



2023

CONNECT CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Impact Report

Connecting people to
Christ, each other and
their purpose.



A Letter From Our Pastor



Message from the Elders



Year In Review



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For more information visit
www.connectchristianchurch.org

A Letter from Our Lead Pastor



What an honor it is to serve with you and learn from you as we trust and follow Jesus together! I see how you seek GOD in worship, how you lead by example, how you fervently serve, how you are building community in groups and how you extend your arms wide open in love to those who are new to the Connect family.

In 2023, we were able to accomplish great things in Jesus' name because of your faithful commitment to connect people to Christ, each other and their purpose. As you turn these pages, I encourage you to glorify GOD for His faithful presence and strength which empowers us to do ministry.

Read it once, read it twice – pick it up the next day and read it again. Every number represents an act of love. Every statistic represents a person who has been divinely touched by real love that brings real hope into real life. While there's so much more kingdom work to be done, let's be thankful that GOD uses imperfect people like us to affect generations of people with the good news of Jesus Christ!

In Christ,

James A. Kuhl, Lead Pastor



Message from the Elders

It's always hard to summarize a full year in the life of a church. There are so many ups, downs, seasons, and ministry experiences that have their own unique feel and impact. As an elder group, however, there were a few themes that characterized both the focus and the feel of 2023 at Connect. The primary words that come to mind are UNITY, COMMUNITY, and ENGAGEMENT.

Over the last several years, between the pandemic and our own seasons of transition, we have worked hard to build a unified and versatile team and to create a stronger sense of family/community within this Connect body. Hopefully, you have experienced this yourself through our many ministries, and even from the stage as we have been blessed by so many of our staff preaching effectively in 2023. Our first church-wide initiative, The Red-Letter Challenge, was a great way to crystalize this community focus and create greater engagement in the small group life of Connect.

Hopefully, you have also seen more and more announcements about events that provide greater opportunities for us to engage together as a church family. This church body, as a small reflection of the greater church body, is made up of many members connected to Christ as the head. Each and every one of us is an important part and has been uniquely gifted to serve a purpose no one else can serve as well. That's why our Mission Statement says, "Connecting People to Christ, Each Other, and Their PURPOSE!" We can't wait to see how God uses each and every person in this Connect family in 2024 and beyond!







In Him,

2024 Elders

Alan Cudney, Matt Dowd, Rob Hyatt, Randy Stewart, Tim Farrar

Attendance Overview



 Baptisms	 Volunteers	 Connect Groups
28	181	24
 First Time Guests	 Sunday Average Attendance	 Wednesday Night Average Attendance
370	471	202

Sunday Attendance Growth over 2022 – 17%

Attendance Overview



■ **Connect Kids Sunday Average Attendance**

88

■ **Uprising Students Average Attendance**

31

■ **Group Member Attendance**

281

■ **WinShape Campers**

391

■ **Easter Attendance**

760

■ **Christmas Eve Attendance**

451

Financial Overview

**2023
Offering Total**

\$1,399,576

**2023
First Time
Givers:**

68

**2024
Budget:**

\$1,386,550

**2024
Monthly Giving
Need:**

\$115,546



Financial Overview

Year End Totals

Annual Offering

2021	\$1,414,039
2022	\$1,370,682
2023	\$1,399,576



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Income/Expense Summary

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Income	\$1,506,748	\$1,417,001	\$1,461,768
Expense	\$1,440,797	\$1,360,411	\$1,397,046
Net	\$65,951	\$56,590	\$64,722

Account Balances

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Designated	\$508,846	\$504,838	\$565,290
Restricted	\$15,217	\$20,930	\$ 10,681
Unallocated	\$442,018	\$460,886	\$526,709

Total Bank

Balance	\$966,081	\$986,654	\$1,102,681
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Any questions, please reach out to:

Cris Rury, Executive Pastor or

Sabrina Armstrong, Finance & Operations Director.

Ministry Highlights



■ Missions Update

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Ephesians 2:10

At Connect, we believe that engaging with the community through service is a vital part of our mission as we strive to connect more people to Christ, each other and their purpose.

