



CHAPEL HILL

United Methodist Church

Annual Report 2025



Mission Statement

WELCOMING *ALL* PEOPLE TO EXPERIENCE AND SHARE THE EXTRAORDINARY GRACE AND LOVE OF JESUS.



Dear Chapel Hillers...

Grace, mercy, and God's peace be with us all!

As is our custom, as we begin a new year, I appreciate the opportunity to share some updates about 2025 and information about our mission and ministry in 2026.

I want to begin by celebrating how we ended the year financially. Our giving exceeded our expenses by \$102,000. Praise be to God and thanks to you for your generosity! The surplus demands some explanation to fully appreciate the significance of ending the year so well.

- We have had several new families who began giving financially in 2025 in a meaningful and impactful way. Many of our existing Chapel Hill families also increased their giving to help fill the gap. Thank you, Chapel Hillers! Your faithfulness and generosity make a real difference!
- Our entire church staff worked diligently to be good stewards of the money you entrust to us for mission and ministry. Christina Kukuruda, our Executive Director of Operations, took a 50% cut in pay the latter part of the year while continuing to work full-time to help reduce expenses. At year's end, Christina retired, but her dedication and faithfulness helped position us well for the future. Thank you, staff, for your creativity and commitment in finding ways to provide meaningful ministry while carefully managing resources. The example you set did not go unnoticed.
- From our beginning in 1995, we have faithfully tithed at least 10% of our income for missions, and 2025 was no exception. Our weekly giving, outside of designated giving, supports mission and ministry in Kansas, our nation, and the world through the United Methodist Church. We are a connectional church, and together we can do more to impact the world for the sake of Christ. I truly believe God honors that commitment.

I also want to celebrate the progress we made with your help in 2025 to reduce our debt. We started the year owing \$1.17 million and finished the year with a balance of \$876,000. In addition to nearly \$300,000 in principal reduction, we also paid \$62,000 in interest expense, which will be less in 2026 as the loan balance decreases. I am pleased to share that we are off to a great start in 2026, and today our current balance is now \$817,000, which encourages us all that our goal of being debt-free is attainable.

It seems like an appropriate time to celebrate our mission statement because it governs our vision, our mission, and our values. We have made our share of mistakes over the years, but I am so grateful to God and to our leadership, staff, and members that we have been faithful to our mission of “Welcoming **all** persons to experience and share the extraordinary grace and love of Jesus.”

I have said over the years that there are times when we will get “tested” to see how true we are to the mission. One of those moments came in 2025, when the Judicial Council issued a declaration that, in all United Methodist Churches, pastors would individually have to decide whether to officiate at weddings for same-gender couples. Out of respect for you and for my own integrity, I shared via the e-newsletter that I would officiate at the wedding of a same-gender couple, provided they met the criteria we have for all couples. We both lost and gained some families over my declared decision. As I stated then, and reaffirm now, I strongly believe in unity in diversity, not uniformity. In my view, a false narrative is that we must divide if we disagree. I am personally and corporately grateful for the grace many of you have shown in this season and admire your commitment to Chapel Hill in spite of differing views. I am proud of our healthy congregation and church staff who can work together for God’s kingdom in spite of our differences and positively impact the church, our community, and the world.

We are incredibly grateful the discipleship ministries for children, youth, and adults continue to flourish. Kids Day in Christ (Parents Day Out) and the Chapel Hill Preschool are self-sufficient ministries that reach many families in Chapel Hill and our community. Our youth ministry continues to grow spiritually and numerically, where I journeyed with twenty-five of our youth who were confirmed in Christ last summer.

Finally, I want to celebrate what we are doing as a congregation in our community and beyond in mission and ministry. Under the leadership of Neal Whitlow, our involvement in Wichita, and Planeview in particular, continues to grow. Through Justice Together, a local initiative, we have partnered with 41 congregations to address homelessness and affordable housing. Additionally, we are one of eleven congregations working with Family Promise to house homeless families one week at a time, four times a year. We provide a place to sleep, nutritious meals, transportation, and hospitality. We receive them and care for them as if they are Christ himself. You have enthusiastically supported Open Door with food donations for those who would otherwise go hungry, totaling an impressive 720 pounds of food. Through your generous volunteer hours and financial gifts, we are making a difference in Wichita and beyond!

