

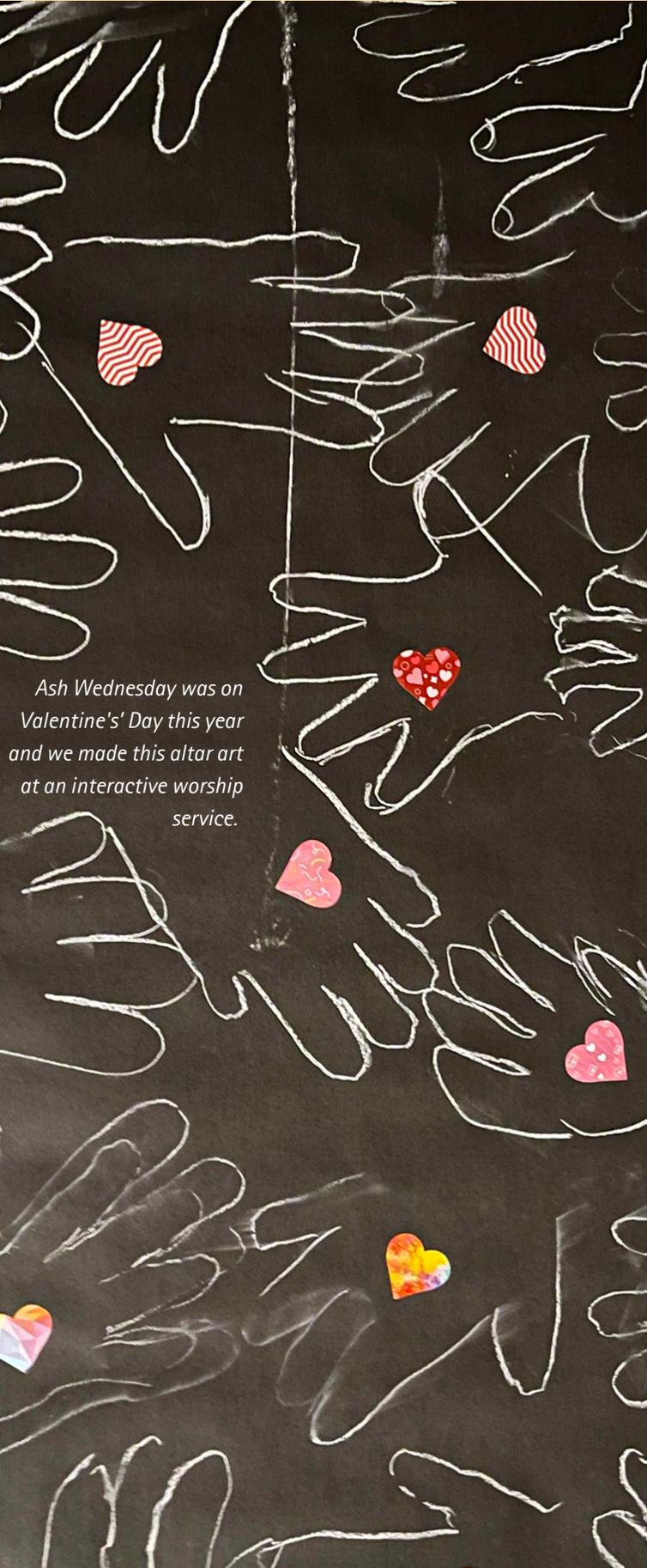


2024
**Annual
Report**

BE LOVED. BELONG. BE THE DIFFERENCE.

cobleskill united  *methodist church*

Overview



Ash Wednesday was on Valentine's Day this year and we made this altar art at an interactive worship service.

Let's write the script.

If one thing could be said of 2024, it's that this church is creating a path forward that matches the needs of the community with the gifts present right in our midst.

Whether it was writing our own Compassion Camp curriculum or inventorying our congregational gifts, this year has been a time of exploring the abundance God has already given us and finding creative ways to share it.

Read through these pages to see how we have stretched and grown in 2024, writing the script for God's abundance as we go.

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Margaret Herrala in the photo booth at our first-ever Diamond Celebration honoring church members who have reached age 75 and above!

Pastor Anna, Jessica Capeci and Naomi Peterson work together on a garden for the summer lunch program.



Staff

REV. ANNA BLINN COLE

Pastor

PAIGE BULMER

Office Manager

ROSALIE DANFORTH (Outgoing)

JEFFERY FOOTE (Incoming)

Treasurer

NAOMI PETERSON

Financial Secretary

CHUCK BARBER

Building Monitor

HILARY TAYLOR

Nursery Manager

DAVE MADISON

Nursery Assistant

BETSY WALSH

Organist

BURKE HERRICK (Outgoing)

Choir Director

LENA ANDREWS (Incoming)

Music Director

MARGARET ORTIZ

Custodian

Cobleskill United Methodist Church

LAY LEADERSHIP REPORT

For the year beginning January 1, 2025

NOTES:

Blank Underlined spaces are vacancies to be filled. **Bold underlined** are newly filled positions. Numbers after a person's name designate how many terms that person has served on a particular committee.

ADMINISTRATIVE ROUND TABLE

Lay Leader.....	Scott Barton
Lay Member to Annual Conference.....	Neil Law (<i>term: 2025 – 2027</i>)
Alternate Lay Member.....	Paige Bulmer (<i>term: 2025 – 2027</i>)
Church Council Chair.....	Ann-Marie Frank
Church Council Vice-chair	Rotates
Church Treasurer.....	Jeff Foot (staff)
Financial Secretary	Naomi Peterson (staff)
Finance Committee	Tarrence Lasher
Trustees Co-Chair.....	Neil Law and Bruce Wright
Trustees Treasurer.....	Janet Sand
Staff Pastor Parish Relations Chair.....	Debra Wollaber
Youth Representative.....	Alexander Smith
Beloved Chair.....	Naomi Peterson
Belong Chair.....	_____
Be the Difference Chair.....	Lori Lasher
Church Historian.....	Martha Price

STAFF PASTOR PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE (SPPRC)

Debra Wollaber, *chairperson*

CLASS OF 2025	CLASS OF 2026	CLASS OF 2027
Brian Elder (1)	Natasha Foote (2)	<u>Libby Hammecker (1)</u>
Denise Smith (1)	Tom Carney (2)	<u>Chris Cash (1)</u>
John Jarvis (1)	Debra Wollaber (2)	<u>Sarah Blood (1)</u>

Members not included in classes:

Scott Barton, Lay Leader Neil Law, Lay Member to Annual Conference

Committee must have 5-9 members; all professing members of the church

TERM LIMITS: Members may serve TWO consecutive 3-year terms

TRUSTEES

Neil Law and Bruce Wright, co-chairs

Janet Sand, *treasurer*

Jeff Foote, *secretary*

CLASS OF 2025	CLASS OF 2026	CLASS OF 2027
Bruce Wright (8)	John Price (5)	<u>Jeff Foote (2)</u>
Janet Sand (2)	Loren Schaff (3)	<u>Will VanDeValk (1)</u>
Neil Law (1)	Alicia VanZandt (1)	<u>Tristan Peterson (1)</u>

Committee must have 3-9 members; 2/3 must be professing members of the church.

Trustees must be elected by written ballot at Church Conference.

