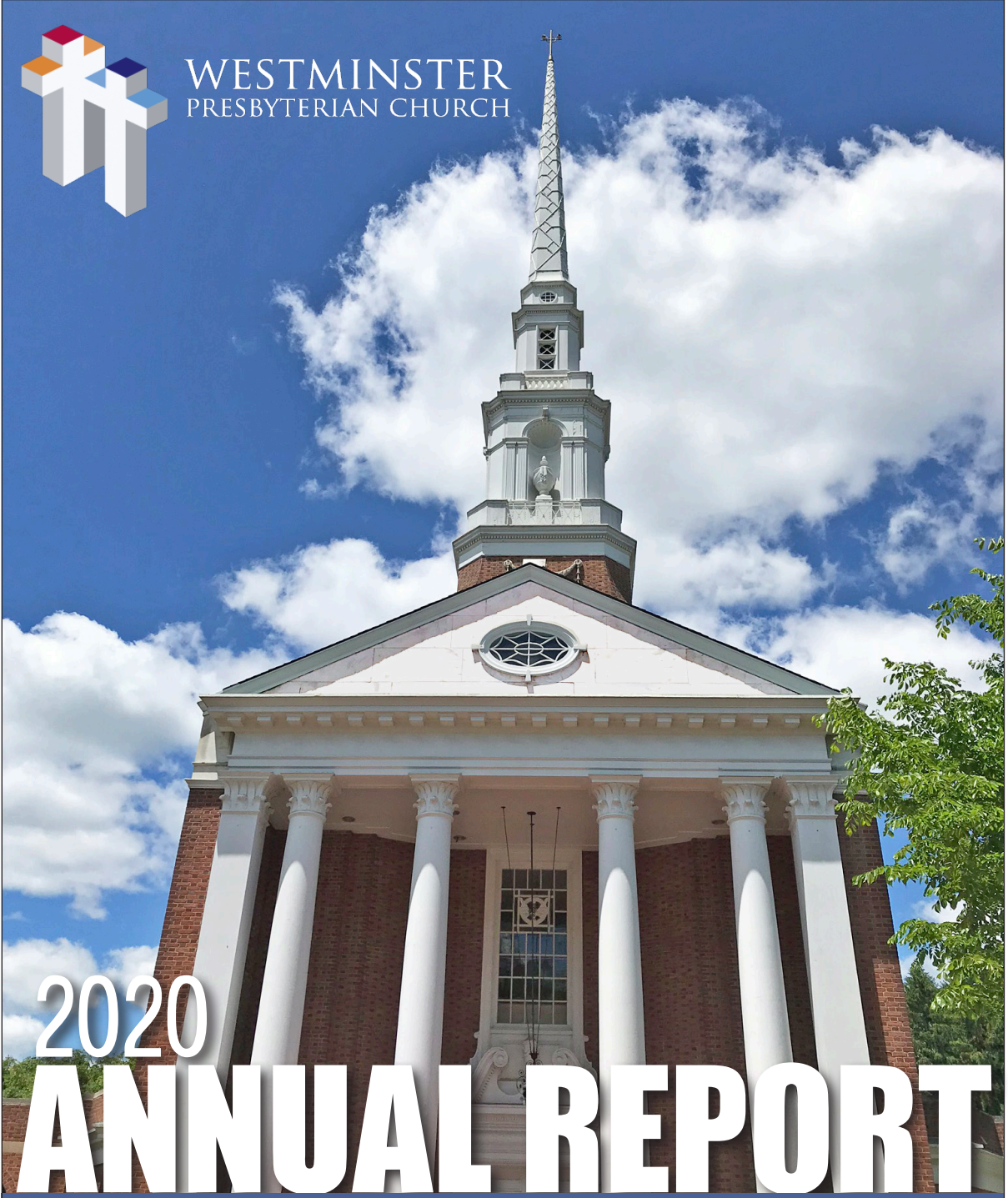




WESTMINSTER  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



2020  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

*to the Congregation from Session*

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## *A note from the*

### **INTERIM SENIOR PASTOR**

My Friends,

God is always calling God’s people to journey out. It is no accident that there are so many stories in the Bible about people making a journey because it is, in fact, Abraham who is the pattern for their faith and our faith.

This faith of Abraham – by which he said, “Yes, I will follow” – is the pattern of faith which God gives to you and me today so that our names can be joined not only with Abraham, but with Moses and Joshua and the disciples and Paul.

It is the gospel, as Jesus tells the disciples: “Go into all the world...and I will be with you until the end of the age.” That promise by Jesus is the source of what it means to enjoy the journey!

We’ve been on that journey. I’ve heard the question along the way, and I imagine Abraham asked it, the disciples asked it. It’s the question of all children on the journey: your children, my children, God’s children: How Much Longer? Are We There Yet?

Well, you’re almost there, and my part of the journey with you is over. I have enjoyed the journey! Let me say it again, with all the twists and turns and ups and down, I have enjoyed the journey! I hope you have.

My prayers are with you as you begin the joy of your journey with Jo Forrest.

Blessings of the season,

Bruce Lancaster

# From Our Pastors

## ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR CONGREGATIONAL CARE



Wow, 2020 has been a stunning year!

Last January, when we held the officer retreat and planned steps for ministry for the coming year, we had no idea of what an extraordinary time was coming. We did have trust in God who is steadfast, reliable, caring, and abiding with us in all

circumstances. The prophet Isaiah promises, “Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” In the course of the coming year, we wanted to soar with the eagles, but the realities of dealing with the coronavirus kept us walking patiently through 2020.

This past year we journeyed through some very dark days together. The church closed its doors for worship not once, but twice due to COVID. As the session wrestled with this difficult situation, the staff got busy reimagining all church programs and ministries given the new restrictions: drive-by collections of food began while communion and baptisms were offered in the courtyards; youth groups met in the parking lots and on the grassy hillsides of the church; Westminster Early Childhood Education Program (WECEP) carefully reopened the child care to serve families, followed by the nursery school in the fall; adult classes and seminars were offered by Zoom. Technology saved the day, allowing us to transmit services into our homes so we could all worship together as we sat apart. Weekly videos were created to teach and bring music into our lives.

Children’s programs were delivered, and Sunday School began via Zoom in November. Worship on Christmas Eve was available online and outside on the steps as we gathered to sing “Silent Night” by candlelight in the rain with the Living Nativity.

The spirit of a caring community continued as donations of food were assembled into bags of food given to kids in downtown Pittsburgh. A special collection was taken for SHIM to support their food pantry. Deacons delivered care bags to our members and continued to send cards to say, “Hey, we are thinking and praying for you!” Three blood drives were held at the church. Treasures for Troops donations came in and were sent to needy families in our community. Care continued within and beyond our doors.

This was also a time of transition. We said goodbye to saints of Westminster Church as they entered the Church Triumphant. On All Saints’ Day, we rang the chime 26 times, remembering and celebrating their lives with us, forever in our hearts. The goodbyes continued as we said farewell and thank you to two beloved pastors: Rev. Jason Freyer, who faithfully served Westminster and its members for 12 years, and Rev. Dr. Bruce Lancaster, who served as interim senior pastor for 20 months.

Thank you to all of you who have prayed, supported, and encouraged one another, the pastors, staff, and the community in these challenging times. Even with the building closed, we continue to be the loving church of Christ.

Onward in faith!

Rev. Louise Rogers



# Worship



# Worship Commission

The fellowship that is an outgrowth of making music together is unparalleled. During rehearsal, we laugh together, we pray together, we sing and ring together. We relish the opportunity to participate in worship as worship leaders.

