

annual report

2023



The Bridge of the Penn-York Valley Churches

March 2024

P.O. Box 202
Sayre, PA 18840
570-888-8826

www.thevalleybridge.org



Bridging the gaps of life in the name of Jesus Christ

*Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker,
but he who is generous to the needy honors him.*

Proverbs 14:31

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About Us



The Bridge of the Penn-York Valley Churches is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization of churches in the Penn-York Valley that serves the residents in the Waverly, Sayre, and Athens school districts. The aim of *The Bridge* is to bridge the gaps of life in the name of Jesus Christ and to help when and where other assistance is lacking.

Specifically, the ministries of *The Bridge* in 2023 included offering assistance for emergency needs, especially housing related needs through **voucher assistance; catastrophic assistance; interim assistance**; free furniture and household goods through **Helping Hands**; free clothing, household goods, toys and books through the **Clothes Closet**; clothing, hygiene items, school supplies and other assistance through **Kids at Risk**; food assistance through the **Mobile Food Pantry** and the **Valley Food Pantry**; financial coaching through **Faith & Finances**; hygiene items, clothing, and other desired items for seniors through **Eldercare**; and referrals to our and other services through our **Clearinghouse**.

The Bridge is supported by its member churches, individuals, The United Way, Waverly Community Chest, businesses, and community organizations. *The Bridge* holds two major fundraising events each year: the **Sleepout** in November and the **Chicken Barbeque and Vintage Sale** held in the fall. Both were held in 2023 and both were very successful. The Board of Directors of *The Bridge* generally meets monthly on the second Thursday of each month with the exception of July and August.

We are so very thankful for all those who participate in the ministry—donors and volunteers alike! Can't have one without the other. We continue to seek God's direction as we serve in His ministry.

Our Member Churches and Partners in 2023

Athens United Methodist Church
Athens Wesleyan Church
Bentley Creek Wesleyan Church
Blessed Trinity at St. James
Chemung Christian Fellowship
Christian & Missionary Alliance, Waverly
Christian Life Church
Church of the Redeemer
Crossroads Family Ministries
Epiphany Parish
Encounter Church
Federated Church, East Smithfield
First Baptist Church, Sayre
First Baptist Church, Waverly
First Church of God, Sayre
Greater Valley Assembly of God

Litchfield United Methodist Church
North Waverly Chapel
St. John Lutheran Church
Sayre Christian Church
Seventh Day Adventist Church
Trinity Episcopal Church
Valley United Presbyterian Church
Waverly Community Methodist Church

Partners:
Catholic Charities, Tioga Outreach
Robert Packer Hospital Chaplain
Tioga County Rural Ministries
The Salvation Army

Serving those in need since 1987

President's Letter



Greetings! Life seems to be moving faster than ever. *The Bridge* has just completed its 36th year in ministry! We were able to celebrate the completion of the 35th year (in 2022) on Saturday, April 22, 2023 at the Athens United Methodist Church. There were about 80 in attendance including many current and past volunteers. It was a special time and such a blessing to gather and ponder all that God has done over the years and is doing in our midst.

There are so many that have gone before us and God willing more to follow. A couple significant volunteer changes occurred at the end of 2023. After reaching the maximum officer limit of 6 years, **Rich Russell**, who has served exemplarily with his wife **Pam Russell** as a faithful partner, stepped down from the Treasurer position and **Rick Felt** accepted the role for 2024. **CT Weber**, who served as Helping Hands Coordinator the entire year of 2023 (though not intending to do so), stepped down and **Carol Jacobs** assumed the role for 2024. Many thanks to Rich, Pam, and CT for their faithful service (and continued service in other areas/roles!) and to Rick and Carol for allowing themselves to be next to be used by God in the ministry of *The Bridge*.

It is my hope that you will review the entire annual report and be encouraged. If you do, you will see that the ministry saw dramatic increases over the prior year in many areas including the Valley Food Pantry, Kids at Risk, Clothes Closet, emergency assistance vouchers, and Eldercare. You will see the addition of new outreaches such as the providing of 37 Easter dinners for the first time as well as the maintaining and improving of ongoing ministries. You will see the results of countless volunteer hours spent serving those in need—volunteers using their God-given gifts and talents to serve those in material need. You will see generous individual, church, and community donations, both financial and physical that also make the ministry possible. We are truly blessed in so many ways!

I look forward to seeing how God will use *The Bridge* in the coming year. Please continue to keep *The Bridge* in prayer as there are no doubt challenges ahead.

⁵ *I remember the days of old;
I meditate on **all that you have done**;
I ponder the work of your hands.*

^{8b} ***Make me know the way I should go,**
for to you I lift up my soul.*

¹⁰ ***Teach me to do your will,** for you are my God!
Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!*

Psalm 143: 5, 8b, 10:

Those have been my prayers for myself and the ministry of *The Bridge* in 2023 and will continue for 2024 and beyond.

Serving Him with you,

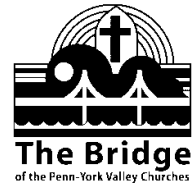
Kim Paul,
President

The Bridge

A brief 35-year history

- 1987—“*The Bridge*” begins organizing
- 1988—*Helping Hands* begins
- 1989—Independent voucher system begins with *Clearinghouse* - \$100
- 1990—Bridge slogan, “*Bridging the gaps of life in the name of Jesus Christ*,” first appears with logo
- 1992—*Clothes Closet* begins; Official 501(c)(3)
- 1995—*Kids at Risk* begins
- 1999—First Sayre Christmas Parade Float
- 2003—First *Sleepout* fundraiser; *Angel Tree* begins
- 2008—*Mobile Food Pantry* begins in Waverly
- 2009—*Catastrophic Assistance* Program begins; *Voucher* amt. ↑ to \$150
- 2010—*Voucher* amt. ↑ to \$200
- 2011—*Voucher* amt. ↑ to \$300
- 2015—First *Chicken BBQ & Vintage Furniture Sale*
- 2017—*Interim Assistance* Program begins; *Valley Food Pantry* becomes ministry of *The Bridge*
- 2020—*Faith & Finances* begins
- 2021—*Valley Food Pantry* becomes partner pantry with Food Bank of the Southern Tier
- 2022—*Apricot* implemented; *Voucher* amt. ↑ to \$400; *Eldercare* begins

2023 Highlights



35th Anniversary Celebration was held during our 36th year on April 22, 2023 6p-8p at the Athens United Methodist Church with about 80 in attendance.

