

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

**From Past to Future**

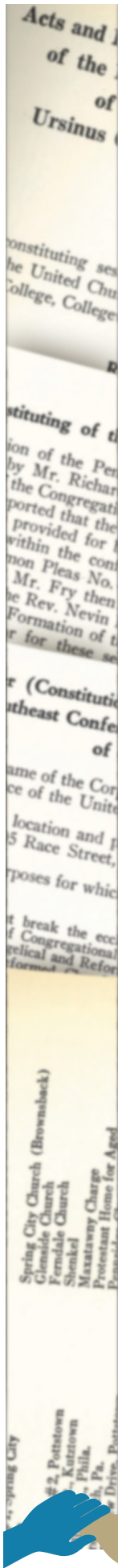


**Together We Are Stronger**

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# Conference Minister's Message



**"Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards."  
— Søren Kierkegaard**

As we reflect on the year gone by, Søren Kierkegaard's words remind us of the critical need for contemplation. By looking back, we uncover the threads of God's presence woven through our journey. But the call of faith is to live forward — to take what we have learned and step into the future with hope, purpose, and love. This Annual Report does both.

This past year has been one of remarkable transition, growth, and resilience. Together, we have built new relationships, navigated challenges, and nurtured ministries that reflect the heart of our shared faith. We have responded to the needs of local and global communities through Disaster Ministries, connected more than sixty pastors and congregations through the search process, and welcomed five new pastors to ordained ministry.

And we have come through a year of contemplation and discernment that has landed on the cusp of a new UCC Conference. These moments have shaped us, revealing the deep faithfulness and mutual care that bind us as a community.

We are not bound by the past (as the vote to merge Pennsylvania Conference so clearly demonstrated). Instead, we are called to let its lessons guide us as we live into the love and mission of Christ in new ways. Hebrews 13 urges us: "Let mutual love continue." This is not merely a call to sentiment but to action — to build relationships marked by generosity, compassion, and hospitality.

This report, then, is not merely a record of what has been done, but a testament to the love that has sustained us and the faith that propels us into the future. It is a story of how we have lived together as a community of faith — seeking justice, caring for one another, and sharing the hope of the gospel with a world in need.

As we move into the year ahead, we are called not just to look back, but to live forward. We are called to love one another with the same sacrificial, patient, and kind love that Christ has shown us. We are called to walk in faith, trusting that God will continue to guide our steps. And we are called to work together, to embody the principles of mutual love and hospitality, to build a future marked by hope, compassion, and justice.

May this report serve as both a reflection on how far we've come and an invitation to the exciting and frightening ways God will lead us. We move forward together trusting that the God who has been faithful in the past will lead us into a future of greater promise and possibility.

