

Walking a path toward flourishing

From Envision Grants to mental health, God is moving in our world and beckons us to flourish.

Envision Grants: Three projects have been awarded grants totaling \$85,000. *See page 3.*

Mental Health Awareness Month: Kenneth Kovacs shares about removing stigma this May. *See page 6.*

Session Highlights: Read updates on the spring elder transitions. *See page 5.*

Reflecting On the Iftar Dinner: Moffett Churn explores how the interfaith Iftar dinner might shape this Easter season. *See page 10.*

Building a world of economic, educational, and physical flourishing



Six students recently benefitted from the guidance, support, and financial resources of the “Pathways to College” program.

Each year, the Envision Board awards grants to serve as seed money for projects that will enrich the ministry and life of the church.

These projects serve a wide variety of people, from within our congregation to broader local, national, and international communities. Grant proposals are evaluated in the categories of ministry development, service in community, social

justice/advocacy, and capital improvement.


The Envision Board is grateful to God for the life and witness of Robert Riley—whose generous bequest to Catonsville Presbyterian Church was used to establish this endowment—as well as the Session, Finance Committee, church staff, and the entire congregation, all of whom make these awards possible.

The Envision Board had \$85,000 available to distribute this spring. During this grant cycle, the

Board recommended funding three projects totaling \$85,000. The Session approved funding all three projects according to the Board’s recommended funding levels. Below are descriptions of each project, including the Board’s funding categories, the dollar amount of each grant, and a synopsis of each project’s intent and projected reach.

Episcopal Refugee and Immigrant Center Alliance (ERICA)

Pathways to College

 Local  \$ 40,000  Full funding

Social Justice/Advocacy

Service in Community

Ministry Development

Pathways to College provides guidance and support to recently-arrived refugee and asylum-seeking students in Maryland. This program makes the difference between life as a university student or working in a warehouse. This Envision grant will support 8-10 students over two years with intensive, full-time Academic English, pro bono college and financial aid guidance, and funding to offset staffing costs for advocacy and implementation. Additionally, ERICA will individually connect students to colleges that have demonstrated a strong humanitarian interest and financial capacity to support refugees.

Submitted by Assistant Director Daniel Jacob and sponsored by Susan Krehbiel and the Mission Committee. Erica-Baltimore.org

First & Franklin Presbyterian Church

Americans with Disabilities Act Bathroom

 Local  \$ 20,000  Full funding

Social Justice/Advocacy

Service in Community

First & Franklin Presbyterian Church has a rich history of over 160 years in ministry. Its historic structure requires careful renovations to preserve its legacy while honoring its future. First & Franklin has only one first-floor bathroom and it is too narrow to be used for any individuals with physical disabilities or limited mobility. This project will use its grant to make the church's meeting spaces, main sanctuary, and the Reid Chapel accessible to persons with disabilities by adding an ADA-compliant bathroom. The Reid Chapel, adjacent to the main sanctuary, is used for many functions during the year. It is a food pantry; meeting place for Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and AIDS Action Baltimore meetings; the staging area for the Guns to Gardens gun buyback program; a space for Bible studies; a concert venue; an art gallery; the dressing area for weddings and funerals; a space for refreshments after services; an Alternative Christmas market; and the space for community meetings such as the Mount Vernon Belvedere Association.

Submitted by Dave Pierson and sponsored by Greg Mayes. FirstFranklin.org

IMA World Health

Nutrition and Economic Strengthening of Vulnerable Households Affected by the 2021 Haiti Earthquake

