

ROCKPORT BAPTIST CHURCH

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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Pastor's Annual Report for 2025

A second angel followed and said, “‘Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great,’ which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.” – Revelation 14:8

Babylon is fallen!

The book of Revelation was written to the first-century church as an encouragement to remain faithful to Christ and to resist the seductive voices and pressures of its time. One of the most powerful of these pressures was the enduring influence of the Roman Empire. Drawing on the inspiring example of Daniel's perseverance during the Babylonian exile (597–538 BC), the early church used “Babylon” as a metaphor for Rome. This imagery served as a reminder that earthly

empires rise and fall, but Christ has established a new and better kingdom that will reign forever. Most importantly, through the cross and resurrection, Jesus has secured victory over the kingdoms of this world, the forces of darkness, and the power of sin and death.

Like Daniel, we continue to live as people in exile, yet we are given glorious glimpses of the kingdom to come—this is what the book of Revelation is all about. We also experience these glimpses as we join our voices in worship each Sunday, as we share the gospel with younger generations in Rockport who have never heard of Christ, and as we bring words of hope and truth to the sick and dying within our community. It is a profound privilege to serve within a congregation where people from nine different decades of life, multiple languages, and diverse socioeconomic backgrounds gather regularly to worship the Triune God. The glory and splendor of the gospel of Jesus



Wigton Family – Easter 2025. Ainsley 7, Alistair 10 and Addison 6

Christ has guided us throughout 2025 as we have worked together to be a faithful presence and a signpost to the Kingdom of God on Cape Ann.

Highlights

This year has been one of the most steady and cohesive seasons of ministry I have experienced. By God's grace, this reflects the fruit of a unified and committed leadership team, as well as

faithful work carried out over many previous years. The following are key highlights from the year:

Daniel and Revelation – I preached a sermon series on Daniel and taught through Revelation during Wednesday Bible Study. Both contributed meaningfully to my own spiritual growth and prompted substantial engagement and discussion within the congregation. The ongoing work of the sermon review team continues to strengthen the quality and clarity of our preaching.

Youth Ministry – Youth ministry remains critical to the future of both the local and global church. We are grateful for a growing and committed group, some of whom have participated for nearly six years. This spring, programming was expanded to include regular ministry opportunities for students in grades 4–12. I was assisted in this work by Sean Flanagan, Meaghan Shelton, and Shaina Stowell.

Bylaw Revisions – The bylaw subcommittee has been meeting for two years and is nearing completion of a proposed set of revised bylaws to be presented to the boards and, subsequently, the congregation. These revisions would replace bylaws that are approximately fifty years old. The goal is to bring the proposal for review and vote at a special business meeting in the second half of 2026, with full implementation in 2027. The committee's goals are to ensure biblical and historically Protestant theological guidance, implement best practices in governance, maintain compliance with nonprofit regulations, and reflect the current and future needs of the church.

Financial Stability – The church experienced financial challenges during the first half of the year. In response, the leadership team worked collaboratively to reduce expenses and explore alternative revenue opportunities. The year is ending in a more stable financial position; however, continued emphasis on regular, sacrificial giving remains essential for both spiritual formation and sustainable ministry.

Leadership Development – A central ministry goal is to equip and empower others for leadership, in keeping with the biblical model for church growth. This year saw continued leadership development across boards, men's and women's ministries, Children's Church, the Praise Band, and expanded lay participation in preaching and leading Sunday services. The upcoming sabbatical will further support leadership growth and development.



Attending Katie Favaloro's graduation from the Connecticut State Police Academy. (L-R) Shaina Stowell, Katie Favaloro, Matt Wigton and Karen Parker.

Gospel Coalition National Conference – In April, the church supported attendance at the Gospel Coalition National Conference in Indianapolis for me, Shaina Stowell, and Meaghan Shelton, alongside Peter Bertozi (Senior Pastor, Cape Ann Bible Church). The conference provided in-depth teaching, training, and worship with church leaders from around the world. Engagement at the conference directly informed the purchase of the *Sing!* hymnals later in the year.

Leadership Transitions – This year marks one of the most significant leadership transitions our church has experienced in many years. The passing of Moderator Cheryl Petras, along with the board retirements of Kris Carlson, Karen Parker, Nancy Pallazolla, and Maureen Small, represents a major transition in the life of our church. We extend deep gratitude to these women for their faithful service, offered to the glory of God.



Youth Group Trip to Water Country (Portsmouth, New Hampshire)

Maureen has led the Stewards over the past five years, guiding us through the conclusion of the pandemic, the parsonage sale, the steeple restoration, and many other building upgrades. Kris has served on the Deacons since 2011 and has acted as chair for much of the past decade. She has consistently demonstrated sensitivity and a heart for honoring the Lord

and caring for the congregation. Nancy is one of our longest-serving leaders and the only one whose service predates my time at the church; she also served on the committee that hired me in 2008.

Please join me in thanking each of these women for their invaluable service and contributions to our congregation.

Baptism of Alistair Charles Wigton – Perhaps my greatest highlight of the year was baptizing my oldest son, Alistair, with my own father present to pray for him. I am grateful to come from a family with deep roots in the Christian faith, and I pray that this legacy continues in the lives of my children and their contemporaries at Rockport Baptist.