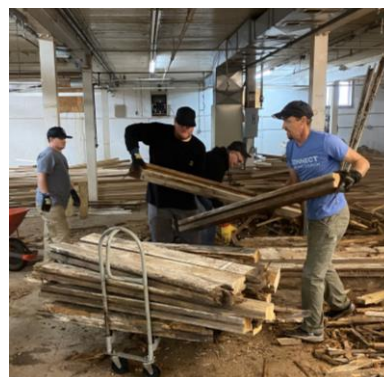
In 2023, Connect gave over \$100K to support other Christ-centered mission organizations both locally and internationally. We served together with a family-friendly meal packing event with Lifeline Christian Ministries. Connect also began a partnership with Brook Pointe Apartments, across the street, in order to come along side our neighbors to show real love.

For 2024, we are adding Pioneer Bible Translators to our mission support as well as Mighty Ministries of God. We have also realigned some of our 2024 mission support to better help those ministries within Cabarrus county that we have a member serving in a leadership capacity.

For a list of the mission organizations, we support and for more information, visit our website under "Ministries/Outreach."

Missions Committee

Randy Stewart, Charles Gregory,
James Kuhl, Cris Rury, & Sabrina Armstrong



Ministry Highlights



Worship Ministry

Worship is a matter of the heart, and few things have the power to stir the heart more than music! It is an honor to serve the body of Christ here at Connect through song. 2023 saw three new worship team members and two new tech booth volunteers. In addition to our weekly worship services, we hosted three Encounter Worship Nights, a prayer service for the National Day of Prayer, a Good Friday service, and two Christmas Eve services. One of the lyrics resonating within my heart right now is:

"If I know my Father, I know my Father has good plans"

2024 is already poised to be an awesome year for Connect and we in the Worship Ministry can't wait to see what all is in store!

Derek Field, Worship Pastor



Ministry Highlights

Connect Christian Preschool

We ended the 2022 – 2023 school year with one hundred and forty-four students, over seventy kids on our waiting list, a total of nine classrooms and a staff of eighteen teachers and two administrators. While preparing our students for Kindergarten, we are blessed to teach them the basic truths: God made me, God loves me, and Jesus wants to be my friend forever.

During 2023, eight of our preschool families, also become regular attenders at Connect.

We welcomed our preschool families and friends to Connect for several events during 2023: Back to School Bash, Pumpkin Patch, Grandparents Day, Parents and Pastries, Christmas Program and Preschool Graduation. We love watching our kids develop spiritually and educationally throughout the school year.

Stephanie Reagan, Preschool Director

Early Childhood 3mths – 5 years old

Our Early Childhood Serve Team teaches and models the first impression of God's love through the basic truths: God made me, God loves me, and Jesus wants to be my friend forever. Throughout the year our team has welcomed adults and teens. Bridging the gap between generations is a Next Gen Team goal.

Each year Connect partners with our families to help ease anxieties, encourage, provide resources, and ultimately help them lead their children to develop a faith of their own. After our families attend our Family Dedication event, they have the opportunity to stand before our Church family to make a commitment to God and the Church. In 2023, we had 9 families attend this event and we as a Church agreed to come alongside and help them raise their families in the Church.

We look forward to 2024 as we continue to teach the basic truths and continue to build relationships with families and the next generation.

Stephanie Reagan, Early Childhood Director

Ministry Highlights

■ Elementary K-5th Grade

Our Elementary Ministry has seen amazing growth this past year, due in part to many new families attending. We have 22 Elementary volunteers who serve each week in Connect Kids Elementary programming.

This past year, we took 12 Preteens (Club 45) to Athens, GA for CIY SuperStart. This is a conference designed especially for this age group to learn about Jesus in a fun and interactive way. We also took the preteens to Camp Awanita for a weekend camp to grow closer to God, community, and their leaders. We also grew our team to allow for programming for Club 45 at both services. We saw 5 kids commit their lives to Jesus and become baptized in 2023.

We also relocated Elementary Ministry classrooms to allow for a dedicated space for this ministry. This included raising funds to make the space feel amazing for our Connect Kids.

Johnny Crossman, Elementary Director

■ Student 6th Grade – 12th Grade

Connect Student Ministry has been catapulted into a movement of students now called: *The Uprising*. This student movement has sensed the Holy Spirit's calling to be a "light in the darkness," and we have ran toward that calling with relentless pursuit. Tangible examples of that can be seen in our numerical growth. With an average attendance of a dozen students in January, we are now reaching between 30 and 40 students each week. Moreover, our Leadership Teams, comprised of 16 Adult and Student "ministers" - have now been trained and challenged to illuminate our message to every student that enters our space: "*welcome home, you have a place where you belong.*" Relationships are now the metric in which we define our culture: relationship with Jesus, relationship with each other, and relationship with your purpose. While we have a journey ahead of us, we are continually pressing toward that goal.