As with nearly everything else, that came to a standstill on March 13. Rehearsals were canceled. Singing was deemed to be a dangerous activity. Westminster Ringers can't ring at home, as the instruments are at church, and each ringer plays 2 or 3 bells. That would be a very limited melody! Students were spending an inordinate amount of time on devices, so it was decided that Zoom rehearsals weren't the best option for Cherub and Junior Choirs. Speaking of Zoom, it's a difficult venue for live music making!

The Chancel Choir met for several weeks in the fall in the courtyard. We were masked and socially distanced. But soon even our attempts to sing together were halted by the shortened days, the colder temperatures, and the disappearing light! We were able to create a virtual choir anthem.

When in person worship was canceled, we recorded worship services. We would meet on a weekday and record two weeks' worth of services. We were delighted to be able to have people in worship for the short term, and recorded those services for live streaming. When in person worship was halted again, it was decided to livestream worship at 11:00 a.m. on Sundays so that we could be relevant to things happening in the world and in the life of our congregation.

– Christine Hestwood

# The Bridge Worship Service

Despite the several changes and shifts during this past year, the Bridge worship community continued to show its value as a service of connection between friends, family, and a growing faith in Jesus Christ. In the spring of 2020, as was the case with all of Westminster's services and programs, the Bridge made a shift to virtual worship and connective experiences. Embracing some of the unique flexibility opportunities presented to this community, the Bridge leadership and congregation shifted to Zoom for its Sunday morning gatherings. This allowed for continued personal connectivity and relationship in a time that so many were isolated.

The summer of 2020 brought the advent of livestream capabilities and we once again were able to worship "together" with a full worship team. Shortly after, we were able to invite a limited and socially distant congregation back into the walls of our church to worship safely together. As each of these changes took place, we also bid our friend Rev. Jason Freyer a fond farewell after he accepted the call to be the senior pastor at Laboratory Presbyterian Church in Washington, PA. His departure opened spaces in both the preaching and music leadership of the Bridge service which were graciously filled by Nadina Robusto, Ed Sutter, and Westminster's pastors. For the health and safety of our broader community, 2020 closed out with services once again being offered virtually.

# The Bridge Worship Service (continued)

Though the year could certainly be classified by its many transitions and shifts, there were several successes to be celebrated as well. Westminster's partnering with PostScript Productions for our livestreaming and video creation has opened the door for a vital presence within the community in spite of our remote operation. This was especially true for the Bridge's contemporary Christmas Eve service, which took on a whole new personal and creative approach to that evening's worship. In the earlier days of the year, several members of the congregation gathered for an evening of fun and fellowship – with lots of help from Marilyn and Joe

Rubino – to paint new banners that add to both the atmosphere and attitude of our worship space. New musicians and vocalists continue to be involved in worship, and the “spirit” of the Bridge has remained alive and well.

We end the year with the continued search for both personal and faithful connection through Christ, and we are excited to offer worship through synchronous and asynchronous meetings into the new year as we look forward to once again joining together in person.

– Ed Sutter

## Chancel Guild

Chancel Guild manages Sunday memorial flowers, seasonal décor for the sanctuary, chapel, and reception areas of the church; wedding coordination; and certain worship-related purchases.

Sunday memorial flowers were replaced by seasonal permanent arrangements with the termination of unrestricted in person worship in March. Seasonal outdoor wreaths, symbolizing welcome, remained off the church's most utilized entrances until Christmas. Some Chancel Guild members decorated the sanctuary for Christmas.

Two wedding coordinators assist the bride during her wedding planning process, rehearsal, and wedding. Chancel Guild provides candles (for a fee) as requested.

Many helpful hands make our tasks social as well as meaningful events. You are welcome to join us as we enhance our beautiful church and worship experience.

– Joy Mahrer and Marsha Gnagey, Coordinators



# EDUCATION & SPIRITUAL FORMATION



# Adult Spiritual Development Commission

The purpose of the Adult Spiritual Development Commission is to provide opportunities and resources for spiritual development. Programs and events are designed to help adults navigate their spiritual journey and develop friendship and fellowship within the groups and Westminster community.

The commission has oversight of the library and adult classes including the Westminster Seminars, Perspectives, and Genesis classes. Small groups are supported by our commission and include Faith in Life, Fishers of Men, Tuesday Morning Men's Group, Westminster Book Group, Adult Bible Study, Women 2 Women (W2W) Bible Study, and Centering Prayer. Information for all the groups is available on the church website.

Although 2020 activities were limited as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, the commission sponsored the following activities and events:

The Lenten book study, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly* by Marva Dawn, was offered Wednesday evenings and Thursday mornings, initially in person and then in Zoom format.

A Quiet Practice for Lent, a time of quiet prayer and contemplation in Galbreath Chapel, was available two evenings in March.

Lenten Devotions: Along with Bible verses, each day's devotion offered a reflection and prayer composed by members of the Westminster community and Sunday meditations from some favorite sources.

The June Twenty-Four Hour Prayer Vigil held in lieu of a day-long retreat provided the opportunity to pray with our community for peace and healing. Participants took a 30-minute time period to focus on prayer.

Several Bible studies were offered which allowed members to explore their faith in a Zoom group setting. "Be Anxious for Nothing" was offered at the beginning of the pandemic. Louise Rogers also led a study on the Gospel of Mark and a Zoom Advent study titled "The Incarnation" by Adam Hamilton.

Adult seminars continue as Westminster Seminars Online. The Sunday seminar programs use the Zoom format, and the link is accessible on the church website. The seminars continue to inspire and to provide a wide range of topics for study and discernment.

- The portable labyrinths are available for program presentations and rental to interested groups and organizations.
- Silence for Our Lives, quotes for reflection and spiritual living, are available in the *Spire*.
- Pets can be such a blessing and are a very necessary component to the well-being of some of us. Our Pet Ministry remains strong with Blessing of the Pets and Pet Remembrance services.
- The Gallery, the Permanent Collection and Members Showcase, continues to be a source of beauty and inspiration.

– Barbara Myers



# Children's & Family Ministry Commission

Our Mission for the Children's & Family Ministry is to:

**Provide** a welcoming Christ-centered ministry for children and families.

**Guide** children and families on a path of lifetime faith.

**Allow** children to discover God through age appropriate learning programs and fellowship.

**Provide** parents the resources needed to raise a spiritual child.

**Give** families the opportunity to serve God and care for others through prayer, actions, mission, and attitude.

We strive for our children to develop:

- Biblical knowledge – become familiar and grow in their knowledge of the stories and scripture teachings in the Bible in developmentally appropriate ways
- Personal knowledge – grow in their own faith through a relationship with God, learning to pray, worship, and live their faith every day
- Moral knowledge – use their faith as a basis for making right decisions

With this mission in mind, we provided the following programs for the children of Westminster this year:

**Sunday School** – Sunday school programs are offered during the 9:45 and 11:00 a.m. worship services. In person Sunday school was suspended in early March due to the coronavirus.

Children's message videos and story book readings were offered on Facebook in April, May, July, September, November, and December.

In early July, to keep in touch with children and families we offered drop off/pick up spiritual formation materials and lessons on the Fruits of the Spirit. These lessons contained a definition of each Fruit of the Spirit, science experiment, suggested video, coloring page, and activity that parent/s could share with their child.

For the start of Advent, family Advent bags were put together with a family devotional, craft, ornament, etc. Families requested bags or were directly offered a bag by receiving a personal email. Some bags were delivered. Approximately 60 bags were given out.

