



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF YORKTOWN



Led by Love

Forward in Faith

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

February 6, 2022

LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH

2021

Session of Ruling Elders

Clerk of Session: Christie Herman Moderators: Reverend Chip Low, Reverend Tami Seidel

The Session is the governing body of our Church. It consists of “ruling elders” elected by the members of the Church. One class of about six members is elected each year, serving for three years in a rotating membership arrangement. In addition, two Youth Elders are elected each year for one year terms.

Class of 2021

Jane Amato (Stewardship)
Beth Gruber (Budget & Finance)
Matt Hager (Operations)
Bill Herman (Worship)
Emily Monk (Congregational Life)
Linda Swift (Communications)
Kate MacDonald, *Youth Elder*
Benjamin Low, *Youth Elder*

Class of 2022

Abby Cross (Worship)
Nicole DeCintio (Faith Formation)
Lynn Edling (Faith Formation)
Eric Kreuter (Mission)
Ian Spence (Operations)
Bill Winsted (Congregational Life)
Benjamin Low, *Youth Elder*
Spencer Brown, *Youth Elder*

Class of 2023

Alice Chin (Nominating, Personnel)
Bryan Ekelund (Communications)
Donna Gresh (Communications)
Jessica Mayes (Stewardship)
Fred Mintzer
(Budget & Finance, Personnel)
Nathan Perry (Worship & Personnel)

Board of Deacons

Moderator: Heidi Haring and Dana Mordue Secretary: Christine Lazarus

In the Book of Order:

“The Office of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of sympathy, witness and service after the example of Jesus Christ. It is the duty of deacons, first of all, to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress both within and beyond the community of faith.”

The primary work of the Deacons involves responding to the needs of our congregation.

Deacons also serve 3 year terms.

In addition, two Youth Deacons are elected each year for one year terms.

Class of 2021

Susanne Caruso
Wanda Diaz
Debra Farrell
Martin Scatola

Class of 2022

Diane Hawlk
Dana Mordue
Christine Lazarus
Nancy Paskin

Class of 2023

Jennifer Burns
Heidi Haring
Brian Kelly
Tim Rishel

Daniel Hager, *Youth Deacon*
Marina Wheeler, *Youth Deacon*

Marina Wheeler, *Youth Deacon*
Emma Placido, *Youth Deacon*

AGENDA

OPENING PRAYER

READING OF THE CALL TO CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Clerk Christie Herman

“The Annual Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation of the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown will be held on Sunday, February 6, 2022 by ZOOM following the 10:30am worship, to review and approve the Co-pastors’ Terms of Call, to elect one Ruling Elder to the Class of 2024; to elect two Deacons to the Class of 2023, to receive the Annual Reports, including the report of the Auditors, to elect five Members-at-Large to the Nominating Committee; and to conduct any other business which may properly come before the meeting.”

REPORT OF MINUTES READERS FOR 2022 CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Minutes of February 7, 2021 Annual Meeting

Katharine Frase and Nancy Caswell

Minutes of December 12, 2021 Special Meeting

Ann Timmons and Connie Knapp

APPOINT MINUTES READERS FOR 2022 ANNUAL MEETING

NECROLOGY REPORT (page 6) AND MEMORIAL PRAYER

ANNUAL REPORTS

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Worship Design Commission ----- Ruling Elders Bill Herman and Abby Cross -----	19-21
Music Ministries ----- Garrett Artman, Director of Music Ministry -----	22-23
Faith Formation Commission ----- Ruling Elders Nicole DeCintio and Lynn Edling -----	23-26
Youth Ministries ----- Stephanie Hare, Director of Youth Ministries -----	24-25
Stewardship Commission ----- Ruling Elders Jane Amato and Jessica Mayes -----	26-28
Operations Commission ----- Ruling Elders Matt Hager and Ian Spence -----	28-29
Personnel Commission ----- Ruling Elders Alice Chin and Beth Gruber -----	30
Budget & Finance Commission ----- Ruling Elders Beth Gruber and Fred Mintzer -----	31-40

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

PRAYER AND BENEDICTION

REPORT OF THE CO-PASTORS

As we sat down to reflect on 2021, two quotes came to mind:

“Life is what happens when you’re busy making other plans.”

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord,
plans for your welfare and not for harm,
to give you a future with hope.”

~ Jeremiah 29:11

In short, 2021 was about holding on to the second quote while living in the midst of the first one. We truly did not expect to be writing our Annual Report for this year still stuck in the middle of a pandemic and all of the upheaval and uncertainty it has brought into our lives. Most of the hopes and dreams we had for 2021 and resuming life together post-Covid have had to be tempered, postponed or reorganized as we continue to adapt to the changing circumstances around us.

2021 began with an Officers’ Retreat that invited us to dig deeper into the results of the Congregational Assessment Tool we took in fall of 2020 and to discern how best to respond to what we learned about ourselves. Remember, FPCY is a transformational magi congregation positioned for growth, expansion, replication, and community impact. Based on these results, our leadership identified four strategic focuses for our future work together:

- Strategic investment in the next generation of the Church
- Building lay leadership capacity
- Strengthening relational infrastructure
- Investment in spiritual formation and mental health ministry

These four focuses were shared with our commissions who were asked to incorporate them into the work of ministry and mission already underway.

Like the magi who embarked on an Epiphany journey to find the Christ child, we also adopted the journey/pilgrimage theme for our worship and ministry together during 2021. We originally hoped that that our journey would take us out of the pandemic and back together in person. Alas, our journey has been more like that of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, waiting and hoping to arrive at the promised. 2021 required much of the same flexibility and willingness to pivot in new and different directions as 2020. Along the way, however, we stayed committed to connecting with God, one another and the world through our worship, faith formation, fellowship, and mission opportunities.

Thanks to the faithful stewardship of this congregation and the steady leadership of our commissions and ministry teams we were able to:

- Worship together online and in person, indoors and outdoors, thanks to the hard work and dedication of our Tech Team, Streaming Media Manager, Worship Design Commission and Capital Campaign Project Management Team who oversaw the installation and implementation of new sound, lighting and camera equipment and continually adapted to the changing circumstances.
- Learn and grow in our faith together through online, hybrid, and in-person Sunday School classes, youth gatherings and Faith4Life discussion groups thanks to the Faith Formation and Operations who installed TV and camera systems in our class rooms to enable hybrid learning.

- Enjoy fellowship opportunities through our Pilgrim Walk series, as well as online Coffee Hours, Game Nights and Lunch Bunch thanks to Congregational Life and the Sabbatical Planning Team.
- Build FPCY’s awareness of and capacity for walking with people through the many mental and emotional health struggles that this pandemic has uncovered or intensified, thanks to the worship services, workshops and support opportunities offered by our Mental Health & Wellness Team (co-sponsored by the Mission Commission and Board of Deacons).
- Feed the hungry in our community through our Pantry, as well as the Garden of Hope, Jan Peek, and Noontime Meal and explore other ways to address this need through the ongoing work of our Hunger Action Team.
- Significantly improve our facility through major projects like the installation of a new boiler system and outdoor lighting in the east parking lot, thanks to Operations and the CPMT.

Throughout the rest of this Annual Report, you can read more about these and many other inspiring ways we have continued to do the ministry and mission God has given us here in this time and place.

Just as the pandemic continued to disrupt our life together as a church, it also impacted Chip’s plan for his Sabbatical pilgrimage. With many thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Sabbatical Planning Team and the staff, however, he was able to enjoy an extended break from ministry which included an amazing month-long family trip to some of our nation’s incredible National Parks in the Southwest. As we monitor the Covid situation, he hopes to take the remaining 3 months of his sabbatical in 2022.

Finally, we want to acknowledge the accumulating toll and loss that the pandemic and this challenging time have taken on our family of faith. We continue to miss seeing people in person, connecting over a cup of coffee, watching our kids grow up in front of our eyes, and the many joys that come with hugs and handshakes, laughing, crying and singing together. In particular, we give thanks to God for the lives of faithful church members who have died or moved away in the past year, and especially for our trustworthy treasurer Tom Travis and our incredibly capable and convivial church caretaker Jim Gerth.

As we look forward to this new year, we do so trusting that, although things may not always go according to our plans, God’s hand is leading and guiding us into a future full of hope. Many, many thanks to all of you in this wonderful congregation, and especially to our leadership and our staff, for walking together with us as pilgrims on God’s path of love, grace, hope and peace.

Chip Tami

FPC Yorktown Co-Pastor Responsibilities 2022

Commission/Task	Chip	Tami	Both
Budget & Finance	X		
Communications	X		
Congregational Life	X		
Deacons			X
Faith Formation		X	
Mission	X		
Nominating			X
Operations		X	
Personnel			X
Session			X
Stewardship			X
Worship			X
Presbytery			X
Public Ministries - 50/50			X
Worship Leadership			X
Preaching			X
Weddings & Funerals			X
Pastoral Care			X

REPORT OF THE SESSION

2021 Statistics

MEETINGS:

Session: 11 Regular, 1 Special, 1 Session/Deacons Combined (retreat), 2 E-mail Advisory
Congregational: 1 Annual, 1 Special

Active Members as of December 31, 2020: 423

<u>Gains (0)</u>		<u>Losses (5)</u>	
Profession of Faith	0	Deaths	5
Reaffirmation of Faith	0	Roll Removal	0
Letter of Transfer	0		

Active Members as of December 31, 2021: 418

BAPTISMS

05/16/2021 Anthony Michael Delano
10/10/2021 Jay Henderson Leslie

DEATHS (*= active members)

01/01/2021	*Edward Hicks	0986
04/01/2021	*Bert Bernauer	2104
06/19/2021	*Phyllis Angliss-Russo	2703
07/23/2021	*Richard Talbot	2723
11/22/2021	*Thomas M. Travis	2088
11/27/2021	Barbara Wright	

Respectfully submitted,
Christie Herman, Clerk of Session

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Members at Large: *Andy Cross, Pam Darreff, Debbie Hager, Sue Nelson, Vinny Wallace, Chip Low, Tami Seidel, Alice Chin (Co- Chair), Linda Swift (Co-Chair)*

Officers of the Corporation:

President: Ian Spence
Vice-President: Alice Chin
Treasurer: Beth Gruber
Secretary: Christie Herman

Staff of the Session of FPCY

Clerk of Session: Christie Herman
Treasurers: Gordon Braudaway
Beth Gruber
Financial Secretary: Lisa Flanagan
Bookkeeper: Stephanie Hare
Auditors/Reviewers: Michele Mosca (2022)
Vinny Wallace (2023)
TBD (2024)

Counters: Pam Darreff
Debbie Hager
Donna Gresh
Kathy Hodgkinson
Nancy Paskin
Linda Swift

Ruling Elders—Class of 2024

Katharine Frase
Elaine Heyde
Connie Knapp
Jennifer Rowe-Behun
Jack Shaughnessy
Marisa Swift

Youth Ruling Elders

TBD in June

Deacons – Class of 2024

Judy Chessa
Terri Froehlich
Sue Nelson
John Winget

Youth Deacons

TBD in June

Food Pantry Co-Leadership

Liam McAuliffe
Debbie Bernardini

Thank you to all the hardworking members of the Nominating Committee and to the people who stepped up to serve. We are very grateful for so many positive responses.