TERM LIMITS: There is NO mandated term limit. QUORUM: A majority of the members (5)

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Tarrence Lasher, *chairperson*

CLASS OF 2025	CLASS OF 2026	CLASS OF 2027
Debra Wollaber	Tarrence Lasher	<u>Alan Danforth</u>
Angie Wright	Laurie Pracher	<u>Garrett Cole</u>

Ex-officio members (staff): Rosalie Danforth (treasurer); Naomi Peterson (financial secretary)

TERM LIMITS: There is no mandated term limit.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Pastor Anna Blinn Cole, *chairperson*

CLASS OF 2025	CLASS OF 2026	CLASS OF 2027
Suzanne Mazoff	Martha Price	Alan Danforth
Ann-Marie Frank	Brittany Noble	Naomi Peterson

**New class members are to be nominated from the floor of church council*

TERM LIMITS: Members are limited to ONE 3-year term.

Ministry Teams *(Beta Version)* *Be Loved. Belong. Be the Difference.*

BE LOVED

Naomi Peterson, *chairperson*

Hospitality Team

Naomi Peterson, Brittany Noble, Cindy Barton, Kate Elder, Natasha Foote, Ann-Marie Frank, Denise Smith, Bill Toohey, Deb Wollaber, Brandi Kerber, and Lindsey Palazzo

Worship Team

Pastor Anna Blinn Cole, *chairperson*
Liturgists: Scott Barton, Alan Danforth, Natasha Foote, Brian Elder, Suzanne Mazoff, Paige Bulmer, Tom Carney, Lisa Cardilli, Sarah Blood, and Chris Cash.

Audio/Visual Team

Alex Smith, Tarrence Lasher, Carl Stoner, Jeff Foote

BELONG

TBD, *chairperson*

Youth Ministry Team

Amy Kennedy, Dennis Manning, Kate Elder, Brian Elder, Brandi Kerber, Paige Bulmer, and Pastor Anna Blinn Cole

Children's Ministry Team

Lisa Cardilli, Karen Stoner, Doris Leverett, Amy Kennedy, Suzanne Mazoff, Pastor Anna Blinn Cole, Teri Hammon, Beth Cash, Lori VanDeValk and Lori Lasher (camping rep)

BE THE DIFFERENCE

Lori Lasher, *chairperson*

Margaret Herrala, Paige Bulmer (Thrift Store Manager), Loren Schaff (Food Pantry Manager), John Jarvis, Tom Carney, Pastor Anna Blinn Cole, Amy Gildemeister, Alicia VanZandt

From the Ground Up

Pastor's Report

by PASTOR ANNA BLINN COLE

2024 for Cobleskill United Methodist Church has, in this pastor's view, been focused on developing a stronger connection with our vision statement: Be Loved. Belong. Be the Difference. How do we tap into the abundance of our collective gifts to BE the hands and feet of Christ in this community?

To aid my own exploration of this, I took a course this year on Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). ABCD is a community development approach that focuses on identifying and leveraging the existing strengths, skills, and resources within a community to create sustainable improvements, rather than solely focusing on its problems or deficits. Throughout the course of the year I worked with our Leadership Development Team to bring elements of ABCD into the church through a sermon series in June focused on developing congregational gifts and building a database of assets within our church thereafter.

The fruit of this work has been a desire to structure our church leadership around the three "Bs" of our vision statement. We have begun matching people's gifts with the broad area of congregational development for which they are best suited. The great thing about these broad categories is that there is a lot of room for adaptation and flexibility around people's individual gifts and passions. When someone says they like to garden and would like to help start a church garden, we can help them decide which "B" this fits under best and give them freedom to develop the plan with similarly-minded folks in the congregation.

A brand-new Hospitality Team has formed as a result of this ABCD movement. People who have gifts for sharing a generous sense of "belovedness" have formed a team designed to shepherd new and existing events to embody this first movement of our church's mission statement: BE LOVED! This moves the creativity and planning of these events to a more sustainable lay-led structure.



Burning last year's palm branches for ashes.



The proud pastor of a radically inclusive church.



Compassion Camp games.



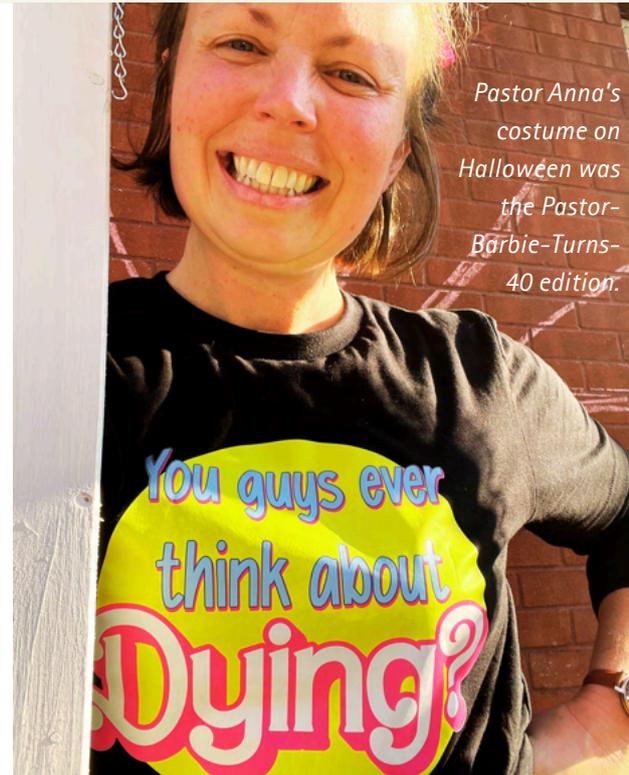
Block Party!

Another part of this year worth celebrating is our church's leadership in community-wide soft plastic recycling. Beginning in December of 2023, our church challenged its congregation and community to recycle 1,000 pounds of soft plastic (mailers, wrapping, bags, etc.) within one year. We met our goal within five months! And we didn't stop there. We have almost met a goal of recycling 2,000 more pounds, with each 1,000 pounds recycled earning a recycled plastic bench through the NexTrex program. A beautiful bench now gives a resting spot under our beloved Catalpa tree (see photos on Page 34), another bench sits at our local elementary school and third bench will soon sit outside our sister church's Code Blue Warming Station. We are beginning to recognize that discipleship takes many forms and caring for God's creation is one of them.

Continuing in the theme of exploring our giftedness from the ground up, a talented group of retired and active teachers in our congregation designed and implemented a home-grown curriculum for our annual children's summer Compassion Camp. "Let Us Build a House" focused on radical inclusivity and housing concerns in our community. The children built homes for carpenter bees and packed hygiene kits for neighbors in our Warming Station. Through creative songs, a mouse puppet (seen on the front cover!), stories, and games on our spacious lawn, we welcomed 40 children plus 8 youth helpers to our church for camp.

I'll conclude this year's report on the life of the church by highlighting the leadership our congregation has taken in building bridges within our community during a contentious election cycle. By engaging the local chapter of Braver Angels, our church has hosted two workshops aimed at depolarization. Together more than 75 people engaged in conversations about how to address stereotyping and negative assumptions in talking about people on the other side of the political spectrum. Our Social Justice Team has led this effort and more workshops in the future are being planned to address family political tensions and issue-based conversations in the community.