Eldercare ministry completed its first full year with four Bridge volunteers acting as liaisons to five long-term care facilities in the Valley and one Senior Adult Program as well as assisting some at home. A total of 438 seniors were served with over 651 items.

Voucher Changes were made in June. Voucher amount increased from \$400 to a maximum of \$500 or \$650 with an exception. The income guideline changed to 215% for working households (200% for all households prior). A clause was added to the 3 times help in 7 years limit to allow additional help if the total amount of assistance was less than \$800 (or \$1,000 starting 5/1/2026). Mortgage help was added to housing assistance (instead of having to use a miscellaneous voucher). The miscellaneous category was expanded to cover unusual circumstances with 2 Exception Team approvals.

Vouchers were given to 200 households for over \$82,000 to assist with electric (58), rent (48), security deposit (33), natural gas (24), water/sewer (18), fuel oil/propane (17), and other emergency needs (2) thereby helping 277 adults and 195 children.

Valley Food Pantry served 1,877 households representing 3,816 adults and 1,791 children for a total of 5,607 people served. Hours increased to include Tuesdays 2p-4p and the 3rd Saturdays from 10a-12n. The partnership with the Food Bank of the Southern Tier has continued to be a blessing in 2023 providing free and reduced cost food. An Easter Ham Dinner Giveaway was done for the first time providing 37 families with a ham dinner and fixings.

Mobile Food Pantry provided food to 2,740 households through the Waverly Mobile Food Pantry. The distribution continues as a "Drop and Go" where the food is delivered and the truck leaves while our volunteers handle the distribution.

Clothes Closet served 1,270 households providing 23,921 free items of clothing, small housewares, books, and toys.

Helping Hands assisted 94 households with furniture and appliances made possible by 218 donations. The **Helping Hands Store** completed its first full year opened to the public to purchase items and collected \$20,900. Since there are sales more than once a year, quarterly New York State sales tax is now required.

Kids at Risk anonymously served a total of 1,784 students. **Grace Academy** was added to the schools served.

Catastrophic Assistance was provided to two households, one fire and one medical case, with another fire case initiated at the end of the year.

21st Annual Sleepout raised \$11,815; **Chicken BBQ & Vintage Sale** cleared \$4,062.26.

Clearinghouse



The Clearinghouse serves as an access point by responding to inquiries regarding *The Bridge* and its services. If applicable, individuals seeking financial assistance or furniture are directed to a member church voucher writer to complete an application and receive a *Bridge* voucher if they are eligible. Eligibility is determined by household income, number of people in the household, frequency of requests, type of assistance needed, and residence (Sayre, Athens or Waverly school district). Referral is made to other organizations when *The Bridge* is not able to help and/or when additional help is needed.



Gail Williams, Kathy Oeffner, and Vera Sharpsteen served as our Clearinghouse Coordinators in 2023. In addition to handling numerous general phone calls for *The Bridge*, **200 regular cash vouchers** were issued for over \$82,000 helping 277 adults and 195 children for electric (58), rent (48), security deposits (33), natural gas (24), water/sewer (18), fuel oil/propane (17), and miscellaneous (2); **94 furniture vouchers**, and **2 catastrophic cases**.

We continued to use Apricot database software to track contacts and assistance (went live in January 2022). It has been quite a learning curve for all involved as it is different than our previous complex spreadsheet, but is helping us to provide more reliable and equitable assistance and facilitates better reporting. This software is also used for managing volunteers and donations. We are so thankful for **Doug Paul** who has used his database expertise to continue to refine the system and assist with troubleshooting and report writing.

One new voucher writer was trained in 2023, **Pastor Sharan Knoell** from Valley United Presbyterian Church. Voucher writers remain at the heart of our regular cash assistance program. We are so thankful for each and every one and can always use more!

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Paul

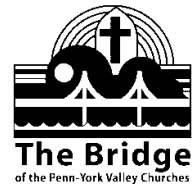
Clearinghouse Hours

Monday	9 am – 12:30 pm
Tuesday	1 pm – 3 pm
Wednesday	9 am – 12:30 pm
Thursday	9 am – 11:30 am

570-888-8826

clearinghouse@thevalleybridge.org

Clothes Closet



The Clothes Closet is a ministry of *The Bridge* located at the North Waverly Chapel which provides clothing and apparel, small household items, and toys to those in need without requiring a voucher and with no geographical restrictions. Individuals and families find out about the ministry through voucher writers, churches, friends, medical personnel, and the media. The ministry relies entirely upon donations from generous individuals and businesses in the community.



In 2023, the Clothes Closet continued to operate twice a week serving those in need, Tuesdays from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm and Wednesdays from 12 noon to 2 pm as well as by appointment in urgent situations. A total of 1,270 households were served with 23,921 items distributed. Our numbers almost doubled from last year bringing us almost back to pre-COVID levels. Generous donations continue to pour in allowing us to provide quality items for which we are immensely grateful.



In addition to teams serving when we are open to those in need, we have others who faithfully work to sort through, organize, and restock items. Besides maintaining the upstairs, they maintain the downstairs of the Clothes Closet and another room in the church which provide items for restocking. This is a monumental task which takes considerable volunteer effort. We are so very grateful for each and every one who uses their valuable time to serve others in this way week in and week out!