Respectfully submitted,
Alice Chin and Linda Swift, co-chairs

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

2018 - 2021 Capital Campaign -- Grounded in Gratitude Forward in Faith



The Capital Campaign Project Management Team

(CCPMT): *Katharine Frase, Chair; Donna Gresh, Matt Hager, Elders; Chip Low, Tami Seidel, Co-Pastors; Ellen Miles, Vinny Wallace, Randy Pratt, Jim Gerth, Kevin McAuliffe.*

Our Capital Campaign's goals of enabling us to improve our efficiency, upgrade our facilities, design & implement new space options and enrich our capabilities to worship, serve, and grow in faith continued to be realized in 2021. The CPMT continues to oversee and coordinate projects associated with the Capital Campaign but that are directly managed by the appropriate commissions.

It is amazing to reflect on how much has been accomplished through your generosity, sacrifice and faith.

Financial Data has been removed for the web-copy of the annual report.
Church Members can obtain a full printed copy of the Annual Report upon request.

Much of the indoor work has been done by our Caretaker, Jim Gerth, as well as a stalwart team of volunteers (including Dick Seymour, Jerry Amato, Bud Coccodrilli, Skip Mahncke and Matt Hager). We are so grateful for their talents and devotion! It would be difficult to overstate Jim's contributions to our planning and execution of the campaign projects; his skills and inventiveness are visible in every piece of the buildings.

Three years ago, we embarked on the "Grounded in Gratitude, Forward in Faith" journey to prepare our facilities and capabilities for the future. We established six ministry priorities for this work (Compelling Worship, Intentional Fellowship, Transformational Mission, Lifelong Faith Formation, Inspirational Stewardship) under the theme of **Radical Hospitality**. As we near the end of our three-year journey, it is a good time to reflect on what we have accomplished and what still lies before us. There are so many reasons to celebrate; we have done more than we originally planned thanks to the faith-filled generosity of the congregation. We were able to start work immediately thanks to First Fruits giving and have incurred no substantial debt thus far.

Radical Hospitality/Inspirational Stewardship: the foundation for all we do. Goals: repaint the sanctuary exterior, replace the roof to enable solar panel installation, repave and light the parking lots, increase our energy efficiency for heating and cooling, and increase our accessibility in the sanctuary, the office and our entrances. Create a welcome center in the Gathering Space and increase the welcoming feel of the office.

⇒ Exterior:

- Installed a new roof and gutters on the CE building
- Executed the Sanctuary moisture abatement project, enabling us to address root causes behind our peeling paint, improve the temperature control in the sanctuary, and reduce the risk of mold
- Repainted the sanctuary exterior
- Repaved the east parking lot, the driveways and sidewalks, and created handicap spaces in the rear parking lot (with paved access to sidewalks (2021)
- Installed lighting in the east parking lot and along the front sidewalk (2021)

⇒ Energy efficiency:

- Installed solar panels on the roof of the CE building which has significantly reduced our electric bills since 2020
- Installed new energy-efficient boilers and heat pumps to reduce our energy consumption, replace old systems, and add capabilities in the office, gathering space, sanctuary and library (2021)

⇒ Accessibility and welcome:

- Completed the accessible and attractive office exterior entrance and entrance hallway
- Installed power door openers on the Gathering Space doors for easier accessible access (2021)
- Created a welcome center in the Gathering Space
- Renovated the office manager and finance team spaces in the office (2021)

Compelling Worship: Goals: improve the technology (light, sound, cameras, projection) in the Sanctuary to improve the in-person experience (and once 2020 hit, to enhance our streaming services as well). Consolidate worship storage from many corners of the building into an area closer to the sanctuary, and create a clean, secure banner closet as well.

⇒ Renovated a dedicated music room for our new music director, Garrett Artman

⇒ Created a new banner closet (soon to be a full worship storage area) from the coat closet (2021)

⇒ Installed new lighting, sound equipment and cameras in the Sanctuary for improved physical and virtual worship experiences (2021)

Lifelong Faith Formation: Goals: create a consistent Church School area on the west corridor, create a larger flexible meeting / education room, and enhance the space available for the Youth Groups.

⇒ Created a beautiful larger youth room in Room 1

⇒ Renovated Room 2 back into a classroom with added storage space

⇒ Created a youth director office with capability for private communication (2021)

⇒ Created a new education room larger than the library from Room 7 (former pre-school room)

Intentional Fellowship / Transformational Mission: Goals: renovate the kitchen to improve food safety, accessibility, and capability to serve meals to the external community. Consolidate pantry storage and distribution into the former pre-school area, to enable other rooms to be used differently and to improve efficiency. Create a larger, consistent and convenient meeting space for community groups.

⇒ Consolidated Pantry operations into Room 5 (former pre-school room)

⇒ Created an expanded meeting room (16) for community groups

⇒ Designed and initiated the renovation of the kitchen

We still have exciting projects in front of us, including the completion of an amazing kitchen and the accessibility work throughout the building. We are so grateful for your prayers, suggestions and feedback, and faithful giving to support us. If you have not completed your pledge, or if this work has touched your heart, we do still need a bit of fundraising to see us through the rest of the work.

With God's guidance and your dedication and support, we look forward to completing the journey, and living into the new capabilities before us. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,
Katharine Frase

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMISSION

Members: *Nancy Caswell, Emily Monk, Bill Winsted co-chairs; Alyssa Bauer, Debbie Bernadini, Caroline Awuor, Sue Mintzer, Pat Prauda. New members are Elaine Heyde, Jennifer Rowe-Behun, Amy Wallace, and Nathan Perry.*

Purpose: We extend hospitality to our church members, visitors and strangers. We plan, participate in, and help organize events and activities for our extended church families to socialize, meet new people and unite services.

2021 On-going Ministry

Sunday Coffee Hour- after Sunday worship services we share fellowship with our congregation and visitors. Coffee, tea and refreshments are provided by volunteers that set up and clean up. We continued to also meet for Coffee Hour via Zoom each Sunday after the live streamed church service.

2021 Highlight Events

We are grateful to everyone who supported our commission by hosting coffee hours and participating in any events. Typically, we also host sermons for lunch, coordinate refreshments for speakers, support the progressive dinner, offer TED talk discussions, coordinate the annual picnic, arrange an autumn hike and offer advent gatherings. We did have an outside picnic with an ice cream truck. But some of these other events had to be cancelled. Instead, we found creative ways to find fellowship and fun and remained connected through Zoom at the zoom coffee hours and separate events.

Amy Wallace and Nathan Perry organized the Pilgrim Walks during 2021. We wish to continue with the Pilgrim Walks and are currently putting together a 2022 schedule of events with their help.

Coffee Topics:

- Garrett joined us in March for good music discussions.
- Nance Thompson discussed FPCY outreach through Jan Peek and NoonTime meals programs.
- Chip hosted an after-worship meeting with Christine Valters Paintner.
- Sandy Fryrear discussed the Mental Health Initiative.
- Several church members received the Serve Safe Certification.

Kitchen Renovation

We continue working with the Capital Campaign Project Management Team to research and design a new, efficient kitchen which will enable FPCY to broaden our hospitality to our church community now and in future endeavors. It is our goal to have the kitchen completed while the building remains unoccupied due to Covid restrictions.

We wish to give Pat Prauda a big thanks for her involvement in several events handled by the Congregational Life Commission over the years. She has decided to step down in coordinating them, and her leadership will be surely missed.

We also thank Nancy Caswell for all she has done for the commission. As you know, she has moved away and she will be greatly missed also.

Thanks to our entire congregation for your support of these events! We look forward to greeting each other with a handshake or a hug in 2022, when we hope we can, once again, enjoy some face-to-face fellowship.

Respectfully submitted,
Emily Monk, Bill Winsted

COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Members: Bryan Ekelund (co-chair), Linda Swift (co-chair), John Bentley, Donna Gresh, Ben Low, JoAnne Marsh, Barbara Santagata, and Rev. Chip Low

Purpose: The Communications Commission manages the internal and external communications of our church. This includes the website, Facebook, Instagram, digital newspapers, banners at the corner of Routes 202 and 132, online event calendars, press releases, advertising, brochures, the TV monitor in the Gathering Space, and community fairs. We tell the story of the church's activities -- from both in-person and online worship, to Sunday School, to mission projects, to the annual Stewardship Campaign, to congregational get-togethers, and to many other church events and church mission work.

Highlights of 2021 include:

Website

In May of 2021, our new and streamlined website was released. Knowing that our website is probably the number one place that new people go to in order to find out information about FPCY, we looked at our website with the lens of a visitor. The website now has a more modern look and feel, along with a new logo and color scheme. We also made it easier for a visitor to find the information they would need in order to visit our church, putting that information right near the top of the webpage. Not forgetting our current church members, we reorganized the information from our old site into a way that is easier to find.