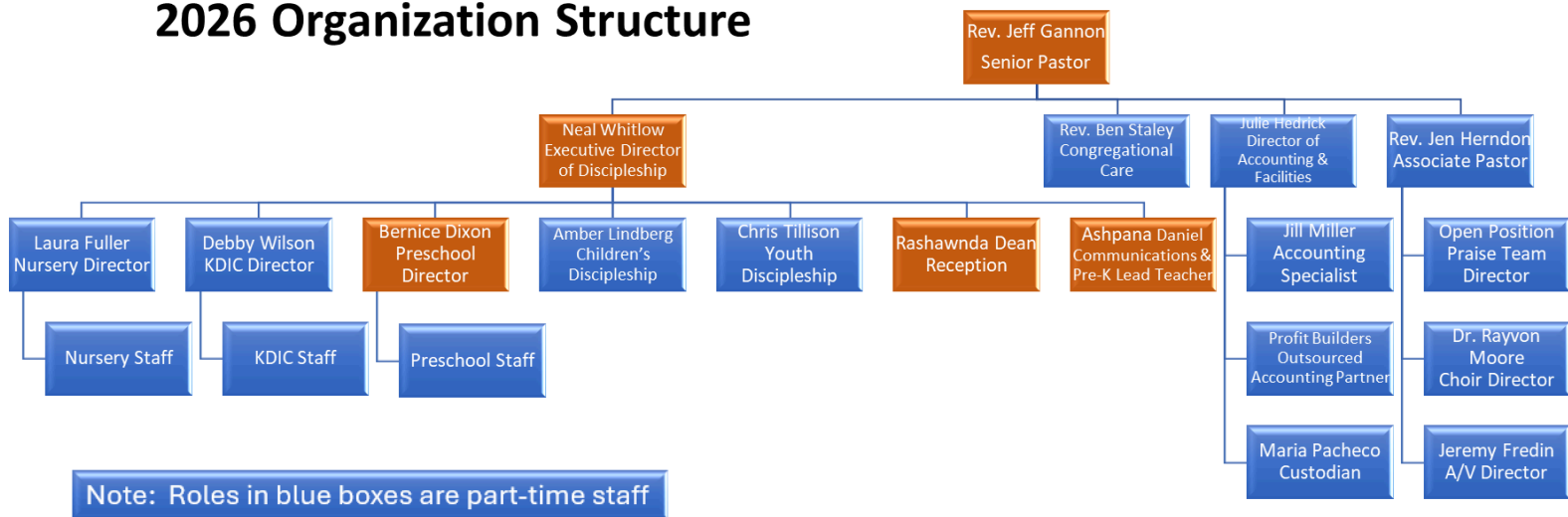
Now, a few updates for 2026.

First, we are incredibly excited and grateful that the Rev. Dr. James Bryan Smith will be preaching six times this year! If his January message was any indication of what is in store for Chapel Hill in the coming months, we are in for some powerful words from our dear friend. Chapel Hill is so fortunate to have Dr. J, as we affectionately call him, joining Rev. Jennifer Herndon and I as part of our preaching team. For me personally, having a fresh word from such gifted pastors gives me the margin I need to effectively teach, preach and provide pastoral care, while maintaining three preaching Sundays each month.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to introduce our Board members for 2026: Gina Ervay (Chair), Cindy Poulson (Vice-Chair/HR Liaison), Victoria Carro (Secretary), Jan Davis, Terri Guthrie, and our newest members, Grant Glasgow and Dr. Eddy Lucas, and me. The Board and I work closely together to ensure we are faithful to our mission and the congregation's overall vision. We have excellent Board members! Thank you for serving so faithfully!

Following Christina's retirement, which eliminated her position, we reorganized some staff, where they expanded their responsibilities, and I now have two additional direct reports. Julie Hedrick serves as our Director of Accounting & Facilities, and Neal Whitlow, our Executive Director of Discipleship, now oversees all discipleship ministries, including the preschool and KDIC. A copy of the 2026 organizational chart is below so you can see the new structure and better understand how we function. I feel it is important to note that we only have five full-time employees on staff, with most of the team working part time in their ministry area.

2026 Organization Structure



Finally, we reached another milestone at the end of 2025, completing 30 years as a congregation where I have had the honor and privilege of being your Senior Pastor and spiritual leader. We will celebrate this fall in an appropriate way to acknowledge how incredibly faithful God has been to Chapel Hill, and how we can, with confidence, continue the mission he has set before us as a congregation.

Again, thank you for your faithfulness, generosity, time, prayers, and love for Christ and one another. It is a joy to serve alongside you!