Virtual Sunday school was introduced for Advent, offered 10:00-10:30 a.m. on four consecutive Sundays. We included a memory scripture on the weeks of Advent, candle lighting, Bible Story, music, game, and prayer. Three volunteer Sunday school teachers participated.

*Grow* curriculum was purchased for Sunday school after reviewing several popular Sunday school curriculum options. The statement of faith includes the Bible as the inspired, authoritative word of God. There is one God, eternally existent in three persons, the Trinity. The deity of Jesus Christ, including his virgin birth, his sinless life, his death on the cross, his resurrection, his ascension to the right hand of the Father, and his personal return. Also, the belief in receiving forgiveness of sins and eternal life through Jesus. *Grow* curriculum works online and in person. *Grow* consists of an entire year of discipleship, teaching, events, volunteers, parents, programming, and annual planning. The teaching consists of curriculum for elementary (kindergarten through 6th grade) and preschool, weekly packs for toddlers, pre-teens, and children with special needs, weekly teaching videos for elementary and preschool, memory verses in sign language, bumper and countdown videos, slides and graphics, parent/volunteer emails, etc.

**Children's Message during Worship** – Children's messages were offered at the beginning of the year on the first Sunday of the month, which coincided with children's choir and communion. When worship reconvened in person, we offered a children's message on the third Sunday of the month. In addition, we provided a monthly Facebook children's message or book reading.

**Baptism Book and Bible** – When a child is baptized into the church, families are given a special baptismal book. This book allows the family to begin that spiritual journey with their young child. Adventure Bibles were given out on the third Sunday in October to children in 3rd grade. In addition, any child in 4th through 6th grade who hadn't received a Bible or was new to Westminster received an Adventure Bible.

**JAM** – JAM (Jesus and Me) is our Wednesday evening program for our 5th and 6th graders. It offers a safe and fun environment for kids and an opportunity to experience age appropriate fellowship. JAM was suspended for in person gathering in March 2020. In April and May we offered JAM virtually. We reconvened in person in mid-August with a JAM mini-golf outing and a kick-off with outdoor games and Wu's Frozen ice. We met in person through November and back to virtual after Thanksgiving.

**Sacrament Education** – Starting in second grade, children are given the option to participate in a two-session sacrament education class. The teaching focuses on the meaning behind the two sacraments of our Presbyterian faith, baptism and communion. Once completed, the children are invited to join their parents in celebrating communion in the worship service of their choice. We did not hold sacrament classes in the spring due to the virus. Seven children participated in one combined class in the fall. In addition, many babies and few older children were baptized in a small intimate ceremony.

**3rd and 4th Grade Workshops** – We provided workshops that taught a core element of worship in a fun and informative way. The only Bible workshop held in 2020 was "I Have My Bible, Now What?"

**Vacation Bible School** – The Bible school experience was very different this year. It was held the last week of June as an outdoor/backyard experience with the parents as the hosts. The virtual curriculum used was BOLT. Bags were delivered to children and families that participated a week before. Three families opened their backyards to additional VBS children. We had 105 children participate virtually.

**Family Events** – Periodically throughout the year, the Children's & Family Ministry Commission holds family fun events aimed at both preschool and elementary age kids and their families. Most events did not occur with the exception of Family Valentine Bowling held on the Sunday following Valentine's Day, Family Golf Outing held on a Sunday in August, Family Fall Fun held outdoors at Gilfillan Farm in mid-October, and Christmas Eve Live held outdoors at 5:00 p.m. with children dressed for the live nativity scene.

Additional Family Events: Family Lent Activity, Holy Easter Hunt, Family Swim party, Gingerbread House Factory, and Breakfast at the Manger. While these events were not held in 2020 due to the pandemic, they can be considered in 2021.

**Mission Activities** – We encourage and provide mission opportunities for the children to participate in throughout the year. For "Food to Go," children brought in nonperishable food items for children in the Pittsburgh area who qualify for free breakfast and lunch during the school year. JAM children went Christmas shopping for a local Bair foster child. Cards were written and a craft made for deacons to deliver to older members in the church, especially those who cannot get out or have visitors due to the pandemic.

– Natalie S. Brown

## Presbyterian Women of Westminster – PWW

PWW Circle small group meetings ceased with the with the termination of unrestricted in person worship in March. The Spring and Autumn Rummage Sales were canceled.

– Joy Mahrer, Abigail Circle Chairman

# Youth Commission

Though it surely comes as no surprise, this wasn't the year that Veritas had planned for. COVID restrictions put a damper on nearly all of our plans, and outright canceled others. As our spring and summer planning ramped into full swing during the late winter of 2020, several changes became immediately necessary. First and foremost, for the safety of students and families, our Wednesday evening programming and confirmation classes were moved to Zoom, and our spring retreat for both middle and high schoolers was canceled.

While all of our major summer trips were also canceled, we were able to gather as a group outdoors in the church parking lot for games, fellowship, and worship. Students were encouraged to participate in our first ever "Virtual Week of Service" by exercising creative means of serving their families and communities. Our young people helped out at camps, in neighborhood landscaping projects, and prayerfully raised funds for local Presbyterian churches. God's Kingdom was evident on earth through the work of our teenagers. The summer of 2020 also saw the departure of Rev. Jason Freyer from our Veritas community. Jason finished up his 13th year with Veritas and accepted the call to be the senior pastor at Laboratory Presbyterian Church in Washington, PA. Jason's departure created a few shifts in Westminster's youth ministry leadership with Ed Sutter assuming the role of Director of Youth Ministry and Family Counseling, and Laura Ecklin moving into the role of Associate Director of Youth Ministry.

The 2020-2021 school year started off with a stated goal of remaining "flexible, but not flaky." Embracing the shifts in leadership, Veritas built a robust team

of volunteer leaders, with training in August, and began the year with a mixed schedule of both in person and virtual meetings on alternating weeks. In this time, our annual Thanksgiving food drive took on a whole new twist with students taking the lead. Our amazing young people came through once again by collecting thousands of food items and hundreds of dollars to be donated to SHIM.

As we had become so accustomed to do, we once again made a shift for the safety of our community and resumed fully virtual youth programming in December of 2020. Through a few outdoor meetings, quick visits in front yards, online discipleship groups, and weekly Wednesday programming, leaders and volunteers have continued to connect with our young people in constantly new and shifting circumstances.

At year's end, we look forward to a retooled confirmation program, renewed efforts to improve the personal connectivity of our ministry, and a safe return to in person programming in the coming months. Our commitment to parents, families, and adult volunteers continues, and we look forward to expanding our offerings for not only youth, but for family and intergenerational opportunities as well. Though Veritas is by no means unique in this season, we've dealt with an everpresent sense of transition throughout the year. Through the dedication of leaders, the love of volunteers, and the constant grace of God, we have continued to present Westminster's young people with opportunities to meet Jesus Christ as their Savior.

– Ed Sutter



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH & MISSION

Micah 6:8  
DO JUSTICE LOVE MERCY WALK HUMBLY  
END RACISM



# Communications Commission

Pre-COVID, the Communications Commission had updated the website to be more user-friendly and welcoming. In person worship sermons were recorded by volunteers, edited and posted to the website for later viewing. We had little presence on social media. We were slowly shifting from print content but continued to spend a large amount of time designing and printing weekly bulletins and monthly newsletters (*The Spire*).

With the advent of the pandemic in March 2020, our shift to full worship service livestreaming, social media, and online content creation accelerated as we were forced into a new, virtual environment. The website, Facebook posts, weekly emails, and online bulletins became the focal point for congregation communication while Zoom video calls became the thread that kept our staff and community operational.