Chad Grindstaff, Student Pastor

Ministry Highlights

■ Group Life

Connect groups saw wonderful growth and life change for 2023. We had 23 groups involved in the Red-Letter Challenge including 8 new groups. Student ministry also participated in this challenge. We learned lessons about being with Jesus, forgiving like Jesus, and serving like Jesus that will last a lifetime.

Connect groups loved and served each other well in 2023. They made meals, watched children, served together, visited people in the hospitals, sat in prayer, donated financially, and grew in their relationships with each other and with Jesus.

We had multiple groups participate in Equip nights. Four classes were also offered including, Financial Peace, Parenting, Old Testament, and Sharing the Faith.

Jesse Smith, Discipleship & Engagement Pastor

■ Testimonials: Why Group Life

"I have been reflecting on how nothing stays the same ... good and bad ... but all without escape of the tender and powerful providence and will of our Most High Father.

Then I thought about our little group; out of all the millions of little groups on this Earth, how, just in the last 12 months, we have been rewarded and blessed for continuing to continue, fighting to remain and learn, trusting and following even when it doesn't always make sense."

"We saw group members ministering to each other, showing the Love of Christ in times of illness or need. We saw answered prayer, as one family was able to move into their first home. We were blessed when two families agreed to multiply our impact by starting a new group."

"A new family joined our group, and we had greater bonding! Each of us have prodigal children who have walked away from God, and we are praying for each other's children. Two families having problems sought Christian counseling. These may sound negative, but honesty, sharing, and praying for the tough stuff is growth for sure."

Testimonials: Why We Give

"Praise Jesus! We've been praying about our end of the year giving amount, and the Lord made it abundantly clear last night. We asked for the amount for a sacrificial gift as things have been really tight this year. We are overjoyed to give, and we are believing He will continue to provide and bless the ministries of our church. We are so thankful for Connect!"



"We joyfully and intentionally give to Connect because of this church's mission to connect people to Christ, each other, and their purpose. We want to be a part of advancing the kingdom and help Connect move forward in its ministry and outreach efforts, in knitting together deep friendships and community, and in helping others realize more fully that Jesus came to give life and life abundantly. We are so grateful to the pastoral staff for faithfully serving the Lord day in and day out, including pastor Johnny, Stephanie, and a village of volunteers pouring into and loving on and shepherding the hearts of our children. True biblical community is a such a gift from the Lord, and we have found Connect to provide that for ourselves and our children. Being rooted in this Connect family by way of regular Sunday worship and small group life have encouraged us to live and love more like Jesus. Connect and its people have been a balm when we were weary, a joy doubled in times of delight, and a steady and faithful presence in the ups and downs of life. We give because we see Jesus here, and we want to help this church continue to show real love and bring real hope into real lives in 2024 and beyond."

Vision for the Future

Connect's 2024 Ministry Priorities

- **Generate healthy growth in attendance, engagement, giving and life change.**
 - Acts 2:46-47, Acts 9:31, Ephesians 4:16, 2 Corinthians 9:6-11
- **Deepen and broaden discipleship culture throughout all ministry efforts.**
 - Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 9:23, Mark 1:16-17, Colossians 1:28
- **Constantly work to deliver inviting and impactful experiences in every interaction.**
 - Matthew 25:40, John 13:34-34, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Colossians 3:23-24
- **Improve the nature and frequency of communication to drive trust and unity.**
 - Proverbs 13:17, Proverbs 25:11, Colossians 4:6, Ephesians 4:15
- **Identify and develop leadership to properly resource ministry priorities.**
 - Exodus 18:21, Acts 6:1-6, 1 Peter 5:2-4, 2 Timothy 2:2

Connect will be a church...

- Where everyone serves
- Where those who feel forgotten can discover their purpose
- Where we continually invite people into our lives, to our home, to worship, & into group life
- Where we equip the next generation of students to be disciple makers
- Where we value worship, prayer, and fasting