Connectionally, I gave a week of my ministerial time to volunteer at Skye Farm as Chaplain, July 7-12. I continue to serve as the Coordinating Elder for the Schoharie Mosaic Cooperative Parish. In July I was elected as the Chair of the Order of Elders for the Upper New York (UNY) Conference which also places me on the Board of Ordained Ministry. I also serve on the UNY Creation Justice Team.



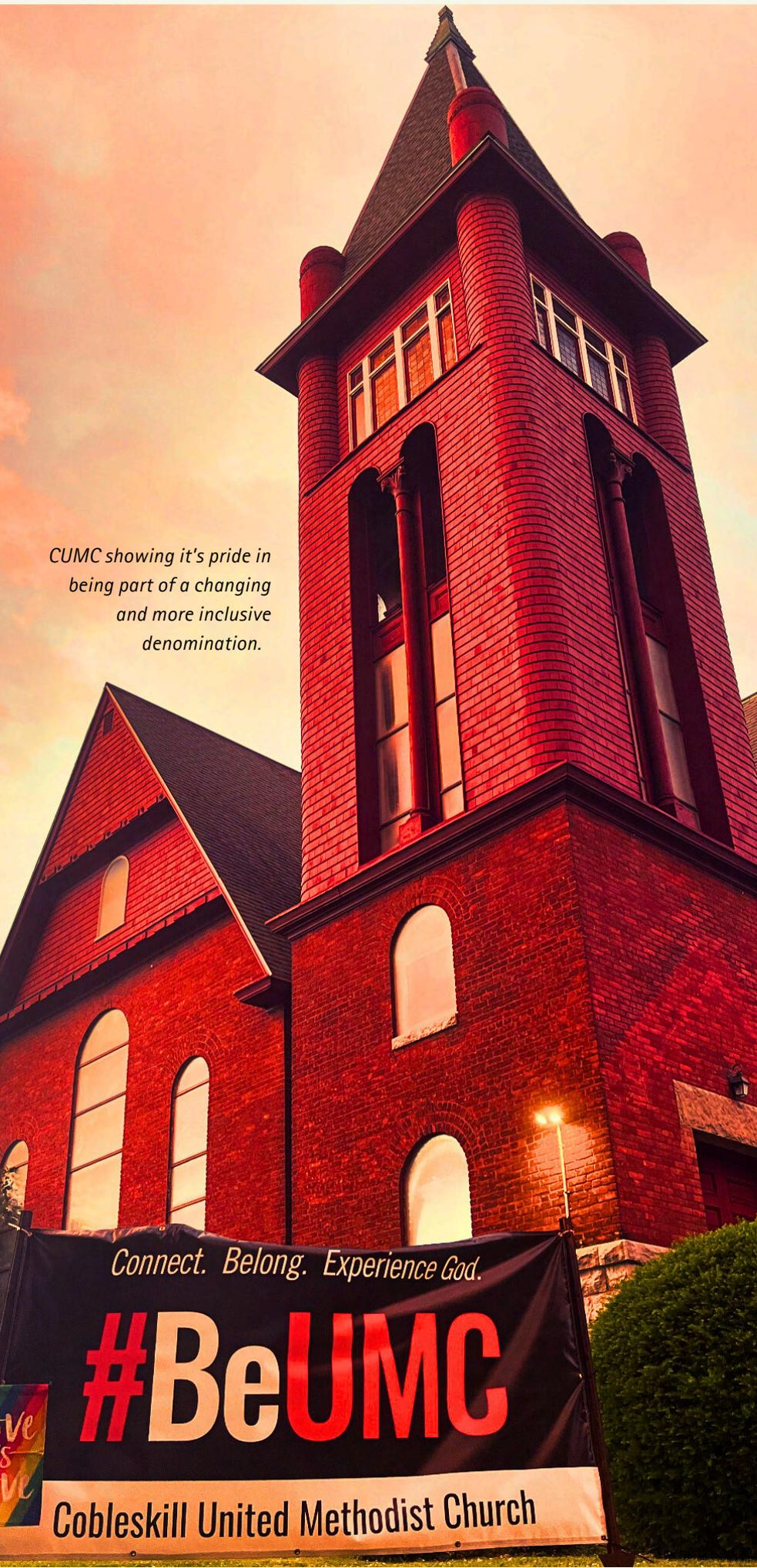
Pastor Anna's costume on Halloween was the Pastor-Barbie-Turns-40 edition.



Baptizing Emmie under the Catalpa Tree



Someone sent Pastor Anna flame-colored wrapping paper after she joked that such a thing didn't exist on Pentecost.



CUMC showing it's pride in being part of a changing and more inclusive denomination.

The Balcony View

Administrative Round Table Report

by ANN-MARIE FRANK

The Administrative Round Table meets approximately every two months to share information regarding the work and activities that are taking place within our church. Committee members include church leaders as well as committee and team chairs. As we move into 2025, it is our goal to be more streamlined in our approach, with committee members who will represent and focus on our vision statement of "Be Loved. Belong. Be the Difference."

We continue to form and/or maintain small groups such as our fellowship groups, Lenten groups, covenant groups, Bible study groups, a parent group, etc. These groups offer opportunities to deepen our faith, become more familiar with the Bible, get to know each other better, and more.

Early in 2024 we set a goal to collect 1,000 pounds of soft plastic. This goal was in keeping with our mission to care for our planet. Once collected, the plastic was recycled into a bench for our church yard. We not only reached our goal, but we later helped the Radez Elementary Environmental Club reach their own goal to collect 1,000 pounds of soft plastic. Check out our bench the next time you come to church.

We are a church that serves our community. Our food pantry continues to provide individuals and families with much needed food, personal hygiene, and household items. Donations and sales at our thrift store continue to be strong.

As in previous years, we were a host facility for the summer lunch program. Once again, our church participated in "Operation Home Repair" sponsored by the Mosaic United Methodist Cooperative Ministry. Volunteers from CUMC and other Mosaic churches provided maintenance and home repairs for local homeowners in need of assistance.

The past year has been full of events, activities, and celebrations. There was the Diamond Celebration to honor our church members who are 75 years and older, the annual Crop Walk, Compassion Camp for K-5th graders, our annual Block Party, Blessing of the Animals, Halloween Hallow, Eco-Advent Festival, Christmas Parade float, Red Cross blood drives, game nights, potlucks, plays, and musical events. We now have a Hospitality Team that will coordinate many of the events previously mentioned plus new events in the works.

Without a doubt, I've overlooked a number of activities, events and programs from this past year. We wouldn't have been able to accomplish any of these things without the leadership and dedication of our pastor, staff and congregation. Let's keep the ball rolling and do great things in 2025!



The Administrative Round Table kicks off a new year at its January 2024 meeting.

Where do you belong?

Small Group Ministry Report

BY PASTOR ANNA

Small groups at CUMC are continuing to have an impact on the health of our church. In 2023 we put more energy as a church into the formation of new groups including Fellowship Groups.

In 2024, we have grown the types of groups we offer and we are moving toward a way to formally adopt a ministry of Belonging into our lay-leadership structure.

A Covenant Discipleship Group that was formed in 2023 concluded it's "pilot year" in the middle of 2024 and pivoted to reform with a few new members. The Covenant Discipleship Group meets once a week and group members talk about their faith journey and shared goals for stronger discipleship.

The Sunday morning Parent Group has also blossomed in 2024 with new parents and new energy. The group even sometimes includes goodies like homemade bagels(!). Parents gather to talk about how faith weaves into the life of raising little ones and there's a lot of laughter and good question-asking.