## 2020 Accomplishments:

- Out of necessity, we improved the video capture and dissemination of worship services.
  - » **January – March 8: Sermons from in person worship were recorded** by Communications Commission members and posted for viewing days following each service. Recorded sermons averaged about 50 views per sermon.
  - » **March 15 – July 5: In the absence of in person worship services, a combined traditional/contemporary service was scripted, recorded, and edited each week prior to Sunday.** The recorded service was then “premiered” on YouTube at the standard worship time on Sunday. These services were recorded and edited by a team of volunteers along with Jason Freyer and Ed Sutter. Recorded worship services averaged about 200 to 300 views per worship service.
- » **July 12 – present: Both worship services,** regardless of whether open or closed to church members, **are livestreamed and can be watched live via YouTube** at the time of the service or later on demand. WPC outsourced worship livestreaming to Post Script Productions, a Pittsburgh-based full-service video production company. Livestream services average about 300 views per traditional service and about 175 per contemporary service.
- The WPC website became an important communication tool during quarantine. **Page views year-to-year increased by 7,036 views, which is a 39% increase.** In 2020, views spiked each Sunday due to the livestream/online worship links that members access on Sunday mornings.
- We expanded our presence on social media, specifically on Facebook and Instagram.
  - » A weekly calendar of posts was developed which included content from multiple ministries and staff video segments.
  - » **Since May 2020, we reached more than 36,000 people/viewers via Facebook.**
  - » **WPC Facebook followers** (measured by WPC page likes) **is up to 684 members** of which 76% are women.
  - » Music video posts on Facebook have had the biggest reach/reaction recently.
  - » **WPC Instagram followers is up to 122 followers** of which 74% are women.
- An informative weekly email continues to be sent to our membership each Friday to help connect all members. Messages from the pastor were added to this email in 2020 to enhance communication in place of face-to-face gatherings. This email is a key tool for the Communications Commission.

# Communications Commission (continued)

- *The Spire* (WPC's monthly newsletter) is now available in an online format. There is a push to transition from mailing a hardcopy of the newsletter to encouraging our members to access and read the online version.

## Plans for 2021:

- Support and facilitate the transition of our new head pastor.
- Given the shift to a more virtual environment, evaluate the organization and workload of WPC Communications moving forward.
- Develop and implement a strategy to increase Westminster's social media presence and reach.
- As livestream is here to stay, begin to offload some of the services performed by Post Script Productions to church volunteers, where possible.

- Continue to advertise our toolbox of services to commissions and internal committees to support and enhance their ability to reach and update the congregation with their ongoing focus and work.
- Continue to produce weekly and monthly communications including the weekly bulletin, weekly news emails, newspaper releases, website updates, social media posts and the monthly newsletter (*The Spire*). Migrate to online formats, where applicable.

Those serving on the Communications Commission this year include: Bonnie Bacik (chair), Carolyn Klasnick-Brooks, Jason Freyer (partial year), Anna Hiner, Carolyn Kerr, Sara Kyle, and Jeannie Schott.

– Bonnie Bacik

# Membership Commission

As members of the Membership Commission, we seek to mindfully invite, welcome, and continually engage people in the life of Westminster. It is our goal to make people feel welcome and ultimately want to join and be active and connected members of Westminster's community of faith.

In addition to worship, we seek to invite people to participate in the life of the church through volunteer opportunities. Volunteers were active in new ways this year as we sought opportunities to reach out to serve our communities while following CDC guidelines. Some of these included:

- Volunteers made and distributed handmade facemasks at the beginning of the pandemic.
- We more than doubled our support of the *Food to Go* program in 2020.

- We provided 500 hygiene kits to *Global Links* for distribution locally and collected and donated our used medical mobility devices to them as well.
- We have begun a new partnership with *Grow Living Stones*, an organization providing food to communities in need. Our volunteers will continue to serve food on specific Sunday evenings into 2021.
- The *Gilfillan Garden* had a record crop this year, harvesting 1,105 lbs. of food, thanks to the dedicated volunteers. This harvest goes directly to the SHIM food pantries.

There were two Inquirers' Gatherings in 2020 held in February and October. Those who attended these informal gatherings met with Bruce Lancaster and members of the Membership Commission for a time



# Membership Commission (continued)

of sharing. Bruce Lancaster provided an overview of the history and structure of the Presbyterian Church and explained what it means to be a member of Westminster.

In 2020, we received 12 new members in February and 9 new members in October. We have been contacting those new members and checking in on how they are doing. In addition, new confirmands joined the church in 2020.

While fellowship opportunities were limited this year, we held several Zoom Welcome Center gatherings and plan to do this monthly in 2021.

## Overview of efforts in 2020:

- Collaborated with Communications Commission and staff to create new “Welcome” pew cards that include information about receiving more information about membership. The cards also feature a “tear off” portion to be dropped in the offering plate.
- New volunteer opportunities
- Commission members reaching out to new members to “check in”

- Updated handouts at Inquirers’ Gatherings to include information about commissions of the church and current session members.

## Goals for 2021:

- Establish better ways to warmly welcome, connect with, and involve potential members. Encourage a churchwide effort of actively reaching out and connecting with others.
- Communicate the answer to “Why become a member of Westminster?”
- Establish a mentoring program for new volunteers and new members so they can have a “buddy” and feel better informed and connected to the church community.
- Continue work on creating an updated brochure and explore options to include it on the website for people to more easily identify which parts of church life they’d like to participate in and to see the benefits of being a member.
- Continue to update information included in the “New Member Packets” distributed at Inquirers’ Gatherings.

– Kristin LeBeau, Chair



*Westminster delivered over 1,600 Food to Go bags this summer! Many volunteers over multiple weeks sorted food and packed bags. Every week for nine weeks, volunteers delivered bags to the five neighborhoods we supported.*

# Outreach Commission

Even in this most unusual year, Westminster continued to faithfully make Mission and Outreach a high priority. The Outreach Commission initially met monthly in person, and then via Zoom to consider how to engage the congregation and distribute available funds to mission partners. The congregation's generosity enabled the Outreach Commission to allocate funds to Pittsburgh Presbytery and to provide funds to local, national, and international mission agencies.

Though faced with the challenges presented by church-building closures, social distancing, and decreased donations, Outreach made allocations to these local/national missions: Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh (Homewood), Lazarus Fund, Friendship Church, Garfield Farms, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, PRISM, Center for Victims, Open Hands Ministries, South Hills Interfaith Movement (SHIM), Washington City Mission, East End Cooperative Ministry through Baby Bundles Project, Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank, Jubilee Food Kitchen, Just Harvest, Bread for the World, Meals on Wheels, Bair Foundation, and Schenley Heights Community Development Program. International mission partners supported in 2020 included our mission partners in India, Malawi, Haiti, Medical Benevolence Foundation, World Mission Initiative, and Hawassa Hope. As a result of 2020's challenges, the level of support provided to our mission partners was down by 35%.

In 2020 the church found new ways to reach out and help our mission partners. SHIM – In the spring, as a response to the increased need for food by South Hills families, Westminster members stepped up and donated more than \$6,200 over and above the Outreach allocations. The SHIM/Gilfillan Garden was tended by a faithful team to provide a bumper crop of produce. Bair Foundation – At Christmas time once again in 2020, members supported foster children by purchasing gifts for them. Additionally, through the generosity of members, a summer project enabled hundreds of foster children to receive gift packages. Food to Go – Each week over the summer, church members bagged and delivered healthy snacks and activities to hundreds of children in struggling Pittsburgh neighborhoods. Heart for Haiti Christmas Ornament Project – Volunteers turned hand-painted Haitian silk scarves into 335 unique ornaments, selling them and raising \$2,310 for La Croix Technical School in Haiti.