With gratitude and hope,

Pastor Jeff



Church Life



Baptism

26



Confirmation

25



Marriages

10



Funerals

23



Church
Membership

1332



Lay - Led Ministries



Family Promise
Nights Hosted

21



Homebound Visits

156



Written Responses
to Prayer Requests

321



BYF Events

7



Discipleship

Youth and Children

Confirmations	25
Missions Trip Participants	18 Middle School: 8 High School: 10
Organizations Served	12
VBS Attendance	214



2025 Organizations Served

Botanica, Open Door, Lord's Diner, Family Promise, EmberHope, ICT Farms, Beggarman Ministries, Arkansas Food Bank, Highland Valley UMC, Habitat for Humanity, Our House

Adult Engagement

Average SS Attendance (all ages)	112
Thirteen Ongoing Discipleship Classes	77
Twenty Short-term Discipleship Classes	283

Worship Engagement

Average Weekly In-Person Attendance	453
Average Weekly Online Attendance	175
Number of Volunteers Needed Each Sunday	50

2025 Organizations Served

Planeview Neighborhood Association, Colvin Elementary School, CureViolence ICT, Hunter Health, Hope Wichita, Dream Center ICT, Open Door, CarePortal, Rainbows United, His Helping Hands, Wichita Public Schools Foundation, EmberHope, Foster ICT, Family Promise, Justice Together, Kansas Interfaith Action, Simply Hygiene, Beggarman Ministries, Lord's Diner



Financial Stewardship & Operations

- **Accounting Modernization:** Successfully transitioned accounting operations, including accounts payable, payroll, and monthly financial reporting, to Profit Builders. This partnership with a respected local firm ensures continuity and aligns our church with the best accounting practices used by over 30 regional churches.
- **Strategic Fund Management:** Established an operating sweep account with our banking partner, Stryv Bank. This ensures all excess operational and restricted funds earn interest in a money market account. To accelerate our debt reduction, 100% of interest earned is applied monthly to the building loan balance.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Updated the church office copier system. This upgrade provides higher-quality printing for bulletins and programs and is projected to yield over \$7,000 in annual savings by reducing the monthly lease significantly and moving promotional printing in-house.

Facilities Improvements & Security

- **Columbarium Enhancement:** Enhanced the columbarium grounds with new granite bench seating and initial landscaping. Further beautification projects are scheduled to continue in the Spring of 2026.
- **Safety & Security Upgrades:** Utilizing federal grant funds, we installed planter bollards at the main west and south circle drive entrances. These additions provide a decorative touch while significantly increasing the physical security of our members, staff, and guests.
- **Infrastructure Maintenance:** Completed significant repairs to the north parking lot. This proactive maintenance was essential to prevent more costly and comprehensive reconstruction in the future.