A Note on the Sabbatical

This fall, we were delighted to learn that the church received a highly competitive and substantial grant from the National Clergy Renewal Program of the Lilly Endowment to fund a sabbatical,

which will take place from April 20 through July 5, 2026. I am deeply grateful to the many members of the church who supported and assisted with the application process.



Baptism of Alistair Wigton – (L-R) Charles E. Wigton III, Matthew Charles Wigton and Alistair Charles Wigton

As outlined in the sabbatical proposal, the purpose of this sabbatical is as follows:

The purpose of this sabbatical is to allow the pastor to focus on prayerful rest, extended time with family, and inspiring travel, in order to renew his spirit and sustain his ministry. The sabbatical will also provide the congregation with an opportunity to rest and to reflect on its hopes and dreams for the next decade of ministry.

During this time, I will devote extended attention to rest, spiritual renewal, and time with my family. This will include individual extended trips with each member of my immediate family, as well as a two-week trip to the United Kingdom with our

entire family. I am sincerely grateful for all aspects of this opportunity. In particular, I look forward to visiting and worshiping with congregations that have played a significant role in my own formation and development, including Park Street Church (Boston), Redeemer Presbyterian Church (New York City), Capitol Hill Baptist Church (Washington, D.C.), Tenth Presbyterian Church (Philadelphia), and All Souls Langham Place (London).

This sabbatical will also provide an important opportunity for the congregation to rest, reflect on the future, and prayerfully encourage emerging leaders to flourish. In preparation, we have established a special Sabbatical Committee to oversee the day-to-day operations of the church during my absence. The committee members are Jennifer Olson, Carl Oulton, David Pierson, Meaghan Shelton, Shaina Stowell, and Jonathan Valvano. David Pierson will serve as chair, and Shaina Stowell will serve as communications coordinator. The committee has arranged for a variety of guest and lay preachers to lead worship during this period.

Following our return from the sabbatical, we will gather for a joint celebration on July 12, 2026, to reflect on what we have learned through this experience.

Concluding Thoughts

While Babylon has fallen, Christ has risen! This remains the hope and reason that we must keep persevering as a faithful gospel presence in our church, homes, and community. It has been a privilege and joy to serve with you in 2025.

Onward,

Matthew Charles Wigton

Church Life Coordinator's Annual Report

This year has been one none of us will soon forget. It was filled with trials, miracles, heartbreaks, loss, learning, and growth for our small but committed congregation. It was an honor and a privilege this year to work with many of you in planning, serving, and executing multiple funeral and memorial services for some of our dearest members. This is a bittersweet job that Matt and I take very seriously, and we have become rather experienced in our ability to minister to the community with funeral and memorial services. Although this is a heavy topic, it is a powerful way that we point each other to our need for Jesus and the hope only He brings.

On a weekly basis, I continue to assist Pastor Matt in his sermon preparations. This typically consists of supporting him by fielding the typical visitor and helping him to keep from being distracted. I also have the incredible opportunity, along with a handful of others, to assist in the sermon review process. This is a time of refinement and a group effort in helping Matt to refine his weekly sermons.

This has been deeply enriching for my own personal growth in biblical understanding and has



also aided in the holistic planning of our Sunday worship services. Thus allowing our congregation to more deeply worship our Lord and Savior.

A major highlight from this year was again attending the Gospel Coalition national Conference last April with Matt Wigton and Meaghan Shelton. This is always a deeply worshipful and encouraging time for those of us in church leadership. This unique experience helps us to learn from, and about, our Christian contemporaries and gain tools to better minister to our congregation. Worshipping and learning with thousands of





other Christians is my foretaste of the eternal worship in God's presence, the Holy Spirit goosebumps don't stop the whole trip!

conference compatriots, and let me be honest, it's not a job for the faint of heart! I am weekly encouraged by their friendships and how quickly they learn and remember the bible lessons. Yes, the youth are wild, and yes, they are loud, but know this: those crazy kiddos know and love the Lord, and they inspire me every single insane time, even when they call me a dinosaur, yes, you read that right. Thank goodness they are cute.

In my personal time, I have continued to lead the Women of the Word bible study group. This year we studied the books of Revelation and Genesis. I am very proud of how much those women have learned over the past year. I also continue to help lead worship as part of our Praise team and meet one night each week to prepare for Sunday mornings.

Music ministry has been such an important part of my spiritual journey. Praising the Lord with songs and music is a joy for my soul, and helping to lead others to that place is a gift.

The highs and lows come and go but the Lord remains steadfast, and we praise Him for that. I will stay close to my church, my church family, and do all I can for it. Thank you for another unforgettable year my brothers and sisters, each of you play an important role in this church, and in the lives of all the people in our church.

Until the barren is beautiful,
Shaina Stowell
Church Life Coordinator



Christian Education Director

As we look back on 2025, I'm so grateful for the many ways God has moved through our Christian Education ministry this year. It's been a year full of growth, meaningful relationships, and encouragement.

Each week, we welcome a large and diverse group of children and families. We currently offer classes for four different age groups, giving kids a place to learn about God in ways that meet them right where they are. As our ministry continues to grow, so does our need for volunteers. If you are not already serving in Children's Church, please prayerfully consider it and reach out. I would love to talk to you about it. We are incredibly thankful for those who give their time and hearts to this ministry and keep our children wanting to come back and learn more.