We wish to thank Louise Rogers for scheduling representatives from Outreach and other Westminster ministries each Sunday morning to highlight the work enabled by the support our church members provide. In 2020 the Outreach Commission was deeply grateful to the congregation for its financial support and personal involvement as a response to God's gracious gifts.

– Sandy Conley, Chair

# Peace and Justice

Peace and Justice has been part of Westminster since 1983 when Ruth Rylander led our congregation in joining over 4,500 other Presbyterian churches in the PC(USA) Commitment to Peacemaking. In those early days the focus was primarily on international peacemaking. Recently we have begun to include social justice issues such as hunger, economic inequality, racism, incarceration, and environmental concerns. To reflect this broadening focus, in 2015 we changed our name to Peace and Justice.

This year, Peace and Justice sponsored these activities and events:

**Grace Book Club:** Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church normally hosts Westminster for this ongoing discussion, an outgrowth of our 2016 workshop Faith, Race, Justice, and Mass Incarceration event. In these COVID-19 times we have been meeting weekly via Zoom. This racially mixed group over the last 4½ years has explored 25 books that address topics such as mass incarceration, poverty, inadequate schools, limited job opportunities, and other racial justice issues.

**Summer Discussions:** In July, Peace and Justice sponsored a three-part series, Welcoming the Stranger: A Look at Immigration in the U.S. This Zoom series explored our history of immigration, the current situation, and ways in which Christians are responding to needs of immigrants.

**Racism Film Discussion:** In response to concerns about racial injustice, we hosted a Zoom discussion of the films *Just Mercy* and *Selma*.

**Faith Witness against Racism:** On October 4, which was both World Communion Sunday and Peacemaking Sunday, we invited members and friends to an outdoor gathering of over 100 honoring those who have worked against racism. Through stories, prayer, and song we committed to work to heal our racial divide; a monthly newsletter was developed to aid us in our work.

**Jesus Christ and the Dividing Wall:** Race and God's Mission: We promoted and "attended" the McClure/WMI Lecture series presented by Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and provided a Zoom discussion for Westminster members following each lecture.

**Peace & Global Witness Offering 2020:** A total of \$2,206 was received. A portion of these funds is shared with our presbytery, synod, and PC(USA); the remainder will be used to pay honoraria for the Summer Discussion Series.

For more information about peace and justice work at Westminster, contact Barbara Myers at [barbwmymyers@gmail.com](mailto:barbwmymyers@gmail.com) or Bobbie Hartman at [hartman1967@verizon.net](mailto:hartman1967@verizon.net).

– Bobbie Hartman



# Town Hall South

The year of 2020 was unique and challenging for all of us, and the Town Hall South Speaker Series (THS) was no exception. For the first time in 52 years, THS had to postpone the entire 2020-2021 season due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the health and safety of THS subscribers and supporters as their first and foremost concern, the THS Board was proactive and, in June of 2020, rescheduled all of the planned speakers to the 2021-2022 season. THS is hopeful and looks forward to gathering together again and enjoying the lectures that have educated and enriched our community for decades when the 52nd season begins in October with the following speakers: legendary journalist and news anchor Dan Rather on October 5, 2021; Silicon Valley innovator and visionary Kevin Surace on November 9, 2021; global adventurer and host of Netflix's *The Kindness Diaries*, Leon Logothetis, on December 7, 2021; former TIME magazine editor and diplomat Richard Stengel on February 1, 2022; and author and professor of animal science, Dr. Temple Grandin, who will discuss her personal journey with autism on March 15, 2022.

THS is a subscription-only series including five lectures held at the USC High School Theater on the first Tuesday of the months of October, November, December, February, and March. The cost of the series is \$165 for general admission or \$190 for reserved seating. A subscription-only luncheon series at St. Clair Country Club immediately follows each lecture for those who attended the lecture. The speaker is available to answer questions submitted

by the luncheon audience. The cost is \$135 for all five luncheons.

THS also provides service to the community through annual philanthropic gifts to a wide range of local organizations. Last year, THS donated \$20,000 to 18 deserving charities. Organizations receiving grants are as follows: Blankets Over Pittsburgh, Homeless Outreach; CASA for Kids, Inc. (Washington Co.); CASA of Allegheny County; City Mission with Children's Shelter; Family Hospice; Familylinks, Inc.; Family Promise of Southwestern Pennsylvania; Boys Hope Girls Hope of Pittsburgh, Inc.; Light in my City; Literacy Pittsburgh; Operation Safety Net; Outreach Teen and Family Services, Inc.; Prime Time Adult Care, Inc.; Street Symphony; Spencer Family YMCA/Camp AIM; The Early Learning Institute; Westminster Early Childhood Education Programs; and Zonta Club of Washington County.

Members currently serving on the THS Board are Janette Clements (Chair), Leanne Adamo (Logistics), Kara Bowser (Treasurer), Tricia Eccher (Graphics/Print), Melissa Epler (Luncheons), Becky Lahnich (Speakers), Erin Madson (Corporate Sponsorships), Kristin Matheny (Membership), Mia Moran-Cooper (Corporate Sponsorships), Susan Nixon (Membership), Nancy Rex (Membership), Roberta Sarraf (Marketing/Communications), Vicki Strain (Logistics), Marianne Trachok (Philanthropy/Secretary), and Wendy Vespa (Marketing/Communications).

— Janette Clements, Chair

# WECEP (Westminster Early Childhood Education Programs)

The children in Westminster Early Childhood Education Programs (WECEP), which consists of Child Development Center, Westminster Nursery School and Kindergarten, and Childrens' Day In, continued to learn, love, and grow in 2020, although in very unusual circumstances. The onset of the COVID-19 infection caused many changes in the programs. The Childrens' Day In (CDI) program, which is a reservation based drop-off, was forced to close, and remains closed at this point. Hopefully this popular program can be reinstated as things change.

The Westminster Child Development Center (WCDC) offers services between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday to meet the needs of working families with children ages 3 months to 6 years. The WCDC philosophy is based on educational research that supports the theory that children learn best through play, so the curriculum is play-based. It provides the children with the opportunity to explore, learn, and grow in a safe, nurturing weekly program. Programs such as music, library time, and physical education classes add to the overall learning experience. The WCDC is licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and nationally accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Enrollment is rolling admission and is open all year long. Except for a period in the spring and early summer, when the government mandated all childcare facilities be closed, and some periods during this fall, when staff members either had the virus or were exposed and certain classes had to quarantine, the center has been open. There is currently a wait list for openings.

In addition to a private kindergarten, Westminster Nursery School (WNSK) offers a comprehensive Pre-K, Pre-S, Transition, and Twos program for children in the community. Classes are offered

in the morning and afternoon, from one to five days per week. Half-day enrichment programs are also offered, with an emphasis on academic and creative areas, such as science, music, art, cooking, and STEM. The curriculum for all classes includes hands-on activities as well as the use of interactive white board for all classes. Westminster is the only school in Allegheny County to offer the Teach Smart Interactive White Board System with 1,100 age-appropriate activities for 2 – 5 year olds. WNSK operates from September through May (kindergarten August through mid-June) and is accredited by NAEYC and Pennsylvania Department of Education. NAEYC accreditation is the gold standard for services to young children and their families. The theme-based curriculum is specifically designed to meet the developmental needs of each age group. COVID took a toll on WNSK as well, as it was forced to close after March, although virtual instruction was provided as much as possible. Enrollment is down this school year with COVID still an issue, but new protocols were put in place, including wearing masks, taking daily temperatures of anyone entering the building, staggering drop-off and pick-up times and locations, providing snacks and supplies. The safety of the children is of utmost importance. Enrollment is held annually in February.

