

# LONG'S CHAPEL

REACH. GROW. SERVE



## 2024 IMPACT REPORT

[longschapel.com](https://longschapel.com)

# WITH GRATITUDE

I don't think the words "thank you" can fully express my heart for the importance of what last year has meant in the journey with Jesus through the life of Long's Chapel. I have so much gratitude in my heart that God has provided in incredible ways through you. The resilience, faithfulness, and cooperation has made ALL the difference in allowing our church to heal while watching God restore so much beyond what we could even ask or imagine. God is at work and each of us are a part of something truly special. This piece is meant to help put words and pictures to some of that work for the purpose of celebration for what has been and a foundation of challenge for what is to come. As Chris Tomlin sings so well "greater things are yet to come and greater things are still to be done in this city."

Chris





## DID YOU KNOW?

- Did you know that last year Long's Chapel made a financial investment in a new curriculum for age-level ministries called, "Orange" that has been helpful to engage the youngest among us in biblically-grounded lessons that engage the senses and help them experience the Bible and not just read it.
- Did you know that in our response to Hurricane Helene, you hosted hundreds of volunteers and staff from Eight Days of Hope, invested tens of thousands of dollars in recovery efforts, hosted community meals, collected infinite supplies to be distributed, and offered comfort and hope to thousands of residents of Western North Carolina through your efforts? The work continues but the last quarter of last year was defined by your efforts to live out your faith in love to our most affected neighbors.
- Did you know that the Yarncrafters Ministry of Long's Chapel has around 15 women that meet weekly on campus to work on knitted and crocheted items that get distributed far and wide around the county to hospitals and nursing homes (prayer shawls), oncology centers (chemo caps), schools (toboggans), and several other places with a tangible expression of love?
- Did you know that we hosted a confirmation class where we took 12 students into membership in the life of Long's Chapel? That added our total church membership as of 12/31/24 to 1021 people who formally consider Long's Chapel their spiritual home.
- Did you know that a long-awaited dream of holding our first Stephen Ministry training group came to fruition with 12 Stephen Ministers who are equipped and trained for all kinds of distinctively Christian caregiving scenarios?
- Did you know that every week hundreds of people gather on our campus for Bible study, prayer and small group gatherings all throughout the day and evening? This is such an important part of the heartbeat of Long's Chapel.
- Did you know that Acts 2:42 is averaging 100 people every Wednesday during the school year? Chef Derrick and his amazing volunteer team prepares and serve an amazing dinner each week.
- Did you know that the Firewood Ministry, led by Richard Reeves and his awesome group of volunteers, delivered 351 loads of firewood this past year?

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# A FEW PROGRAM NOTES FOR OUR SHARED LIFE TOGETHER

One of the opportunities that 2025 brings is some renewed leadership (staff and volunteer servants) to important tasks in the life of our church. We would like to welcome The Birches (Chris and Carley) to the Director(s) of Communication role. This is a role that Drew Westmoreland filled in the last several years (first as Assistant and then Directing). With his leadership of modern worship and his full time employment teaching Middle School History, he had asked some time ago to be relieved of that part of the work. We appreciate Drew, Laura Greer and every other staff and volunteer leader that stepped up to “carry” different pieces of this communication work through this extended transitional time.

Chris Birch will run primary point on the Communications role with Carley supporting. We feel blessed with the experience in communications that they bring to our church and to this work. In addition to experience working in a church environment they have recently owned their own communication/video production company and were also a family whose oldest graduated from Long's Chapel Child Enrichment Center. They live in downtown Sylva and have two children. We feel blessed to have them on our team. If you need to connect with them the best way is:  
[Chris.birch@longschapel.com](mailto:Chris.birch@longschapel.com)

Long's Chapel is blessed with phenomenal leaders in so many different capacities. We have incredible small group leaders and Sunday school teachers. Incredible hospitality servants and a brand new Stephen Ministry program. We have generous financial givers who lead our church with the generosity of their stewardship. We have folks that lead in our community on boards and agencies that make this world a better place. At our congregational meeting in early December, we also elected the Long's Chapel Church Council for 2025. The members of that body are: Chuck Lipp, Jim Breitmeier, John Bryan, Ginny Howard, Jaci Reynolds, Clay Hinson, Leisa Scoggins, Elaine White, Wanda Payne, Parker Reeves, Steve Crites, Fred Eastwood, Jamie Francis, Hal Fair. Non-voting staff members include: Torry Pinter, Pastor Chris, Pastor Joey, and Laura Greer, Recording Secretary.

- The Church Council's work is well underway for the new year with Jaci Reynolds leading this team for 2025. We also are so very grateful for Chuck Lipp who led that team the last two years and for Vicki Staib and Bill Ashley that provided essential leadership over the last several years and can now “rest from their labors” as they serve in other capacities. We also feel so grateful for Debbie Hembree who moved to Tennessee and Jim Davis who remains in our church family and continues to serve in our Praise Team Ministry. Please be in prayer for these leaders (past and present) who steward the vision of Long's Chapel through their embodiment of what it means to REACH, GROW and SERVE.