 International  \$ 25,000  Partial funding

Service in Community

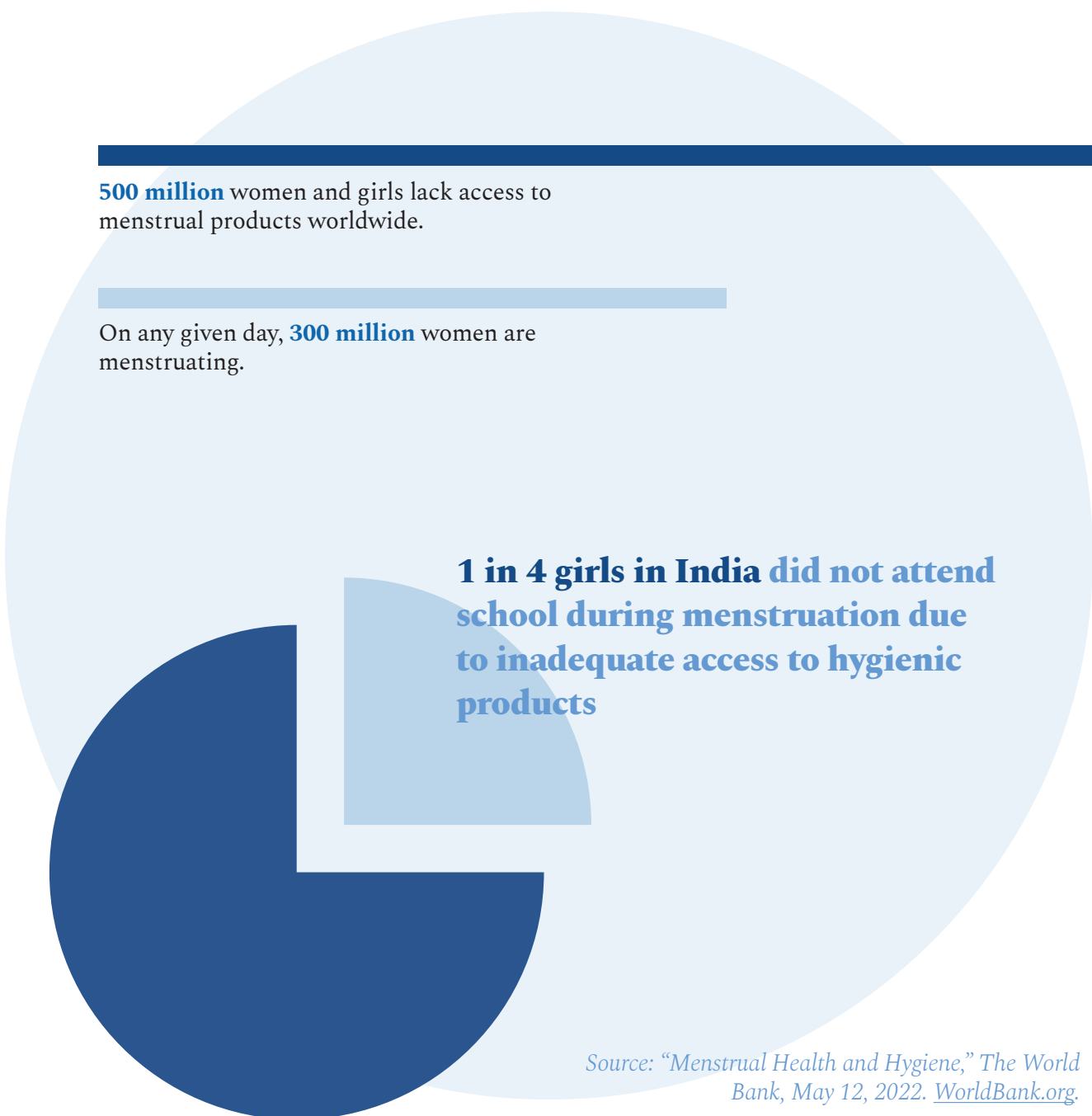
On August 14, 2021, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck southwestern Haiti, and the city of Grand Anse was the most severely affected. This IMA World Health project will support families with children living near three rehabilitated health centers in Grand Anse. Residents' lives underwent significant changes due to loss of capital, property, jobs, and economic activities. This IMA project will use its grant to establish nine Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). Each of the VSLAs will support residents to manage their finances, support the community's health and nutrition needs with training by Community Health Agents (ASCPs), assist in establishing biointensive gardens to improve agricultural productivity, and raise cattle for livestock.