The best way to stay up to date on what is happening in our church is to visit our website. There are two ways on our website that Congregation members and the surrounding community can learn about what's going on in our church:

1. At the top of the website, under the "News & Events" heading, click "Latest News." Any events, announcements, worship services, etc., will be listed here, newest to oldest. There are entries dating back to 2011, if you are interested to see what has been going on at FPCY over the past decade.
2. For info that is happening now, scroll past the video of our church and there is a rotating sliding graphic that displays the most current events. You can click on a graphic and it will take you to the details of that event.

If you want to receive events and announcements as they are posted (about 5 per week) directly to your email, go to our website (FPCYorktown.org), under "News & Events", click on "What's New", then click on any entry. To the right of that entry, there is a message that says "Subscribe to FPCY Connections Email" and enter your email.

A BIG thank you to Donna Gresh, who constantly keeps our website up-to-date with all the current events, news items, and graphics!

Facebook Live

Facebook Live continues to be an invaluable tool, as this past year has seen us go from online only, to in-person and online, to back to online only. Through it all, we have been able to seamlessly continue with our worship services. With the addition of a new camera system, we can now show video from different angles within the Sanctuary allowing us to show the bell choir, the organ, the choir, and the piano, which enhances the online worship service even more.

It has been a blessing that we have been able to stay connected, even though we are physically separated at times. Many continued thanks go to our "virtual greeters" who make sure comments left on each Sunday's livestream are met with a welcome, hello, or thumbs up.

A big thanks to Bryan Ekelund, John Bentley, Bill Herman, Ben Low, and Nathan Perry for getting the new camera and sound system set up. Also, a big thanks to the Tech Team for running the livestream each Sunday morning. The current Tech Team consists of John Bentley, Bryan Ekelund, Karen Gerth, Bill Herman, Nathan Perry, Linda Swift, and Amy Wallace. And a special thanks to Karen Gerth, who has been organizing the Tech Team and being our cheerleader on Sunday mornings. And last, but not least, we are so grateful to Ben Low for being our Streaming Media Manager and being such a great teacher with everything tech related. Thank you, Ben, for all your countless hours!

(Continued on page 12)

Each Sunday, three people are needed to livestream the worship service. The Tech Team needs more members, so if you are interested, please contact someone from the Communications Commission or Worship. You do not need any experience with cameras or sound systems to be on the Tech Team, as several of the roles are quite straightforward.

Social Media

Another way we relay our church's story, events, and activities is with Facebook and Instagram. Each week's entire worship service has been livestreamed on Facebook and is available soon thereafter on our website. Catch up if you missed the service, or want to re-hear it, by going to our Facebook page and clicking the video of the service or go to our website and find the news item about the service.

If you regularly use Facebook, please "Like" our Facebook page, and then, under "Follow Settings" (...), choose to "Follow" the page to have it appear regularly in your Facebook feed.

Graphics

Many thanks to JoAnne Marsh and Barbara Santagata for designing and creating so many amazing graphics! These graphics are used on our website, on social media, on banners, and in the events we publish in the digital newspapers. Our new church logo was designed by JoAnne. Check it out on our website!

Additional thanks go to Donna Gresh and Barbara Santagata for managing our Facebook and Instagram pages; to John Bentley, Bryan Ekelund, Donna Gresh, and Linda Swift for posting the sermons to our website each week; and to Linda and Donna for promoting church events in community outlets. We would also like to thank Chip Low for keeping us posted on upcoming events; Lisa Flanagan for creating the Disciple and Bulletin, along with beautiful graphics; Tim Chin for documenting so many church activities with his photos; the Tech Team (John Bentley, Bryan Ekelund, Karen Gerth, Bill Herman, Nathan Perry, Linda Swift, and Amy Wallace) for livestreaming the sermons; and Walter Oudheusden for making and putting up banners and signs.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Swift and Bryan Ekelund

REPORT OF THE DEACONS

Being a Deacon is a call to service. We organize assistance and care for those who are in need, lonely, grieving, ill and or facing significant life challenges. Deacons are also the Leader servants/care-givers of our congregation, who aim to involve the whole church community in caring for each other, as we are all called to do. "What good is it, my brothers (and sisters), if someone says he/she has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? if one of you says to a brother or sister, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." James 2:14-17

Faced with the challenges of 2021, and with a now experienced awareness of the needs and threats imposed by isolation and Covid, after 2020, the Deacons have worked hard to continue to adapt our caring ministries to the realities of the pandemic. Throughout 2021, we have continued our outreach to the congregation through our contacts with the homebound and hospitalized—some in person over the summer, many many phone calls and our card ministry—more cards were sent to those who were isolated and needed encouragement. We were also able to re-instate the Loaves and Fishes ministry to deliver home-made meals, when needed.

We have several sub committees which are responsible for organizing the various areas of this care ministry:

Visitation Team—Our team has been active in making contacts with homebound and recently hospitalized members, and to those isolated at home by the pandemic. Many, many phone visits were made! The team includes past and present deacons: Sue Caruso, Pam Darreff, Debra Farrell, Terri Froehlich, Heidi Haring, Diane Hawlk, Chip Low, Dana Mordue, Sue Nelson, Jean Post-Winget, Chuck Radke, Tami Seidel, Marianna Sherman, and Christine Lazarus, Chair. A hearty thanks for all the efforts made to keep in touch with our homebound and isolated members!

Loaves and Fishes—This ministry provides food, homemade meals, and comfort when a member is going through a hard time due to illness, a recent hospitalization, a new baby or other crisis situations. Four deacons lead this ministry, each per a quarter, with the help of about 20 volunteers. Because of the pandemic, we have not had many requests for meals this year, but this ministry is now active again.

Card Ministry—Nancy Paskin leads this ministry. She sent out 313 cards this year, due to an extra effort to encourage isolated members. Thanks for the extra effort in caring, Nancy.

Transportation—This team has been run by Marty Scatola, who has a team of 7 volunteers he can call if someone in our church needs a ride to the doctors, to church, etc. 40 rides were given this year, many of them to one member for doctor visits.

Bereavement—after no memorial services for over a year due to Covid, we handled 4 Memorial Service receptions for grieving families, a few were members who couldn't be memorialized last year. *Journey Through Grief*, a four book series, was delivered to those grieving a recent loss at specific points over an approximately 11 month period. The book series was completed for 7 individuals. It is newly started or in process for four individuals. Dana Mordue is the Chairperson, along with Tami, who helps deliver the books, and Diane Hawlk, with a team of 9 volunteers who help set up, serve, clean up and pack up for the families.

Prayer Ministry — which was new last year, continued this year due to many requests from the on-line prayer request site, Pastors, and from requests in church—once services were conducted in person. We also had prayer ribbons placed with the requests, by Teri Froelich and later Diane Hawlk, in front of the church, for visual reminders of prayer support for our members and the community at large. They were moved to the back in the summer, near our Labyrinth, as they became more wind-blown and aged. The purpose of prayer ribbons is to let the request linger until it “disintegrates”, so this is why there are new and older, even ratty ribbons, still hanging in the back, as a reminder of prayer support, the need to make our requests known and to carry them for others, until they are answered.

It was encouraging to see the large number of requests, over 95, some from people who wouldn't be comfortable sharing requests in front of others. This gave us an insight into the needs of our members and allowed us the privilege of further supporting them in their concerns/needs. We also aim to make e-mail contact with each requester, to let them know of our support and that we received their request. Often we receive thankful e-mails with further details, which enable us to pray more faithfully.

We will continue this ministry of Prayer in the coming year, mostly with individual prayer by team members. This team has many non-Deacons and we welcome anyone interested in caring for each other through prayer. The current team: *Heidi Haring, Chair Person; Debbie Amorese, Debbie Bernardini, Lynn Edling, Ann Everingham, Terri Froelich, Karen Gerth, Christie Herman, Barbara Humphrey, Sara Mann, Sue Nelson, Nancy Paskin, Marianna Sherman, Cathy Talbot, Nance Thompson and Jean Post-Winget.*

There is also talk of a contemplative prayer ministry (Quiet group prayer), like we experienced during Advent, led by Abby Cross, and there are other ideas for deepening both individual and our congregation's relationship to God through prayer. Please pray with us for the direction and growth of this ministry and our church, in this time of great change.

Knitting Ministries

- 1) The Knit Togethers create blankets and hats for the Linus project for children in hospitals and new babies and for other needs. In 2021, they gave 145 hand-made items to several groups: Birthright in Peekskill, FPCY Deacon's Gift Tree at the Food Pantry, and Paramount Care of Somers. We have nine members plus one at home knitter: Nancy Betz, Terri Froehlich, Diane Hawlk, Priscilla Lucas, Sue Nelson, Lois Ostling, Nancy Paskin, Pat Prauda, Maxine Travis, and Norean Radke, Chair.
- 2) The Prayer Shawl Ministry, led by Marianna Sherman, have also continued their prayer shawl knitting, albeit at home, and pray while knitting each shawl. They are given to new babies, new Deacons and Elders and to those who are sick, etc. They are a great comfort and a gift of love!

Both groups have continued throughout this challenging time, mostly meeting over Zoom or knitting on their own.

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Mental Health Initiative Team—initiated in 2020 as a joint initiative by the Mission commission and Deacons to explore the mental health needs of the church and to develop approaches to strengthen the mental health outreach, first to our church, and later to neighboring communities.

Highlights of 2021 included sharing the results of the Survey with our Congregation and other congregations who participated under our grant. Using the results from our own survey, the team has moved forward to take advantage of training options through the \$8000 grant. The first Mental Health 101 training was in several groups over the summer. The whole team received one of these trainings, in early summer. Tamsin Levine and Cecelia Ortiz, led the next training in August, open to the Congregation. Another one for the congregation, was offered in January 13, 2022. Companion Training is scheduled to be done in Spring 2022. There may be further training from our grant, to be decided in 2022.

Along with the initial survey, the Mental Health 101 training and future Companion training, we are using part of the \$8000 grant to buy books and pamphlets, which are on the wall near the Information Desk. Many pamphlets have already been taken, which gives us a measure of the interest. We are in the process of ordering books for our library on Anxiety, because it was mentioned most often in our survey. Books on other mental health topics will be in the library in the coming years. (For more detail, see the Mission Commission report for this group in the Annual report.)