This year marked our fourth year using the WonderInk curriculum, and we continue to see how impactful it is. Children aren't just hearing Bible stories—they're engaging with Scripture and discovering how God's story relates to their own lives. It is exciting to watch them make deep connections from lessons learned years ago to the lessons we are actively diving in to.

Vacation Bible School was a particular highlight this year. After years of post-pandemic catch-up, I feel we have hit our stride again. VBS 2025, Magnified, was encouraging to children and volunteers alike. We brought in talented new volunteers and everyone worked in a position that allowed them to best use their strengths for HIS glory. All 50 children who attended have meaningful connections with our church and its members. While our mission is serving the wider community, it was a terrific opportunity to strengthen existing relationships through true discipleship.

It has truly been a joy for me to take on a more active role with our youth group throughout 2025. Our biweekly youth group continues to experience growth and now includes students from 4th through 12th grade, representing seven different schools. It is a blessing to welcome back returning students and to walk alongside each of them as they deepen their faith and build lasting friendships.

As we look ahead to 2026, we're excited about what's to come. We remain committed to sharing God's love and the Gospel of Jesus with the children of our community. We are prepared to help them grow in faith in a supportive, welcoming environment. Thank you for your continued prayers, encouragement, and support.

Respectfully,
Meaghan Shelton
Christian Education Director

2025 Rockport Baptist Deacons Report

Our Goal: Follow Jesus and Proclaim Him to the World!!

First, I would like to thank the Deacons currently serving: Nancy Pallazola, Meaghan Shelton, Jonathan Valvano, & Carl Oulton, & Shaina Stowell for all they contributed this past year.

As a board, we are constantly looking to where we can serve our Lord. We want to glorify the Triune God; worship Him in spirit and in truth. We are always looking for ways we can achieve this in these areas: Music, Sermons, Greeting people, Discipleship, Fellowship, Sunday School, Youth Group, Bible Studies, community involvement and in our ethical and moral conduct as believers inside and outside the church.

How do others see us as a church? How do we see and engage with people? We have a passion for reaching those living in Rockport and being a witness to them. Our mission, as members and attendees inside the church, needs to be reaching out those sitting next to us, in front of us, behind us in the pews. I challenge **ALL** of us to get to know those sitting around us.

We are experiencing a period of growth with new families attending, new members and more children attending Sunday School. Along with this growth comes “growing pains” of the blessed kind, presenting challenges for the Deacons to be aware of any issues needing attention. Some of the areas we oversee are:

1. Middle/ High School Youth group: currently meeting every other Wednesday night from 5:30 to 7 pm (Pastor Matt, Meaghan Shelton & Shaina Stowell leading)
2. Children’s Church: meets during church (Meaghan Shelton, Coordinator) and what a joy to see the children “run” enthusiastically when called to their classrooms.
3. Music Committee: meets once a month to review the following: Praise Band, the organ functioning, the sound equipment, and any other issues relating to music worship.
4. Fellowship: (Julie Oulton & Angela Valvano) bringing us together after church with food contributions, coffee and good conversation.



5. Missionaries: We currently support – World Team’s Ryan and Erin Bennett with children Elias and Charlotte serving in Paris, France; Hope Ascending with Carl Oulton ministering in Northern India & Nepal, Liz & Brian Parkers serving in PA with Disciple Makers and The Open Door of Cape Ann.
6. Vacation Bible School: (Meaghan Shelton, Coordinator) meets the 3rd week in July from 9 to Noon daily. This ministry takes a “village” to prepare and carry out. We have amazing volunteers that faithfully meet, greet & minister to over 50, or more, children with some older children returning as volunteer helpers; 12 to 14 teen volunteers come with a smile [at 8 am], and a willingness to serve where needed.
7. Bible Study: (Pastor Matt leading): meets Wednesdays 9:30 – 11 am over 20 participants each week (several come from other churches). Currently they finishing up studying the book of 1 Samuel.
8. Greeters: (Martha Dougherty, coordinator) Our volunteers greet churchgoers each Sunday. Their smiles are the first thing people see when entering Rockport Baptist. They are responsible for directing people to the nursery, bathrooms & seating.
9. Women of the Word: (Shaina Stowell, coordinator) meets every other Tuesday from



6:30-8 pm. Currently they are studying the Book of Genesis in a workbook & on screen.

10. Weekly prayer on Wednesdays at Noon: (Pastor Matt leading)

There are lots of additional activities ongoing in the life of Rockport Baptist church; Potlucks lunches or cookouts happening on the last Sunday of each month, baptisms, membership classes, church cleanup days, church hymn sings, worship nights at different churches, the annual children’s Christmas pageant, weddings, funerals, serving a meal the 1st Friday of each month at

Open Door and leading worship at Oceanside nursing home every 5-6 weeks AA meets Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, along with hosting a variety of other Rockport events.

We want to thank Pastor Matt and Megan, (raising 3 very active children), for ALL the ways they are a **light** here at Rockport Baptist. We all need to continue to **keep them in our prayers** as they give so much to us and others – most which happens “behind the scenes”.

We also want to thank all of you who helped in ANY way to bless this church and its ministries in 2025 – **FOR YOU ARE MANY!!**

Please feel free to contact any of the Deacons with questions, concerns, prayer, or suggestions. We are here to serve you!!