Submitted by Jennifer Bentzel and sponsored by the Mission Committee. IMAWorldHealth.org

Addressing Women's Health Abroad

By Brenda Logue

The Mission Committee has elected to participate in a new Church World Service (CWS) project this early summer. This project provides women and girls—both nationally and globally—essential feminine hygiene products that are often lacking during disasters, poverty, and displacement. The Mission Committee will solicit funds for CWS to purchase and distribute hygiene products like sanitary napkins, tampons, soap, and wet wipes for women in need. CWS works in conjunction with United Methodist Committee on Relief, making this a meaningful way to support women abroad as well as our siblings in Christ. Please plan to participate! Visit [CwsGlobal.org](https://www.cwsGlobal.org) for more.



500 million women and girls lack access to menstrual products worldwide.

On any given day, **300 million** women are menstruating.

1 in 4 girls in India did not attend school during menstruation due to inadequate access to hygienic products

Source: "Menstrual Health and Hygiene," The World Bank, May 12, 2022. [WorldBank.org](https://www.worldbank.org).

Session Highlights

By David Hutton

The Session is a body of fifteen members, elected by the Congregation and ordained as ruling elders, who provide leadership for our congregation. Following are highlights from the Session meeting on April 12, 2023.

The opening devotional for our meeting took Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan and related it to children's television host Fred Rogers ("Mister Rogers' Neighborhood"), who delivered a message of demonstrating kindness to others and valuing every person just as they are.

The Nominating Committee presented an additional nominee for Ruling Elder for the Class of 2026; Howie Nixon has agreed to serve and was elected at a special meeting of the congregation on April 16, 2023.

The Envision Board presented its recommendations for grants, and Session approved the proposal to award a total of \$85,000 to four applicants. The grant award recipients were announced at worship on April 30, 2023.

The Finance Committee reported that for the year to date as of March 31, 2023, the Operating Budget continues to show a surplus of income versus expenses as some members have paid their annual pledge all at once, while some expenses have not yet been incurred. Offerings at worship have been light since the COVID pandemic and resuming of "passing the plate" in worship is being considered.

This was the last Session meeting for Ruling Elders Debbie Davis, Alison Enokian, Keith Glennan, and Dottie Marshall, as their terms have expired. Thanks were expressed for their service, and they were given an opportunity to discuss their experiences and impressions while serving on Session. Melissa Lambdin's term also expired, but she was elected to a new term and will continue serving for another three years.

The Session recognizes the need to continually communicate with the congregation and we welcome your suggestions for feedback. Contact information for Session members is listed in the church directory. Take a few minutes to send a message to a Session member, the pastors, or the church office to let us know what your thoughts. We want to hear from you!

Children wave palm branches with Dorothy Boulton on Palm Sunday. Children and youth also sang with the chancel choir during the offertory. ▶



Nurturing Our Formation

Removing the Stigma

Kenneth Kovacs

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. According to recent estimates from Johns Hopkins, one in four US adults (26%) experience mental illness each year, while research from National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) states that one in twenty live with a serious mental illness such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder (13.1 million).

Nearly 8 million children and adolescents in the U.S. suffer from a serious mental illness.

Researchers also estimate that half of all chronic mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24.

Yet despite these statistics, nearly 50% of people suffering from mental illnesses do not seek treatment. On average, it takes 11 years for someone to seek help after first experiencing symptoms of a mental disorder.

This is attributed to the stigma associated with mental illness as well as underfunding for mental health care providers. The stigma surrounding mental

health disorders, in particular, leads to many people hiding their struggles and avoiding getting the help they need. Many struggle in silence without receiving the necessary support needed to manage their condition, while others may not even realize they have an illness and continue to suffer despite its devastating effects on their lives.

On average, it takes 11 years for someone to seek help after first experiencing symptoms of a mental disorder.

As people of faith, we are called to offer compassion and support to those in need—and work to remove the stigma. If you are struggling or know someone who is, we are here to help and help you find the help that you need. Please feel free to contact Dorothy or me. In addition to listening ears, we have a variety of resources available for you. Here are two:

Suburban Crossroads Counseling Center in Catonsville is a good resource. The church has funds available for those without insurance. Read therapist biographies, a

philosophy of care, and see insurance information by visiting BaltimoreCounselingServices.org.