WECEP works closely with the church, sharing space and having activities led by the church staff, such as Christmas and Thanksgiving programs with story and songs, and Blessing of the Backpacks at the start of the school year. A renovation of the playground as well as the two indoor playrooms and upgrading the security system were paid for by the church. Fundraising activities also help to enhance programs. WECEP looks forward to 2021 when we will welcome more families into our programs.

– Karen Williams, WECEP Board Liaison for Programs

# WROC (Westminster Recreation & Outreach Center)

This year required perseverance and creativity. With the addition of several new programs and the commitment of dedicated WROC fitness instructors, we continued to strive toward our mission:

“To reach out to people for Jesus Christ and develop their faith through recreational activities and Christian fellowship.”

The WROC partnered with SilverSneakers, a nationwide senior fitness program, to bring more fitness options to older adults. A SilverSneakers certified instructor was contracted and led a variety of fitness classes including cardio workouts, strength training, stretching, and meditation.

A fitness class designed for people diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease, Parkinson’s Disease Level 1 (PD1) Workout, was added to the schedule. Instructor, Marta Phelps joined the WROC fitness instructor team in September. The plan is to expand the program in 2021 with a PD Level 2 workout for those who need more assistance. With limited fitness programs for people with Parkinson’s in the South Hills, our hope is to meet a strong need in the community.

Saturday Zumba returned in February with a new instructor and new energy. The class had 60 participants with most being new to the WROC.

Due to the pandemic, March 16 was the last day classes were held at the WROC. Through the WROC network of instructors we immediately began

finding creative ways to reach out to participants. WROC fitness instructors challenged themselves to find and learn virtual ways to teach classes. Many of them volunteered their time out of the love for their students and passion for exercise by staying in touch with students, reaching out with cards to those they knew were struggling, sending motivational emails, holding coffee hour on Zoom to check in and encourage fellowship.

WROC instructors have provided more than 100 Zoom and Livestream fitness classes. Participation has ranged from six to 70.

A WROC Advisory Board comprised of a group of a volunteers was formed to give recommendations and provide feedback to the WROC director. The board is comprised of both church members and non-members who have participated in WROC activities.

Improvements to the facility itself continued and the WROC floors were sanded, refinished, and permanent Pickleball lines added.

The WROC reopened in July 2020 with COVID guidelines and protocols in place. Both in person and virtual classes continue to be offered. Despite challenges, we have been able to minister and show the face of Christ to many participants. This is always our ultimate goal.

– Kathy Long

A black and white photograph of a man wearing a dark face mask and a light-colored jacket. He is holding two large paper bags filled with supplies. The bag on the right has handwritten text: "Shift 3 (15)" and "cookies & chips". The background shows an outdoor parking lot with a fence, trees, and a building.

# CARING COMMUNITY



# Board of Deacons

The Board of Deacons serves the congregation with acts of care and compassion. This past year many of the traditional ways of caring had to be temporarily stopped due to the virus. However, the Deacons continued to serve the congregation in meaningful and creative ways. The Deacons met nine times through the year, some meetings through Zoom, on the fourth Monday of every month, except June and July. We had a total of 32 deacons including two high school youth deacons.

During the 2020 calendar year the Deacons served Westminster through the following committees:

## **BLOOD DRIVE**

*Candy Kottyan, Chair*

We held four blood drives in 2020: February, May, July, and September, averaging 45 units donated per blood drive. Vitalant is the organization that now runs our blood drive, and they have merged with other sizable blood banks throughout the country. When large quantities of blood are needed, they have a larger pool to access. All signups were held online except for the one in February. Due to the need for social distancing, the Deacons could not be as involved as before but they did coordinate the efforts for the church.

## **CARE CALENDAR**

*Erin Madson, Chair*

The Care Calendar is a collaboration service opportunity for the entire congregation to volunteer to help church members who need special assistance during their time of need by reducing the stress of preparing and serving a meal. In 2020 a Care Calendar request was made for a variety of reasons: illness, surgery, recovery, and other needs. The requests were as short as a week and up to a month, sometimes extended once evaluated.

Those in need provide the chair with a list of food preferences and nights that delivery would be most helpful. Deacons often provide a cooler to the recipient's home for the duration of the meal delivery. Recipients were extremely grateful for the meals. In addition to the deacons providing the meals, many church members signed up to help support the Care Calendar. Their help is always appreciated.

## **SNAPPY SPIRITUAL TEAM – SST**

*Andi Noah, Carol Couch, Sandra Baker*

This team is ready to act on a "moment's notice," typically within 24 hours. It sends cards to members, prays for those on our Joys and Concerns list, and delivers prepared frozen meals to members who may need immediate attention. The SST has done great work this year in connecting with the members of Westminster Church.

## **FLOWER DELIVERY**

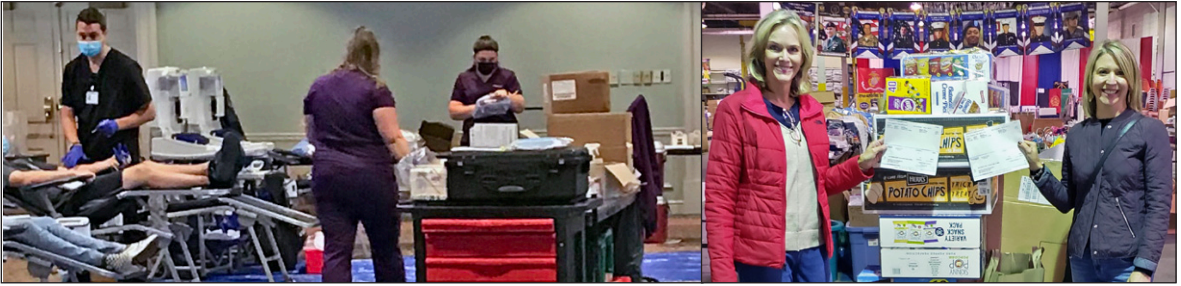
*Amy Walker, Sue Madden, Chairs*

The Deacons delivered flowers, prior to the church being closed due to the virus, every Sunday following the 11:00 a.m. service. Each week, two deacons volunteered to deliver flowers to members assigned to us by Peg Kinsey. Usually, there were 2-5 deliveries to the communities in our area: USC, Bethel Park, Carnegie, Peters, Mt. Lebanon, Bridgeville, and Canonsburg.

## **TREASURES FOR TROOPS**

*Tricia Eccher, Jill Dietrich, Chairs*

We asked the congregation for help in collecting personal care items for our troops deployed in the Middle East. We listed the items needed in the bulletin as well as in the Spire. The collections ran October 11-18, over two Sundays. Again, there was an overwhelming response from the congregation.



## Board of Deacons (continued)

Monies were also collected. Thank you to the deacons who coordinated the drive collection by Sunday. At the end of our drive, the items were sorted, packaged in boxes, and taken to Operation Troop Appreciation for distribution to our troops.

### CARE CALLS

Given the limitations in personal gatherings this year, the Deacons reached out to individuals with personal phone calls. The effort was made to stay connected and let everyone know the Deacons were available to assist as needed and to inform about happenings involving the church community. Generally, a Deacon was assigned a list of 25 people and contacted them throughout the year.

### ACT OF KINDNESS

*Amy Walker*

The Deacons reached out to members with care bags in the fall. The bags included prayer booklets, special treats, sermons, reading materials, and decorations. These were given to say “A special hello, we care.” The Deacons also went to Beechview to serve dinners with the 3-4-1 ministry. Individuals came to receive prepackaged meals, some prepared by Kara Daniele, the kitchen coordinator from Westminster Church. The efforts were greatly appreciated.

