Presbyterian Church of Western Springs
5250 Wolf Road, Western Springs Illinois 60558-1898 • 708.246.5220 • www.presbyws.org

Annual Meeting of the Congregation

March 6, 2016

Once again this year, the annual meeting of the congregation will be included in and following Sunday morning worship.

We hope this "worshipful work" concept allows more people to attend the annual meeting and permits us to honor and remember with gratitude

our faith community's milestones in 2015.

Please see the Order of Worship for Sunday, March 6, 2016 for the details and agenda for our annual meeting.

Index and Our Church Staff

Index

	Page
Associate Pastor's Report	5
Benevolence Fund Comm	8
Board of Deacons	7
Church Membership Report	6
Church Officers	3
Church Staff	2
Communications Team	20
Endowment and Special Gifts Committee	11
Endowment and Special Gifts Fund Activity	11
Faith Formation	13
Confirmation	14
EXPLORƎ!	14
Sunday School	14
Theology & Brew	16
Vacation Bible School	14
Youth	15
Young Adults	15
Flower Guild	19
InterFaith Book Group	18
Leadership & Ministries Comm.	10
Membership/Church Life Comm.	9
Mission Committee	17
Music Ministry	18
Nominating Committee	7
Pastor's Report	4
Personnel Committee	12
Presbyterian Women	20
Properties Committee	8
Stephen Ministry	19
Technology Committee	9
Worship Committee	16

The Reverend Jennifer Burns Lewis	Pastor, Head of Staff
The Reverend Matthew Paul Schmidt	Associate Pastor
The Reverend H. Daniel Lewis	Parish Associate
The Reverend Donald L. Simmonds	Parish Associate
The Reverend Grayson Van Camp	Parish Associate
The Reverend David Bebb Jones	Pastor Emeritus
Patricia Hughes Mangis	Director of Music
Stephanie M. Coates	Organist
Carolyn Bozek	Christian Education/Youth Ministry Administrator
Kristene Hiepler-Hartwig	Office Administrator
Cory Hoskins	Nursery Attendant
Kurt Smyers	Director of Operations
Ross Bartolomei end date 8-15-15	Sexton
Paige Dold	Sexton
Hunter Pendleton end date 6-30-15	Sexton
Alex Rodriguez	Sexton
Katie Sindelar	Sexton
Mary Smyers	Sexton
Erin Sullivan end date 10-15-15	Sexton
Dan Wennerstrum	Sexton
Tom Wennerstrum end date 8-31-15	Sexton
Linda Murray	Director of Lay Ministries
Michelle Hennessy	Director of Communications
Hank Vaughan	Technologist

Find us on Facebook

Church Officers

The Session

Walt Kovalick, Clerk of Session

Class of 2015	Class of 2016	Class of 2017
Janet Andersen	Paul Banovic	Kathy Boxell
Stephanie Carlisle	Herb Smyers	Kim Fronk
Scott Karstens	Kathy Wennerstrum	Neil Pendleton
Jim McMahon	Stacie Wilson	Lance Smith
Hunter Pendleton		

The Board of Deacons

Class of 2015	Class of 2016	Class of 2017
Val Blough	Jill Dold	Bruce Barnes
Kami Booth	Kay Kelly	Jan Paddock
Laura Gertsmeier	Jane Melilli	Mary Jo Sindelar
Sarah Sullivan	Laurie Merrifield	Lisa Wennerstrum
Katie DeVries		
Erin Sullivan		

Endowment and Special Gifts Fund Committee

Class of 2015	Class of 2016	Class of 2016
Mark Burt	Larry Randa	Matt Booth
Barb Vaughan	Julie Kelly, moderator	Mike Lobash

Financial Officers

Treasurer: Pat Ravanesi **Associate Treasurer:** John Boxell

Assistant Treasurers: Judy Diebel, Andy Hoskins, Rich Haeske

Officers of the Corporation

Herb Smyers, President Stephanie Carlisle, Vice-President Walt Kovalick, Secretary

Pastor's Report

You're an amazing congregation, and I hope you know that.