Presbyterian Mental Health Network (PMHN) is a churchwide independent grassroots network launched with the support of a mental health ministry grant. Its purpose is to facilitate networking,

conversation, and the sharing of stories and models for mental health ministry across the church. Visit pmhn.org to sign up for their mailing list and to discover more information.

Take action

Read more statistics from Johns Hopkins Medicine at tinyurl.com/mha-statistics

Visit nami.org for online resources and to find resources for managing and treating mental health concerns.

Jenny Hutton stands at the Storywalk voting booth, where participants cast their vote with Easter eggs.



A Storywalk to Share

By the Christian Education Committee

Nurturing Our
Spiritual Formation

The Lenten storywalk incorporated creative re-tellings of biblical accounts, illustrated displays, and the woodlands to draw participants into the heart of our faith: the life and Resurrection of Jesus. Youth volunteers and members of the Christian Education Committee hosted the congregation after worship on March 26 for this fun and imaginative time.

As part of the storywalk event, participants had an opportunity to vote for a service-based organization to support: Catonsville Emergency Assistance (CEA) and One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS). Our Catonsville neighbors receive utility assistance, nonperishable

food items, and aid through CEA. The latter organization, One Great Hour of Sharing, is a PC(USA) organization that responds to natural disasters with emergency assistance; provides vital funds to those affected by war or violence; addresses hunger or food insecurity; and directly supports the self-development of communities through mission co-workers and grants.

We're happy to report that CEA placed first with the most Easter eggs in their basket. The Christian Education Team sent \$100 to CEA. OGHS was a close second, receiving \$50 plus an additional \$35 of personal donations.

Earth Day Celebrations

During Care of Creation Sunday on April 23, Laurie White shared this indigenous proverb: "Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children." Laurie, along with Jenny Hutton, Betsy Hall, and Ron Gunderson, pointed to the wisdom and truth that God has buried in soil and planted deep within our natural world.

Care of Creation Sunday was preceded by a very special celebration: the Earth Day Festival at Hillcrest Elementary School. With an invitation from the Hillcrest administration, the Earth Care Team spent time with the children from whom we have borrowed this planet. Those small hands and bright smiles were hard at work during the Earth Day Festival, not only having fun, but also building "seed bombs," full of native seeds and rich nutrients.

Following worship on Care of Creation Sunday, members and friends built their very own "seed bombs" in the pavilion. These palm-sized, earth-like knots of seeds, twigs, and paper pulp were spread throughout the woodlands, entrusted to the grace of God and wisdom of our friend, this beautiful planet called "Earth."



A message of thanks

To Mark and Debbie Davis: thank you for hosting the Youth Lock-In on March 17. It was a wonderful evening of fun and togetherness.

And thank you to our Easter Storywalk volunteers and everyone who attended!



Meet our
YOUTH

James Burriesci is a 6th grader attending Arbutus Middle School. He likes playing chess and videogames.

Ministry with Youth

Youth Events

We will be celebrating our senior high graduates on **Sunday, May 14th** during worship. Kyle Jones, Lars Nilsen, Nathan Bolognese, Ian Noble, Paul Roman Dongarra, congratulations on this milestone!

Youth Group will meet on **Sunday, May 21** from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. to allow youth to celebrate Mother's Day on May 14.

Second Sunday ministries will still be held on **Mother's Day, May 14**: childcare (0-5 years), multi-age church school (kindergarten through fifth grade), and Cocoa and Conversations for middle and high school.

On **Saturday, June 1**, the third annual Catonsville Family Pride will take place from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The event is organized by community members, but it is hosted on the church grounds. Details to follow for this wonderful celebration!

On **Sunday, June 4**, the Christian Education Committee invites all members to participate in Kindness Rock painting immediately following worship. It will be outside in the pavilion and will be part of our theme for June, "Generous June."

On **Tuesday, June 20th**, the Christian Education Committee invites all parents to participate in a Zoom call. We would like to get your feedback on how the Second Sunday ministries are working for your family. A zoom invitation will be sent out.

Lastly, if any of our youth are interested, The Disciples of Christ Church in Bethany Beach is offering youth camps for this summer. Find out more information by visiting tinyurl.com/bethany-beach-camps



Meet our
YOUTH

Megan LoPresti attends Bonnie Branch Elementary and is in 6th grade. She enjoys basketball, her trampoline, and hanging out with friends. She is passionate about horses, but loves all animals and has many pets. She's dedicated to her horse riding lessons and works as a hand at the stables to earn extra lesson time.