Deacons have helped with the first special event, this past October, on caring for our mental health with prayer, silent time together, scripture, and art—poetry this time. In addition, group time allowed any willing person to offer a concern and to be prayed for silently by the whole group, which was very powerful, with the idea that with sharing and caring listening healing can begin. Eric Kreuter led us in creating a group poem which was based on our experiences that evening and one of the Psalms. Thanks to all who helped plan this special event, especially Sue Caruso, Tamsin Levine, Marilyn Rivera-Alvarado and Eric. Response was quite positive and other events will be planned for the future.

Mental Health Team Members: *Sue Caruso* and Eric Kreuter, Co—Chairs, Tami Seidel, Jen Burns, Judy Chessa, Sandy Fryrear, Heidi Haring*, Jeff Kephart, Chip Low, Dana Mordue*, Cecilia Ortiz, Marilyn Rivera-Alvarado. (* 2021 Deacon).*

Blood Drive—We again opened our doors to the Red Cross to host drives in February and August. Like the previous year, Covid protocols and safety concerns meant that the Deacons were not able to be physically present for the purpose of greeting and assisting the blood donors. But between the pandemic and back-to-back natural Disasters of Henri and Ida, the need was great. Our drives brought in an average of 30 donors and 84-99 lives impacted.

Thank You and Farewell

We want to enthusiastically thank all of the members of the Board of Deacons for your flexibility, energy, compassion and faithful service in the face of what has been a challenging 2021!

We also want to say a special thank you and farewell to our outgoing class of 2021. We want to heartily thank Sue Caruso, Wanda Diaz, Debra Farrell and Marty Scatola for all their contributions as they finish their terms.

We wish to offer a warm welcome to the new class of Deacons: Judy Chessa, Teri Froehlich, Sue Nelson and John Winget.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Haring and Dana Mordue; Co—Moderators

MISSION COMMISSION

Members: *Eric Kreuter, chair; Debbie Bernardini, Dawna Dennis, Katharine Frase, Donna Gresh, Steph Hare, Heidi Haring, Jeff Kephart, Chip Low, Kaycee Perry, Tami Seidel, Lynda Spring, Marisa Swift, Nance Thompson.*

Pantry

After the adventure of 2020, operating the pantry in 2021 began to feel routine, although still with all the challenges of a pre-packed, socially distanced, drive-by distribution model. While the distribution model is consistent, we have worked to find new ways to make it personal and welcoming for our clients, to try to reduce the stigma of coming to any pantry. We now wear nametags so the clients can call us by name, and our computer system highlights when someone has a birthday near a pantry – we all collect by the driver’s window and sing to them – the smiles of surprise and delight lift our spirits as well as theirs! We are immensely grateful for the core team of volunteers who have packed bags on Fridays, and particularly those who have stood outside in all sorts of weather for the pantry throughout 2021.

Feeding Westchester continues to be our lifeline for food supply, augmented by shopping at Acme, BJ’s and Restaurant Depot for missing items. Feeding Westchester has continued to make the majority of bulk foods free of charge throughout the year, including the off-week free pallet of fresh produce. We continued to have unbelievable support from the congregation, the community at large, and local businesses, houses of worship, schools, and civic groups in terms of both financial and food drive contributions. A partial list includes Wilkens’ Farm, Meadows Farm, the Garden of Hope, Polymedco, the Field Hall Foundation, the Lions Club, the Knights of Columbus at St Patrick’s, the United Way, many school and scouting groups, and local families who created their own food drives or charity sales initiatives on our behalf. The ongoing support of our “Item of the Month” has enabled us to offer canned fruit and breakfast cereal to our clients when our other sources ran dry.

Pat Prauda has been our dauntless and resourceful diaper purchaser for many years, and we are so grateful for the work she has enabled us to do. We are also grateful for all the times she found a home for strange food items we couldn’t use at pantry, to create meals for Jan Peek House.

For the full year, we served nearly 16,000 individuals from over 3900 families with over 125,000 pounds of food; while this is a decrease from the peak of 2020, it still represents a 50% increase over pre-pandemic “normal”. We know that hunger is a trailing indicator of economic health, so we expect to see higher client volume for at least the balance of 2022.

Thanks to all the generosity and Feeding Westchester’s support, we continued to operate very efficiently, and are in good financial standing for 2022. We also distributed nearly 1000 bundles of diapers, eldercare supplies for nearly 700 people, 230 school supplies, and (with support from the Deacons and the Knit Togethers) coats, scarves, and gloves for 149 children. We distributed information to our clients about the interfaith Mental Health Awareness initiative, as well as safety tips for infants, resources for domestic violence support and other services from other agencies. We continue to co-lead the Food Insecurity Task Force sponsored by the Town Board of Yorktown and look forward to contributing to FPCY’s Hunger Action Congregation effort.

2022 will bring its own challenges, and we will continue to rely on the congregation’s support in prayer, financial support, donations, and volunteer efforts. We are so very grateful to be able to help our hungry neighbors with your support. Thank you all.

Liam McAuliffe and Debbie Bernardini, FPCY Pantry Co-Leaders

Pantry Related Ministries

Annual Holiday Children’s Coat Drive: (Co-chair Pam Darreff & Sue Caruso) Realizing the tremendous need in the community, we decided to continue with our children’s coat drive using a similar model as the food pantry thus reaching our desired result while keeping everyone safe. Thanks to the generous support of the congregation, the Knights of Columbus, local schools and communities, on Saturday, December 11th, we were able to served over a 100 families by providing 150 coats and a large number of hats and gloves. We also want to recognize the tireless

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work of the Knit Togethers, who provided all of the knitted hats, gloves and scarves given out at the event. The coat drive was a success thanks to the enthusiastic volunteers from the congregation and the community who helped out on distribution day. Special thanks to all who supported this program by donating gifts of warmth! What a wonderful team effort!

School Supplies

During the August pantry 300 children received a bag filled to the top with supplies they would need for school. Items in the bag were generic for all students this year because of the drive through distribution of all pantry items. Because of the increased number of food pantry clients, we again had to double the amount of school supplies bags prepared in advance of the distribution day. Many thanks to the Miranda McGill's Girl Scout Troop that helped pack the school supplies bags. Also thanks to those who helped handed out the bags. The clients are always very appreciative! This ministry is successful because of the generosity of many! Thank you all!

Pam Darreff, chair

Garden of Hope

Our community inter-faith garden project to provide fresh healthy veggies for neighbors in need—received a fresh new start, after its long-time garden was sold. The Town of Yorktown gave us a few acres of space at Willow Park at the corner of Curry and Tulip St. Because the land has a high-water table, is quite marshy and doesn't drain well, the first step in creating a permanent garden was to layer, at least 6 inches, on top of the marshy soil: wood chips to soak up extra water, topsoil, composted leaves and finally manure. There was a lot of wheelbarrows, and shovel work! This was done in May by a large team of volunteers, including a team of at least 16 volunteers from our church to start. Soil amendment work continued throughout the growing season, although to a lesser extent.

For a first-year garden, under marshy conditions, it produced many harvests of high-quality veggies, for the most part: especially cucumbers, tomatoes, Eggplant, hot peppers, herbs, and lots of beans. There were weekly harvest parties during July, August, and September to harvest our row and to work with the others on many abandoned rows, to increase the overall harvest. We worked weekly with "Garden Guru", Janet Morra and her team (you can see her teaching and working on the Yorktown Garden of Hope Facebook page, as well as some photos of our team members). As a result, we had large harvests to drop off at our pantry and St Mary's Food Pantry, on the weeks our Pantry wasn't operating. We also had a good time and deepened relationships with the other volunteers from Croton, Peekskill, Yorktown, and Mt Kisco. Janet was very grateful for our help each week, so that a great deal of food wasn't wasted! Reports from both pantries were that clients were especially appreciative of the herbs, hot peppers, and tomatoes among the other fresh veggies.

A steady small team of our members tended our row and helped harvest during the growing season: Dawna Dennis and family, co-ordinations Nance Thompson—often with Carl, and Heidi Haring, sometimes with Ruud Haring and Liana and Guy Grieco. This team often spent a few hours at church on our Pantry weeks, bagging veggies for the clients, so the Pantry wouldn't be burdened with extra work. We also had Miranda and Sasha McGill and Jeff Kephart's help closing the garden—more schlepping of layers of soil amendment. Thanks to those from our church who helped to make this first year of hard work, such a surprising success!

Submitted by Heidi Haring and Nance Thompson

Hunger Action Congregation

Thanks to the efforts of the Hunger Action Congregation task force, in May 2021 PCUSA certified FPCY as a hunger action congregation, recognizing us for being active in all six areas of hunger response, including Hunger Alleviation, Development Assistance, Hunger Education, Lifestyle Integrity, Corporate & Public Policy Witness and Worship. We are grateful to Ellen Miles for her effective leadership of the HAC task force.

With certification having been achieved, and with Ellen having moved to North Carolina late in the year, the HAC task force is undergoing a transition in leadership and direction. Jeff Kephart now leads the task force. Its new goal is to provide a coherent frame around Mission's food justice efforts, and to capitalize upon and extend them

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further in the direction of empowered partnership and advocacy.

Another significant transition is that Pat Prauda, who served as coordinator for the **Jan Peek House** and **Noontime Meal** programs since taking it over from Bud Coccodrilli in 2015, is retiring from that role. We are extremely grateful to Pat for the wonderful job she did organizing the dinners that 2 or 3 of our church families prepare for about 40 residents of the Jan Peek House on the 4th Saturday evening of each month, and for coordinating the Noontime Meal effort, through which we provide about 50 lunches on the second Wednesday of each month to very grateful laborers at the Salvation Army building in Peekskill. We appreciate the tirelessness, passion, and creative nimbleness Pat displayed in keeping both programs going strong even during the pandemic. It is going to take several people to replace Pat; more specifically, one Noontime Meal coordinator and two Jan Peek co-coordinators.

Please contact Jeff Kephart if you would like to explore taking on these roles, or if you would like to volunteer to serve a meal at Jan Peek House sometime this year. We are particularly interested in pairing new families who have never done this before with more experienced families who can show them the ropes — it's not hard, and it's very rewarding!