I'm so grateful, and so honored to serve as one of your pastors.

2015 marked thirteen years with you and I count that as one of the great blessings of my life.

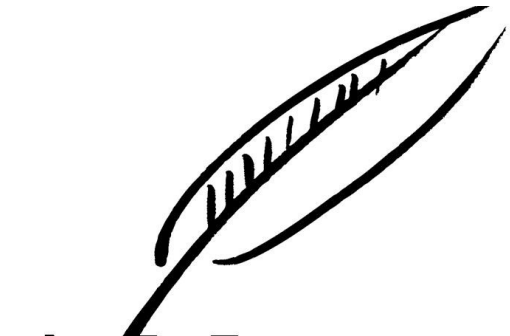
You're thoughtful, compassionate, bright and funny and generous. You love one another and you take good care of your staff. You welcome the stranger and draw the circle wider. You're a tiny bit counter-cultural, in a time when it's not terribly cool to be a church-goer, and that results in some wonderful relationships, with guests who are seeking a church home, with mission partners in countless places and right under our own roof, with the Presbytery of Chicago, the Synod of Lincoln Trails and with the wider church we call the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Our friendships extend to the Mosque Foundation and Nueva Paz, to Englewood and right next door in LaGrange. What rich blessings those are!

You have a remarkable staff, and it's an honor to serve with them. They're creative and kind and resourceful and generous with their time and energy.

You celebrated 60 years of mission and ministry in delightful ways in 2015. This next year will bring new challenges and new opportunities and I have all the faith in the world that , with God's help, you will accomplish many great things in our neighborhood and far beyond.

Thank you, PCWS, for who you are and what you mean to the realm of God.

Joy to you,
Jennifer



A Message
From our Pastor

Associate Pastor's Report

The year of 2015 flew by with whirling activities, thoughtful conversations, meaningful mission projects, new relationships, deeper relationships, and a big dose of joy-filled ministry.

I'm so proud of the involvement that our youth displayed in the past twelve months. In a time when other extracurricular activities can pull families in many different directions, we had such good involvement among our youth. Our senior high studied and planned and created a memorable "Gonna Have a Good Day" themed youth Sunday, raised lots of money (thanks to the generosity of many generous church members and friends) for another new mission trip experience, helped make homes in one of the poorest counties in America cleaner, safer and dryer, led multiple inter-generational educational experiences during Explore, including lessons in social media and an important green conversation about our church's weekly trash output; they also gathered for fun faith formation activities throughout the year. And our junior high group, an equally busy bunch of JUPYs, carved out space in their lives to learn and play at church, meet after school on Wednesdays for a Bible study called Sync, serve various mission projects, go on a secret summer road trip together, and so much more. I'm thrilled that this church values and empowers its youth to be active servants in mission and ministry.

This was also a year of newness—every month at Theology & Brew new conversations simmered, every week during Explore new ideas were shared across generations of children, youth and adults, each day I woke up with a fresh opportunity to live into and serve God's mission through this church in new ways. And as I look forward into a new year, 2016, I can sense that PCWS has the energy and vitality of a leading-edge church in the suburbs. We're staying the same in many of the best ways, we're sabbathing and resting when needed, and we're evolving and adapting into the bright new future that God has in store for us all. I'm so thankful to be involved with all the elders, deacons, volunteers, youth leaders, teachers, beloved staff colleagues, friends, youth and children of a community such as this. It is a humble honor and a real privilege to serve alongside all of you.