We are also grateful for **Joan Schoonover** who took over doing the data entry for households and items distributed for the Clothes Closet so we have data to report. This is just one piece of work, but takes hours each month picking up the slips, entering the information into a spreadsheet, and reporting the data.

And it would be remiss if we didn't express our gratitude for the continued generosity of the **North Waverly Chapel** allowing the use of space for the Clothes Closet without charge which makes it all possible!

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Paul, Clothes Closet Coordinator

Helping Hands



The Helping Hands Ministry continued to be located at 515 E. Chemung Street, Waverly, New York during 2023 and open twice a week, Wednesdays and Saturdays 10a-12n with additional times for



pickups and deliveries done by appointment. The building remains for sale and we don't know what the future will bring regarding the location of the ministry. We have been working with the seller to purchase the building, but to date, no purchase has been made either by us or someone else. We are praying for God's provision.

In 2023, 94 vouchers were fulfilled facilitated by 218 donations.

As a result of the successful sales of vintage goods over the years, we started selling



housewares and some furniture and appliances not needed by our voucher clients during our regular operating hours. This started on December 1, 2022, so 2023 was our first full year selling items on a regular basis. Sales totaled \$20,900! The volunteers at Helping Hands are documenting sales and **Marion Dabroski** has taken on the responsibility of submitting the required quarterly sales tax information as well as managing the deposits regularly.

Our overflow storage space at **Christian Life Church** continues to be a blessing. We use it for additional donated items and much-needed specialty items such as medical equipment for our Eldercare ministry and other clients.

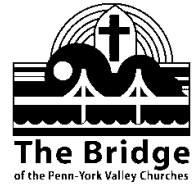
On Saturday, September 30, we held our annual Chicken Barbeque and Vintage Sale. It was very profitable, clearing \$4,062.25! In November, we supported the Sleepout, as we have since the event started, setting up and taking down the makeshift house for the event.

Many thanks go to all the volunteers for their dedicated service throughout the year. Also, a huge thank you to our Valley for all the donations given during the year without which we would not be able to operate.

Respectfully submitted,

CT Weber, Helping Hands Coordinator

Kids at Risk - Our 30th Year!



Kids at Risk has been helping students within the Athens, Sayre and Waverly School Districts for the past 30 years. In 2023, we have extended assistance to the Grace Christian Academy which relocated from Rome to Ulster PA. Our mission continues to be that of helping children in grades K-12 with needs that cannot be met in any other way, making every effort to preserve the self-esteem of the child and family as we reach out in the name of Jesus Christ. This mission continues to provide items to students who may be in uncomfortable or unhealthy situations, in an attempt to help them be more successful in school and hopefully later in life.



Delivering clothing and backpacks to Mr. Webster at Grace Christian Academy.



Epiphany students with clothes items they generously collected for Kids at Risk

The number of students assisted by Kids at Risk in 2023 was the highest yet, 1,784. This is an increase of 559 over last year. Requests this year by our school contacts (nurses, teachers, secretaries and counselors) often extended beyond those of meeting daily needs of students who need a change of clothes during the school day. Those working with students noted needs for shoes, coats, boots, glasses, and clothes for those who only had one outfit to wear to school every day. We've helped students who have had a major loss such as a house fire, those unexpectedly relocated to

another home, as well as the homeless.

Thanks to generous donations, Kids at Risk continues to be able to say "Yes!" when school personnel ask if we can help a student. Groups such as Williams Subaru, Sayre-Athens Lioness Club, St. John's Lutheran Church, Athens UMC, Epiphany School and Church, Valley Energy, Valley Eye Care and the Christian Life Church are among those who have kindly helped Kids at Risk. Several individuals have also very generously made monetary donations as well as given items that we can pass along to our students.



A very generous donation from St. John Lutheran Church.

The compassion for our area children comes not only from those who donate, but also from the concerned, watchful eyes of school personnel who inform Kids at Risk when they see or hear about needs within their building. Every month we receive requests from schools to replenish their clothes closets, so that students can be helped when a

need arises. Teachers in two school buildings have started a clothes closet in their classroom where a student can come “to shop” (at no cost.) When students have a need, it may be less embarrassing to visit the clothes closet, rather than to wait for a teacher or nurse to notice a need, or for the student to have to come and admit the need for certain clothing items such as undergarments. This supports the mission of Kids at Risk to help maintain a student’s self-esteem.



Harlan Rowe staff Colleen Devine and Corey Mosier receiving back to school clothing from Kids at Risk.

Kids at Risk continues to be a connection for groups who want to help our area school children. St. John Lutheran Church provided Easter dinners to nine families in our three districts. The Spaulding Memorial Library provided books at Christmas. There was also an individual who at one time received help from The Bridge, and wanted to “give back” by assembling boxes of toys, crafts and hygiene products to distribute to eight children at Christmas. Kids at Risk worked with school personnel to identify students and families and help with delivery.

The beginning balance in the checking and investment accounts for Kids at Risk was \$17,347.83. The ending balance was \$15,554.85. Expenses this year were also at the highest level since we began in 1994, at \$13,328.89. Certainly, rising costs of clothing, shoes and hygiene items help account for this increase. However, there is also the fact that as our area schools have become very familiar with the assistance available through Kids at Risk, they know where to turn when they see a student in need. As God continues to bless this ministry by providing funds and resources, we will continue to do our part to minimize those who could become “Kids at Risk.” Your prayers, assistance and donations are much appreciated.

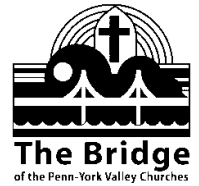
Respectfully submitted,
Cindy Jones, Kids at Risk Coordinator

Kids at Risk 2023

	Beginning	Income	Expense	Transfer*	Ending
Checking	\$5,172.15	\$10,984.40	\$13,328.89	\$0.00	\$2,827.66
Savings	\$12,175.68	\$551.51	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$12,727.19
Total	\$17,347.83	\$11,535.91	\$13,328.89	\$0.00	\$15,554.85

*Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD,
and he will repay him for his deed.
Proverbs 19:17*

Eldercare



Since the inception of the Eldercare ministry in 2022, The Bridge has strived to serve elders in our community by identifying and satisfying unmet needs, which cannot be attained through other established organizations or services, and to help bridge the gaps of life while sharing God's love.