May It Be So,

Rev. Bill Worley  
Conference Minister



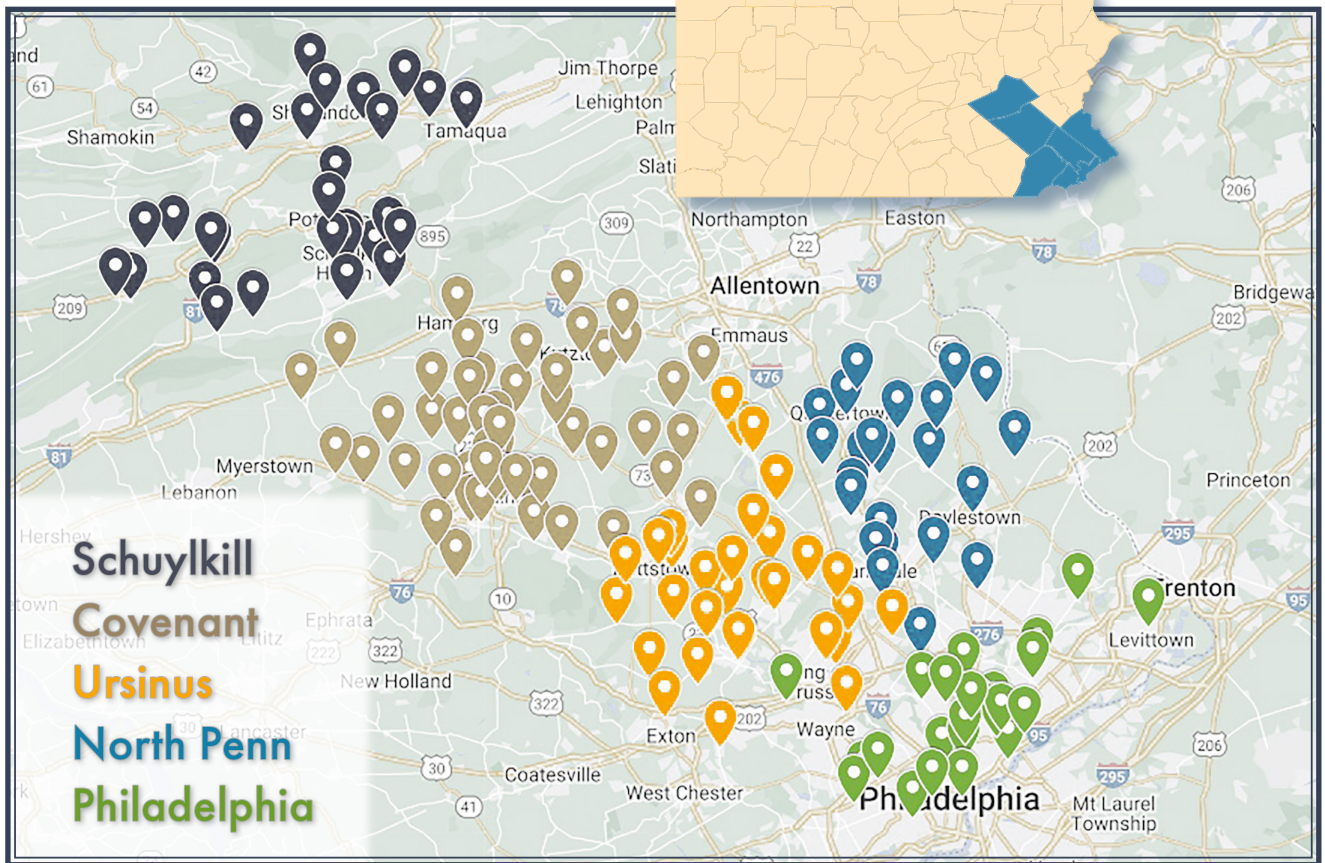
*Conference Minister Bill Worley  
at Friedens UCC, Sumneytown*

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# What Is PSEC?



**5** Associations

**147** Congregations

Heartland of the historic German Reformed Church  
(see Our History, page 5)

A bridge between the local and national  
United Church of Christ:

One of **4** Pennsylvania conferences

One of **36** regional conferences

Part of a national covenant of **712,296** members

Our history continues: the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference  
works with the Penn West, Central, and Northeast Conferences  
to form a single **Pennsylvania Keystone Conference**.



# PSEC Views and Voices



## **Rev. Frances Chester, Pastor Falkner Swamp UCC, Gilbertsville**

Our church will celebrate its 300th anniversary in 2025, when about 40 people first communed with John Philip Boehm on Oct 15, 1725. It's also the birth of the German Reformed Church in this country. The continuous worship and service of our faith community happened in part because of the connectedness of the wider church.

Looking to the formation of the Keystone Conference, the prophetic words ring out now as they did for our spiritual ancestors in 1725, "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19). We often don't see what God is doing in our midst! Now more than ever, I believe we need each other, and our Conference, to help sharpen our perception.



## **Rev. Dr. Linda Noonan, Senior Pastor St. John's UCC, Lansdale**

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Book of Esther tells us of a time that may feel familiar to some of us—a time when a few profited off the bodies and labor of many, and it looked like there was no justice to be found. And yet, the message to Esther—a woman and an outsider who risked her life for God's people—was: "You were made for such a time as this." (Spoiler alert: Esther goes on to save her people.)