Grace and Peace,
Rev. Matthew P. Schmidt

Youth

THEOLOGY & BREW

Young Adults

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Celebrating Our 60th Year of Ministry

Clerk's Report for Calendar Year 2015

Active members on the church roll as of January 1, 2015 **404**

Members received during 2016:

Reaffirmation of Faith..... ….4

By Letter of Transfer.....2

Reinstatements..... 0

Total additions..... +6

Members dismissed during 2016:

To another church..... 4

Removed at their request 7

Deceased 7

Inactive ..... ….6

Total dismissals..... -24

Active Members on the church roll as of December 31, 2015 **386**

We rejoice with those who joined PCWS:

By Reaffirmation of Faith

Amy Seus Paul Seus Anthony Tinaglia Julie Tinaglia

By Letter of Transfer

Carolyn Coughlin Debra Tice

Administration of the Sacrament of Baptism of Children

Ellie Kathleen Tester, June 7, 2015 Jake Anthony Tinaglia, April 12, 2015

In Memoriam

✞Paul Allen, November 5, 2015 ✞Bruce Janecek, December 23, 2015 ✞John Jessen, November 20, 2015
✞Mary Randa, May 22, 2015 ✞Paul Seus, October 14, 2015 ✞Neil Stark, October 15, 2015
✞Henry Strunk, December 24, 2015

Celebration of Marriage

Sean Hoskins & Laci Wilkes, April 11, 2015 Tim Karstens & Ilona Ah-Yo, March 13, 2015
Andy Kelly & Maggie McCormick, September 26, 2015

Committee Reports

Board of Deacons

As the hands and heart of the PCWS ministry of compassion, the Board of Deacons was busy in 2015 providing care to our congregation. We embraced the opportunity to know our fellow church members in a deeper way, serving and praying alongside them, celebrating in their joys and providing support during times of grief, illness or struggle. We delivered - meals, jars of soup, cookies, prayer shawls, reach-out cards, and flowers. We recruited - fellowship hour hosts, Meal Angel cooks and drivers for those who needed a ride to worship. We hosted - anniversary, memorial and other special receptions. We organized - a spring blood drive, Communion visits for the homebound, and the mass mailing of boxes of goodies for our students who are away at college. And we nurtured relationships - through phone calls, cards and letters, over coffee, via home and hospital visits, and by warm and welcoming interactions at Sunday worship and numerous other church events. And as part of the 60th anniversary of PCWS, we planted tulips on church property, delivered thank you treats to the Western Springs fire and police departments, and hosted a lovely reception at Plymouth Place to celebrate with some of our long-time members who reside there.

Board of Deacons 2015:
Bruce Barnes, Valerie Blough,Katie DeVries, Jill Dold, Laura Gertsmeier, Kay Kelly, Jane Melilli, Laurie Merrifield, Janet Paddock, Mary Jo Sindelar, Erin Sullivan, Sarah Sullivan, Lisa Wennerstrum
Kami Booth, moderator

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee did great work in 2015.

They met and met and nominated the following slate of officers to be elected for service beginning in 2015:

Elder: Three year terms-
Eric Boeckmann
Marcia Buell
Condy Dixon
Nate Yate

One year term-
Jamie Smith

Deacon: Three year terms-
Lori Carsten
Judy McAtee

One year term-
Michelle Hennessy
Linda Murray
Katie DeVries
Erin Sullivan

Endowment and Special Gifts Committee:
Steve Blough and Carol Stoub
One year term:
Sal Melilli

Nominating Committee for 2016:
Andy Hoskins, Linda Murray, Aileen Pendleton, Abby Sindelar, Joyce Smyers

Nominating Committee for 2015 -

From the congregation: Ron Blough, Janet Burt, Paige Dold, Jon Gertsmeier, Linda Murray, Hank Vaughan

From the deacons: Katie DeVries

From the Session: Lance Smith and Stacie Wilson, moderator

Committee Reports

Properties Committee

2015 was a year of identification and longer term planning for repairs and updates to our property both inside and out. This assessment started at the beginning of my term on Session with the question, "How do we want to handle properties? Reactionary or Strategic?" After discussing it, the overwhelming majority agreed that a strategic, long term planning approach was important for the Church. So early in the year we compiled and reviewed a series of imminent costs for mechanical, electrical and fire/life safety items, repairs to our parking area, replacement of carpet that's almost 40 years old (and looking it in some areas), etc.