In 2024, Pastor Anna organized a small group of people who will take a pilgrimage to the Isle of Iona in Scotland in August of 2025. For many months, this group has been meeting to read together *Sacred Earth*, *Sacred Soul* by John Phillip Newell. Plans for their trip are coming together and the group is learning a lot about Celtic Christian roots.

In addition to these regular groups, we had a short-term small group that studied the Enneagram during Lent and several groups that met during Advent for devotions and conversation. Our regular Tuesday Bible Study goes strong with Rev. Tom Carney at its helm.



Kate Elder and Sarah Blood making Advent Wreaths at our Eco-Advent Festival.

2024 by the numbers



2,450

POUNDS OF PLASTIC

This congregation, with help from community members, saved thousands of pounds of soft plastic from the landfill this year. As a result, Trex used our recycled plastic to make a new bench for under our Catalpa tree (see pg 34 for a picture!)



25

BAGS

One for each pew, these bags of "Sensory Worship" items help make worship accessible to more people.



20

NEW MEMBERS

joined our church in 2024 by transfer, profession of faith and baptism.



390

CANISTERS OF PLAY DOUGH

given along with candy to our neighborhood kids before we ran out, serving in total more than 450 children on Halloween!



58

KIDS, YOUTH AND VOLUNTEERS came together for a fun week of art, games, songs and learning about how to create safe spaces for all at our Compassion Camp themed "Building a House for All."



75

BRAVE PEOPLE

Came to our church for workshops around civility and healthy conversations across political divides.



A choir of children joined the adult choir for a special song "God is Here Today" on November 24.

Worship + Art

BY BETSY WALSH, TOM CARNEY AND PASTOR ANNA BLINN COLE

Many people work together to make our worship of God creative and beautiful including our children, musicians and our pastor and staff. This year we featured several different worship series including Seeking Another Way: Pilgrimage Wisdom for the 21st Century (Epiphany), Lent in Full Color (Lent/Easter), A Conspiracy of Gifts (Pentecost), Created to Be (summer outside), In Polarizing Times...(fall), A Generous Life (fall), and Words for the Beginning (Advent/Christmas).

The Bell Choir once again has been active throughout the year playing at least monthly in addition to playing on Easter and on Christmas Eve. They have played anthems, and hymn accompaniments and often played with instrumental flutes. They have been a special addition to the rich church music program. We are thankful to the bell ringers and flutists and to our organist, Betsy Walsh, for all the music they have created together.

The chancel choir has also been very active this year providing music most Sundays through the program year. They have sung anthems from our vast collection in addition to hymn arrangements. Under the leadership of our choir director, Burke Herrick, they have successfully sung many different types of music. After the lovely anthem on Christmas Eve we bid farewell to Burke and wished him well in his new endeavors. The choir is looking forward to making music in the coming year with our new Music Director, Lenna Andrews.

This year we offered several unique worship services including a Valentine's Day Ash Wednesday service designed to be interactive and intergenerational. We also tried a Bluegrass Watch Night Service to ring in the New Year. These services, in addition to our now annual Blue Christmas, Good Friday, Easter Sunrise, and Blessing of the Animals, bring creativity and variety to the liturgical year.

A small nativity scene that was left for our church on the sign base this Advent.



A Look at the Numbers

Finance Committee Report

BY TARRENCE LASHER

The congregation of Cobleskill United Methodist Church continues to exemplify remarkable generosity. Thanks to your faithful giving, 2024 ended on a strong note, with contributions increasing by 8% to a total of \$179,034. This growth allowed us to pay all our bills and carry funds forward into 2025. We did supplement giving with \$20,400 from our investments as a safety net, and we are actively working to reduce reliance on these funds in the future. Approximately 65% of our budget supports our dedicated staff, whose work is essential to the success of our worship and programs. Another 14% covers our annual building costs, while major repairs and upgrades are funded separately through trustee-managed resources.

The Finance Committee extends heartfelt gratitude to **Rosalie Danforth**, who is retiring after 10 years of faithful service as treasurer of Cobleskill United Methodist Church. Her meticulous attention to detail and steadfast dedication have been a blessing to our congregation, ensuring financial stewardship that has strengthened our ministry. Your generosity has empowered us to maintain an excellent staff, care for our building, and focus on impactful ministry both in the sanctuary and the broader community. Thank you for your continued commitment to God's work through CUMC. Together, we are building a foundation of hope for the future.

2024/25 Budget

Advent began with the children hanging quilt squares on the altar.



	2024 Budget	2024 Actual	% of Budget	2025 Budget
Income				
Commitments	187,000	184,634	99%	202,000
Plate Offerings	5,000	3,784	76%	5,000
Holiday Offerings	3,000	4,015	134%	3,500
Investment Income	20,000	20,400	102%	10,000
Miscellaneous	200	1,432	716%	200
Property Use	13,600	16,083	118%	18,300
Total Income	228,800	230,348	101%	239,000
Salary and Benefits				
Pastor Salary	52,986	52,986	100%	54,681
Substitute Pastor	500	350	70%	2,200
Staff Salary	59,643	65,536	110%	68,515
Substitute Staff	1,050	500	48%	1,500
Service Contracts	3,500	3,435	98%	3,420
FICA	3,540	4,063	115%	4,341
Pastor Pension & Health Ins.	26,247	26,247	100%	26,604
Staff Medicare	750	950	127%	1,016
Unemployment Insurance	600	732	122%	990
WC Insurance	300	716	239%	985
Total Salary &	149,115	155,516	104%	164,252
Operating Expenses				
Accountable				
Reimbursements	4,500	4,601	102%	4,500
Annual Conference	1,000	1,166	117%	1,200
Office Supplies	3,000	4,170	139%	3,000
Postage	1,000	312	31%	750
Banking	1,200	1,598	133%	1,200
Marketing/Publicity	300	147	49%	300
Finance Committee	100	197	197%	100
Technology	2,000	844	42%	2,000
Total Operating Expenses	13,100	13,033	99%	13,050
Church Ministries				
Nursery Supplies	150	0	0%	150
Children's Ministries	500	433	87%	500
Vacation Bible School	750	587	78%	750
Fellowship Team	286	571	200%	0
Worship Team	1,200	1,219	102%	1,200
Leadership	100	0	0%	100
Safe Sanctuaries	200	221	110%	200
Adult Studies	500	744	149%	766
Youth Ministries	800	856	107%	800
Choral Music	300	568	189%	300
Total Church Ministries	4,786	5,200	109%	4,766

Budget (cont.)

	2024 Budget	2024 Actual	% of Budget	2025 Budget
Building Maintenance				
Chruch Heat (Fuel)	9,200	4,567	50%	8,000
Church Electric	5,500	3,539	64%	4,700
Phone & Internet	1,600	1,516	95%	1,600
Snow Removal	8,000	5,055	63%	8,000
Grounds Maintenance	3,500	3,390	97%	3,500
Refuse Collection	900	828	92%	900
Insurance	9,500	10,012	105%	9,500
Water & Sewer	1,500	1,287	86%	1,500
Parsonage Heat (Fuel)	2,000	1,199	60%	1,750
Parsonage Electric	1,400	1,370	98%	1,250
Custodial Supplies	1,000	1,342	134%	1,000
Total Building Maintenance	44,100	34,105	77%	41,700
Connectional Expenses				
Ministry Shares	29,148	29,148	100%	32,256
Retiree Premium	3,153	2,678	85%	2,966
Total Connectional Expenses	32,301	31,826	99%	35,222
Total Expenses	243,402	239,679	98%	258,990



Avery works hard scraping the Warnerville Warming Station during Operation: Home Repair.