During 2023, the Eldercare ministry continued to grow with the addition of another program, Elderwood Adult Day Services Program and by expanding to assist seniors who are still living in their own homes. A total of 438 people were served with approximately 651 items.

Reflecting the successful model of the Kids at Risk program, Eldercare began with the goal to reach out anonymously to residents of assisted living and skilled nursing homes in the local communities of Sayre, Athens, and Waverly. Site surveys were conducted at chosen facilities in order to assess the anticipated needs of their residents. Each facility was assigned a Bridge liaison: **Athens Health & Rehab – Gail Williams; Elderwood, Assisted Living at Elderwood, and Elderwood Adult Day Services Program – Stacie Robinson; Sayre Health Care Center – Belinda Klovekorn; and Sayre Personal Care Residence – Kim Paul.** Each liaison worked with personnel at the respective care center to determine a suitable location for a shelf, closet, or cupboard which could be easily accessed by their staff and supplied with inventory by The Bridge. The liaisons now work together with on-site contacts to provide hygiene supplies, clothing, physical therapy aids, and other personal items which may not otherwise be available due to lack of finances, family support, or transportation.



Sayre Personal Care Residence
Eldercare Supply Area

There is much to be thankful for and we hope that our member churches will continue to respond with increased visits to our senior centers, prayers for the ministry, and donations of care items to be shared! Financially, this ministry was started in 2022 with funding from the Bridge's Board of Directors, grew through a very generous grant (from **Epiphany Parish** and the Diocese of Scranton, facilitated by **Joan and John Schoonover**), and in 2023 was blessed with additional individual donations for the purchase of needed items. Storage space is still provided at **Christian Life Church** to facilitate a centralized space for liaisons to access. Similarly, we are thankful for being able to collaborate with the **Clothes Closet** ministry and volunteers to provide some needed items and for sharing valuable storage space specifically for Eldercare.

	Beginning	Income	Expense	Transfer	Ending
Eldercare Checking	\$5,841.26	\$2,613.12	\$2,131.35	\$2,500.00	\$6,323.03

Respectfully submitted,
Belinda Klovekorn, Eldercare Coordinator, SHCC

Mobile Food Pantry



This year marks the **15th year** The Bridge has sponsored a Mobile Food Pantry on the third Wednesday of each month from 10am-11am. It continues operating as a drive-thru "Drop and Go" since October 2021. In total, 2,740 households were served in 2023 with a maximum of preregistrations of 225 each month.

Clients register the day before the mobile either online or by calling 800-901-2180 or 211 if physically located in New York.

Half are given one time to arrive and the other half another time to arrive about a half hour later to help decrease wait times and congestion in the parking lot.



Approximately 25-30 volunteers are required for each distribution. There are a variety of jobs needed including people to take phone reservations the day before the event, directing traffic and parking, checking people in, setting up, preparing food to be loaded into vehicles, loading vehicles, and clean-up. We have very faithful volunteers who make it all possible! We are also grateful for the additional help from the **Helping Hands** ministry for taking the cardboard to recycling after each distribution.

In addition, we are very thankful for the graciousness and hospitality of the **North Waverly Chapel** for allowing the distributions to take place on their property as well as allowing us to use space in their facility to store the equipment provided for the mobile. What a blessing!

It has been our privilege to serve God and the people in this community through the ministry of the Mobile Food Pantry in 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Paul, MFP Site Coordinator

Valley Food Pantry



The Valley Food Pantry has seen a steady increase in client need for food this year. The year began in January serving 81 families and numbers began climbing into the 140's by March and to over 200 families by October. For the 2023 year, we served 1,877 families and 5,607 individuals.

We have continued our partnership with the Food Bank of the Southern Tier where we are able to receive many foods for free and have received a HPNAP (Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program) grant of \$6,500 to help pay for other foods they offer. This partnership has allowed us to offer more fresh fruits and vegetables to clients. For the year, we have received over 68,000 pounds of food from FBST. In mid-August we began receiving deliveries on a weekly basis when our orders were over 1,000 pounds which was too much to be transported in a van. Many items still need to be purchased elsewhere such as milk, margarine, and bread in order to offer a full 5-day supply of food, which is the goal for those served. In addition, donations received from individuals, organizations, and churches provide variety to help us ensure we deliver a client choice-based supply of food.



On March 24th, we were able to give hams and additional foods to make a wonderful Easter meal for 37 clients. Then in November, we offered 25 turkeys and 30 turkey breasts along with a full 5-day supply pantry visit. The additional food was determined over the phone ahead of time to provide clients with a choice and packed specifically to their needs. With many great volunteers both events went very well and clients were very grateful to

receive the special dinners. Some shared that without us there would not have been a turkey (or ham) for dinner that day.

The Food Bank of the Southern Tier also helped us by providing a new commercial grade freezer when one of our residential freezers couldn't keep up with our increase in families in need. It could not handle the constant opening and closing of the door and had been leaking on the floor and defrosting at the oddest times.



In May, the Food Bank of the Southern Tier awarded the Valley Food Pantry a one-year "Period Product" Grant for \$7,161.48. This grant is to be used to purchase tampons and pads for our clients. We are having clients come specifically for the period products and then also stay and get nutritious food too. One mom got tears in her eyes as she said, "This is very helpful especially for moms. It's so expensive to get formula, diapers, and pads when you need to buy food too. It's great to come here for food, diapers, and pads all in one place." The period product shelf has been very popular, and we have had many clients thank us for having these products available. If interested in partnering with the Valley Food Pantry after May of next year (when this grant ends) to continue this meaningful venture, please contact the Valley Food Pantry.

