and performed by the children and youth, from nursery-age to high school seniors.

Nursery:

Church of the Servant now has a fully-functional, fully-staffed nursery with three staff members who are professional childcare providers! (Read that again, it's a really big deal!) Over the past year, Rene and Jessica have led the task of re-creating the COS nursery, which included the important tasks of preparing the space, anticipating and troubleshooting issues which have and will come up and creating a Nursery Manual which brings clarity and consistency to how the nursery functions. Thanks to them as well as Jackie Anderson and Leslie Antos who provided significant support during the hiring process.

The nursery team also created a calm space in the sanctuary for children too old to be in the nursery or for times when the nursery is not open.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS):

David and Kim are both trained catechists and lead our CGS program. This program continues to provide a unique and gentle way for children to explore their relationship with God. They primarily meet Sunday mornings during the Christian Education hour. There are trained volunteers who help in the atria and support the program (including Laura Hickey, Azzari Jarrett, Khadija Tribie and Rachel Williamson).

The annual Liturgy of Light service was held indoors this year in May. Kim and David demonstrated a CGS presentation to the congregation during a Sunday Service.



Illuminate Youth Ministry led by Jonathan D'Amico, Director of Youth Ministry:

It's been another fast moving year in Illuminate. Overall, we have a slightly smaller group, and slightly younger in average age, but participation has been very steady this year.

We have been gearing our Sunday discussions more around the lectionary as much as possible, to attempt to create some connection to the rest of the community, and what they may hear in our church gatherings. This has created some good conversation, which is never surprising with our group. They are a thoughtful group of

young people who have thoughts and questions and WE LOVE THAT.

We kicked off the year with a trip to Galloway Farm in Columbus Co., featuring the craziest corn maze ever and some other fall fun. We once again participated in COS angel tree, taking some gifts from the tree and making a little shopping/lunch trip out of it. We are hoping to get a bowling trip on the schedule as well as hopefully a spring service project. And of course, we will soon begin preparations for the "Annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper Dinner Extravaganza" (a title as big as the spread!)

Another exciting development has been Wilmington Episcopal Youth events (WEY) a combined effort between COS, St Luke's, St Paul's, and St Andrew's on the Sound. In Oct we gathered over 40 students at St James gym for fun, food and fellowship. Another gathering is planned for 1/11 from 5-7 again at St James gym. We are hoping to continue to develop this partnership and offering of events with more students.

We have decided for Illuminate outings to have a suggested cost for students (in the past, events were largely covered) which has been well received. We are hoping to keep costs for the program low through fundraisers.

Lastly, just a general thank you for the adult leaders who agreed to step up and help this year with Illuminate- Bill, Jody, Cynthia, Rachel and Leslie- you are magic.

The CYF Committee is grateful to the parents and guardians who work so hard to bring their children to church and keep them involved. The committee is always open to ideas and suggestions for how to improve the experience for families. Also, there are many volunteer opportunities for church members feeling called to serve our children and youth—any of the CYF committee members would be happy to talk to you if you are interested!

Communications

Cynthia Sosnowski

The new COS Communications Committee was constituted in August with six members and has met regularly this fall. A big thank you to Barb Wagar, Pat LeRoy, Clif Murray, Jenneffer Sixkiller, and Glenn Hultberg for volunteering your time and talents to this new committee!

The committee's work has included:

- Reviewing the COS website, at Sally's invitation, and providing feedback on any needed updates,
- Recommending that the process of creating an executive summary of each vestry meeting, "Vestry notes," be reestablished and posted to the vestry bulletin board and provided in the Friday announcement email following each vestry meeting,
- Reviewing the current newcomer welcoming process and recommending expansion and structuring of the process to ensure that newcomers don't "fall through the cracks",
- Working with other COS ministries / committees to create brief summaries of their ministries for the COS website, to include how someone can participate in the ministry, and who to contact to learn more.

Stay tuned to learn more about these projects and others that the committee has on our vision list, including:

- A parish newsletter
- A parish directory
- Expanding our social media

If you would like to be part of our group or if you have any ideas you would like to share with the committee, contact Cynthia Sosnowski.

Hospitality

Kim Deslaurier

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.
~ Romans 15:7



Let us first welcome and continue to welcome. Hospitality is, and always has been, the core of who we are and what we do here at Church of the Servant. The hospitality committee is working to establish a culture of hospitality, welcoming with hearts open and creating a true sense of connection and belonging.

With two years behind us, our new-ish hospitality committee continues to go strong with a core group of consistent and committed individuals, and a large group of what I call: "Friends of Hospitality." Whatever is needed, our parishioners step up to help. We are a true family.