2024 Unbudgeted Missional Giving

Unbudgeted Missional Income	
Thrift Store Income	45,796
Food Pantry Income	23,513
Special Sunday Offerings	2,097
Love Your Neighbor Offerings	3,197
Unbudgeted Missional Income	74,603
Unbudgeted Missional Giving	
Thrift Store Allocations	45,131
Food Pantry	20,059
Special Sunday Offerings	2,697
UMCOR Disaster Relief: Hurricane Helene, Gaza, Ukraine	2,282
Living For Others	681
Total Missional Giving	70,850

Dick Frank and Alan Danforth finished their terms as Trustees at the end of 2024 after decades of combined service.



Stewarding our Resources

Trustee Report

BY ALAN DANFORTH

The following officers were elected for 2024

Chairperson: Alan Danforth

Vice Chair: Loren Schaff

Secretary: Jeffrey Foote

Treasurer: Janet Sand

Elected trustees are custodians of all church assets. These assets are held in trust for the Upper New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. The church endowments, physical church, parsonage, their contents, and vacant land are all monitored by your elected trustee board.

Trustees work closely with the church's financial advisor, Leo and Sean McAllister of Cadaret Grant Cooperation. The financial advisor ensures that our endowments are prudently and diligently managed. Endowment funds contributed \$20,000 to the operating budget.

Many projects were accomplished in 2024.

- Sidewalks were removed and replaced from the education wing to Chapel Street. A precast concrete step was installed by the entrance to the side door of the sanctuary. Cost \$10,950.
- Drainage by the rear of the church was addressed. Windows were blocked up and stucco applied. Fabric was laid down with a crusher run stone over the top to provide a car turn around. This also addressed water drainage away from building. A new road was built from the back of the church to the parking lot. Also, the removal of wood and debris surrounding back yard. Stone was applied to parking lots and graded. Cost \$31,488.

(Project list, cont.)

- Locks replaced in education wing and electronic keypad installed. Cost \$3,850.
- Routine church maintenance includes furnace repair, Fyr-Fyter alarm system, plumbing, landscaping, painting, chair lift, etc. Cost \$12,500.

Endowment investments allow trustees to maintain and improve the church properties. The above projects are just a few of the accomplishments achieved in 2024. Trustees continually monitor the heating system, fire alarm system, plumbing issues and minor repairs.

Your elected trustees are dedicated to maintaining a welcoming door policy for our congregation as well as our many visitors. They are always available for comments and suggestions.

Trustee Managed Fund Balances as of December 31, 2024

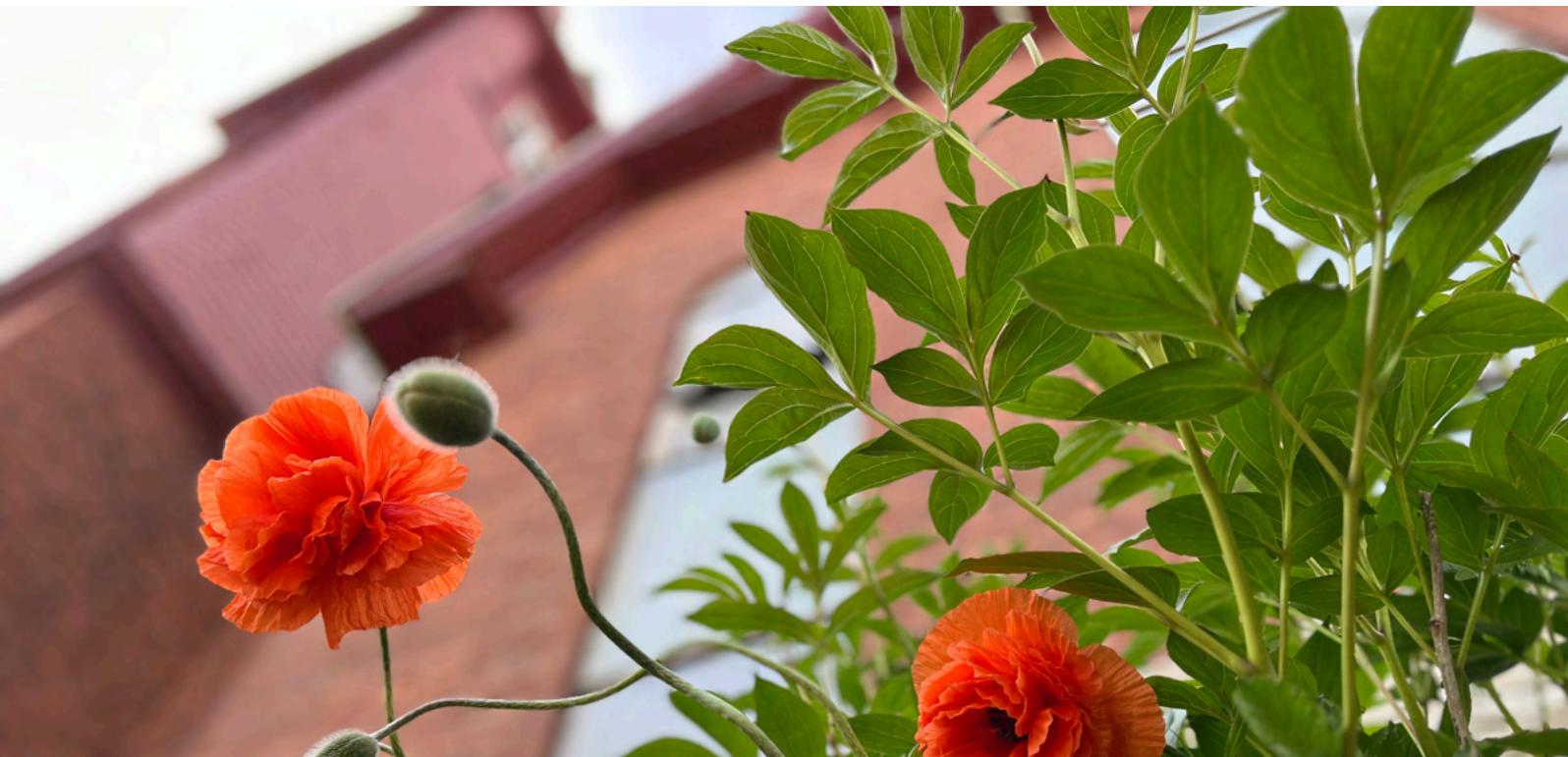
Trustee Bank Account Balances

Bank of Richmondville (Checking)	\$ 30,236.30
NBT Bank (Accessibility)	314.39
NBT (Memorial funds)	5,928.46
Total Trustee Bank Accounts	\$36,479.15

Trustee Investment Fund Balances

The principals (P) in the below accounts are to remain and the dividends are used to fund the designated ministries.

