

FRIENDS REPORT

DECEMBER
2025

Annual Newsletter of the Friends of the Locktown Stone Church, Inc.



PRESIDENT'S LETTER 2025

Mark Zdepski

Progress has been slow, but the Friends are moving closer to our goal of acquiring title to Church property since Delaware Township offered to sell it to us for \$1.00 last year! FLSC, Inc. responded to the verbal offer in writing on February 5, 2025 and again through our attorney on May 20, 2025. Correspondence continued between the attorneys throughout the summer. On October 23, 2025, the Township Committee produced a letter of support, voicing their endorsement of FLSC, Inc. ownership, and their commitment to achieving a timely and smooth transition. The Friends hope to take title early in 2026.

With ownership comes responsibility, but since incorporation in 1987, we are familiar with this burden. Since 1989, the Township had a benign influence, but one that was devoid of any financial contributions. In early 2025, a generous patron pledged to pay for our capped legal fees for the transfer. Ownership of the church property will not change the mission of the Friends, nor the obligation for public access for Green Acres use or other Special Conditions recorded with the Deed in 1989.

What changes are an increase in paperwork needed to maintain tax-free real estate ownership and some increased overhead costs. The New Jersey Conservation Foundation has offered to assist us in understanding and preparing the necessary documents. FLSC, Inc. will be responsible for all insurance premiums, as we have been during Township ownership.

The property transfer removes a roadblock to the Wagon Shed Project. It will release us from the NJ Prevailing Wage Rules, which stem from Township ownership. The Friends will be able to invite bids and select contractors without the burden of state rules designed for government-owned properties. The Township had informed us that they were occupied with Dilts Park redevelopment and could not help with the Wagon Shed Project. Therefore, the only way to proceed is for FLSC, Inc. to own the property.

FLSC, Inc. is \$50,000 short of funds needed to cover the projected cost of construction of the Wagon Shed Project. We have raised \$83,165 from patrons and secured a \$143,000 grant from the State Historic Preservation Office. Recently, \$15,378 was returned to FLSC, Inc., reimbursement for funds expended in accordance with the grant. However, we have spent \$58,000 on design drawings, engineering and government permits so far. An additional \$10,244 has been spent on legal fees, primarily for the unanticipated Board of Adjustment Use Variance. The Friends have \$30,128 in funds that are dedicated to the Wagon Shed Project. Now more than any recent appeal, FLSC, Inc. needs your contribution. Our organization has been kept solvent by a core group of patrons, punctuated with widely-spaced much larger donations. Between the two, we are able to maintain the building.

During the past two years the Trustees have increased public outreach in an effort to build a larger patron base. Some first-time attendees to the StoneHouse Concerts were clearly impressed with building appearance and the acoustics. Some have expressed interest in working as a volunteer, an advisor, or a Trustee. Our plans for 2026 are focused on growing our programing, expanding our patron base and moving the Wagon Shed Project forward. To do this, the Friends need your monetary support. Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution now.



President Mark Zdepski preparing for a trustee meeting

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Treasurer's Report

Robert N. Roop, Treasurer

For the year 2025 to November 1, we have had income of \$28,781.13 and expenses of \$22,641.97 for a net income of \$6,139.16. We received our first reimbursement from the New Jersey Historic Preservation Fund for 57% of the eligible funds we spent since August 2023. That \$15,378.32 helped us improve for the year so far, to better performance than the past few years when Wagon Shed expenses were high. Individual contributions have been over \$1,350 so far with your normal year end contributions still to come. We were fortunate to raise \$2,900 in support of the StoneHouse summer and Mimi Conklin Upmeyer fall concerts. We have continued to benefit from moderate interest rates on Treasury Bills, a super safe investment. With lower interest rates income was down from last year to \$1,998.

Our biggest source of income has been the enthusiastic support for our concerts. If you were lucky enough to attend you experienced a wide

variety of musical genres and enthusiastic audience participation. This year we have experienced the largest attendance of any programs we have ever had. The historic building can really showcase its marvelous acoustics.

We continue to see a very high use of PayPal to purchase concert tickets at a discount over the at the door admission fee. Using PayPal lets us have additional email addresses so many new concert attendees are receiving this newsletter for the first time. We are still printing and mailing a limited number of newsletters to supporters and friends but email helps us preserve our limited resources.

Building maintenance this year turned from tree work to the building itself. We retained several skilled local craftsmen to restore windows, interior wall plaster and paint. Repair to a stone wall displaced by growing tree roots is planned as well. We are also working to keep squirrels from visiting via the open flue of the chimney.

Concert performers have been very generous with their talents charging well below their usual engagement fees to entertain you. Our concert managers work hard to make your enjoyment as economical as possible.

Your support is needed for the annual fund. It provides the resources to maintain the building and grounds. Most of the work is accomplished by volunteers. Our next door neighbor is still cutting the grass and the trustees clean the building in preparation for events and perform some building maintenance. We do need paid services for preparing our tax return, maintaining our website and publishing our newsletter.

We recognize with gratitude your trust in our stewardship of the site and the resources that you contribute.



Trustee Chris Ely
repairs a shutter

FLSC Trustees Friends of the Locktown Stone Church 2025

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LOCKTOWN STONEHOUSE MUSIC SERIES WRAPS UP A SECOND SUCCESSFUL YEAR

Deb Kline

The second year of the Locktown StoneHouse Music Concert Series experienced growth in the range of music as well as the number of attendees. Performers brought a wide spectrum of music from a variety of cultural backgrounds including, old-time string, classical Hindu, Mariachi, Celtic fusion and vintage jazz. Enthusiastic audiences tapped their feet, clapped hands, sang along or sometimes just closed their eyes and let the sounds echoing off the stone walls wash over them. The second season ended with a community sing led by the effervescent Kira Willey with Choir & Co, who managed to pull together random voices with a special spin on The Boys of Summer—mashed up with Toto's classic Africa!