Above all, we need to pray continually that our walk with Jesus would be a positive witness to those at Rockport Baptist Church, our family, friends, co-workers, Rockport and beyond!

Blessings:
Kris Carlson,
Chair of the



Deacons

Steward's Report

First and foremost, the Board of Stewards is extremely grateful for God's abundant provision for every aspect of our work in 2025. This not only includes being thankful for the financial means, but also the time, knowledge, and efforts of many skilled craftsmen, board members, Church staff, Church members, and volunteers. We are truly blessed here at FBC!!

Three major accomplishments of the Board in 2025 included:

Ensuring the Final Work on the Steeple was Completed – The Steeple needed two support cables installed, the bell ropes installed, and the bell ropes boxed up in the Nursery. Each Sunday, the Church bell can now be rung from the Narthex. The Board also got Structures North, the



engineering firm that designed the new Steeple, to sign off on all the work that was done.

Fixing Major Rot on the Front of the Church – This involved rebuilding the overhang over the Church front doors and covering it in copper, replacing rotted siding and rotted plywood sheathing behind the siding, and replacing rot trim and sills around the three windows above the Church front doors. The new siding was also primed and painted.



Installing a Television in Fellowship Hall – The Board decided to have a television installed on the wall in Fellowship Hall. This proved to be very valuable at not only reducing the amount of paper used for church meetings, but also reducing usage of the Sanctuary (and heating it) when a big screen television is needed for an activity in the Church.

Some of the other church building issues that were addressed in 2025 included:

- Replacing and fixing the toilet flushing mechanisms in two of the bathrooms.
- Getting Garevanta to inspect and fix the handicap lift so that it would pass the State inspection.



The Board of Stewards wishes to acknowledge and thank Karen Parker, who's term is ending this year. Karen has faithfully and willingly served on the Board for 4 years. She has been a valuable asset and liaison between the Church and Alan Battistelli, the Church contractor. Her dedication has been invaluable and very much appreciated by not only the Stewards, but by all at First Baptist Church.

Finally, may God give the Board wisdom and boldness to do great things as he takes FBC into a new year!

*Respectfully Submitted by Maureen Small
Board of Stewards Chair*

Clerk's Report for 2025

Members to heaven: John Lafond (August 08) Cheryl Petras (August 28) and Laura Ferazzi (December 6).

Friends to heaven: Kevin White (March 12)

Membership transitions out of church: Serena Burgdorf

Total Membership = 48

See next page for full list of membership

Memorial/Funeral Services:

Kevin White (May 16), Louise Viestra (July 07), Bea Waring (October 15), John Lafond (October 25), Cheryl Petras (September 01) and Philip Chalmers (December 18).

Baptisms: Alyssa Arathorn, Jonathan Arathorn & Alistair Wigton (June 22)

Business Meeting (for minutes see proceeding pages):

January 26, 2025 – Annual Meeting

Respectfully Submitted,
Millicent Bruce



2025 Church Membership List and year of membership.

1. Kay Bannon (1987)
2. Suzanne Blake (1978)
3. Andrea Brown (1965)
4. Millicent Bruce (2013)
5. Kristine Carlson (2011)
6. James Cox (2024)
7. German Disla (2024)
8. Victoria Disla (2024)
9. Martha Doughtery (2022)
10. Joan Keefe (2006)
11. Sandy Lafond (2013)
12. Diane Lynn (1992)
13. Mary Malcolmson (1999)
14. Anne Manion (1999)
15. Virginia McMinn (1979)
16. Robert McMinn (1981)
17. Maureen Means (2024)
18. Shepherd Means (2024)
19. Danielle Michel (2021)
20. Philip Michel (2021)
21. Jennifer Olson (2022)
22. Carl Oulton (2022)
23. Julie Oulton (2022)
24. Janet O'Donnell (1966)
25. Karen Parker (2018)
26. Nancy Pallazola (1983)
27. Victor Pallazola (1987)
28. Larry Peatfield (2022)
29. David Pierson (2012)
30. Steven Scatterday (1989)
31. Meaghan Shelton (2004)
32. Anthony Shelton (2004)
33. Mark Small (2018)
34. Maureen Small (2018)
35. Mary Stillman (2024)
36. Shaina Stowell (2020)
37. Ben Tuck (2009)
38. Katrina Tuck (2016)
39. Laurie Tuck (1994)
40. Robert Tuck (1950)
41. Jane Tutein (2013)
42. Angela Valvano (2022)
43. Jonathan Valvano (2022)
44. Matthew Wigton (2009)
45. Megan Wigton (2009)
46. Margaret Williams (2011)
47. Gail Zeman (1975)
48. Phil Zeman (1975)



Rockport Baptist Church Annual Meeting

January 26, 2025

Moderator, Cheryl Petras called the meeting to order, noting that a quorum had been met Kris Carlson opened with a Prayer. Clerk's Report, Millicent Bruce: minutes for each of the 2024 meetings are printed in the annual report. Pastor's Report, Matt Wigton, Mary Stillman is noted for all her hard work on organizing the historical records of the Church. A few housekeeping corrections are: Anthony Shelton should be listed as Chairman of the Music Committee. The Auditor's report has been added to the digital online edition of the Annual Report, as well as an addendum at the annual meeting. The first footnote on page 21 should be corrected to read "this line will disappear in 2027". It is agreed that to avoid any conflict of interest as a staff member, Shaina will abstain from voting on anything related to the budget while serving on the Board of Deacons. Matt is entitled to a sabbatical every seven years, but due to circumstances, he has not taken one. He will apply for the Lilly Foundation Grant this year. This includes \$60,000, \$20,000 of which would go to the Church. Matt considers this time away a benefit for both he and the Church, with time to reflect and think about the future.