Lily Vedder Scholarship Fund (\$10,000 P)	\$10,771.98
Jones Altar, Flower & Landscaping (\$10,000 P).....	10,747.05
Student Awards Fund (\$40,000 P)	27,711.98
Decker Camp Scholarships (\$20,000 P).....	48,805.73
Regular Undesignated.....	1,054,413.17
Total Trustee Investment Accounts	\$1,152,449.71





Building Healthy Relationships

Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee Report

BY DEBRA WOLLABER

Our goal as the Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee (SPPRC) is to focus on building strong relationships between the Pastor, Staff, and Congregation so that we can continue to be a beacon of hope and change as we seek to be better disciples of Christ and to help transform our world. To that end, our committee meets regularly to address any issues that may be forthcoming, to support our pastor in her work, and to operationalize congregational goals.

Each staff member has a SPPRC liaison with whom s/he can communicate any joys and concerns. In 2024 we experienced staff changes and, while we are grateful for the work and contributions those who left us made to CUMC, we are fortunate to have wonderful people who have stepped up to serve in their roles. Specifically, we welcomed:

- David Madison, who serves as our new Nursery Assistant
- Chuck Barber, who serves as our Building Monitor

As we say goodbye to 2024 we celebrate the accomplishments made in the past year.

- We fleshed out the first "B" in our discipleship pathway: "Be Loved. Belong. Be the Difference," by celebrating the development of a Hospitality Team focused on leading special events at our church that let our community know they are loved by God. This newly-formed team identifies those of us in the congregation who can provide leadership for such church events as our Block Party, Halloween Hollow, Christmas events, and other welcoming events that our church hosts throughout the year.
- We want the community in which we live to see us as a welcoming, open and safe place. However, this year found us identifying some security issues and, with the help of the trustees, we addressed these issues by installing a new keypad, several new outdoor cameras, and new interior door locks.

- We participated in the Summer Lunch Program which, again, was a success. Our Outreach Committee generously supported the hiring of our Summer Lunch Coordinator, Jessica Capeci.
- We have seen attendance in worship increase with our 2024 in-person average being 77. Following in suit, congregational giving has also increased.
- Small group ministries continue to build stronger relationships among our parish members.
- We celebrated our staff in worship and shared a Christmas gift with each of them.

We would like to encourage anyone who has joys and/or concerns to share them with one of the members of our committee. Any joy or concern will be considered confidential and discussed only within the confines of our committee meeting. Our committee is: Brian Elder, Natasha Foote, Sarah Blood, Denise Smith, Tom Carney, Chris Cash, John Jarvis, Debra Wollaber, Libby Hammecker, Neil Law and Scott Barton.

As we look forward to 2025, we already know great things will happen. For example, January will bring the hire of two new staff members: Jeff Foote as Treasurer and Lenna Darbin Andrews as Music Director. In July, Pastor Anna and her family will be taking a renewal leave in the summer and Rev. Tom Carney will be our substitute pastor. In August, Pastor Anna will lead a pilgrimage group from our church to Iona, Scotland the first week of August.

As you read this, please know we are grateful for your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service and your witness.



THE POWER OF GIVING

Outreach Report

BY LORI LASHER

I am certain that my grandmother was a superhero. When I was a young child I spent many Saturdays with my grandmother. I would immediately ask, "What are we doing today?" She would respond "that depends on you." In my mind, this was a set-up for "choose your own adventure!" My grandmother was charged with caring for a child while doing all of her errands and duties outside of her job. In my child's view, I was more than happy to sort the tupperware containers while she made soup. Later the soup was our lunch. We then delivered soup to the neighbor, and great grandma after we picked up her mail. Then my grandmother would say something like "if you can rest while I drive, I wanted to check out that Rummage Sale at the church." I naturally agreed with anticipation of a future treasure. The days and weeks continued in this same pattern. My grandmother taught me so much. Her super power of giving taught me that by going ever so slightly out of your way, you are making a difference in a way that someone else feels. Not only did she care for and love me, she loved her neighbor, her mom and her church family.

When I look around at our congregation and community I feel this same power. The power of giving has enabled the Outreach Team to share the wealth of donations and generosity through internal, local, and global missions. I found this quote that reminds me of our work: "Wherever there is a human in need, there is an opportunity for kindness and to make a difference." (K. Heath)

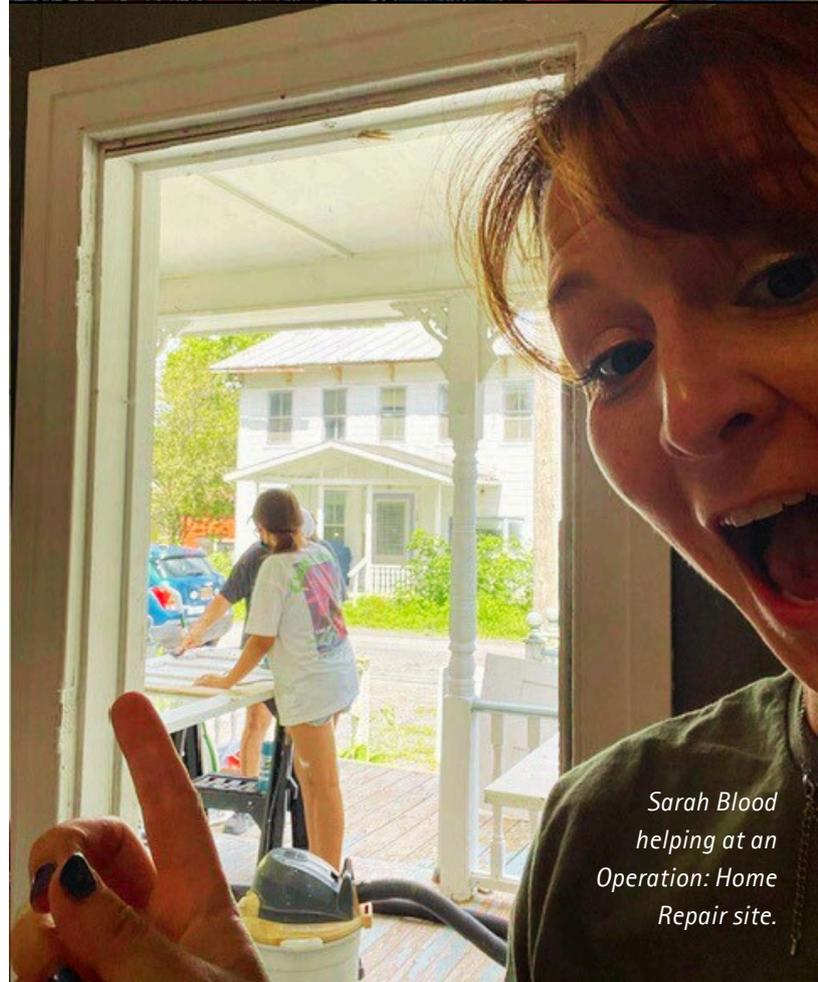
EACH ONE OF US CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE:
TOGETHER WE MAKE CHANGE!



Block Party artists at work!



Scouting and Camping Sunday



Sarah Blood helping at an Operation: Home Repair site.

This past summer we sent fifteen campers to Skye Farm Camp!! What a wonderful opportunity for children to experience God's love in this outdoor ministry full of nature, fun, activities and fellowship with peers.

Our church also hosts the Joshua Project's Summer Lunch Program in our Fellowship Hall for the months of July and August. We provide numerous volunteers everyday to prepare and serve the meals to our guests. This past summer we served a total of 2,514 meals, averaging 314 lunches per week!