The number of attendees greatly increased, perhaps due in part to experience the history of the facility and hospitality offered in the courtyard, accompanied by a glass of wine, an interesting specialty brew or other non-alcoholic beverage.

We are grateful to our performers for their trek to the hinterlands of Locktown, including Burnt Mills Highballers, Snehash Nag on sitar & Mallar Goswami on tabla, Rivertown Vintage Jazz, Mariachi Sones de mi Terra, Na'Bodach and Choir & Co for rocking the stone walls of Locktown. Even more thanks to our sponsors and crew: Val Tucci, Chris Ely, Will Wong,



Mariachi Sones de mi Terra played at the StoneHouse Music Series

Moira & David GaNun, Rich Warwinsky & Audrey Frankowski, Linda & Mark Zdepski, Will McConnell, Colin Lee & Deb Kline, Julie & Greg Huljack.

The Locktown StoneHouse Music Series plans to expand for 2026 and could use your help. Aligning with the 250th Anniversary of the United States, we are looking at America's Roots in song and stories. We are seeking historical story tellers or performers, musicians who represent the cultural influence from the waves of migration who have landed on our shores and/or the indigenous people who were here before us. If you can help or wish to volunteer, please send an email to info@locktownstonechurch.org.



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THE MIMI CONKLIN UPMYER FALL CONCERT SERIES 2025

Caroline Beidelman



The Mimi Conklin Upmeyer Fall Concert season opened with The Anderson Brothers Trio's unique tribute to Richard Rodgers, with Will Anderson and Peter Anderson on the saxophone and clarinet, and Adam Moezina on the guitar. In addition to delighting the audience with their unique improvisations, they gave a synopsis of Richard Rodgers' biography and historical anecdotes of the pieces themselves. Peter spoke of the collaboration between Rodgers and Lorenz Hart and Oscar Hammerstein. The trio's individual improvisations flowed from one to the other so smoothly underscoring their cohesiveness, which was noticed by audience members during the ensuing post-concert comments from the audience. This was the trio's second performance at the Locktown Stone Church.

The following week, the Andorinha Duo, featuring Hunterdon County native Robin Zeh on the violin and her husband, Paul Woodiel on the nyckelharpa and fiddle, performed early music from Scandinavia, with pieces from Medieval and Renaissance scores. They explained the influence of these early works on future musical styles. The duo also included traditional airs and joyful polskas from the Swedish repertoire. Their performance at the Locktown Stone Church marked their premiere



public performance of such a program. Robin expressed further delight in having her 2nd grade teacher and early violin teacher, as well as family, in the audience. They commented that the acoustics of the church was perfect for their program, and they expressed a genuine interest in returning.

After a one-week break, we closed our Fall 2025 Season with the string trio Filament, featuring Evan Few, violin, Elena Kaufman, viola da gamba, and John Walthausen, harpsichord. They presented a program called Bach Revisited, in which they played works by J.S. Bach, sonatas written for the organ. The Ensemble transcribed the pieces for viola da gamba, violin, and harpsichord. At the end of the concert, Elena demonstrated the treble and bass viola da gamba to interested audience members.



The Friends of the Locktown Stone Church would like to thank the following sponsors for their continued support which makes this concert series possible:

Christopher & Deirdre Ely, Phoebe & Joseph Wiley, David & Moira Ganun, Wil Wong, Mark & Linda Zdepski, Valerie Tucci.

We have been fortunate to be able to offer quality concerts in the unique venue of the Locktown Stone Church, and rely ENTIRELY on donations from the public and our sponsors. Should you wish to become a sponsor to support our programs and ensure continued quality of music offered, please email us at info@locktownstonechurch.org.

EDUCATION OUTREACH

Moira GaNun

We are working with the Delaware Township Historic Advisory Committee and teachers from Delaware Township School, to develop a project to celebrate the 250th year of US Independence that includes the Locktown Stone Church.

We had our first Locktown Litter Clean Up Day this past spring as a good will effort in the community and also shed a light on the history of the church. The event started and finished at the church with refreshments provided and an opportunity to tour the church and learn about its history. We plan to expand the outreach to include local groups (including Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops, DTS students etc) to join us.



*Trustee Moira GaNun
reading the church history*



The pristine exterior at dusk



“A JOB WELL DONE!”

Virginia Mickle

Like all historic structures, our beautiful Locktown Stone Church needs the occasional burnishing to present its best face to the public. This summer the trustees committed \$10,000 to make several repairs to include exterior and interior work. Brian Cahill of CDMA, Inc. in Rosemont took care of painting all the windows and doors, glazing windows where needed and repairing a broken window pane. Brian inspected all the exterior soffits, fascias and moldings and determined only one small area needing to be addressed. The shutters also received his attention. Inside the church Brian repaired the worst of the plaster failure below the chair rail, where moisture has taken its toll.

It is a pleasure to enter this pristine structure on a bright fall afternoon, to take in the clear sunlight reflected on the white woodwork and enjoy the turning leaves through the old wavy glass of the original windows. The trustees wish to offer Brian Cahill a “job well done!” for keeping the church looking its best.

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Sketch by Jason Eckhardt,
brother of Trustee Julie Huljack



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