The hospitality Committee is a group who meets 6 - 8 times a year. Our members are enthusiastic and bring many ideas to the table to create opportunities for fun and fellowship. The question we focused on this past year was: How do we welcome folks - newcomers and long-timers - and keep welcoming in a way that says you are part of us; we care about you!

We realize that the hospitality committee often gets called to plan and organize events throughout the year that may not fall under the umbrella of "hospitality," and while we are working to establish more focus and define our role, our group always seems willing to make things happen. The following is a list of activities, accomplishments, and events the hospitality committee planned and organized in 2025.

- Epiphany Dinner
- Celebrating Servant Sunday (Annual Meeting) catered brunch
- Dreams Dance performance - Hap Rogers organized
- Bobby Joe Valentine Concert - Tickets, Set-up, Greeters, Parking Lot Attendants
- Cake Reception for Cheryl Wagoner
- Pentecost Picnic
- Celebration of Life / Memorial Services with Receptions
- Cake Reception for Rev. Deacon Rhonda
- Bishop Candidates' Reception
- Newcomers Gathering hosted by Leslie and Joe Antos - organized by Gail Henry
- Continued Extended Social Coffee Time - thanks to the Holy Baristas
- Newcomers Ministry - organized by Gail Henry
- Holy Barista Ministry - organized by Priss Endo
- Greeters Ministry
- New Communications Committee - organized by Cynthia Sosnowski (now its own committee)

We also have small social groups that continue to be active and run on their own:

- Old Retired Fellows who meet for lunch on the 2nd Tuesday of each month
- The Sunday Lunch Group who enjoy lunch together after the 11:15 service
- Ladies Who Dine Out, organized by Jenneffer Sixkiller, who meet for dinner and lunch at various restaurants once a month.

Challenges:

- We recognize that we are a congregation who likes spending time together, but the challenge is always balancing time commitments and not creating too many activities.
- Another challenge is our greeters ministry. We are in need of a person who will oversee the schedule to make sure we always have greeters. The greeters are the first people those who worship at COS see when they walk through the door. They are the face that smiles and welcomes folks. We will continue to explore how to better organize our greeters ministry.

I am grateful to be part of the hospitality committee. We are called to serve one another with generosity, caring, joy, and love. Working together brings us together in fellowship. My hope is that the hospitality committee is an integral part of creating a place where All Feel Welcome.

"Hospitality is love on the loose" ~ Joan Chittister

Liturgy Rev. Jody

Bishop Rob Wright in the Diocese of Atlanta was my ordaining bishop. While Rob said a lot of things I *don't* remember, one thing I *do* remember is this: "Get Sunday right!" By that, he was imploring us to prioritize our energy toward Sunday worship and Christian formation, which is central to who we are as Church. It's not that what we do *stops* there, but everything that follows *begins* with Sunday!

One way we try to “get Sunday right” is by offering three different liturgical formats each Sunday. Having three services on Sunday morning is unprecedented and especially for a congregation of our size, but I believe each liturgical format meets the needs or wants of those who worship with us. The energy is different in each, and I wouldn’t have it any other way.

For “Sunday” to happen, many people are involved before, during and after worship. I am grateful to the Liturgy Committee who come together bi-monthly for planning and to stay coordinated. They include: Natasha Clay (Convenor/Altar Guild/Acolytes), Sara Allen (Flowers), Ginny Lundeen (Altar Hangings), Mary Ellen Stokes (Choir), Catherine Charles (Music) and Deacon Rhonda (while she was serving at COS).

There are many people in the various ministry areas that support worship, and though I’m not listing all by name, please know how vital your serving in these ministries is to “getting Sunday right.” These include: Flower Guild, Altar Guild/Altar Hangings, Bread Bakers, Schedulers of worship participants, Acolytes, Choir, Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Eucharistic Visitors, Vestry Person of the Week, special musicians (on occasion), and Memorial Garden tenders.

While Sunday morning is the primary time for worship, COS also has offerings at other times. In 2025 we had our Epiphany Celebration on January 6, our Liturgy of Light (Catechesis of the Good Shepherd) in May, and a special liturgy of Prayers for the Bishop Candidates in November. During the third weekend of each month the Labyrinth was open for walking on Friday evening and Saturday morning, as well as New Year’s Eve, Fridays during Lent, Tuesday of Holy Week, and they partnered with St. James to host the Airlie Garden labyrinth on World Labyrinth Day.

Thanks to all who share your gifts, seen and unseen. We just couldn’t get Sunday right without you!