For all that we may face, we face it together when we practice being the church. With all that we hold, we are stronger together as the Body of Christ. When we give not out of a sense of scarcity, but in a spirit of abundance, God will multiply our gifts. We were made for

these times. I give thanks for our church, our local congregations, and our conference. I celebrate the strong foundations on which we stand, and the ways God is calling us into the future. Thanks be to the One who rises within and among us!





# PSEC Views and Voices



## Rev. Dr. Heather C. Ohaneson, Pastor *Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church, Havertown*

My appreciation of the PSEC is summed up well by this picture from my ordination. Since I came to Pennsylvania in 2021 to serve as a bridge pastor at Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church, I have been buoyed by Conference Minister Rev. Worley. His strong leadership, matched by incredible accessibility, have been a true gift on my journey to becoming the settled pastor here. Rev. Michael Caine has been a fun mentor— but don't let his cool



fool you. His sage insights were critical for me to navigate the ordination interview process. And Rev. Dr. Geneva Butz, oh my. She went above and beyond to serve as my supervisor for a year and a half of seminary field education, giving me the best possible model of a fervent servant of God. In supporting the PSEC, we recognize the value of these church superstars! Thank you for all you have invested in all of us!

Զօրացէք Տէրոջմով (be strengthened in the Lord).

## Rev. Nichole Jackson and Rev. Zack Jackson, Co-Pastors *Open Table UCC, Pottstown*



Open Table UCC has been partially supported for three years by PSEC grants, which originated from the generous donations of now-closed churches. Our church would not exist if it were not for the faithfulness and wisdom of those churches who shared their final resources with the Conference and the Consistory's decision to use that money to fund new churches. This connection to past ministries is a privilege, connecting their past faithfulness with our present work and God's unfolding future.



# Our History

## The German Reformed Church



1523

### **The Beginning: Zwingli's Theses**

Swiss Reformer Ulrich Zwingli defends his 67 Theses in Zurich.

1529

### **Marburg Colloquy**

Zwingli and German Reformer Martin Luther meet at Marburg but cannot agree on communion.

1563

### **Heidelberg Catechism**

Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus co-author this confession of the Reformed faith, used widely for Confirmation well into the 20th century.

1682

### **Pennsylvania: Holy Experiment**

William Penn founds the colony of Pennsylvania. German immigrants begin arriving soon thereafter.

1725

### **Falkner Swamp**

John Philip Boehm serves Communion at Falkner Swamp on October 15, acknowledged as the founding of the German Reformed Church in America.

1747

### **Coetus**

Michael Schlotter organizes German Reformed churches into a covenantal body on September 29.

1793

### **German Reformed Church in the U.S.**

The first synod of the German Reformed Church in the United States is convened at Lancaster on April 27.

1850

### **Mercersburg**

During the Mercersburg Period, Henry Harbaugh composes the hymn, "Jesus, I Live to Thee."

1869

### **Reformed Church in the U.S.**

The word "German" is dropped from the name of the Reformed Church in the United States, demonstrating increasing assimilation.

1934

### **Evangelical & Reformed Church**

The Evangelical and Reformed Church is formed through a merger of the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America.

1957

### **United Church of Christ**

The Evangelical and Reformed Church and the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches formally unite on June 25.

1962

### **Pennsylvania Southeast Conference**

The first meeting of PSEC occurs on June 24–25, followed by a special meeting on Oct 10.

2025

### **300th Anniversary**

United Church of Christ congregations across Pennsylvania celebrate the 300th Anniversary of Boehm's first Communion at Falkner Swamp.