We are so grateful for our faithful individuals, churches and organizations who donate food and money to the Valley Food Pantry to support the ministry. Without your support, we could not do what we do. We also are thankful for the group of volunteers who faithfully step up and come in to work their shift(s) and help out whenever possible.

2023 Activity

2023	PA	NY	TOTAL
Households	1,102	865	1,877
Adults	2,127	1,689	3,816
Children	1,033	758	1,791
Total Helped	3,160	2,447	5,607

	Beginning	Income	Expense	Transfer*	Ending
Checking	\$13,371.26	\$21,062.94	\$19,484.93	\$0.00	\$14,949.27
Savings	\$88,558.36	\$4,464.58	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$93,022.94
Total	\$101,929.62	\$25,527.52	\$19,484.93	\$0.00	\$107,972.21

Designated Funds within Cash Assets:

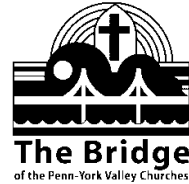
FBST Grant	\$0.00	\$7,161.48	\$4,017.24	\$0.00	3,144.24
Total Designated	\$0.00	\$7,161.48	\$4,017.24	\$0.00	\$3,144.24
Total Undesignated	\$101,929.62	\$18,366.04	\$15,467.69	\$0.00	\$104,827.97

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Cocco
 Coordinator, Valley Food Pantry
Howard Brewster
 Assistant Coordinator, Valley Food Pantry.

Valley Food Pantry
 418 Waverly Street
 Waverly, NY 14892

Hours:
 Mon, Tues, Thu, Fri 10a-12n
 Tues, Wed 2p-4p
 3rd Saturdays 10a-12n

Faith & Finances



Faith and Finances is a program developed by the Chambers Center with a target audience of financially vulnerable adults with limited financial training and a high school education. The typical target participant has personal debt, no emergency fund, doesn't live within budget, has a net worth near or below zero, and ranges from a non-believer to a mature Christian.

There are 12 weekly sessions, each 90 minutes with a meal offered beforehand. The facilitator-led sessions encourage interaction and discussion and include the following topics:

1. Connecting Money & Relationships
2. Exploring Values & Attitudes
3. Overcoming Financial Challenges
4. Setting Savings Goals
5. Creating a Spending Plan
6. Living Simply
7. Giving Joyfully
8. Managing Debt
9. Taking Loans
10. Getting Banked
11. Preparing for Emergencies
12. Planning for Long-Term Change



Facilitators are required to complete a training program. Currently we have two who have completed the training and are serving as facilitators: **Marion Dabroski** and **Kim Paul**.

We have been blessed this year to have a Faith and Finances class for the Valley Moms group. The 12-week class has been spaced out throughout the 2023-2024 school year on Thursday mornings. Twelve people registered and attendance is usually about eight. The participants have been eager to learn. We thank the **Valley Moms Group** for providing breakfast and **The Athens Wesleyan Church** for the meeting space. A special thanks to **Julia Brown** for providing child care. We hope to offer more classes in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Dabroski

Kim Paul

Faith and Finances Facilitators

Catastrophic Assistance



A catastrophic event, for the purpose of this assistance, is defined as “a natural disaster (e.g., flood, winter storm, tornado, earthquake, mudslide, and wildfire), house fire, chemical emergency, severe medical event causing significant disability (such as paraplegia), or an abusive situation resulting in having to leave a residence without belongings.” To receive this assistance the household must meet our regular emergency assistance guidelines, have a catastrophic event as defined above, and be approved by 5 designated individuals. Following established guidelines, the Catastrophic Assistance Coordinator can provide up to \$1,500 of assistance. Additional funds may be given with Board approval. This year we helped two households, one was affected by fire and one a medical event. In the first fire case, we provided \$170 for two nights lodging (regular voucher by exception) and a \$400 security deposit. A furniture voucher was also issued, but the client received the needed furniture from a friend. In the medical event case, we provided \$1,474.59 to prevent the repossession of a car. We also started another fire case at the end of the year which will be reported next year as payment occurred in 2024.

Interim Assistance Program

This assistance is aimed at helping individuals or families who have experienced a significant event, causing a short-term need that requires more than our regular assistance provides, up to \$1,500 each. It is only permitted to be used once and given over a period of 3-6 months. Once approved for the program, an Interim Assistance Coordinator works with the individual(s) on mutually set goals along with a partnered member church. The goals are evaluated on a regular basis over the 3-6 months (at least monthly).

In 2023, we had a number of households who qualified for Interim Assistance, but did not commit to the program. The program does require a commitment to goal setting and regular contact over the 3 to 6-month period. In 2023, the individuals seemed interested at first for the \$1,500, but then didn't follow through. We are hopeful for a better response going forward and would like to recruit some additional volunteers and churches for the program, especially another Interim Assistance Coordinator.

35th Anniversary Celebration

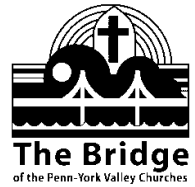


Saturday April 22, 2023
at 6:00 pm
Athens United Methodist Church

Planning Team:
Wendy McKeithan
Joan Schoonover
Gail Williams



Generous Donations in 2023



The Bridge relies on generous donations to do all the things we do. **These are just a few** of the many donations received in 2023 and we are so very thankful for each and every donation. **THANK YOU!!!**





2023 Fundraisers:

Chicken BBQ & Vintage Sale

The 2023 Chicken BBQ & Vintage Sale was held on Saturday, September 30 and cleared \$4,062.26. We had many of the same dedicated volunteers expertly manage the chicken part of the sale again this year. Many thanks to all those who participated in making the event a success!