Music

Catherine Charles

It’s been a wonderful year at Church of the Servant for music. The choir has grown by three new members, Shelia Pueschel, Heather White, and Jeremy Hotalen, whose voices have added so much to our music. We continued to have a “pickup” Summer Choir between Memorial Day and Labor Day that is open to anyone interested in singing with us.

We have also had the pleasure of the many talents of instrumentalists in our services this year with Bill Davis and his wonderful guitar at our Easter Vigil as well as various services, Joe Antos on trumpet, Michelle Mendes on flute, and Heather White on clarinet providing wonderful solos for services as well as at both of our Christmas Eve services.

As we move forward into 2026, plans are in place to maintain our beautiful organ for the year as well as begin to plan for maintenance on a larger scale in the future. We will continue to have wonderful music from members as they share their talents with us at various services as we incorporate a variety of music into our worship. If you have an interest in adding your voice to the choir, or your instrument in a service, please feel free to speak with me after the service!

Outreach

Jodi Davis

Thanks to all who serve on the Outreach committee:

Don & Jackie Anderson, Don Arabian, Andrea Carson & David Smith, Rene Gouverneur, Michele Mendes, Martin Posey, Clint & Betty Robertson, and Paul Smith.

The Outreach Committee provides opportunities for COS parishioners to help in our community, focusing on dignity-based ministries. The needs in our community are great and can be overwhelming, but if we all do something, we can have a great impact. We are a church family that shares Christ’s love in tangible ways! Please feel free to reach out to the contact people listed below for more information and don’t forget that we are always collecting food items!

2SHARE Contact person- Don Arabian

This ministry provides furnishings and basic household items to families in need. The November Stuff the Truck event collected enough items to fill a 10' X 10' storage unit.

Christmas Families Contact person- Kristina Mercier

COS parishioners generously provided Christmas gifts for families from College Park Elementary. The Illuminate group also took a field trip to shop for gifts.

College Park Elementary Contacts- Jackie & Don Anderson

COS members helped our neighboring school by volunteering in the library, serving as classroom tutors, donating school supplies, cataloging classroom library books online, distributing Nourish NC weekend bags to teachers, providing candy and decorated trunks for Trunk or Treat, and giving money for a Teacher/Staff Appreciation Lunch. Jackie and Rev. Jody have spoken with the school principal about other ways we can help their students.

Good Shepherd Center Contacts- Clint & Betty Robertson

On the First Friday of each month, we continue to provide 4-5 cooks/food servers for dinner for 50 -100 unhoused people. Signups are on the COS website.

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard Contact person- Paul Smith

COS has an ongoing collection wagon for donations of food and personal hygiene items. COS provides volunteers who collect empty boxes and who help at the warehouse. With federal budget cuts, Mother Hubbard's Cupboard is relying on community donations more than ever.

Nourish NC Contacts- Andrea Carson & David Smith

Nourish NC gives food to the 1 in 5 children in New Hanover County who experience food insecurity. COS helps this ministry by packing weekend food bags, cleaning bins at the warehouse, collecting food staples, and by selling Christmas wreaths.

Pollinator Garden Contacts- Rene Gouverneur & Martin Posey

As part of our Environmental Stewardship, COS now has a pollinator garden! This has been planted with several native perennials. More plants will be added in the spring.

Prison Ministries Contact person- Rhonda Thomas

Rev. Deacon Rhonda, along with Kim Deslaurier and David Smith, visit LINC (Leading Into New Communities) twice a month as a part of Yokefellow Prison Ministries. This important listening ministry connects those who were recently released from prison or drug rehab to a group of folks who love them and will happily listen to whatever is on their heart. Rhonda also visits New Hanover Correctional for Bible Study twice a month, which is led by New Life Prison Ministries.

Other thanks:

Thanks to Emily & Mike Bliss for organizing the Christmas Wreath sale, which benefits Nourish NC.

Thanks to all who have donated to our food collections.

Thanks to those who give their time for the ministries listed here.

Thanks to those who volunteer with other amazing ministries in our community (see the Connections board in the Narthex).

Parish Care
Hap Rogers

Parish Care is a vital lay ministry of COS dedicated to supporting one another by intentionally praying, sending cards, calling, visiting, providing meals, creating prayer shawls, transporting and sometimes just by "being there." We strive to be a healing link to those in the parish who may be unable to come to church or participate fully in the life of the parish.

The Parish Care Committee is enthusiastically chaired by Harriet Forbis and co-chair Sara Allen. Special thanks for their leadership! Current members include: Ginny Lundeen, Kim Deslaurier, Tamara Dossin, Jan Christophersen, Jenneffer Sixkiller, Laura Williams, Katie Larkin and Jerry Hansen. The Vestry Liaison is Hap Rogers.