## A FEW “SAVE THE DATES” TO BE AWARE OF FOR 2025 ARE:

- March 3 - Ash Wednesday Worship 6:30 pm
- March 30 - SERVE SUNDAY -
  - Covered dish drop off by 9:00 am
  - Breakfast at 9:15 am
  - Service and Send Off 10:00-10:15 am
- April 5 - SpEGGtacular
- April 17 - Holy Thursday Music/Scripture @ 6:30p
- April 20 – Easter Sunday Worship
- April 27 - LCKids Easter Program
- May 25 - Move Up Sunday/Graduation Sunday
- June 16 – 19 VBS Week



# REFLECTING ON 2024:

A Year of Growth and Transition at Long's Chapel

By: Chuck Lipp, Church Council Chair 2023-2024

This past year, your Long's Chapel Church Council focused on making our church the best it has ever been. While our ministry focus remained grounded in our Wesleyan and theological heritage, we also embraced a season of reflection, renewal, and decision-making.

We navigated the challenging process of disaffiliating from the United Methodist Church in 2023, allowing time to grieve the changes and explore all available options for our future. After careful consideration of several Wesleyan denominations, the congregation voted to join the Global Methodist Church. The decision was clear, with 76% of the votes in favor. As of December 31, 2024, we are now officially affiliated with the Global Methodist Church.

This year also brought increased engagement across our congregation—both qualitatively and quantitatively. Worship attendance, a key measure (though we recognize its limitations), saw a slight but encouraging increase, marking the end of a series of annual declines.

We prioritized communication and transparency, holding four congregational meetings throughout the year to keep everyone informed and provide opportunities for feedback. The necessary steps for disaffiliation required significant effort, including recertifying the Child Enrichment Center as a licensed daycare.

The Church staff took on these many tasks in addition to the regular activities.

Thank you for your prayers, support, and involvement during this pivotal year. Together, we've embraced change while remaining steadfast in our mission to serve Christ and our community.

# 2024 LONG'S CHAPEL FINANCIAL REVIEW AND IMPACT

Compiled and Submitted by Bill Ashley, Finance Chair

As most are aware, after the disaffiliation of 2023, Long's Chapel was faced with a great opportunity to rebuild, but not without a few challenges.

The 2023 disaffiliation expense was nearly \$600,000. Thanks to generous donations, our congregation not only met that expense but continued to meet our remaining mission and other obligations.

What follows is a summary of bullets describing 2024, a few of our challenges and yet, more importantly, the successes of Long's Chapel to thrive and to grow. It's with your financial support, prayers, and presence that we were able to be faithful to our task of *Reaching, Growing & Serving* for Jesus.

- In 2024, we started and finished the year without a formal budget. This was not ideal and may have been upsetting to some. In hindsight, it was the right decision not knowing an accurate estimate of income and contributions that would be coming in.
  - Instructions to all were to watch expenses very carefully yet continue to be a church of community outreach missions.
- As you will see, through a combination of managing financial challenges and the generosity of many, 2024 turned out to be a very positive year for Long's Chapel.

Long's Chapel	2023	2024
Income	\$ 1,253,596	\$ 1,522,111
Expense	\$ 1,542,746	\$ 1,455,905
Net	\$ (289,150)	\$ 66,206

CEC	Dec-23	Dec-24
Income	\$ 60,422	\$ 111,509
Expense	\$ 88,000	\$ 80,236
Net	\$ (27,578)	\$ 31,273

Second Season	2023	2024
Income	\$ 118,805	\$ 151,264
Expense	\$ 196,951	\$ 121,223
Net	\$ (78,146)	\$ 30,041



If we review the financials of Long's Chapel, without distortion from disaffiliation income and expenses from 2023, Long's Chapel had an approximate 20% increase in revenue yet a decrease of approximately 6% in expenses, not including Second Season or The Child Enrichment Center which will be discussed separately. This resulted in a net positive of \$66,000 versus a negative of \$289,000 in 2023. This alone without the rest of the story is worthy of celebration.

## THE CHILD ENRICHMENT CENTER

One of the many challenges/opportunities facing Long's Chapel was the ability to continue the mission of the CEC. Childcare availability in Haywood County, if not across the state, was becoming increasingly difficult to find and was unaffordable. A large part was due to governmental decrease in grants and funding post-Covid.

- We decided as your Church Council, this was an important mission for Long's Chapel. It was worth the effort and study to find a way to continue offering daycare and classroom services.
- We formed a committee that worked hard to find solutions to the large losses we were incurring each month.
- The solutions we put in place included several steps to bring the CEC back to an affordable mission for Long's Chapel. In fact, the last three months have produced positive monthly numbers.
- Enrollment is up with a 24% increase in income, financial losses are down by 65% and overall expenses are down by 8% from 2023.

It may be too early to claim victory, but all indications demonstrate that we were able to save this mission and make it sustainable going forward. We were not willing to give up until we gave it everything. Thanks to the staff of both Long's' Chapel and the CEC for executing a plan that at times was difficult and uncomfortable, yet the results speak for themselves.

God is good! All the time!





# SECOND SEASON THRIFT STORE AND NEIGHBORHOOD PANTRY

This is the second largest mission of Long's Chapel. The Open Door on Commerce Street was closed in 2022. It was reborn as Second Season with a thrift store and a free choice food pantry located at 156 Boundary Street.

- Second Season in early 2023 was losing a significant amount of money for many reasons including a paid model for staffing versus a volunteer model and not watching expenses for food and equipment.
- Second Season today is all volunteer except for approximately 40 hours a week of paid thrift store staffing.
- Food costs are watched very carefully. A fundraiser was held, and grants were obtained, two of which came from Food Lion.
- Second Season over the last 18 months has a net positive of \$28,000.
- In the last 18 months we have handled over 488,000 lbs. of food, served households representing 48,000 individuals and provided enough food for over 400,000 meals.