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# At A Glance



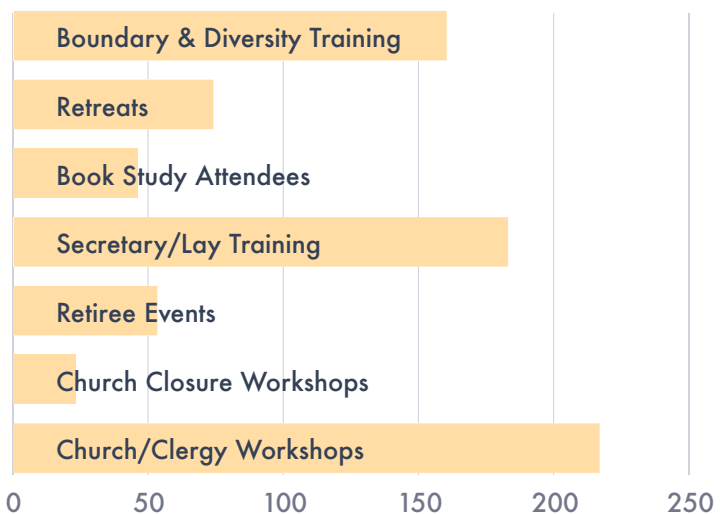
Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) is the name we give to congregational gifts that support wider UCC ministry in the national and global settings as well as in the Conference setting.

**\$702,788** Total OCWM contributed by PSEC congregations and individuals

Members-in-Discernment (MID)  
retreat attendees



## Attendance at OCWM-Supported Trainings, Workshops & Events



**464**

Conference  
Meeting  
Attendees

**126**

Profiles recieved  
& reviewed for  
pastors interested  
in serving PSEC

**60**

Congregations  
supported in the  
Search and Call  
process

PSEC is the link that connects our church's various and diverse ministries both locally and globally. Together, we provide our local churches, pastors and congregations with the training and inspiration they need to carry out our church's wider mission. We are stronger together; therefore, we embrace diversity, and above all, we spread God's love!





# Supporting the Wider UCC



Supporting Our Church's Wider Mission connects you regionally, nationally and globally to those around the world who share our Christian faith across the United Church of Christ network.

Of the OCWM  
& Other Receipts  
Collected in 2024:



- ▶ \$73,400 United Church of Christ Ministry
- ▶ \$ 8,556 Ursinus Campus Ministry & Phoebe
- ▶ \$ 4,638 Bethany Children's Home
- ▶ \$ 3,594 Disaster Response Ministries
- ▶ \$ 3,500 Lancaster Theological Seminary
- ▶ \$ 3,000 PA Council of Churches
- ▶ \$ 2,000 E&R Library & Archives
- ▶ \$ 2,000 Interfaith Center of Greater PHL
- ▶ \$ 1,271 Locust Lake Chaplaincy

"Five for Five"  
churches

giving to OCWM and  
the Special Mission  
Offerings

59



\$198,050+

Pass-through contributions donated to  
26 UCC initiatives, including

Lancaster Theological Seminary  
Phoebe Homes/Ministries  
Bethany Children's Home



# Donor Acknowledgements



## Individual Donors

Frances Chester  
Paige Engro  
Robert Fogal

Frances Merkel  
Shawn Van Dyke  
William Worley

S M T W T



## Giving Tuesday

Kim Adamson  
Caroline Bashore  
Melissa Burkhart  
Rick Deerfield  
Caroline Dunleavy  
Robert Fogal  
Donna Fried  
Selina Hamilton

Barbara Hughes  
Mary Loiselle  
Kevin McLemore  
Ruth Mitman  
Sharon Morris  
Homer & Susan Royer  
Jennie Strauch  
William Worley



## Leading Per Capita OCWM Churches

Bethel UCC  
Collenbrook United Church  
Gulph UCC  
Old First Reformed UCC  
Open Table UCC

Peace in Zion UCC  
Pleasantville UCC  
St. Matthew's UCC, Chester Springs  
UCC East Goshen  
UCC at Valley Forge



## Greatest OCWM Giving over Pledge

Armenian Martyrs'  
Congregational UCC  
Falkner Swamp UCC  
First UCC, Royersford  
Friedens UCC, Hegins  
New Jerusalem Zion UCC

Salem Belleman's UCC  
St. Andrew's UCC, Perkasie  
St. John's UCC, Auburn  
St. John's UCC, Lansdale  
St. Vincent UCC  
Trinity UCC, Shenandoah  
Zion's Union Church, Maxatawny



## Top OCWM Giving

First UCC, Quakertown  
Glenside UCC  
New Goshenhoppen UCC  
Old First Reformed UCC  
Pleasantville UCC  
St. John's Hain's UCC