The Bridge of
the Penn-York Valley Churches
hosts the annual

 **BBQ**

& Vintage Goods Sale



 Dinners \$13
Halves \$11

**Saturday
Sep 30th 2023
11am - 3pm**

At the
Helping Hands Furniture Warehouse,
515 Chemung Street (17C), Waverly, NY

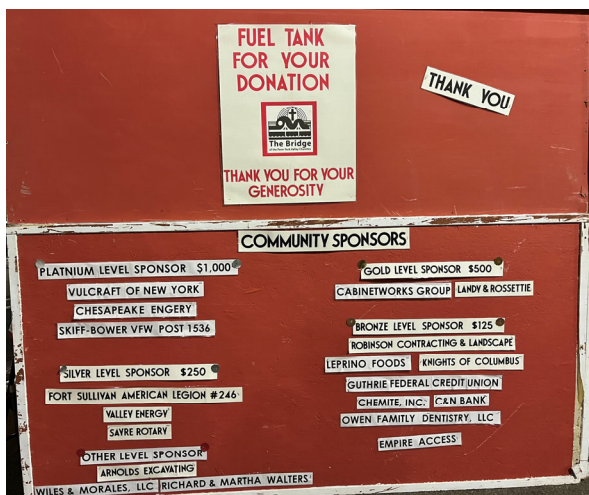


21st Annual Sleepout

The Bridge Annual Sleepout 24-hour Fundraiser

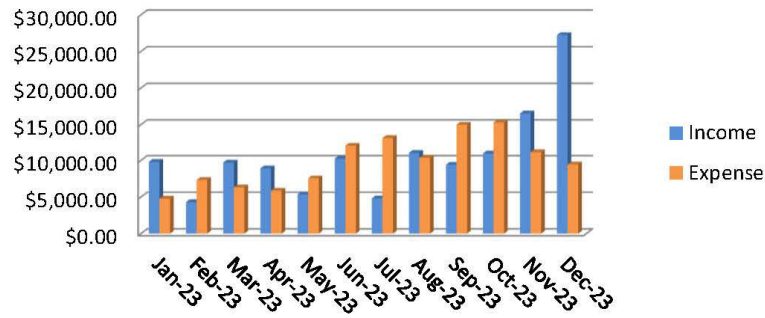
The Bridge's Sleepout aims to bring awareness to those in need, to explain how the Bridge meets those needs, and to raise funds for the ministry. The 21st Annual Sleepout was held on Friday, November 24 at 3pm through Saturday, November 25 at 3pm in the parking lot of the Sayre Guthrie Desmond Street Practice. The event raised \$11,815, which was short of the \$15,000 goal but still very successful.

The Sleepout Team in 2023 consisted of **Wendy McKeithan**, **Joan Schoonover**, and **Kim Paul**. **CT Weber**, Helping Hands Coordinator, managed the building and tearing down of the Sleepout "house" with other volunteers.



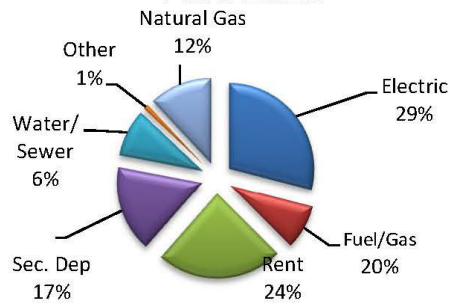
The Bridge of the Penn-York Valley Churches 2023 Treasurer's Annual Report

2023 Income and Expenses



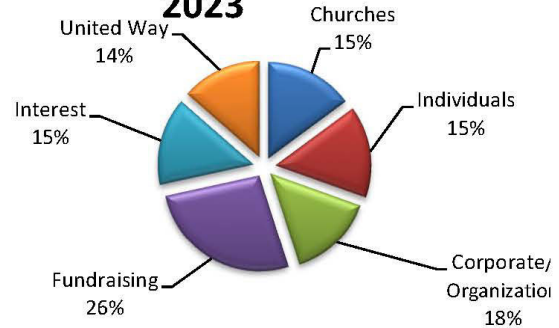
Types of Vouchers

Paid 2023



Funding Sources

2023



Account	Beginning Balance	Income	Expense	Transfers *	Balance
Bridge Account	\$ 61,669.38	\$ 128,422.68	\$ (118,325.05)	\$ -	\$ 71,767.01
Bridge Savings Account	\$ 428,448.31	\$ 21,599.78	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 450,048.09
Total Bridge Funds	\$ 490,117.69	\$ 150,022.46	\$ (118,325.05)	\$ -	\$ 521,815.10

Designated Funds within Bridge Account

Operational Reserve Fund	\$ 100,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100,000.00
Helping Hands Warehouse	\$ 800.00	\$ 9,600.00	\$ (9,600.00)	\$ -	\$ 800.00
Weber Memorial	\$ 260.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 260.00
Ministry Improvements	\$ 463.22	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 463.22
Beulah Merrill Estate	\$ 118,370.52	\$ 145.00	\$ (8,135.68)	\$ -	\$ 110,379.84
Total Designated Funds	\$ 219,893.74	\$ 10,245.00	\$ 18,235.68	\$ -	\$ 211,903.06
Total Undesignated Funds	\$ 270,223.95	\$ 139,777.46	\$ (136,560.73)	\$ -	\$ 309,912.04

Income and Expense Comparison 2022-2023				
	2022	2023	Difference	
Income	\$ 131,512.85	\$ 150,022.46	\$ 18,509.61	
Expense	\$ 86,163.12	\$ 118,325.05	\$ 32,161.93	
Difference	\$ 45,349.73	\$ 31,697.41	\$ (13,652.32)	

A total of 200 vouchers were paid in 2023 assisting 277 adults and 195 children. In addition, 2 Catastrophic vouchers were issued.