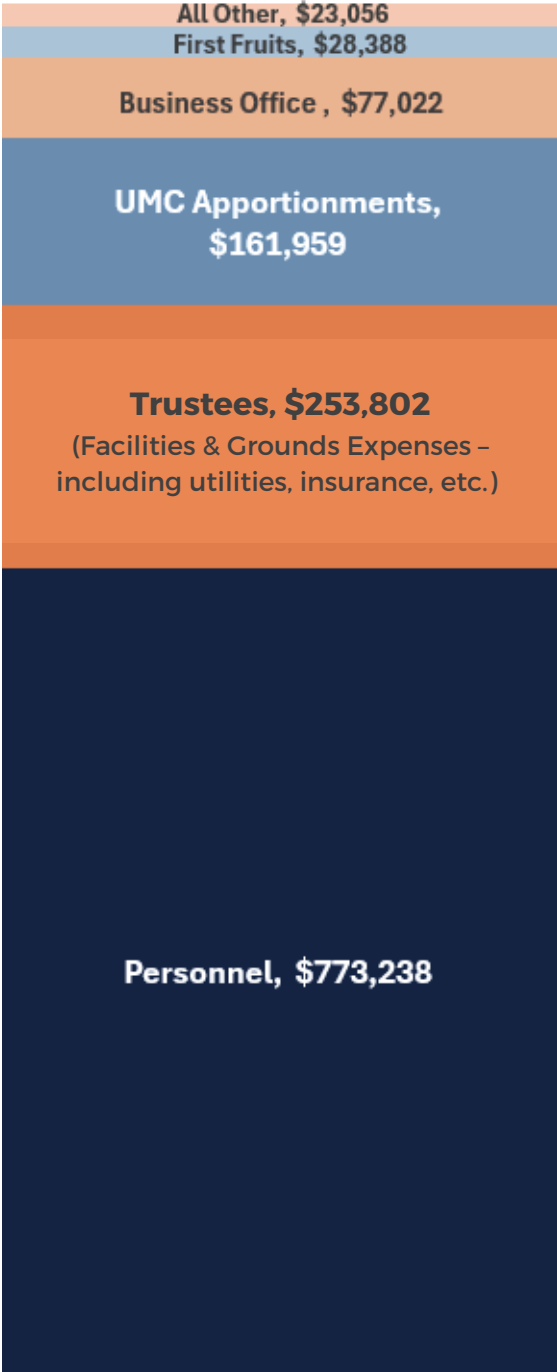
Financial Stewardship

Operational Tithes & Offerings



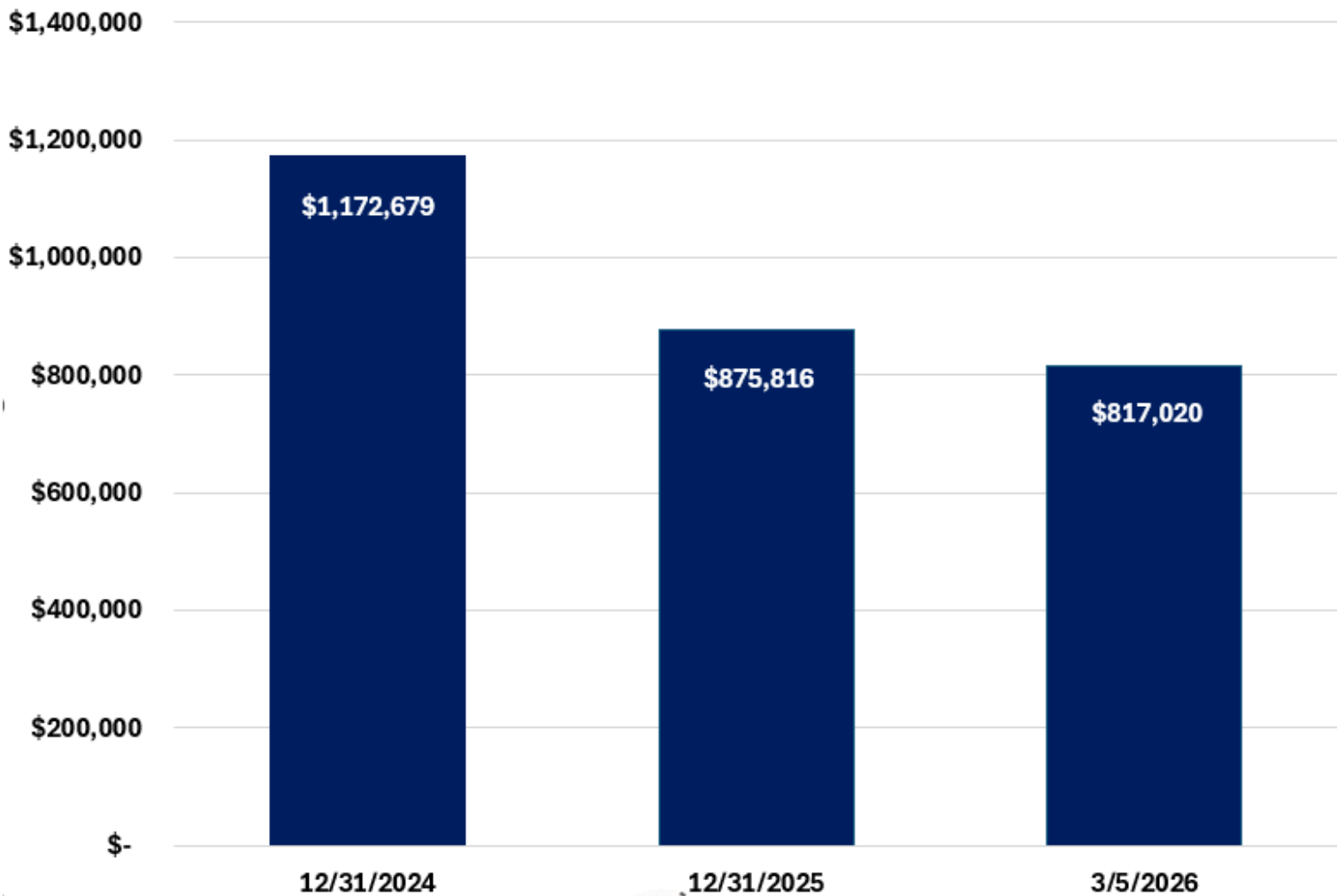
Total Giving: \$1,419,393

Operational Expenses (Church & Business Office)



Total Expenses: \$1,317,465

Building Loan Balance



(\$61,981 was paid in interest expense in 2025)