Submitted by Sub-committee – Chair – Jeff Kephart

Midnight Run

There were no Runs this year due to Covid, however we did share some toiletry kits with the Cold Spring Church which continued regular Runs. This year we got a new walk-in closet for supplies for up-coming Runs. Items were moved from the old cramped, disorganized space in Room 17. We also created at least 35 toiletry kits and stored the left-over soaps, etc. to create more kits for any upcoming Runs. We also have some new underwear and socks and some clothing so that we don't have to start from scratch and ask the congregation for so many items. The Confirmation class is planning a Run in 2022, assuming Covid eases up.

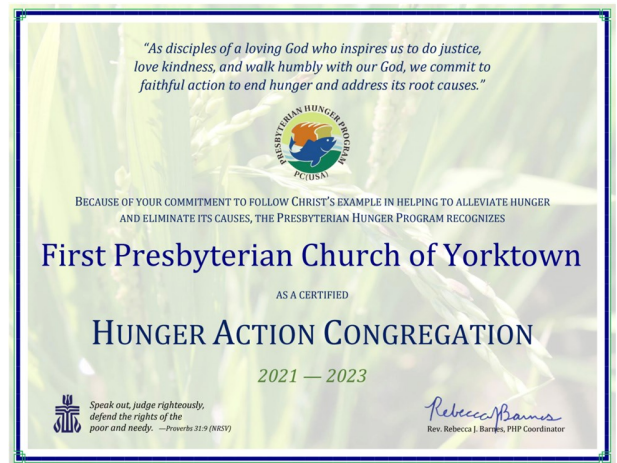
Mental Health Initiative

Team Members: *Sue Caruso – Co-Chair, Eric Kreuter – Co-Chair, Jen Burns, Michelle Forlano, Sandy Fryrear, Heidi Haring, Jeff Kephart, Tamsin Levine, Dana Mordue, Cecilia Ortiz, Marilyn Rivera-Alvarado, Tami Seidel, Marina Wheeler.*

Purpose: The Mental Health Initiative Team was initiated in 2020 as a joint initiative by the Mission commission and Deacons to explore the mental health needs of the church and community and develop approaches to strengthen the mental health outreach to both our church and neighboring communities. The team remained active throughout 2021. Highlights of 2021 include:

⇒ **Mental Health Survey:** In February 2021 the congregation (and 4 local churches interested in participating) were asked to respond to the customized Mental Health survey designed to assess the mental health needs in their congregations. Survey results provided valuable insight and specific recommendation for MH101 and Companionship model training.

Summary of survey: Excerpts follow from Pathways to Promise, P2P, analysis of our congregation's MH survey: Anxiety (65%) and Depression (51%) are issues present in those lives/family responding. 38% of those responding felt unsure how to support families struggling and 30% were unsure of where to refer someone for treatment. Stressors/life circumstances that are present in the lives of those congregants that responded to the survey included Chronic or Severe Physical Health problems (46%), Chronic or Severe Mental Health problems (30%), Friends/Family with Dementia or Alzheimer's (28%) and Financial Distress (28%).



- ⇒ **MH101**: (class designed to introduce the congregation to various mental health challenges with the belief that this will grow our capacity to appropriately support individuals experiencing these challenges). First MH101 class was conducted by P2P in June 2021 to MH team members and interested Elders and Deacons. Subsequently, members of the mental health team launched their first training for congregation members in August 2021. The team plans to continue offering this training throughout 2022 as a way of sustaining our commitment to this ministry and spread the knowledge to as many congregants as possible.
- ⇒ **Sharing and Healing Fellowship evening**: Congregation members were asked to join the mental health team on November 8th to share the impact mental health challenges have had on our lives and how are we dealing with these challenges? We talked about what healing looks like to each of us and what techniques we use to help us heal. At the end of the evening, we worked collaboratively to create a poem of healing, which is currently being set to music by Garrett Artman.
- ⇒ **Commitment to Mental Health Ministry**: During the May 16th Service, Mental Health Awareness Sunday the congregation adopted the commitment to the MH ministry.
- ⇒ **Partnership with other churches and organizations in the community**: Co-team leaders are continuing to participate at the County (Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health, Interfaith Leadership Networking Group) and National level (PCUSA Mental Health Networking group).
- ⇒ **Research and ordering of various resources relating to mental health issues**: We have ordered several brochures on mental health issues for eventual distribution and exploring various books to supplement the church library

Saint Christopher's Inn/Resource Recovery of Orange County

The newest creative writing program offered at Resource Recovery in this 28-day substance use disorder rehabilitation program located in Middletown, NY is going very well.

Eric submitted a book proposal for a second book on the use of creative writing in the treatment of chemical addiction to Ethics Press International, based in the UK.

PRIORITIES for 2022

As a way of managing our limited resources (financial and human) we will focus our efforts in 2022 mainly on food insecurity and mental health.

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Kreuter, Chair

WORSHIP DESIGN COMMISSION

Members: *Jane Amato, Debbie Amorese, Garrett Artman (Director of Music Ministry), Abby Cross (Co-chair), Lynn Edling, Karen Gerth, Marsha Henderson, Bill Herman (Co-chair), Christie Herman, Ben Low (Streaming Media Manager), Rev. Chip Low (Co-pastor), Sara Mann, Nathan Perry, Barbara Santagata, Rev. Tami Seidel (Co-pastor), Ann Timmons.*

About the Commission:

The Worship Design Commission oversees the needs of our faith community as it gathers for **worship** in the Sanctuary, at home, or even out of doors.

The Commission serves as a resource and support to the pastors in developing **themes** for worship and to **design** and implement meaningful, thoughtful and experiential worship. This includes, but is not limited to: reviewing the content and structure of worship, planning and implementing worship themes, designing special services, overseeing the **Usher Ministry** and lay leaders, making arrangements for the serving of the **Lord's Supper**, and planning for appropriate decoration of the Sanctuary (such as banners, candles, flowers, themed décor, and greens).

Additionally, the Worship Design Commission oversees the **musical life** of our congregation, including service music, the Adult Choir, the Adult and Youth Bell Choirs and the Concert Series. Director of Music Ministry **Garrett Artman** has supervised and directed our "pit singers" for the live streamed services, as well as designing, directing and editing a glorious selection of "Special Music."

Increasingly prominent in 2021 was the role of our **Tech Team**, which provides for both live-streaming of services, and the audio-visual aids to in-person worship (such as microphones, lighting, projections, etc.). As in 2020, we continued to provide **live-streaming** for all Sunday worship and most special services, enabling our members and guests to remain connected to the church regardless of our ability to gather face-to-face.

Our Year in Review:

During 2021, our work was guided by three broad objectives: **Streaming, Sabbatical, and Re-opening.**

Throughout the year, as hopes for an end to the pandemic rose and faded, we continued to employ a variety of formats for worship and special services. Ash Wednesday and Holy Week services remained virtual, with walk-through imposition of ashes and the return of the **Drive-thru Holy Week Worship Pack Pick-Up™**, while Easter Sunday once again consisted of an outdoor Sunrise service and a live stream from the sanctuary. In June, a "test run" of 8:30 in-person worship services was conducted, with the aim of resuming them for good in September.

The first part of our year was spent preparing for the planned **sabbatical** period of Co-pastor **Chip Low**, which was to intertwine with summer vacations for Chip, Tami and their family. In anticipation of this, we delved into our roster of **lay liturgists** and supply preachers, planned for technical coverage in the absence of Streaming Media Manager **Ben Low**, and considered worship themes to prepare our hearts and minds for a period of pilgrimage and rest.

To conclude the sabbatical period, we anticipated a September **re-opening**, to be marked by the return of in-person worship, with two Sunday services (at new times), one of which would continue to be live-streamed. Technology remained in the forefront, as the re-opening was to be followed by equipment upgrades to our camera, lighting and audio systems, as well as the conclusion of Ben's tenure as Streaming Media Manager. **Karen Gerth**, along with Ben, spearheaded the initiative to build and train an expanded Tech Team to carry over these duties uninterrupted into the season of Advent and beyond.

Besides the technological aspects, the Re-opening Committee tackled questions about the feasibility of hybrid services, the needs of the church to re-open safely and smoothly, and the ever-changing guidance regarding masks, vaccination and other public health concerns. The **Usher Ministry**, also led by Karen Gerth, faced the challenge of re-starting its operations under the new conditions imposed by the pandemic, change in format to the services, and the resulting change in availability of its members. The return of in-person **Communion**, using individual pre-packaged elements, was another of the many reins held by Karen Gerth.

To finish the year, the season of **Advent** saw a hybrid menu of services. The Longest Night service was presented in-person and live-streamed, as was the Christmas Eve Children's Service and Pageant, with the children performing their own pre-recorded dialogue (to overcome the limitations of face masks). For evening Lessons and Carols services, both were held in-person, with the first service also live-streamed.

Four Strategic Focuses from the CAT Scan:

1. Strategic investment in the next generation of the church
2. Building lay leadership capacity
3. Strengthening relational infrastructure
4. Investment in spiritual formation & mental health ministry

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Worship themes:

For the first part of 2021, we were guided by the book *Soul of the Pilgrim* by Christine Valters Paintner, which lays out the following "**Eight Practices for the Journey Within**":

1. Hearing the Call and Responding
2. Packing Lightly
3. Crossing the Threshold
4. Making the Way by Walking
5. Being Uncomfortable
6. Beginning Again
7. Embracing the Unknown
8. Coming Home

This led us to our theme for Lent, **Wandering for the Love of God: A Lenten Pilgrimage of Faith**, then through the sabbatical period and finally into a period of **Coming Home & Remembering Who We Are**, which was to coincide with the September **re-opening**. For this period, we followed a theme of **Led by Love, Forward in Faith**, encompassing three goals for the fall: **Reconnect, Remember, Recommit**. Following this, our Advent theme was **Incarnation: Living in the Mystery**.