Safe Church: Special thanks to Jerry Hansen for providing an educational update and overview of Safe Church Guidelines and Training for members of the committee.

Monday Prayer Group: As a sub-group of Parish Care, they met every Monday in 2025 offering prayers for those who had asked to be named and those who desire prayers but ask that they remain confidential. They also pray for parishioners; family, friends and acquaintances of parishioners; those who serve(d) in the military; those who have passed away; those who have given birth; the ministries served by COS; those who lead our church and diocese; and all manner of world situations. Special thanks to Ann Arabian for continuing to maintain the prayer list.

Pastoral Care Program options: Earlier this year, at Rev. Jody's asking, the committee researched an alternative to Stephen Ministry called Community of Hope. It was deemed not to be viable to implement. In further support of Rev. Jody and the growing pastoral care/parish care visitation needs, the committee will begin to do more targeted visiting of parishioners. Rev Jody is continuing to ascertain how a more formalized pastoral care program can be implemented.

Meals: Special thanks to Kim Deslaurier, the committee and other COS members who prepared meals for parishioners in need in 2025.

Blood Drive: Special thanks to Mike and Emily Bliss for coordinating the Red Cross blood drive at COS.

Memorial Garden: There are now 40 people interred in our Memorial Garden, and the Memorial Garden file was updated and includes a diagram of how the stones are laid out and a photograph of each stone. Special thanks to Ron Knopf who keeps the new plaque of names up to date. Also, the stones were cleaned and look wonderful thanks to the hands of Mary Ames Booker and Laura Williams. A special thank you to Marcia Lindler for keeping greenery in our large planters and faithfully watering our outside pots.

Worship Accessibility: The committee is grateful to the Vestry for approving "pocket talker" individual assistive listening devices for those who have difficulty hearing in the parish hall and during the 9:00 service when Rev. Jody encourages comments/discussion after her sermon.

Hurricane Preparedness: Special thanks to all who served on the Hurricane Preparedness Team notifying parishioners when a severe storm was predicted and following up to provide support.

Adult Ed Offerings: Thanks to Parish Care for coordinating these Adult Christian Ed programs:

- a "show and tell" by the consultant from the NC Assistive Technology Program,
- WECT for a weather education and hurricane preparedness presentation and
- Martin Posey who presented on global warming, impacts on our area and how to best prepare for the future.

Our year culminated with a combined November-December meeting with brunch and a joint time of joy writing birthday and Christmas cards to specific parishioners. Thanks Sara Allen for hosting this gathering!

Parish Care needs and welcomes new members to join us in 2026!

Racial Equity Project

Natasha Clay

Thank you to our members! They are Alfreda Gee, Azzari Jarrett, David Schultz, Erin Williamson, Ginny Lundeen, Julie Potter, Karen Rogalski, Karen Sorenson, Kenneth Colston, Kim Deslaurier, Laura Hickey, Laura Schultz, Mary Ellen Stokes, Michele Mendes, Natasha Clay, Pam Keeney, Laura Williams, Rachel Williamson, Sally Peel, Sara Allen, and Tamara Dossin.

Our Vision: A church in which members are actively seeking education and spiritual growth in matters pertaining to racial equity and discerning how and where this knowledge is utilized to best serve the needs of our community.

Our Mission: To follow the Episcopal Church's Becoming Beloved Community directives whereby we commit to racial justice, healing, and reconciliation.

Our **Parish-Focused Group** led by Sally Peel and Alfreda Gee, finished working through the book "The Church Cracked Open" by Stephanie Spellers. Discussion has now been focused on the book "Resurrection Hope: A Future where Black Lives Matter" by Kelly Brown Douglas. There are 15 members attending and meet twice a month.

Our **Community-Focused Group** is led by Rachel Williamson and Natasha Clay. This branch of Racial Equity Movement is focused on finding and engaging activities in our area that further the mission of racial equity while representing COS, leveraging the time and talents of the church and this group. By virtue of the need to be outward-facing and oriented toward finding partners in the community to do this work, this group is intended to be smaller and comprised of participants who have either participated in antiracism education, such as Sacred Ground, or have come to understand racism through their own lived experience.