2023 Bridge Budget Report

Category	Actual	2023 Budget	Difference
INCOME	139,777.46	126,555.00	13,222.46
Churches	21,929.00	25,000.00	-3,071.00
Bentley Creek Wesleyan Church	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
Blessed Trinity Parish (St. James)	1,791.00	0.00	1,791.00
Chemung Christian Fellowship	2,475.00	0.00	2,475.00
Church of God	400.00	0.00	400.00
Crossroads Family Ministries (Keyst...	2,540.00	0.00	2,540.00
First Baptist, Waverly	360.00	0.00	360.00
G.V. Assembly of God	1,210.00	0.00	1,210.00
North Waverly Chapel	900.00	0.00	900.00
Paypal	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
Bentley Creek Wesleyan	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
Redeemer	1,285.00	0.00	1,285.00
St. John Lutheran	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
UMC, Athens	3,727.00	0.00	3,727.00
UMC, Litchfield	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
UMC, Waverly	241.00	0.00	241.00
Valley United Presbyterian	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
Community Chest	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00
Corporate-Organizational Gifts	11,881.50	10,800.00	1,081.50
Fundraising Income	17,224.11	18,000.00	-775.89
Chicken BBQ & Sale	4,909.11	6,000.00	-1,090.89
BBQ Furniture Sale	2,682.11	0.00	2,682.11
Chicken Sales	2,227.00	0.00	2,227.00
SleepOut	12,315.00	12,000.00	315.00
Cash	325.00	0.00	325.00
Churches	650.00	0.00	650.00
first Church Of God	150.00	0.00	150.00
Redeemer	300.00	0.00	300.00
Sayre Christian	200.00	0.00	200.00
Corporate-Organization	7,550.00	0.00	7,550.00
Individual	3,790.00	0.00	3,790.00
Helping Hands Income	21,830.00	3,635.00	18,195.00
Delivery Fees	630.00	0.00	630.00
Furniture Sales	20,900.00	0.00	20,900.00
Scrap Metal	300.00	0.00	300.00
Individual Gifts	22,022.00	30,000.00	-7,978.00
PayPal Deposit	1,750.00	0.00	1,750.00
Other Individual Gifts	20,272.00	0.00	20,272.00
Misc Income	21,870.62	16,120.00	5,750.62
AmazonSmile	115.29	0.00	115.29
Checking Interest	155.52	120.00	35.52
Ukogf Foundation (Bing)	0.03	0.00	0.03
WIF Savings Interest	21,599.78	16,000.00	5,599.78
United Way of Bradford County	20,000.00	20,000.00	0.00
EXPENSES	100,089.37	126,555.00	26,465.63
Indirect Exp	4,397.67	8,010.00	3,612.33
Bank Exp	0.00	50.00	50.00
Box.com	300.00	300.00	0.00

financial report 3

Category	Actual	2023 Budget	Difference
Dues	0.00	75.00	75.00
Equipment	124.37	550.00	425.63
Fundraising Exp	1,095.09	1,400.00	304.91
BBQ & Sale	846.85	900.00	53.15
BBQ Furniture Sale	0.00	900.00	900.00
Chicken	846.85	0.00	-846.85
Sleepout	248.24	500.00	251.76
Insurance	1,315.20	2,000.00	684.80
Misc	7.67	500.00	492.33
Other Misc	7.67	500.00	492.33
Office Supplies	750.87	400.00	-350.87
Outreach Items	0.00	500.00	500.00
PayPal Fees	84.46	130.00	45.54
Phone	54.37	180.00	125.63
PO Box Fee	176.00	200.00	24.00
Postage	303.86	300.00	-3.86
Promotional Items	0.00	500.00	500.00
Software	38.81	700.00	661.19
Website	146.97	225.00	78.03
Ministries	95,691.70	118,545.00	22,853.30
Catastrophic Assistance	1,874.59	10,000.00	8,125.41
Clearinghouse	708.17	820.00	111.83
Misc	0.00	50.00	50.00
Utilities-Phone	708.17	770.00	61.83
Clothes Closet	705.74	1,275.00	569.26
Maintenance	0.00	175.00	175.00
Misc	24.52	300.00	275.48
Utilities-Electric	681.22	800.00	118.78
Eldercare	0.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
General Ministry	2,400.00	2,400.00	0.00
Helping Hands	7,873.70	7,450.00	-423.70
Maintenance	0.00	150.00	150.00
Mileage Reimbursement	1,519.60	2,500.00	980.40
Misc	297.71	200.00	-97.71
NYS Sales Tax	1,788.43	0.00	-1,788.43
Overflow Storage	2,400.00	2,400.00	0.00
Utilities	1,867.96	2,200.00	332.04
Electric	747.98	1,000.00	252.02
Phone	691.11	770.00	78.89
Propane	112.99	180.00	67.01
Trash Disposal	315.88	200.00	-115.88
Water & Sewer	0.00	50.00	50.00
Interim Assistance Program	0.00	7,500.00	7,500.00
Mobile Food Pantry	40.98	300.00	259.02
Misc	40.98	300.00	259.02
Vouchers	82,088.52	87,800.00	5,711.48
Electricity	24,775.34	20,000.00	-4,775.34
NY	6,957.72	10,000.04	3,042.32
PA	17,817.62	9,999.96	-7,817.66
Fuel Oil	7,063.58	20,000.00	12,936.42
NY	460.42	10,000.04	9,539.62