Financial Report, David Pierson explains there is a system. He oversees it all and does the payroll, Jenna Olson is the bookkeeper, and he and Julie Oulton are the Collectors. David seeks advice on whether to reorganize the finances in order to raise money for upcoming future building repairs or to wait until the money is actually needed. Waiting 'til needed seems to be the consensus. Deacon's Report, Kris Carlson: there is a very busy First Baptist Body, and there are a lot of people to thank for getting all the work done. Stewart's Report, Maureen Small opened her remarks by reading Ephesians 2:10. This was the year of the steeple, which totaled \$390,000 - \$334,000 coming from the Rockport Preservation Fund. A couple of small items remain to be done, but the money is on hand. There were two clean-up days. A lot of debris was removed from the basements. Looking ahead, the outside of the building will be where our attention will be needed as rot is showing up.

Music Committee, Anthony Shelton & Cheryl Petras standing in: many thanks for helping us to make a joyful noise to the Lord, go to the Praise Band, Hymn sings, Praise and Prayer, and the Youth Band. Old Business: None. New Business: Nominating Committee, Kris Carlson A motion was made by Diane Lynn and seconded by Maureen Small to vote that all the nominees be accepted as printed in the Annual Report. Approval is also allowed for the Treasurer to spend from the Investments as needed. It was so voted. A motion was made by Maureen Small and seconded by Angela Valvano to accept all the 2024 reports, as printed in the Annual Report, including the corrections made. It was so voted. Moderator, Cheryl Petras, called for adjournment at 12:40, and Pastor Matt closed with a Prayer.

Respectfully submitted.
Millicent Bruce
Clerk

Attendance Report

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
January	57	55	50	61	49	63	36	55	63	66	66
February	37	54	49	56	55	60	38	62	73	68	48
March	54	62	48	53	52	61	45	75	76	78	71
April	66	52	63	63	59	*	50	84	72	77	83
May	65	66	54	61	67	*	47	81	82	83	72
June	56	60	57	60	58	*	58	75	65	83	76
July	61	65	61	60	70	*	58	81	73	75	85
August	57	63	58	59	65	*	57	65	75	78	71
September	57	61	68	59	65	*	66	76	78	71	76
October	55	57	71	62	69	*	61	72	73	72	71
November	65	57	64	64	70	*	65	70	69	76	83
December	63	53	61	66	75	*	74	74	75	77	79
Average	57	59	59	59	61	61	72	72	73	75	73

*Attendance was not taken between March-December 2020 due to the chaos caused by the Commonwealth and Town of Rockport's onerous covid restrictions. The church resumed meeting in person in late May 2020 after being shut down from in-person activities in March 2020.

2025 Nominating Report

An asterisk indicates candidates to be elected on January 25, 2026. Date in parenthesis indicates the expiration of the term. Per church bylaws the Pastor is a voting ex-officio member of the Board of Deacons, Board of Stewards, Music Committee and Church Personnel Safety and Nominating Committee. The nominating process is set out in the church bylaws which are available on the document section of the church website.¹

Board of Deacons

- Carl Oulton (2027)
- *Meaghan Shelton (2029)
- Shaina Stowell (2028)
- *Jonathan Valvano (2029)



Board of Stewards

- *James Cox (2029)
- *Jennifer Olson (2029)
- *Larry Peatfield (2029)
- *Mary Stillman (2029)

Officers (One Year Term)

- *Auditor – Millicent Bruce
- *Clerk – Millicent Bruce
- *Collector – Julie Oulton
- *Head Usher – Martha Dougherty
- *Moderator – Jonathan Valvano
- *Treasurer – David Pierson
- *Christian Education – Meaghan Shelton
- *Music Committee Chair – Anthony Shelton
- *Church Personnel Safety Oversight and Nominating Committee Chair – David Pierson

Submitted by the 2025 Church Personnel Safety Oversight and Nominating Committee
Kristine Carlson

¹ <https://firstbaptistrockport.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Bylaws-and-Rules-of-Order-Rockport-Baptist-Updated-January-2018.pdf>

Church Curmudgeon Report – 2025

If you are looking for a glossy report full of buzzwords, dramatic graphs, and declarations that we have finally “figured it all out,” this is not that report. Rockport Baptist Church remains stubbornly ordinary—and that is something to be thankful for. 2025 was not a year of fireworks. It was a year of showing up.

The State of the Church

We are still here. That alone is worth saying plainly. In a time when churches close quietly, pastors burn out loudly, and commitment has become optional, Rockport Baptist Church kept opening its doors, turning on the lights, and preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. We did not reinvent ourselves. We did not chase trends. We sang familiar hymns, opened worn Bibles, prayed imperfect prayers, and trusted that God still works through ordinary faithfulness.

Attendance fluctuated, as it always does. Some Sundays were full. Others felt thin. Yet week after week, God gathered His people—enough to worship, enough to encourage one another, enough to remind us that the Church is not a crowd but a body.