The Youth Mental Health Crisis

Youth and young adults are at profound risk for suffering emotionally and mentally, not because they are somehow less resilient than older generations, but due to our recent global catastrophes and the social environment in which we live. A recent CDC report found that 1 in 3 teen girls have seriously considered suicide. More than one in five LGBTQIA+ youth had attempted suicide in the previous year. And worse yet, over half of young people think humanity is “doomed.”

“Over half of young people think humanity is ‘doomed.’”

In an age of isolation and existential threats—whether it be the collapse of natural ecosystems or anti-trans legislation—youth and young adults have been shaped by loneliness and injustice.

Fortunately, there are ways to ease this mental health crisis. As Dr. Noam Shpancer points out, individuals with close friends or family members are ten times less likely to have mental health problems. We know, of course that spirituality matters, too. Building strong networks of mutual support—like Stephen Ministries—and exploring sources of meaning, purpose, identity, and integration can all play an important role in our wellbeing.

This May, set aside time to critically examine the factors leading to our present mental health epidemic, not just with your intellect, but also by reflecting on your own lived experiences of mental health and adolescence. And just as critically, draw a friend or loved one a little closer.

Statistics from “The State Of Youth Mental Health,” by Noam Shpancer, Ph.D. in Psychology Today (May/June 2023).

Adult Education

Solved By Walking

Sunday, May 7 and 21 at 9:00 a.m.

Meets in the Library. Led by Kenneth Kovacs.

Solvitur ambulando. “It is solved by walking.” A Latin saying attributed to St. Augustine (354-430). What is solved by walking? As I learned walking the Camino, perhaps everything—well, a lot of things. As we head into the summer months and spend more time outdoors, we’ll explore what could be called a theology of *walking*. Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) said, “I know of no thought so burdensome that one cannot walk away from it.” Naturalist John Muir (1838-1914), who once walked from Louisville, KY, to Key West, FL, confessed, “I only went out for a walk and ... going out, I found, was really going in.” Contemporary writer Rebecca Solnit says walking “is how the body measures itself against the earth.” And Jesus certainly spent a lot of time walking and came to show us the way. In fact, the first Christians were known as followers of The Way. There’s a lot to discover here. Wear “comfy shoes” and bring your “walking stick.”

The Post-Covid Church

Thursdays, 10:30 a.m to noon

Meets in the Library and online. Led by Kenneth Kovacs.

Our lives, including the life of the church, have been indelibly marked by our pandemic experience. So much has changed. What will the post-covid church look like? What can Acts, which tells the story of the emergence of the church, say to us in the living of these days?

May 4: Acts 2:1-42

Come, Holy Spirit

May 11: Acts 2:43-47

Life in Community

May 18: Acts 9:1-22

Encounter on the Damascus Road

May 25: Acts 17:16-34

Religious, Not Spiritual

Belonging in God's World



Inviting the Spirit to Ramadan

By Moffett Churn

The Hashemees were our neighbors in North Carolina. Each year during Ramadan, they shared an Iftar feast with everyone on our cul de sac. That expression of overflowing abundance has been engraved on our hearts, so we jumped at the chance to attend the Iftar Dinner at CPC with our Muslim friends from Maryland Turkish American Inhabitants (MARTI, TheMarti.org). When we arrived at the church, the sanctuary was humming with anticipation. And while we counted down the minutes before sunset, Pastor Ken and Ozgur Karakuzu talked about the roots of Ramadan and Easter. Hearing the Christian story alongside of the Islamic narrative gave a fresh perspective from which to view not only their beliefs and practices, but also ours.

As we reflected on the meaning of our holy seasons, smells from the kitchen filled the sanctuary with the promise of a feast for body and soul. Finally, the setting

of the sun marked the end of the fast, and we sat down to eat with four MARTI and four CPC folks at each table. You might think being seated for dinner with a group of complete strangers is the recipe for an awkward evening, but before we even picked up our forks, we were diving headlong into the back and forth... What brought you here tonight? What helped you to feel at home here? What career changes have you made? What teachers or mentors have made a difference in your life? What was Ramadan/Easter like for you as a child? May I see the fastener on your hijab? What are you hopeful about? How would you like to change things? Why is fasting important for you? How can we pray for each other?