Special services:

- Epiphany: Individualized “Star Words” to focus on through the year
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday
- Earth Day Worship led by the Green Faith Team (outdoor + indoor live-streamed)
- Celebrate the Gifts of Women
- Mental Health Awareness (Ascension Sunday)
- Pentecost and Children’s Sunday (pre-recorded)
- Celebrate the Gifts of Men
- Sabbatical Commissioning
- Stewardship Celebration
- Blessing of the Backpacks (Virtually)
- World Communion Sunday
- Blessing of the Animals
- Stewardship Commitment Sunday
- Peace and Justice Sunday
- Longest Night Service on the Winter Solstice
- Christmas Eve Services (Children's Service, Lessons & Carols)

In Gratitude:

Karen Gerth has done so much for the operation and efficiency of Worship that her contributions cannot be acknowledged and thanked enough. She is a gift to the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown and a model of Christian love. From ushers and communion to banners and tech, Karen has given unstintingly of herself and her time. We want to say we have noticed, we are grateful, you are loved.

The Tech Team is responsible for livestreaming to Facebook, running the sound board and cameras during worship **services**, operating the worship laptop computer, recording the services and sharing them on our website (audio and video). Special thanks to **Ben Low** who stepped down from his role as Streaming Media Manager after sharing his expertise to migrate our technology to the three-camera and new sound board configuration. Special thanks to all the crew who learned a new system and continue to deliver week in and week out. They include **John Bentley, Linda Swift, Nathan Perry, Bryan Ekelund, Amy Wallace, Karen Gerth, Bill Herman, and Ben Low**. Tech team also supports audio requirements for concerts and large meetings. *Hopefully, in 2022 our numbers will swell again as we return to in person services.*

Special thanks to our **Sabbatical Team**, who kept worship enriching and meaningful throughout Sabbatical 1.0. We look forward to Sabbatical 2.0 if the “you-know-what” goes away, or at least behaves itself. **Christie, Karen, Connie, Garrett, Tami, Nathan and Amy** all provided meaningful community interactions and worship as Chip refueled and refocused.

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Worship Teams: Thanks to our small band of masked workers for our annual **Greening of the Sanctuary** for Advent and Christmas—with special thanks and gratitude to our Greening coordinator, now in his fourth year, **Matt Hager**. Many thanks to the **Wilkens/Pratt** families for the gift of Christmas Trees, wreathes, and garlands. (Also, much of the décor for the beautiful and abundant Thanksgiving Service.) The Christmas Eve Family Worship and Pageant moved to a new pre-recorded format which would not have been possible without the wonderful work of **Bill Herman, Garrett Artman, Abby Cross, Pam Angione, and Tami Seidel**. And the “Magnificent Seven”: **Jamie Cross, Meaghan Heyde, Paige Edelmann, Clara Cross, Alexander Heyde, Julia Angione and Caroline Angione**.

Many thanks to **Jim Gerth** and **John Harrigan** for all their efforts to keep the Sanctuary in order. We offer special gratitude and remembrance to **Jim** for his creative and useful ideas and adaptability in meeting the evolving needs of Worship. He will be missed. He was a friend and a mensch.

The Worship Design Commission oversees **The First Presbyterian Church Concert Series**, which is currently in hiatus but will soon appear in a reconstituted form led by **Garrett Artman** and a new Concert Series Task Force. We were so close to having a concert, and the Covid snatched it from us. (This line is sadly repeated from last year’s report.)

Thanks to the **Sanctuary Strategy Team**, who has seen many of their plans and dreams come to fruition, but the work continues.

We want to acknowledge the **Re-opening Committee**, now **The Pandemic Response Team**, who developed protocols for the safe return to face-to-face worship which we were able to use for most of 2021 and will again soon. But whatever happens, we will always have live-streaming.

The Worship Design Commission is deeply grateful to the talents of those on the Commission, as well as the spiritual leadership, support, and talents of Chip Low and Tami Seidel. We are thankful for the office support of **Lisa Flanagan**. We are tremendously grateful for **Carol** and **Erik Jensen**, who provide all the behind the scenes work for the adult and youth bell choirs.

Special thanks to **Barbara Wilkens** and **Karen Gerth** for selecting and hanging Banners, and for **Barbara Santagata’s** insightful and beautiful graphic designs. We are blessed by the gifts of **Connie Knapp** for providing coverage and leadership in our worship. The Worship Design Commission also recognizes with thanks all those who have ushered both pre- and post-COVID, set and served the Lord’s Supper, created and provided signs, banners, and web pages to communicate our message to the community, donated the materials and decorated our worship space, provided lay leadership, and who have stepped in to assist in countless ways—all of which contribute to the powerful worship experiences with which we are so blessed. We are thankful to have the energy, enthusiasm, and commitment of our vibrant faith community.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Herman and Abby Cross (Co-chairs), Nathan Perry (Co-chair, 2022)

MUSIC MINISTRY

Let us build a house

Where love can dwell

And all can safely live.

A place where saints and children tell

How hearts learn to forgive

Built of hopes and dreams and visions.

Rock of faith and vault of grace.

Here the love of Christ shall end divisions

All are welcome,

All are welcome

All are welcome in this place

Let us build a house

where all are named,

their songs and visions heard

and loved and treasured,

taught and claimed

as words within the Word.

Built of tears and cries and laughter,

prayers of faith and songs of grace,

let this house proclaim

from floor to rafter.

All are welcome,

All are welcome,

All are welcome in this place.

Originally, Marty Haugen wrote “All Are Welcome” for a church dedication in 1994. Although the event was for a physical space, the words transcend physical structure and goes on to build spiritual foundations. There are so many phrases that capture both an ancient and future truth that is at the very core of what our church practices. For example, I love that it names the church as a “rock of faith and a vault of grace,” “built of tears and cries and laughter,” and finally that wonderful line where we hear the invitation, “all are welcome.”

There’s one lyric not listed above that particularly resonated with me and my struggle this year. “Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God’s face; let us bring an end to fear and danger.” With our theme of incarnation over advent and the sermons of Chip and Tami, it was easy to be in the mindset of seeing God everywhere and in everyone. What wasn’t easy was seeing beyond the computer screen and facemask. Although the twinkle of God was in our eyes, I’m not sure we were given an opportunity to see it without hinderance; not to mention the constant barrage of news headlines of new variants and rising hospitalizations in the back of our minds. Hindsight may be 2020 but echoes of the pandemic still sound strong inside of the empty building. This year has not been easy, and in a church of planners and list-makers, embracing the unknown is an exhausting task.

Despite the challenges, our music ministers marched on to practice some of the most integral parts of humanity and met weekly for in-person rehearsals providing music for worship. We welcomed new (and returning) members to our ensembles, created new musical opportunities for people, and explored the health and practices of our art with the first music ministry meeting. Here’s a few things we were able to successfully do this year.

- ♫ **HIMSingers** (Tenor/Bass Chorus) a vision of Tom DeVaul, Liam McAuliffe, and myself, this chamber group of 4-7 people meets every week outside of regular choir rehearsal and learns its own TB repertoire. Huge thank you to the members Liam, Aidan, Tom, John, Dick, Bob, and Kurt for making this dream a complete success. I still get chills thinking about our “First Noel” sung during Christmas.
- ♫ **Boomwhackers** (Percussion ensemble) the Good Samaritones put their bells down for a couple rehearsals and picked up the boomwhackers. These are plastic, pitched idiophones that are SUPER fun to play. I hope that this is the start of a regularly meeting percussion ensemble that creates music with items we come across every single day. The purpose of these groups is to ground ourselves in rhythm. To practice and accept the importance of space in between the notes.
- ♫ **Gathering Time** (Music moments) We were able to create a musical moment with the gathering time kids, led by Abby Cross, the Sunday School staff, and myself. Here we learn the fundamentals of music literacy, concepts of sound, and how music integrates itself in our faith. By the sounds most of us were able to produce during the songs in the pageant, I would call it a success!

♫ **Music Ministry** (All things music) This team met and helped me organize and lay out some structural foundation of our ensembles here at the church. People answered the call of becoming sections leaders, managers, librarians, networkers, and gave great insight on how we can implement musical enrichment in our faith. Such as adult education, a lecture series on music history, outreach programs, etc.

Our musical assets are in a window of repair. The organ swell shade is finally repaired! Allowing for volume to be adjusted without the addition or subtraction of pipes. Pipe couplers can be abrasive to one's ears in a small space, so I am grateful for the work of Stanton Daugherty on the organ. Over the years, our sanctuary piano has lost its lustrous sound and will be worked on by our technician, Jeff Waldo. To be brief, the mechanisms are showing signs of wear after the rebuild a few decades ago (wobbly keys, sticking parts, worn felts). These repairs will ensure that our sanctuary Steinway is in top performance shape.

Thank you all for your work building this house. To my section leaders Kendra, Debbie, Tom, and John. To Amy for giving us grab-and-go goodies on Christmas when we were unable to meet for our potluck dinner. To Abby for helping me teach gathering time kids and managing attendance for choir. To Christie for managing our library and repertoire. To my new choir members Kurt, Tamsin, Sam, and Bob. To my volunteer pandemic singers when we are 100% virtual (shout out to the original Covid Quartet Katharine, Christie, Liam, and John). To my Bell Choir team Erik and Carol. To my ensembles. To the staff. And lastly, to all the members and supporters of the music ministry here. What I'm able to achieve at this church is a direct reflection of your love, acceptance, tenacity, and creativity. This year has truly been "Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace" and I say we should "let this house proclaim from floor to rafter- All are welcome in this place."

Yours in music,
Garrett Artman, Director of Music Ministry

FAITH FORMATION COMMISSION



Members:

Nicole DeCintio and Lynn Edling, Co-chairs; Andrew Cross, Bridget Bentley, Wanda Diaz, Stephanie Hare, Heidi Haring, Carole Jensen, Connie Knapp, Miranda McGill, Michele Mosca, Suzy Rishel, Rev. Tami Seidel, Nance Thompson, Jean Post-Winget.

Overview:

The Faith Formation Commission is responsible for the development, implementation and administration of educational programs that address the needs and interests of our entire church family. From the youngest child to the oldest senior, our mission is to guide all on their spiritual journey and have some fun in the process. The dedication and perseverance of the members of the Faith Formation Commission was key in keeping the church classes running during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic and continues today. The following sub-committees fall under this commission: Sunday School, Faith4Life (adult education), Church Library, Youth, Confirmation, Childcare, Vacation Bible School, Intergenerational Ministry and The Christmas Pageant.