Worship and the Word

The Word of God was preached in 2025—clearly, consistently, and without apology. Some sermons comforted. Others irritated. A few probably did both at the same time. That’s usually a good sign.

We worshiped without spectacle and without shame. The music was sincere, even when it wasn’t perfect. The prayers were real, even when they were quiet. We were reminded again and again that worship is not about preference but about faithfulness. And yes, sometimes the sound system still misbehaved. We survived.



Discipleship and Fellowship

Growth this year looked less like numbers and more like roots. Sunday School classes continued to gather, discuss Scripture, and wrestle honestly with life and faith. Some conversations were encouraging. Others were uncomfortable. All of them mattered. Fellowship happened the old-fashioned way: meals shared, hands shaken, hospital visits made, tears wiped, and laughter heard in the hallways. We did not always agree, but we kept talking—and that, in today's world, is no small miracle.

Service and Witness

Rockport Baptist Church remained committed to serving quietly and faithfully. We helped when help was needed. We prayed when there were no easy answers. We supported missions near and far, trusting that God uses even modest generosity when it is given willingly. We did not solve every problem in our community. We were not called to. We were called to love our neighbors, tell the truth about Christ, and keep doing good without growing weary.



Finances

The bills were paid. The lights stayed on. The doors remained open. Giving in 2025 reflected what we have come to expect from this congregation: steady, sacrificial, and unpretentious. We spent carefully, avoided unnecessary debt, and tried to be good stewards rather than impressive ones. Faithfulness, once again, proved sufficient.

Looking Ahead with Stubborn Hope

Here is the hopeful part—so brace yourself. God is not finished with Rockport Baptist Church. The culture may keep changing. The church may keep aging. The world may keep insisting that places like this no longer matter. But the gospel has outlasted empires, and it will outlast trends. Our calling for the year ahead is not complicated:

- Preach Christ
- Love one another
- Serve faithfully
- Endure patiently
- Hope stubbornly

We will keep planting seeds even when growth is slow. We will keep believing that God works through faithfulness more than flash. And we will keep trusting that the Lord of the Church knows exactly what He is doing—even when we grumble a little along the way.

Respectfully submitted,
With gratitude, resolve, and a cautious optimism rooted in Christ alone.
The Church Curmudgeon



Financial Reports

First Baptist Church of Rockport Financial Statement with 2026 Proposed Budget December 31, 2025