Community Events attended, sponsored, or hosted on behalf of REP at COS in 2025:

- Church of the Servant joined the New Hanover County NAACP
- Proposed and approved name change from Racial Equity Project to Racial Equity Movement
- Increased our support for the teachers and students at College Park Elementary
- March 29 - Attended The Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina Racial Healing Commission's 2nd annual Jazz & Race Symposium at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in Greenville
- April 26 - Gave a presentation at Holy Cross Episcopal Women's Brunch sharing how COS became involved in Racial Equity work and how other parishes might start doing racial justice work
- May 24 - Attended the Sokoto House 5th year celebration
- August 6th - with Rev Jody members of Racial Equity Movement attended the Board of Elections meeting to urge them to open more early voting sites
- September 26-27 COS provided financial support for Rachel Williamson to attend the NC NAACP Conference in Durham
- October 19 - Supported the YWCA Lower Cape Fear showing of the film "Straw" by REM and COS parishioners by providing snacks
- October 19 Rachel presented what she learned during the NC NAACP conference and facilitated a discussion during ACLF on how it applies to COS
- October 26 - Participated in Souls to the Polls
- October 28 - National Election Protection Training participation on October 28th
- December 14 - Arranged for NHC NAACP President and leadership team to give a presentation during ACLF

Stewardship Inza Walston

Welcome to 2026! I hope that your family and friends had more smooth lanes than rough ones in 2025 and that 2026 will bring peace in your hearts. Regarding Stewardship, at the outset of 2025 we had anticipated we'd have a deficit by year-end, but it looks as if we could very well end with a balanced budget. This is due in great part to the generosity of you, our worshipping community, including new arrivals to COS that didn't wait for a pledge drive, but just started giving toward our mission and ministries. What a gift indeed!

The 2026 Stewardship pledges that have come in so far look very healthy! What we know, thanks to Sally Peel's hard work on breaking these numbers down for all of us, is that we have received 84 pledges totaling \$327,537.

- Thirteen pledges are from individuals or households who had not pledged for 2025!
- We have 8 "awaiting" pledges from active members that pledged a total of \$21,858 last year but have not yet pledged for 2026.
- There are 15 households that are regular givers but do not make a formal pledge, which usually account for \$32,315 of our annual income.

So far, this brings us to an estimated total of \$381,710 vs our budgeted amount for 2025 of \$350,000.00.

My heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you! What a family we have here at Church of the Servant. I stay in awe of your generosity.

Vision and Vitality

Pam Keeney

Members: Rev. Jody Greenwood, Jonathan D'Amico, Leslie Antos, Bill Davis, Kim Deslaurier, Alfreda Gee, Pam Keeney (Vestry Liaison), David Smith, Cynthia Sosnowski, Laura Williams, and Trish Williams

The Vision & Vitality (V&V) group began as a follow-up to the December 2024 Congregational Renewal "Postlude" gathering. Over the past year, the V&V group has discussed new ideas and been a catalyst for various projects to reinvigorate our church in serving the community and our congregation. Sample accomplishments and activities from 2025 include:

COS Merchandise: Bill Davis designed the "Come & See" cards to share with those who might like to attend church and the COS t-shirts in multiple styles and colors.

Threads of Connection: Thanks to Cynthia Sosnowski and Laura Williams, the Threads of Connection survey was conducted and the results posted on the bulletin board in the Narthex. We now have a better idea where our congregation volunteers or otherwise supports local, regional, and national organizations. Additionally, we have COS contacts for these groups if people would like to ask any questions.

Relationship with College Park Elementary School (CPES): Building on the connection Don and Jackie Anderson have made with CPES, Rev. Jody started an intentional partnership with CPES's principal, Debbie Calvert, centered on what is most beneficial to CPES. COS members have volunteered in multiple ways for CPES, such as Trunk or Treat, end-of-year testing monitors, and tutoring. And when we learned about the new requirements that all classroom books had to be cataloged at the beginning of the school year, various individuals from COS volunteered to go to CPES and scan in books for teachers, to expedite the process. Ms. Calvert would like to start a future garden club at the school which may offer another connection with some of our COS gardeners.

Relationship with UNCW: Alfreda Gee identified "The Vinery" a possible new way to grow a mutually beneficial relationship with UNCW and the church. As we considered this, we found that one of the requirements for participating in 2-year Vinery program included making the "church-university relationship" one of the church's top three priorities. As our church priorities and energy are focused on other activities, it was decided that The Vinery isn't the best fit for COS at this time and we should focus on and strengthen our work with ECCO, and find other ways to deepen our connection to students and faculty at UNCW.

Welcome Audit: A Welcome Audit is being planned for COS. It is a special assessment of our church to see how welcoming we are to new people. It will be a useful tool to identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement. Cynthia Sosnowski and Laura Williams will be instrumental in this effort.