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Sunday School:

Our classes meet Sundays at 9:15am for an hour during the regular school year and are divided into 4 groups. The *Shine* curriculum is used for our preschoolers through 4th graders and enjoy music time in their class with our Music Director, Garrett Artman. Our 5th and 6th graders use the *Connect* curriculum and our 7th and 8th graders use the *So Great A Cloud of Witnesses (A Survey of Church History)* curriculum. Our 9th and 10th graders prepare for Confirmation in their own class (see the Confirmation Section of this commission report).



Over the summer of 2021, our commission implemented a plan to have virtual and hybrid classes starting in September 2021. Large flat screen TV's and cameras were installed in all of our classrooms (including the adult education room) and as the building is being renovated, members of our team along with other members of the church worked tirelessly to clean out closets and rooms so that all of the classrooms could be located in the same area of the building. Not a small feat!



As we navigated (and continue to navigate) through the Covid-19 pandemic, our dedicated school leaders, teachers, superintendents, and substitutes have been outstanding in adapting to virtual and hybrid instruction. Our children and youth have the option to come in person to class as they are comfortable or attend virtually.

We would like to thank all the teachers and substitutes for their help in keeping our classes running smoothly. A thank you to our previous Superintendents, Bridget Bentley and Kristy Berlin for their support last year as well as our new Superintendents, Miranda McGill and Wanda Diaz for stepping in during the Fall of 2021. A very big thank you to Stephanie Hare, Andy Cross, and Lynn Edling for handing the technology portion of the installation of the TVs and cameras in all of the rooms; Also, thanks to Heidi Haring and Stephanie Hare (again!) and all who helped with cleaning out the rooms to prepare for the new classrooms. A thank you to Garrett and Abby for their musical time with the youngest children during class and our Co-pastor, Tami Seidel for her guidance and help as we make decisions. Last but not least, our beloved Jim Gerth was instrumental in mounting the TVs in all of the classrooms. His presence in our church is greatly missed already.

Confirmation

It almost goes without say that covid has interrupted several traditions in our congregation over the past two years; in the realm of Confirmation, we decided to seize the opportunity afforded to us by these interruptions to update our path to Confirmation for our students. Due to safety precautions because of the pandemic, we did not hold a Confirmation Class during the 2020-21 school year knowing that we would not be able to carry out many of the traditional in person activities that play a key role in the program, such as visiting other houses of worship and many of our service projects.



Instead, last school year we included our 9th graders with our 7th and 8th grade students in our first year of our newly imagined FaithX class, where we took a journey through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, with the goal of increasing the Biblical literacy of all of our students. As mentioned above, our current FaithX (current 7th and 8th graders) class is spending this year studying the history of Christianity from the early days of the Apostles up through the establishment of the Presbyterian tradition. As future groups of students rise through our Sunday School program, we will continue this pattern of emphasizing the history of the Church and the Bible in the 7th and 8th grade years, the goal being to have students enter the Confirmation process with a solid base knowledge of how our Church and its traditions came to be.

We recommenced a Confirmation class this Fall with a class of twelve students comprised of our now 9th and 10th grade students, led by Gordon Braudaway, Pam Darreff, and Stephanie Hare, with assistance from Chip and Tami. We again are using the curriculum *Big God Big Questions* from the PC(USA) in which we take apart and analyze the questions asked of prospective members when they join the church. In the process, we encourage students to engage their critical thinking skills as they learn more about the traditions of the Presbyterian Church and Reformed Christianity, and discern a path for their own faith journeys.

Respectfully Submitted by *Stephanie Hare, Director of Youth Ministries*

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Youth Groups

In early 2021, we continued to have our Youth Groups meet online via Zoom, with Middle School Youth meeting on two Wednesday evenings a month and High School Youth meeting two Sunday evenings a month through the end of the 2021 school year. Our Middle Schoolers focused on building community and staying connected in light of the necessary physical separation of the pandemic. Our High School group engaged in a series of discussion topics called “This and Faith”, which included sessions such as: “Justice and Faith”, “Institutional Racism and Faith”, and “Service and Faith”. Since the beginning of the current school year, the goal has been to move back toward in person meetings and activities, but we do so cautiously in light of the Covid variants that have emerged in the last several months of 2021. However, we look forward in hope to a brighter 2022.

Respectfully submitted by *Stephanie Hare, Director of Youth Ministries*

Faith4Life

Despite the pandemic, the Faith4Life group has had a very active and rewarding year, meeting mostly by Zoom. We were able to offer groups on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, Wednesday evenings, as well as Sunday mornings before church and Sunday evenings. Participation in these Zoom sessions has been good, with lively and interesting discussions.

For much of 2021 our theme was Christian practices. The Thursday morning group watched a film series called *On Our Way: Christian Practices for Living a Whole Life* which focused on practices such as hospitality, keeping the Sabbath and living as community. In September, the Sunday morning group studied Adam Hamilton’s book, *The Walk: Five Essential Practices of the Christian Life* which provided some concrete suggestions on daily practices for living a Christian life.

For Lent, our theme was *Wandering for the Love of God: A Lenten Pilgrimage of Faith*. This theme continued our focus on practices but also included the concept of pilgrimage since the pastors and congregation were contemplating sabbatical time. On Sunday mornings, we discussed Christine Valters Paintner’s book *Soul of a Pilgrim: Eight Practices for the Journey Within*. We were also blessed to have Christine Valters Paintner preach for us on May 2. Also in lent, Chip provided a program that included podcasts from the Center for Contemplation and Action on *Learning How to See* with Brian McLaren, Father Richard Rohr and Rev Dr. Jacquie Lewis. An insightful look into biases often present in our thought processes.

In September, as part of our reconnecting, remembering, and recommitting ourselves initiative, we began a study of Brian McLaren’s *The Great Spiritual Migration: How the World’s Largest Religion is Seeking a Better Way to be Christian*. Tami and Chip lead the discussions which were well attended by many of our church family. For those who participated, this study brought new insights, or at the very least new questions, about what it means to be God’s Church in our present day.

In the fall and moving into Advent, we began to focus on the humanity of Jesus and what his human life means for us. The Women’s circle read *What my Grandmothers Taught Me: Learning from the Women of Matthew’s Genealogy of Jesus*. And then further into Advent, the Sunday morning group studied Adam Hamilton’s book *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas*. Through this book we looked at the many titles or names given to Jesus and their significance for us as Christians.

We are very grateful to Tami, Chip, and Connie for their inspired leadership and faithful devotion in teaching us to be more faithful followers of Christ. We also want to thank our occasional leaders, Lynn Edling and Nance Thompson, and all those who participate in our studies. Your insights enrich us all.

Library

Enhance your spiritual journey through reading! The church library has continued to be maintained during the pandemic by Carol Jensen and is open to church members (please check with the office to see if an appointment is needed). If you missed a bible study or an adult ed class, stop by to sign out a copy of the book used during the sessions. Many thanks to Carol for keeping our library up-to-date and answering questions as needed!

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Childcare

Our church offers dependable childcare during Sunday morning services and special events. Available to infants through kindergarten, parents can rest assured that their children are in good hands while they attend service. We typically employ 3 people for coverage (background checks conducted on all) however, at this time, we are seeking a 3rd person. In the fall of 2021, we were able to install a camera in the room for occasional times when only one childcare adult is present. Many thanks to Michele Mosca, our Child Care Coordinator, for her continuous work in this area as well as the childcare workers!

Vacation Bible School

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, VBS has been on hold. This program brings together the children and youth of our church, The United Methodist Church, and St. Andrew's Lutheran Church.

CrossGen/Intergenerational Ministry

We want to thank Nance Thompson, Debbie Hager, and Marissa Swift for considering how we can create activities that will be participated in and enjoyed by all age groups. In July we had an Intergenerational Labyrinth Walk as part of our Sabbatical Summer activities. Unfortunately, since then, get-togethers have been severely limited by the pandemic. We hope to start again soon.

Christmas Pageant

Our Christmas Pageant this year was a feat of technical and artful collaboration. The children/cast each played more than one role and did all their parts beautifully. The cast members were Caroline Angione, Julia Angione, Jamie Cross, Clara Cross, Paige Edelmann, Alex Heyde, and Meaghan Heyde. To be especially safe this year, the sound was recorded apart from the acting and so the children needed to act to the pre-recorded sounds of their voices. It was challenging but the cast did it well. We thank them for their participation and congratulate them on their performance! We especially want to thank Bill Herman, Abby Cross, Garrett Artman, and Tami Seidel for all their work and technical expertise in bringing this production together.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicole DeCintio

STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION

Members: *Jane Amato, Gloria Coccodrilli, Pam Darreff, Barbara Humphrey, Connie Knapp, Rev. Chip Low, Tim Lupfer, Jessica Mayes, Nancy Paskin, Rev. Tami Seidel, Lynda Spring.*

Financial Data has been removed for the web-copy of the annual report. Church Members can obtain a full printed copy of the Annual Report upon request.

Planned Giving:

In 2013, the Session approved the establishment of an endowment fund for FPCY to support planned giving. Our pastors and Tim Lupfer of the Stewardship Commission have information on how members may consider long-term giving.

(Continued on page 27)

Veterans Recognition:

Stewardship celebrates Veterans Day and Memorial Day by recognizing members of our church family who serve/served in our country's military. Lisa Flanagan and Tim Lupfer organized the names, videos and information for their recognition at our recent church service with the able assistance of Ben Low.

Outreach:

College students and active military personnel receive care packages during the year. Pam Darreff coordinates this project, working hard to update accurate addresses and timely mailings. This outreach keeps the connection with our young adults and service members who are away from home.