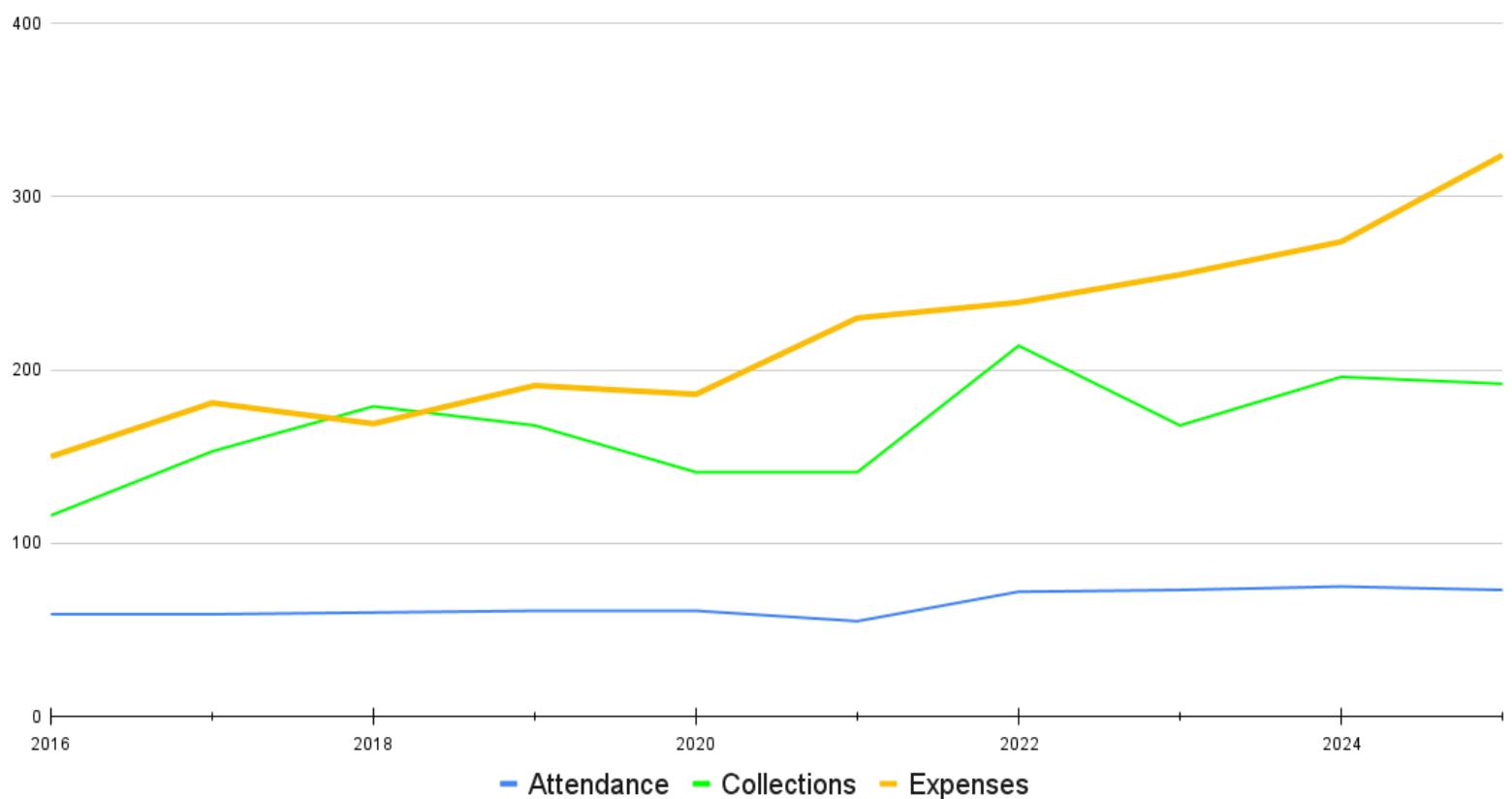
INCOME	2025	2024	Difference
40000 General Fund Collections			
40100 Named Giving & Loose Offering	160,843	184,183	(23,340)
40102 Tithe.ly Credit Card Fees	(648)	(737)	89
40300 Miscellaneous Offering	31,914	12,105	19,809
40400 Interest	72	72	(0)
40500 Credit Card Rewards	286	0	286
Total General Fund Collections	192,468	195,623	(3,156)
41000 Transfers			
41100 Transfers to Gen Chkg from Invstmt Acct	77,400	25,000	52,400
41200 Transfers to Gen Chkg from Housing	52,000	37,000	15,000
TOTAL Transfers	129,400	62,000	67,400
TOTAL INCOME (including transfers from invest. funds)	321,868	257,623	64,244
EXPENSE	2025	2025	2026
	Actual	Budget	Difference
51000 Board of Deacons			Proposed
51100 Pastoral Compensation			
51101 Pastor Salary	75,533	75,533	0
51102 Pastor Housing Allowance	36,000	36,000	0
51103 Pastor FICA Allowance	7,879	7,879	0
51104 Health Insurance	6,500	6,500	0
51105 Pension	7,951	7,951	0
51106 Pastor Professional Expense	1,859	2,000	141
51108 Life & Disability Insurance	800	800	0
51109 Pastor Sabbatical*	0	0	0
TOTAL Pastoral Compensation	136,522	136,663	141
51200 Support Staff Compensation			
51201 Church Life Coordinator	26,752	26,208	(544)
51202 Bookkeeper	7,920	8,620	700
51203 Staff FICA	2,421	2,289	(132)
TOTAL Support Staff Compensation	37,093	37,117	24
51300 Other Personnel Expenses			
51301 Worker's Comp	1,149	1,500	351
51303 Pulpit Supply	800	1,000	200
51304 Staff Professional Expense	1,164	1,000	(164)
TOTAL Other Personnel Expenses	3,113	3,500	387
51400 Other Deacon Expenses			
51401 Worship Materials	394	600	206
51402 Flowers	777	900	123
51403 Evangelism/Outreach	1,252	2,000	748
51404 Fellowship/Hospitality	5,764	5,000	(764)
51405 Lay Leadership Development	2,000	2,000	0
51406 Judson Dues	213	225	12
TOTAL Other Deacon Expenses	10,401	10,725	324
51500 Mission Support			
51501 Bennett - Missionary Support	3,500	3,500	0
51504 Hope Ascending Missionary Support	1,875	1,250	(625)
51507 Open Door/CA Food Bank	250	250	0
51508 Deacon's Fund	1,046	2,000	954
51509 Community Impact	0	0	0
51512 TABCOM	250	250	0
51513 DiscipleMakers Ministry (Parkers)	500	250	(250)
51514 Amy St. Denis/CVM	1,000	1,000	0
TOTAL Mission Support	8,421	8,500	79
			13,500