In 2021, Matt Baculik will serve as Moderator, Kevin Green as Vice Moderator, and Carol Couch as Secretary.

– Dave Palko, LHR

## Caring Ministries

Congregational Care at Westminster Presbyterian Church is extended through the entire congregation as we seek to be a Christian community of care. We are blessed by the range of services and the dedication of individuals who care for others. This past year, 2020, presented unique challenges and opportunities in offering care because we had to stay distant from one another. However, we found

creative ways to share God’s love and compassion to each other.

If you would like information on any of the services or groups listed, please contact Louise Rogers, Associate Pastor for Congregational Care, Spirituality, and Education, at [rogers@westminster-church.org](mailto:rogers@westminster-church.org) or 412-835-6630x216.

# Caring Ministries (continued)

- Grief Contacts – Ongoing support is provided through regular mailings of meaningful grief materials to those who have experienced recent loss. Counselors and pastors are also available to meet for ongoing support. Pastors support families during times of grief when a loved one dies or experiences trauma.
- Prayer Group – The Westminster prayer group focuses on prayer for our church’s ministry, our community, our nation, and the world, as well as for those in hospitals, who have suffered a loss, or are experiencing other concerns in their lives. The confidential prayer list contains members and non-members of Westminster. This year additional prayer support was also found through a Facebook prayer group and through the chat feature during worship services.
- Blessing of the Pets – All people-friendly pets and their owners come to a celebration that recognizes the animal companions that love us unconditionally. A pastor blesses these special family members and the people who love and care for them. The Blessing of the Pets is held once a year, the first Sunday in October, at 2:00 p.m. in the north parking lot.
- Prayer Shawl Ministry – Members knit or crochet shawls that are given to persons who are ill, have suffered a loss, or are in the midst of a life crisis. The shawl is a tangible reminder of the abiding presence of God with us.
- Christmas Remembrance Service – Missing a loved one can be particularly difficult at the holidays. This past year the remembrance time was offered online with a special video shown on December 21, the Longest Night. The video provided a time for reflection and meditation with message and music.
- In Home Services – Visitations are made by pastors to those church members who are at home recovering or in the hospital. Meals are provided by the Deacons and through the church. Recordings of the church services can also be mailed on CDs.
- Deacons – The Deacons provide a variety of support to the members of the church. They facilitate the Care Calendar in providing meals as needed, serve home communion, deliver flowers, coordinate the blood drives, and organize the Treasures for Troops. This year in particular, the Deacon ministries shifted to support through the phone. Care calls were made by deacons to members of the church to stay connected and to identify any particular needs that may arise.
- Welcome Baby Baskets – Such a joy to have a new baby. Volunteers from Westminster visit families and take a gift to assist them in caring for the new bundle of joy!
- Samaritan Counseling Center – Christian Counseling Associates provides family therapy that provides a “blueprint” to navigate chronic conflict. Services include co-parenting, parent-child reconciliation services, parenting workshops, and personalized family counseling sessions with a CCA counselor. The counseling center is located on site and is available for Westminster members and the community.
- Care Team – This group of individuals have been meeting to assess the growing care needs at the church. They are also willing to spend time with church members for individual visits. We hope to expand this team in the coming year.
- Blood Pressure Screening – On the first Sunday of the month, medical personnel are located in Memorial Parlor and at the Bridge to take blood pressure to help us care for our bodies.

– Louise Rogers



# STEWARDSHIP & SUPPORT



# Endowment & Special Gifts Fund Committee

The Westminster Endowment & Special Gifts Fund Committee is responsible for oversight and management of the church's endowment fund. We have had a couple of busy years that are worthy of a detailed update to the congregation.

Considering the accounting theft that was uncovered in November 2018, our grant for CY 2019 was unique. We made a special grant of \$120,000 to our nursery school – Westminster Early Childhood Education Programs (WECEP). No other grant requests were accepted or reviewed.

The theft left our church with debts to the IRS. Our committee made a motion to loan the church \$1.3MM from the fund to pay our IRS obligation. This motion was approved by the session; the congregation then voted on the resolution on December 4, 2019. All three votes were unanimous. We were able to pay the IRS \$1.259MM in principal in December 2019. The remaining \$41K is in our operating account awaiting final word from the IRS as they relate to our interest charges. The details of the loan from the Endowment Fund to our church are: 10-year term with a 4% annual interest rate. We are happy to report that all loan payments were made in 2020.

The fund corpus allows for grants up to 4% of the previous year's ending balance. We voted to use the entire 4% for grants, hence the amount approved for grants was \$93,500. Grant notifications were published in the spring of 2020 and we received many requests.

We voted on, and the session approved, the following grants for CY 2020:

WECEP – security system upgrade	\$4,100
WROC – floor refinishing	\$17,000
Schenley Heights Community Development – replace van	\$20,750
WECEP – replace worn carpet with vinyl floors	\$21,774
Sangli Industrial School in India – replace equipment	\$29,876
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$93,500</b>

Despite the challenging year, we ended 2020 with \$2,751,377 custodied at our two investment advisory firms and the loan balance stands at \$1,140,560.

We are so blessed to have our Endowment Fund. After two apprehensive years, we are once again seeking to expand and build up the assets; with greater assets we can have a greater positive impact. If you are interested in learning more about the Westminster Endowment & Special Gifts Fund, please reach out to one of the members of the committee.

2020 Endowment Committee Members: Bill Rogers, Brian Eccher, Carolyn Kerr, Janis Davis, Jeff Rex, Lois Singleton, Michael Molli, Phil Kocher, Rob Wagner, and Steve Schmitt

– Michael Molli

# Finance Commission

The year 2020 has been a time of challenges and blessings for all, including the stewardship and finance ministries at Westminster. Still, the church was able to generate an operating surplus of \$349,000 related to 2020 activities.

With Westminster shut down for in-person worship for most of the year, our congregation generously responded nevertheless through giving in many remote forms. The church generated total revenues of \$2,312,000, which were only \$36,000 below the budget, but general fund (pledges and offerings) contributions fell \$250,000 below the target of \$1,948,000 originally budgeted. Thankfully, this shortfall was offset by several bequests and one-time gifts totaling \$374,000, well above our budget. Contributing to savings in 2020 were lower operating expenses that were favorable to the budget by \$315,000 reflecting the partial shutdown of the church for a majority of 2020. In addition, there was a concerted effort to thoughtfully reduce all expenses after it became clear during the year that general fund contributions were falling short of the budget.

The church achieved a sound cash balance of \$746,000 on December 31, 2020 as compared to \$375,000 at the year-end 2019. During 2020, the church's overall cash position benefited from \$250,000 in proceeds from an insurance settlement

relating to the financial malfeasance uncovered in 2018 and \$233,000 from the Federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan under the CARES Act. This loan is expected to be forgiven by the government in 2021.

To date, pledges for 2021 are \$1,179,000, down a considerable 20% from final 2020 pledges of \$1,434,000. While cognizant of the financial and other challenges faced by all, we are blessed to now be positioned as a congregation to look and move forward. To that end, we ask you to prayerfully consider making your pledge if you have not yet, or perhaps give consideration to increasing your existing 2021 pledge. It is critical that we have an accurate accounting of our 2021 potential revenue in order to effectively budget for the upcoming year as part of our goal to avoid any required staffing, program, or mission cuts and shortfalls.

We appreciate and value not only your financial giving, but all the other forms of time and talent that each of you generously provide in support of the vital ministries here at Westminster and the greater community.