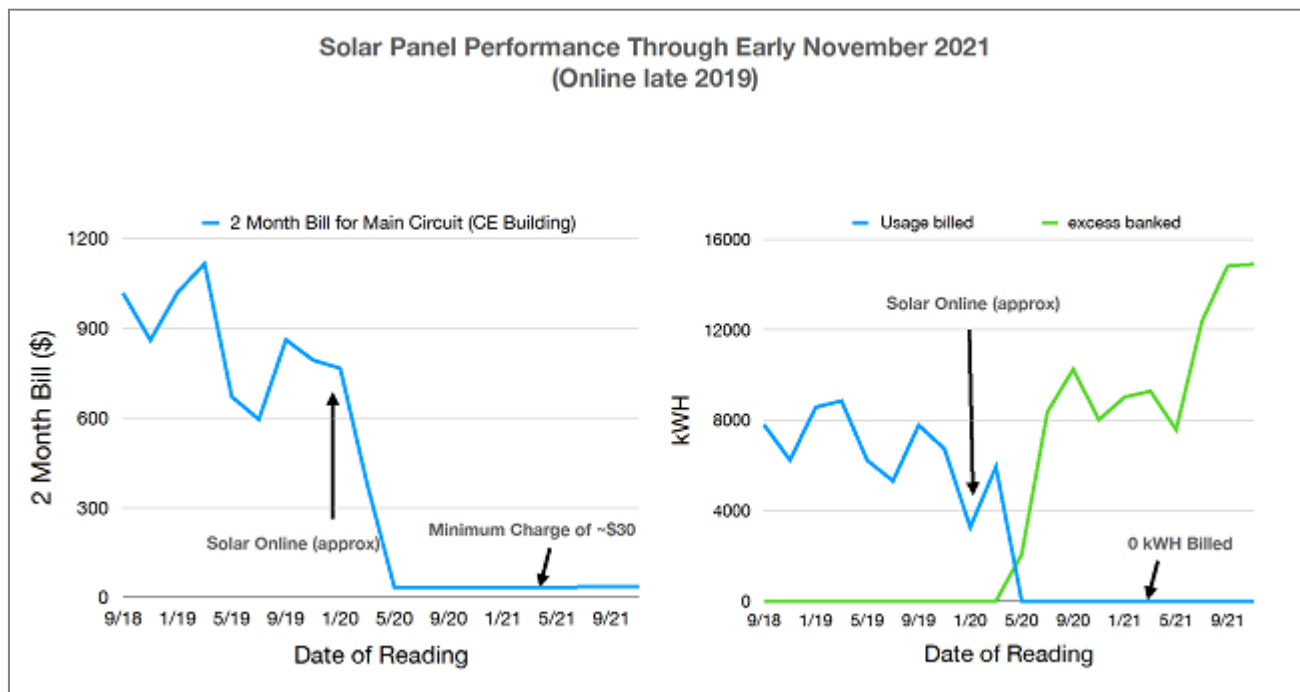
Green Faith/Earth Care:

Connie Knapp reports the Green Team's activities to Stewardship. Nancy Caswell has chaired the Green Team; Nancy has moved, and the Team is looking for a new leader. Earth Care congregations are recertified annually. We were successfully recertified during 2021. During this past year, we coordinated the Earth Day worship service. Most of our activities were curtailed because of the pandemic.

We also asked Session to support the Presbytery's partnership, HRP Green. Each partnership needs to provide at least three congregational letters of support; we supported HRP Green along with Irvington, Montgomery and Wappingers. Other congregations that are part of HRP Green include White Plains, Cold Spring, Naurausuhan, Chester, and Middletown United. HRP Green produced a "Healing Our Sacred Sites" tour of Newburgh, New York as a video to be used by churches as a worship service. Connie participated in the planning of that service as a member of HRP Green.

Report on Solar Energy Production

Donna Gresh reported that beginning in 2020 we started "banking" the excess electricity that we generated. Our banked generation in 2020 carried us throughout the winter, spring, and summer of 2020/2021. As of early September this year, we had excess (banked) generation of about 15k kWh. Our highest two-month usage (winter) is about half of that. The sanctuary circuit shows small amounts of electricity usage, so the savings for the sanctuary aren't as great. Donna put together this graph which shows the impact of our solar panels.



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Membership and New Members:

Due to the COVID pandemic, our membership review and new member classes were not held in 2021. Therefore, there have been no members removed from the rolls. The process needed to “Welcome Our Visitors” headed by Barbara Humphrey, has been mostly by virtual invitation. Our welcoming tradition of Baked Bread has been on hold. The recent reopening of the church has created a real challenge as to how we “Revisit the Visitor.” With today’s options of in-person services and live streaming, Stewardship is contemplating the new vision of today’s congregation and how we can best reach out to welcome everyone visiting our church. This is a work in progress as we contend with the ever-changing times of the pandemic.

Stewardship Seminar:

Rev. Tami Seidel, Connie Knapp, Pam Darreff attended the Kaleidoscope Conference in September 2021 via Zoom.

Special Offerings:

One Great Hour of Sharing: 100% PCUSA

Easter Offering: 100% FPCY – Jan Peek & Garden of Hope

Pentecost: 60% to Presbytery + 40% FPCY – Mental Health Associations of Westchester Youth Ministry

Peace & Global Witness: 75% PC(USA) + 25% FPCY - Annie Y. Fisher Scholarship Fund @ Antioch Baptist

Thanksgiving Offering: 100% FPCY – Christmas Pork Roasts for Pantry Plus

Christmas Joy Offering: 100% PCUSA

This past year in the midst of pandemic uncertainty and an “anything-but-normal” summer routine, FPCY has forged ahead with its third year of capital campaign, while adapting to new approaches of worship, prayer and Christian fellowship. We not only survived but we evolved. Stewardship has been overwhelmed by the awesome collective commitment to share time, talent, as well as treasure. Our commission has attempted to express our enormous gratitude to everyone who continues to serve and support our church. A grateful heart has many blessings!

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Amato and Jessica Mayes, Stewardship Chairs

OPERATIONS COMMISSION

Members: Tami Seidel, Dick Seymour, Bud Coccodrilli, Vinnie Wallace, Deanna Collins, Jim Gerth, Walter Oudheusden, Rob Baddeley, Judy Chessa, Matt Hager, Ian Spence.

Purpose: The Operations Commission is responsible for maintaining and improving our premises and in doing so support FPCY’s work in our community and beyond.

Special thanks

- ⇒ to Dick Seymour for sponsoring and spearheading several essential projects some of which will be detailed below, accompanied by Jerry Amato, Bud Coccodrilli and assorted Commission members.
- ⇒ to the late Jim Gerth for lending his expertise to and taking on projects both inside and out. He lived up to his title as Caretaker with devotion and love which he poured into every project.
- ⇒ Working behind the scenes, Matt Hager was a constant, involved in most projects relating to the facilities and the Manse.
- ⇒ to Androsko Landscaping for their continuing support above and beyond what they were contracted to do. Mr. Androsko always made available machinery and manpower for special Church related projects.
- ⇒ to the members of this Commission and many others who were always there for storm cleanup, leaks, equipment failures, weeding and grounds keeping, and whatever else might arise. Nothing was left unattended.

2021 Highlights:

On behalf of the CPMT, Operations undertook evaluation of and eventual recommendations for contractors for the heating and HVAC projects, the paving project, and the outdoor lighting project. Dick spearheaded each of the projects with Jim adding his expertise as well.

To that end, Carey and Walsh were engaged to provide us with a new HVAC system for cooling as well as new boilers for heating. That work concluded in May.

Jim's Paving was engaged to repave and restripe all of our exterior blacktop and bolstering our dumpster pads with that project ending end of June/beginning of July.

The lighting project necessitated appearances before the Yorktown Planning Board by Dick and Vinnie to allay any fears of light pollution and to obtain any necessary permits. Delta Electrical was contracted for that project which was also completed by the end of June.

There were several other major projects, unanticipated but necessary and detailed below, which fell under the purview of the Commission.

During a yearly inspection of our basement sump pumps, Connecticut Basement Systems (CBS) discovered that the support columns under room one had been almost rusted through by years of ground water so they were contracted to replace and stabilize new ones. This work was completed to our satisfaction late in the year.

The front portico of the Sanctuary was found to be pulling away from the main structure so Clemco was called in to first strap the portico in place and then re-attach it correctly, a project that was completed by December.

Separately, the Manse was found to be in need of a new roof as well as re-pointing the chimney, both projects being completed in December.

In interior work, the gathering space doors were reconfigured for remote access in the same manner as the exterior office door. Work continued/continues to remodel the office, the banner closet, and several of the other rooms. Jim undertook each of these projects utilizing all of his skills and was helped by various members of this Commission. Deanna made known that the Defib machine had been disconnected during renovations so this was corrected. Additionally she undertook to update and distribute all necessary first aid supplies throughout the facility.

Later in the year, on behalf of the CPMT we began demolition of the kitchen by removing cabinets, many of which will be repurposed, and assorted structural elements. Work continues.

Exterior work began early in the year as our Blue Spruce, weakened by disease, was severely compromised during a severe Christmas Eve '20 windstorm. We engaged Sav-A-Tree to remove it and another diseased Spruce. Throughout the year they performed routine maintenance on our other trees which appear to be thriving.

We conducted Spring and Fall Cleanups albeit in rather limited fashion due to the Pandemic.

The various exterior gardens as well as the interior Memorial Garden had become overgrown and unsightly during the Pandemic so Dick proposed setting up a committee to undertake the task of re-imagining and re-planting these gardens. To that end the Ad-Hoc Committee for Re-imagining Church Gardens was set up, now consisting of seven members and chaired by Dick.

Respectfully submitted,
Ian Spence, Co-Chair, Operations (and Matt)

PERSONNEL COMMISSION

Members: Alice Chin, Beth Gruber, Chip Low, Fred Mintzer, Nathan Perry, Jean Post-Winget, Tami Seidel, Nance Thompson

The Personnel Commission acts as the human resources department, dealing with the management of our employees, supporting their goals -- professional, spiritual, and personal -- as well as addressing their needs. We take the lead in the hiring process, as needed, as we have done with the search for Childcare Providers and Streaming Media Manager. We also evaluate job descriptions annually for each position and update them accordingly. This year, in support of our church and its staff, as well as ensuring the church is in compliance with local/state/federal regulations and insurance requirements, we began work on drafting an Employee Handbook, along with guiding policies and procedures, such as Sexual Misconduct guidelines and NYS Hero's Act. This Commission has also worked collaboratively with other Commissions in response to the ever-evolving pandemic challenges. We are blessed to support an extraordinary staff, who faced a challenging year with resiliency, patience, and grace.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Chin and Beth Gruber, Co-Chairs

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