Balance Sheet

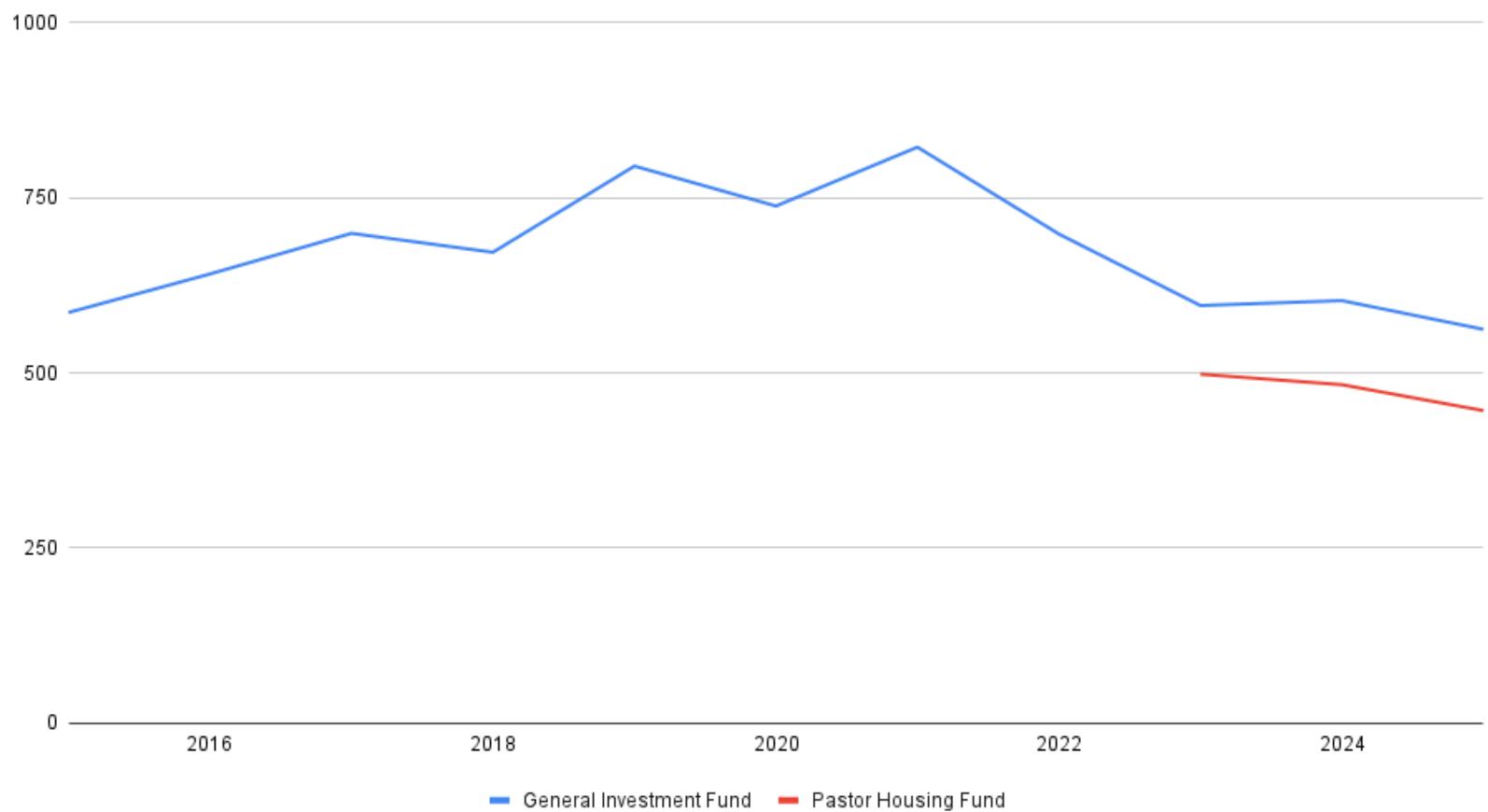
First Baptist Church of Rockport Balance Sheet December 31, 2025

ASSETS		2024	2025	Difference
10000	General Checking Account (1194)	20,084	22,329	2,245
11000	Debit Card Account (6347)	809	477	(332)
12000	Payroll Checking Account (5421)	245	1,518	1,272
13000	Savings Account (1760)	6,425	47,072	40,646
13500	Stewart Music Fund (MABIT) (as of 11/30/25)	25,957	26,090	133
14000	General Investment Account (as of 11/30/25)	602,511	561,668	(40,843)
16000	Pastor Housing Investment Account (as of 12/31/25)	480,417	445,545	(34,872)
TOTAL ASSETS		1,136,448	1,104,697	(31,751)
LIABILITIES and FUNDS				
22000	Amazon Business Card (AmEx)	0	3,215	3,215
30000	General Fund	3,655	1,740	(1,914)
34000	General Investment Account Fund	602,511	561,544	(40,968)
35000	Grants			
35201	BBSU(Boston Baptist Society Union) Grant	9,558	12,011	2,453
35203	Vacation Bible School Grant	2,954	2,678	(276)
35301	Senior Outreach/Lectures/Juds Bask Grant	0	530	530
35304	George Wright Fund Grant (ABC)	0	0	0
35305	Lilly Sabbatical Grant	0	39,386	39,386
35306	TABCOM Youth Group Meals Grant	0	2,124	2,124
	TOTAL Grants	12,512	56,729	44,218
36000	Restricted Funds			
36101	Adult Church Groups Restricted Fund	2,265	546	(1,719)
36102	Deacons Restricted Fund	0	0	0
36104	Flowers Restricted Fund	0	0	0
36105	Missions Restricted Fund	1,189	1,189	0
36106	Music Restricted Fund	0	0	0
36107	Special Offerings Restricted Fund	45	45	0
36108	Youth Programs Restricted Fund	425	0	(425)
36202	Steeple Fund	0	0	0
36301	Stewart Music Restricted Fund	25,957	26,090	133
36302	Markham Scholarship Restricted Fund	4,209	3,221	(988)
36304	Memorial Fund	2,785	4,685	1,900
36401	Pastor Housing Restricted Fund	480,427	445,693	(34,734)
	TOTAL Restricted Funds	517,302	481,468	(35,833)
38000	Other Accounts			
38100	Pass-Through	0	0	0
	TOTAL Other Accounts	0	0	0
TOTAL LIABILITIES and FUNDS		1,135,979	1,104,697	(31,282)

10-Year Trends



Investment Fund Trends



Wordsearch

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Better Know a Baptist		Nebuchadnezzar
Revelation Song	Steeple Done	Millennials
Sabbatical	Repair Work	Church Mice
Volunteers	New Hymnals	Reformed
Baptism	Babylon	Gardens
Cheryl	Bible	