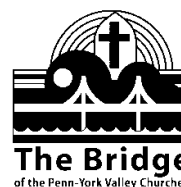
Category	Actual	2023 Budget	Difference
PA	6,603.16	9,999.96	3,396.80
Lodging	170.00	800.00	630.00
Misc	570.13	500.00	-70.13
Home Repair	570.13	0.00	-570.13
Prescr. & Medical	0.00	249.96	249.96
Other Misc	0.00	250.04	250.04
Natural Gas	8,415.53	6,000.00	-2,415.53
NY	1,553.41	3,000.00	1,446.59
PA	6,862.12	3,000.00	-3,862.12
Other Heat	489.92	0.00	-489.92
NY	489.92	0.00	-489.92
Rent	20,995.90	20,000.00	-995.90
NY	3,744.00	10,000.04	6,256.04
PA	17,251.90	9,999.96	-7,251.94
Security Deposit	12,116.00	16,000.00	3,884.00
NY	3,190.00	7,999.96	4,809.96
PA	8,926.00	8,000.04	-925.96
Sewer	4,000.41	1,500.00	-2,500.41
NY	0.00	750.00	750.00
PA	4,000.41	750.00	-3,250.41
Water	3,491.71	3,000.00	-491.71
NY	381.26	1,500.00	1,118.74
PA	3,110.45	1,500.00	-1,610.45
Net Difference:	39,688.09	0.00	39,688.09

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Russell, Treasurer

*Whoever gives to the poor will not want,
but he who hides his eyes will get many a curse.*

Proverbs 28:27

Financial Secretary



In 2023, a total of 52 year-end receipts were distributed to individuals, organizations and businesses for gifts of \$250 or more as well as 19 receipts sent to our member churches for any amount. Along with the receipts, an insert was included with highlights from the year. Apricot software was used to track donations and generate the year-end statements. Thank you to **Michelle Burger**, Corresponding Secretary, for sending acknowledgements through the year for donations of any amount from Tennessee!

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Paul, Financial Secretary



Thank you for your contribution(s) in 2023 which enabled us to help those in need in our community! Specifically, with your generous support, our volunteers were able to:

- Provide \$84,000 in 204 **vouchers** for basic needs including electric, fuel, rent, security deposits, water/sewer, and other emergency needs thereby helping 277 adults & 195 children.
- Serve 1,270 households in our **Clothes Closet** ministry giving out 23,921 free items of clothing & apparel, small housewares, books & toys.
- Assist 94 households through our **Helping Hands** ministry with furniture and appliances made possible by 218 donations.
- Provide 1,877 households representing 5,607 people with emergency food through the ministry of the **Valley Food Pantry**.
- Provided food to 2,740 households (average of 228/month) through the once a month drive-thru **Mobile Food Pantry**.
- Serve a total of 1,784 students through our **Kids at Risk** program in the school districts of Athens, Sayre, & Waverly with clothing, hygiene items, school supplies, and other needs anonymously by partnering with school personnel.
- Provide needed items to 438 seniors with 651 items in long-term care facilities/an adult care program through **Eldercare**.

The Bridge of the Penn-York Valley Churches

570-888-8826 P.O. Box 202, Sayre, PA 18840 www.thevalleybridge.org

Questions about your statement?

Contact Kim Paul, 570-867-2628
financialsecretary@thevalleybridge.org

Audit Committee

The Financial Audit of The Bridge 2023

The Audit Committee completed a review of The Bridge's 2023 financial records, including the Main Bridge account, Kids at Risk, Valley Food Pantry and Eldercare accounts. We found the accounting records to be accurate and proper procedures and internal controls were followed in the record-keeping process. Financial reports fairly present the financial position of The Bridge.

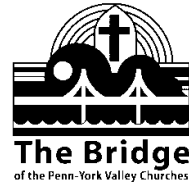
The committee would like to thank all those involved with maintaining the financial records throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,

2023 Audit Committee:

Rick Felt, Bob Crocker, and Oliver McKeithan

2023 Leadership



Officers:

President: **Kim Paul**, Christian Life Church

Treasurer: **Richard Russell**, Crossroads Family Ministries

Secretary: **Joan Schoonover**, Epiphany Parish

Other Leadership:

Pastoral Advisor: **Pastor Robert Nacci**, First Baptist Church, Sayre

Corresponding Secretary: **Michelle Burger**

Assistant Treasurer: **Marion Dabroski**, Twin Tiers Evangelical Free Presbyterian Church (TTEFPC)

Financial Secretary: **Kim Paul**, Christian Life Church

Clearinghouse Coordinator: **Gail Williams**, Athens Wesleyan Church; **Kathy Oeffner**, Seventh Day Adventist

Voucher Writer Trainers: **Kim Paul**, Christian Life Church **Rich and Pam Russell**, Crossroads Family Ministries

Exceptions Team: **Cindy Jones**, Athens United Methodist Church **Oliver and Wendy McKeithan**, Sayre Christian Church **Kim Paul**, Christian Life Church, **Rich and Pam Russell**, Crossroads Family Ministries, **Joan Schoonover**, Epiphany Parish

Catastrophic and Interim Assistance Coordinators: **Oliver McKeithan**, Sayre Christian Church, and **Kim Paul**, Christian Life Church

Clothes Closet Coordinator: **Kim Paul**, Christian Life Church

Eldercare Coordinators: **Belinda Klovekorn**, (for Sayre Health Care Center & Financial records); **Kim Paul** (for Sayre Personal Care Center); **Stacie Robinson** (for Eldercare Skilled, Assisted & Adult Care Program); **Gail Williams**, (for Athens Health & Rehabilitation Center)

Faith and Finances Coordinator: **Marion Dabroski**, TTEFPC

Helping Hands Coordinator: **CT Weber**, Athens United Methodist Church

Kids at Risk Coordinator: **Cindy Jones**, Athens United Methodist Church

Mobile Food Pantry, Waverly, Site Coordinator: **Kim Paul**, Christian Life Church

Valley Food Pantry Coordinator, **Liz Coco**, Blessed Trinity at St. James; Assistant, **Howard Brewster**, Blessed Trinity at St. James; Financials, **Marion Dabroski**, TTEFPC

Historian: **Kim Paul**, Christian Life Church

Photographer, **Gail Williams**, Athens Wesleyan Church

Publicist, **Wendy McKeithan**, Sayre Christian Church

Social Media/Facebook: **Pam Russell**, Crossroads Family Ministries

Webmasters and Apricot Administrators: **Doug Paul** and **Kim Paul**, Christian Life Church