Please feel free to stop by the church finance office and talk to Richard Mills if you have any questions about the 2020 financials or 2021 budget.

– Finance Commission

# Finance Commission – 2021 Budget

<b>REVENUES</b>	<b>2019 Actual</b>	<b>2020 Actual</b>	<b>2020 Budget</b>	<b>2020 Budget vs. Actual favorable/ (unfavorable)</b>	<b>2021 Budget</b>
General Fund	\$1,705,128	\$1,701,030	\$1,948,819	\$(247,789)	\$1,560,000
Bequests and one-time gifts	\$50,000	\$374,000	\$69,000	\$305,000	\$69,000
Other	\$338,765	\$236,976	\$330,708	\$(93,732)	\$182,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$2,093,893</b>	<b>\$2,312,006</b>	<b>\$2,348,527</b>	<b>\$(36,521)</b>	<b>\$1,811,000</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>2019 Actual</b>	<b>2020 Actual</b>	<b>2020 Budget</b>	<b>2020 Budget vs. Actual favorable/ (unfavorable)</b>	<b>2021 Budget</b>
Personnel	\$1,239,945	\$1,173,037	\$1,287,277	\$114,240	\$1,011,567
Property	\$310,501	\$270,423	\$253,452	\$(16,971)	\$264,700
Discretionary Outreach	\$15,586	\$156,554	\$218,702	\$62,148	\$156,000
Other (including per capita)	\$500,486	\$362,634	\$518,435	\$155,801	\$418,380
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,066,518</b>	<b>\$1,962,648</b>	<b>\$2,277,866</b>	<b>\$315,218</b>	<b>\$1,850,647</b>
Revenue less expenses	\$27,375	\$349,358	\$70,661	\$278,697	\$(39,647)
Loan Principal Payments – Endowment/PNC	N/A	\$112,000	\$112,000	\$0	\$133,000
<b>Revenue less expenses adjusted for loan amortization</b>	<b>\$27,375</b>	<b>\$237,358</b>	<b>\$(41,339)</b>	<b>\$278,697</b>	<b>\$(172,647)</b>

as of 1/21/21

# Stewardship Summary, 2021 Campaign

The results of the Stewardship Campaign for 2021 have thus far been somewhat disappointing although there have been some encouraging outcomes. There were 21 new pledging units for this year after the church was physically closed for many months. A total of 94 pledging units increased their pledges from 2020 to 2021.

Unfortunately, the total number of pledging units to date are 15% below those that pledged and paid for 2020, with a total of 65 that have not yet pledged to date. This represents an opportunity to increase the results to date. Total pledges to date for 2021 are \$1,179,427, 10% below the total paid pledges for last year adjusted for the same membership base.

A summary of the pledges are as follows:

- Those that had an increase in their pledged amount this year – 94 units
- Those that had a decrease in their pledged amount this year – 47 units
- Those who did not change their pledge amount this year – 189
- Those who have not yet pledged this year – 65

The table shown below reflects the annual pledges to date for specific dollar ranges:

Pledge amount	Number of pledges
\$0 - \$500	27
\$501 - \$1,000	47
\$1,001 - \$1,500	49
\$1,501 - \$2,000	27
\$2,001 - \$3,000	71
\$3,001 - \$4,000	23
\$4,001 - \$5,000	15
\$5,001 - \$7,500	38
\$7,501 - \$10,000	15
\$10,001 - \$20,000	13
\$20,001 & above	5

Thank you to all who have so generously contributed to Westminster Presbyterian Church in 2020 and for your continued pledges to support the ministry of Westminster in 2021.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE!



# Property Commission

It is never a dull moment when dealing with a 100,000 square foot building. I find it interesting how on a daily basis so many things come up that require attention. Little things like how to install new batteries for the AED devices or how are we going to reach that burned-out light bulb? And big things, too, such as personnel decisions and broken HVAC unit. Our beautiful church is daily being cared for competently and with energy. Charley Richardson, our Facility Manager, is to be thanked for that. He has a deep understanding of the church's needs and the will to support it. This year WPC acquired new custodial staff members after retirements and resignations. We are very pleased with the new team.

A big thank you to our Thursday morning crew of volunteers and volunteer gardeners who continue doing the activities that make this a better place. They are some of the people who work unnoticed but have a great positive impact. Note: we are always looking for more help from people who like hands on activity. The Property Commission have been supportive of the facility's needs while also using their discernment on the financial implications. They continue with the oversight of the Forward in Faith funding and the challenges that COVID delays has placed with its implementation. Another great team.

## Forward in Faith

In January 2020, after an unavoidably long delay, active contract awarding was started. Then COVID happened and it became difficult to receive bids and have contractors on site. However, since then, we were able to do many things in a short period of time. Some of the recently completed items about to be mentioned were not part of the original plan but were deemed necessary to the operation of

our church. Here are some very visible projects we completed so far this year.

- Parking lot pavement milling, repaving, and restriping
- The spire restoration (If you haven't noticed, take the time to look up – not only inspiring us toward God but also a great roost for Red Tail Hawks.)
- The children's playground rehab with new turf and grass
- The audio visual systems for the WROC and the main sanctuary (This significant upgrade for the sanctuary projector and cameras enable us to livestream and/or record services for folks who cannot attend worship, funerals, and weddings.)

And now for the less tangible completed projects:

- The water vault pump installation
- The emergency generator replacement, along with power feeds to selected areas
- HVAC repairs to Galbreath Chapel and emergency HVAC repair for the WROC.
- Ionization systems that protect us from COVID and other viruses and bacteria are in use in the sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, Room 194, and the WROC.
- Moisture and water infiltration repairs to sections of our roof and below grade areas of the north and south breezeway
- Computers, laptops, web cameras, wireless access points, a Network switcher all high value items for our office staff
- An office security system to enable controlled access to the staff offices and child care

## Moving on to 2021

- A big focus will be several exterior door replacements and exterior painting. I'm still

# Property Commission (continued)

in the process of receiving bids for the door replacement.

- A contract was signed to start the first section of exterior paint work. This will occur when the weather allows this spring.
- The rebuilding of the columbarium staircase wall and other brick repairs in this area. Our mason, Nick Pasquini, has reviewed the work scope and is planning on starting this summer.

- Contract was signed to replace the 1960s-era box gutter systems on the church. A very expensive but needed repair. Work will start this spring.

It has been a high honor and a joy to serve Westminster.

Blessings,

Jay Galbreath

## Personnel Commission

The Personnel Commission is responsible for developing, interpreting, and administering personnel policies for all members of the staff. Specifically, we:

1. Develop and administer personnel policies/review and update the Policies and Procedures annually
2. Recommend needed staff positions
3. Assure every staff position has a job description
4. Review salary actions assuring the adequacy of compensation for all staff and employees with special concern for equal employment opportunity
5. Approve plans for continuing education
6. Provide support, supervision, and appraisal for the senior pastor/head of staff
7. Be a support group for all pastors and staff members
8. Report monthly to the session regarding personnel matters, while maintaining confidentiality

Among Westminster's strengths are our devotion and trust in God and our commitment to the people who serve God on our staff. This year, the Personnel Commission conducted a comprehensive look at all personnel policies, including updating all position descriptions. The pandemic and staffing changes brought about some realignment of responsibilities that were certainly challenging, but will hopefully also create opportunities to more efficiently serve the community. While continuing to monitor and adjust as needed, the commission hopes to continue to find ways to attract and retain an outstanding staff by honoring their unique gifts and commitment.

– Patrick McClintock-Comeaux, Chair



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