We also support Special Sundays with extra mile giving through our United Methodist Connection. This provides an opportunity for the congregations to donate to specific funds for further impact around the country and world.

- Human Relations Sunday - \$439
- United Methodist Committee on Relief Administration - \$469
- Native American Ministries Sunday- \$573
- Peace with Justice Sunday - \$324
- World Communion Sunday- \$292
- United Methodist Student Day - \$350

Our church also raised \$1,682 for the UMCOR response related to Hurricane Helene, \$681 for Anna Migera's ministry in Tanzania, *Living for Others*, and \$600 for UMCOR relief in the international war zones of Ukraine and Gaza.

"If you think you are too small to make a difference, you haven't spent a night with a mosquito." *African proverb*



Lori and Hannah Lasher at Halloween Hollow with Robyn Vernon representing Skye Farm.



Thrift Store Volunteers at our Outreach Appreciation Lunch



CUMC folks at Skye Farm Camp this summer!

Filling the Shelves

Food Pantry Report

BY LOREN SCHAFF

I would like to thank all of the volunteers who help on Friday and all the people who pick up deliveries and the office manager who takes all of the phone in orders. In 2024 we served 1,302 households and 3233 family members, which is an increase over last year. Children and seniors saw the largest increase in usage. This year we continued to meet the needs of members of our community who are unable to drive by offering food delivery to home bound and medically fragile consumers, averaging 8 deliveries per week. Orders are called in ahead of time and packed up by volunteers, and then delivered to the door of the consumer by our wonderful volunteer drivers John Jarvis and Sue Lockwood. In addition, this year we provided an extra Christmas dinner to 60 families and included 60 stockings for all the children in those families.

The CUMC Food Pantry is a participant in the Feeding America network, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization that works to connect people who are food insecure with the food they need to care for themselves and their families. The network works to get nourishing food from farmers, manufacturers, and retailers to people in need via regional food banks and local pantries. Hunger can affect people from all walks of life. Many Americans are just one job loss or medical crisis away from food insecurity. The Regional Food Bank in Latham, donors, and volunteers all play an important role in our effort to curtail hunger here in Schoharie County.



Food Pantry Manager, Loren Schaff, organizes Christmas Basket sign ups as the youth group fills bags.



CUMC youth filling Christmas Baskets for Food Pantry clients.

Month	Households	Adults	Children	Older Adults	Total Individuals Served
January 2024	111	152	65	61	278
February	100	138	56	57	251
March	136	190	79	57	326
April	91	125	46	48	219
May	109	154	57	60	271
June	101	44	54	101	199
July	116	144	74	43	261
August	125	171	85	65	321
September	97	134	63	56	253
October	112	161	99	63	323
November	110	122	70	53	245
December	94	110	62	50	222
Year-end Totals	1,302	1760	800	667	3169
2024 Mon. Average	109	146	67	56	264
2023 Mon. Average	98	128	54	48	238



CUMC Volunteers serving lunch at the Summer Lunch Program



*Easter Sunday
children's time.*

Spiritual Curiosity

Children's Ministry Report

BY LISA CARDILLI

Children at CUMC bring life into everything that we do. Whether it's projects happening in Sunday School or big questions asked during Children's Time in worship, our children show us the path toward wisdom and delight.

Weekly Sunday School is a place of gathering and imaginative wondering for children as they learn about God. In the spring, Lisa Cardilli and Amy Kennedy worked together to provide weekly Sunday School for our children. In the fall, Lisa was joined by Suzanne Mazoff (assisted by Ann-Marie Frank and Lori VanDeValk) as they planned a kick-off Sunday School party. Everyone enjoyed festive food, fun decorations, and a scavenger hunt. Our focus in October was reading and learning about the Book of Ruth. Projects included painting a community mural, making, and sharing friendship bracelets, creating the most delicious (and sticky!) popcorn balls, and reading wonderful stories of friendship and loyalty.

Advent was an incredibly special time in Sunday School full of great anticipation, love, and joy. The kids made an Advent wreath for the classroom and participated in lighting a candle each week. They also worked together and created a lovely mosaic Christmas tree and painted wooden star ornaments to bring home. We are blessed to have children grades kindergarten through 5th grade participating this year in Sunday School.

In addition to regular Sunday School, our church hosts a one-week summer camp called Compassion Camp in August. This year's Compassion Camp was extra special, as a talented team of adults from our church wrote the entire curriculum themselves. Our theme "Building a House for All" highlighted Bible stories that teach us about welcoming all into God's house and brought together nearly 40 children, 7 youth junior counselors and 10 adults. The week was filled with creative skits, stories, games, construction projects, and everybody's favorite puppet: Squeakers the Church Mouse.



All Are Welcome!

Nursery Care Report

BY HILARY TAYLOR (SHE/HER)

In 2024, our nursery continued its mission to celebrate all children and families, promoting diversity and justice aligning with our United Methodist social principles, through child-led play. We celebrated Black History Month (February), and AANHPI month (May), by creating art inspired by Black and Asian artists, and during Pride month (June), we removal of exclusionary language in our UMC *Book of Discipline* by creating a colorful banner welcoming all people to our church. This year we added lots of fun play items to our nursery, including drums and ukuleles, an ice cream cart, and many "tinker tray" items such as locks and keys, clocks, and shoe horns. But our best addition came at the very end of the year--our new Nursery Assistant, Dave!





Bigger Circles, More Fun

youth Ministry Report

BY ALEXANDER SMITH

This year at the Cobleskill United Methodist Church Youth Group, we've seen some great progress, and great fun! We kicked the year off with our very first Finally Friday happening on the 12th day of Christmas, and so we banded together to solve a Nativity Escape Room. The very next month we had our first field trip of the year and went bowling at the Middleburgh Lanes for a fun bonding experience! To help us go on these wonderful trips (which you'll definitely be hearing more about) we've had to do some fundraising, such as our flagship fundraiser this year, which was selling truffles! During early March, our youth group banded together and rolled, dipped, and decorated some beautiful truffles!

Next, in May, select members of the youth group volunteered to interview our very own "Diamond Generation" - members of our church family who are 75 years old or more - for a video which can be found on our Facebook page, showcasing their favorite memories, experiences, and the changes that have been seen at our church by some of our longest standing members. Also in May, we used some of our fundraising money to take a group outing to deliver our styrofoam recycling to the Re-Use center in Oneonta. Afterwards, we went over to a nearby park and had fun playing basketball, hide and seek, and plenty of other yard games! After some good times in the park, our merry group headed over to Interskate 88 for some skating and pizza eating to wrap up a lovely day.

The following month, we had a wonderful time celebrating school letting out! First we had a great backyard cookout, with grilled foods, cornhole, and fun yard games! As we wrapped up the youth group season for the summer, we enjoyed a summer's last blast at the Elder's pond for a fun-filled day of swimming, snacking, and marshmallow roasting!

After a summer's hiatus, the CUMC youth group made a quick jump back into the action with game-filled Finally Fridays in September, followed by preparation for our Halloween Hallow in October. Together plenty of youth came and carved beautiful (and spooky) pumpkins to decorate our alleyway for our community trick or treating celebration, Halloween Hallow. To close up the year, our youth helped pack Christmas baskets filled with yummy meals for those in need, and (even despite weather delays) decorated and delivered Christmas cookies to some of our at-home church members!