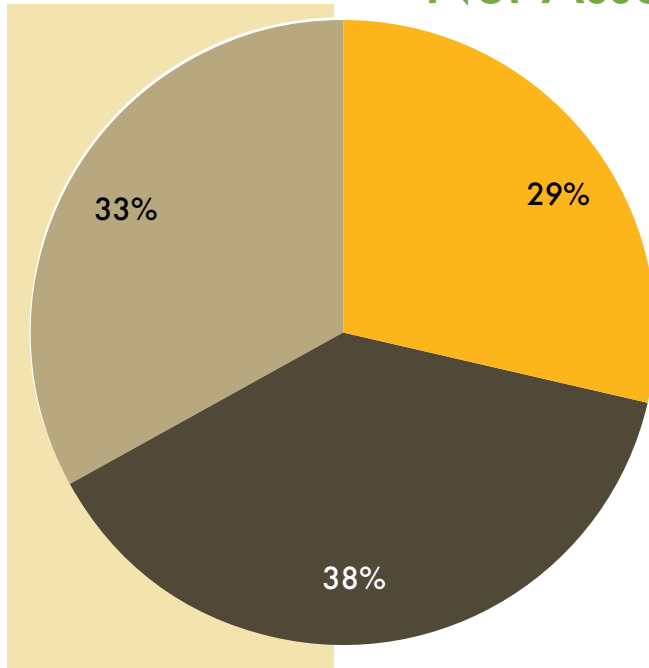
St. John's UCC, Lansdale  
St. Vincent UCC  
Shenkel UCC  
UCC at Valley Forge  
Zion's Union Church, Maxatawny  
Zwingli UCC



# FY 2024 Financials

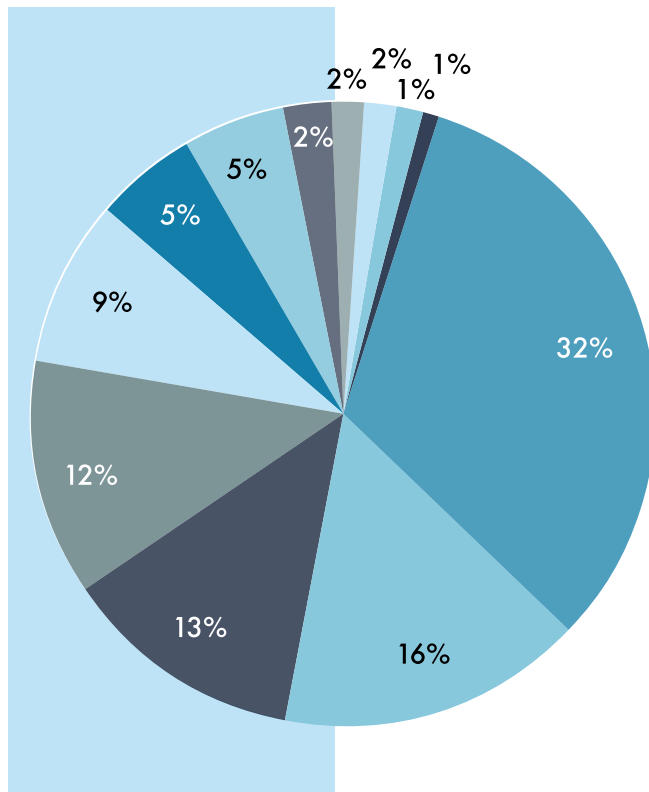


Net Assets as of 12/31/24  
\$4,692,576



- Operating/Working Assets
- Restricted Cash and Investments
- Unrestricted Cash and Investments

Expenses as of 12/31/24  
\$1,399,442



- Conference Staff Ministries
- Misc. Office Expenses
- Conference Supported Ministries
- Taxes/Benefits
- Administrative Expenses
- Clergy Development Ministries
- OCWM National Commitment
- Church Development Prog Exp
- Rent Expense
- Communications/Equip Program Exp
- Office Supplies/Telephone/Postage/Leases
- Cleaning-Recycle/Insurance/Rep

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**Pennsylvania Southeast Conference  
United Church of Christ**

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**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**