Throughout this polyphonic conversation, I thought about the book of Acts, where the Spirit of God keeps showing up in ways that remind us that the table is so much bigger, so much messier, and so much more boisterous

than we imagine!

Several weeks have passed since the Iftar dinner, but I'm still savoring the experience. It was a time of real connection and recognition that runs counter to all the ways we, as a society, sort and separate ourselves. And even though everything took place in our building, our MARTI friends prepared and served the meal, set the clock for the evening, took their places at the table and took their mats to the sanctuary for Maghrib prayers. It was one of those rare moments when the roles of Host and Guest were blurred.

The last question our dinner partners asked was: "How do you tell yourself what Easter means?" As we move through the Great Fifty Days from Easter to Pentecost, I think I'll let that question go on hanging in the air.



▲ The Creation Care Team shared about native plants and ways to tend to the earth.

▲ Eric Fielding (L) is stepping into leadership as Scoutmaster with the departure of Jeff Scharf (R).

Scouts at Catonsville Presbyterian Church

By Glenda Johnson

Engaging Scouts in Creation Care

Cub Pack 306 hosted “Mr. Ron” Gunderson at their April 26 meeting in the Pavilion. He presented information about our woodland gardens, native plants, pollinators, & other environmental issues as part of Earth Week observances. Each Scout received a packet of seeds to plant at home. Thanks to Mr. Ron for his help & presentation.

Leadership transitions and celebrations

Jeff Scharf, has served as the Scoutmaster of Troop 306 for the past 11 years. His leadership, commitment, & ongoing dedication to the ideals of the Scouting program are greatly appreciated. Jeff will serve as a committee member of the troop.

New Scoutmaster Eric Fielding, is well prepared & has completed the required training courses required for this position. Eric has served as a Den leader in Cub Pack 306, but since both sons are now members of the Troop, he had also transitioned to that group. New Assistant Scoutmasters for the Troop are Thomas Cherry & Harley King.

Gratitude for transitions and bridging

There were twelve Cub Scouts in fifth grade who recently “bridged” into the Troop. Congratulations to these new Troop members and those who are leading them. And as always, a word of gratitude to the congregation and our community for your ongoing support of scouting.

Financial Update

Actual Income	\$ 273,718
Actual Expense.	\$ -250,637
Total.	\$ 23,081
Per Capita	\$ 1,460

Updated 04/28/2023

Pastors and Staff

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Upcoming events

Friday, May 5: Food Collections Resume

4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. | Frederick Road Entrance

Friday food collections are resuming this May! Drop off nonperishable food items every other week from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Donations will be distributed to Catonsville Emergency Assistance and the Grace A.M.E. pantries. Westowne Elementary School will also receive a portion of the contributions until the end of the academic year.

Saturday, May 6: Church Grounds Workday

9:00 a.m. to noon

This workday will focus on replenishing the wood chips along the woodland paths, but all ages and skills can help. Extra wheelbarrows and shovels are welcome, too!

Sunday, May 14: Mother's Day and Second Sunday

Beginning at 10:00 a.m.

Second Sunday ministries will be held on Mother's Day during worship. Childcare begins at 10:00 a.m., with multi-age church school following the children's message.

Sunday, May 21: Q&A with Ken and Dorothy

After worship | France Room

This Q&A time is meant to help recent visitors and friends become familiar with our ministry and life together. There is no set agenda, just come with your questions on everything from Presbyterian theology to the minutiae of our programming.

Sunday, May 21: Youth Group

6:00 p.m. | Fellowship Hall

Middle and high school youth will gather in the Fellowship Hall for games, conversation, and mutual support. Parents can drop off their youth at 6:00 p.m. and plan on picking them up around 7:30 p.m.

THE
Messenger

Catonsville Presbyterian Church

1400 Frederick Rd • Catonsville MD

Church Office

Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
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