All in all, 2024 was a great year for the CUMC youth group, with plenty of new members, antics, and tons, and tons of games. I know I'll miss this group when its time for me to leave for college, but the teens who are in it, and the adults who run it (yes I mean you, Pastor Anna, Den, Kate, and all of the lovely helpers) are all wonderful people who will no doubt keep the CUMC youth group running strong. It's been a wonderful year, and I have no doubt that 2025 will be a great new chapter for our group.



Our Fall Joining Sunday in which we welcomed 11 new people into our community.

The Family Grows

Membership Report

BY JANET SAND

Total number of members reported at beginning of 2024	285
Removed by death	2
Removed by transfer to another Methodist church	0
Removed by transfer to other denomination	0
Removed by action of charge conference	0
Removed by withdrawal.....	2
Received by profession of faith	9
Received by transfer from another Methodist church	5
Received by transfer from other denominations	2
Restored	0
Total membership as of December 31, 2024	297



Received as Professing Members:		
Elizabeth Walsh	Theresa Heary	Bill Toohey
Laurie Carter	Lisa Murphy	Elizabeth Hopkins
Cindy Barton	Teri Hammon	Theresa Ciccia

In Memoriam:
Jay Dewell
Roger Mallory

Received as Baptized Members:	
Christopher Timm	Kayla Kerber
Melody Taylor	Emileigh Agen

Received as Transferring Members:	
Brandi Kerber	Michael Kerber
Linda Horstman	Leland Horstman
Ginger Mason	Don Mason
Hilary Taylor	



Around the Connection

*Schoharie Mosaic
and the wider United Methodist Church*

BY PAIGE BULMER

The United Methodist Church is a system of "connections," ways in which we hold shared values and support each other to achieve the greatest good as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

As part of this connection, our church celebrated the May decision of the General Conference to remove exclusionary language in our *Book of Discipline* by hanging a #BeUMC banner outside our building. Our connection to the other churches of the Upper New York was also affirmed by representation at the UNY Annual Conference by Pastor Anna, Neil Law and Paige Bulmer, as well as members from several other Mosaic congregations.

We were thrilled to host Anna Migera, a United Methodist deaconess in Tanzania, in the spring as she shared about the ministry in her home town of healing gender disparities and restoring relationships.

In the Schoharie Region of the Oneonta District of the United Methodists of Upper New York, we have our own special local form of connection called "The Mosaic Cooperative Ministry." In 2019, after a year long process of discussion, discernment and visioning between the United Methodist Churches in the region, it was decided that forming a cooperative parish would allow for us to be "Stronger Together," working with each other on outreach ministries in our community, sharing resources both physical and spiritual, and forming deeper relationships between the members of each of our churches. A total of 10 churches are currently in our cooperative

parish and each church is represented by their pastor and at least one lay person on the Mosaic Council.

In 2022, having already participated in several mission trips to the Red Bird Mission in Kentucky and Maine Economic Ministries, the members of Mosaic decided that it was time to shift the focus of our outreach mission to our local community, where we knew there was a great need for safe housing in our economically challenged county. Building on what we had experienced during our work week trips to Red Bird, Operation: Home Repair was born, with the goal of setting aside a full week in July 2023 to complete no-cost home repairs for homeowners in our region.

We held a number of fundraisers and received monetary support from the Road to Jubilee Thrift Store, and that summer teams of volunteers from all of the Mosaic churches worked together to complete critical repairs on 11 homes at no cost to the homeowner. Building on the success of OHR '23, in 2024 Mosaic committed to two weeks of Operation: Home Repair and together with volunteers from several other UMC congregations in the Upper NY Region, we helped 15 additional homeowners with repairs such as installing handicapped accessible ramps, building stairs, rehabbing a former parsonage to become low income housing for a family in the community, building a porch to allow easier home access for a disabled homeowner and much more. Truly being "the hands and feet of Christ," loving our neighbors and providing an opportunity for deeper connection between members of Mosaic congregations and beyond continues to be a tremendous blessing for everyone involved.



Photos From 2024



*Children, children, children!
We love the way children are at the heart of what we do at Cobleskill UMC. From curiosity in worship to reading scripture on the lawn to heart-shaped ashes on foreheads and puppets who enchant. We love our children!*

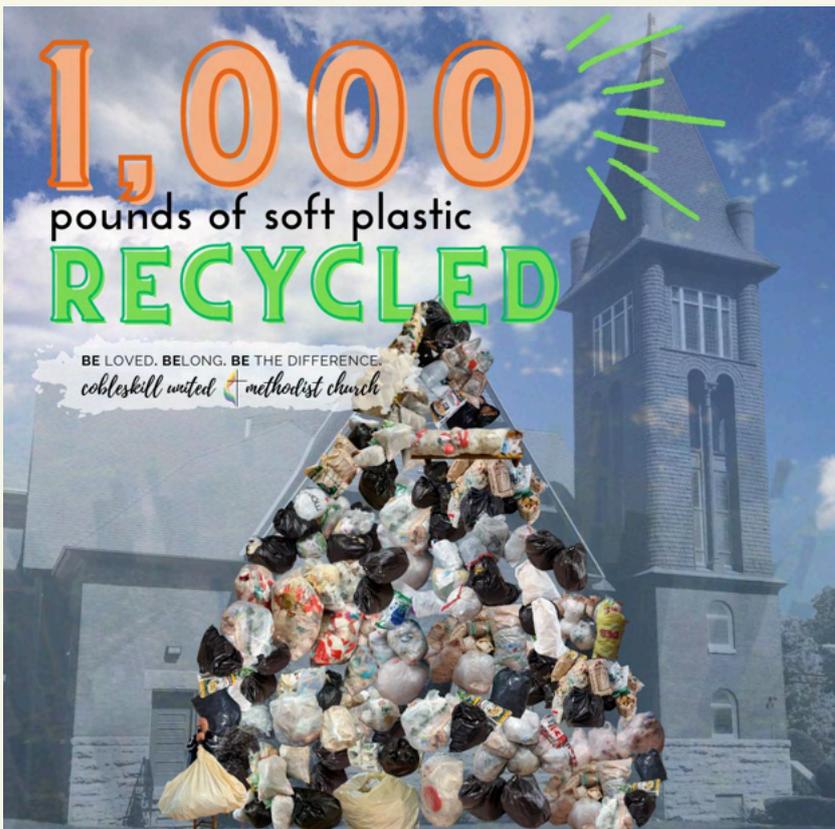


Every other Friday, approximately 15 youth between the grades of 6 and 12 gather at our church for games, dinner, spiritual conversation, Bible stories, and community projects. We love that youth enjoy this evening so much that they bring their friends.





The first half of the year brought the liturgical high points of Lent, Easter and Pentecost, as well as celebrations of our 75 year+ members, celebrating our Covenant Group's first year, meeting a new friend from Tanzania, Anna Migeru, and reaching our first goal of 1000 pounds of plastic and putting our new bench under the tree.





You know what's better than anything? God's love. And we love sharing it. Here are scenes from our robust community block party, Blessing of the Animals and outreach volunteers being thanked for their work.





We ended the year with Halloween Hollow fun welcoming hundreds of children and adults to our parking lot and celebrated a full and bright Advent and Christmas season. Highlights included our Eco-Advent festival with crafts, a meaningful Blue Christmas service, a Bluegrass Watch Night Service, quilt themes throughout, a cheery Christmas parade, and the light of Christ shining in the darkness.