This exercise has resulted in the basis of our capital campaign, but by no means is a fully comprehensive list. It is an educated assessment of the items that need to be done much sooner than later, but with the idea that we also must continue to plan and save as good stewards of our finances for other future improvements to our Church home and manse.

In the meantime, it has been a trying year as we continue to monitor, assess, and prioritize things that need to be immediately fixed throughout the property while working with a limited operating budget. Kurt Smyers, our Director of Operations gets special recognition as the man behind the curtain that truly keeps things going. Few people recognize it, but we all should give him a special thanks for doing what he does behind the scenes every day and many nights.

We have tried implementing some operational changes to reduce electrical and gas expense as we have adjusted some automated temperatures while people are not in the church. We have also been experimenting with what appear to be simple changes such as strategically shutting of the gas to the stove/ovens in the kitchen. Why? Because with eight burners and three ovens, the appliance is constantly "on" via each individual pilot light. While the results are not yet complete, the simple idea of not burning gas when the appliance is not used for a large majority of time just seems like the right move.

There have been some bright spots, as we have been able to re-do the Graham Charter Room, thanks to the design skills of Sheryl Allen, Jane Mellili and Michelle Hennessy (and special work effort thanks to Peter Weber, Mark DeVries and Herb Smyers) - all courtesy of a special endowment earmarked specifically for that work. It was truly a transformation that was needed in that room.

All in all, we continue to work with what we have and look forward to a successful 2016.

Moderator: Neil Pendleton
Staff: Kurt Smyers

Benevolence Fund Committee

The Benevolence Fund and its oversight committee were established at PCWS in the 1990's in response to a health emergency in the life of a self-employed member of the congregation. Since then, many members and close friends of the congregation have received financial grants and loans for unforeseen needs. In 2015 the committee, composed of representation from the Session, the Board of Deacons, the Endowment and Special Gifts Committee and Pastor Jennifer, responded confidentially to a variety of needs. The congregation's generous response to the Benevolence Fund takes place through special gifts and a percentage of the receipts from the Christmas Joy offering each year.

Thank you for your generosity in helping friends and neighbors in need.

Committee Reports

Technology Committee

The Technology Committee provides technology solutions and tools to provide the staff and many programs within the church while prudently managing funds consistent with church budget goals. The Technology Committee mission is executed by a very dedicated and highly qualified team of volunteers who support and maintain the church computers, sound system, networks and other technology based equipment. The committee actively participates in hands-on support, training of staff and program leaders in their creative efforts requiring electronic or technology based solutions and recommendations on policy matters pertaining to the systems and their operation. Below, please find a list of accomplishments for 2015:

- Created and had approved new policies for proper information system usage and interaction with social media.
- Recommended and purchased video monitor and cart system.
- Replaced Head of Staff laptop according to Replacement Plan.
- Added additional microphone to sanctuary.
- Created Discretionary Fund from 2015 Plan to enable unplanned technology projects in the future.

In addition to project activities, the committee and a number of key volunteers operate the sound system each Sunday and for special activities. This effort includes sound checks, proper placement of microphones and recording of the event when requested. The Committee has been looking for additional volunteers to assist with the sound system. Any support here would be welcome.

Hank Vaughan continues his superb work as the church Technologist replacing the need for outside troubleshooting support. He handles IT issues on an as-called basis. We are grateful for his continued fine work in maintaining church systems.

Committee Members: Bob Cushman, Rev. Matt Schmidt, Jim Koning, Mike Lobash, Kurt Smyers
Moderator: Jim McMahon
Sound System Operators: Paul Banovic, Roger Dold, Jim Koning, Kurt Smyers, Hank Vaughan
Technologist: Hank Vaughan

Membership/Church Life Committee

The Membership and Church Life Committee has two roles. First, it's charged with taking care of the administrative portion of our life of faith, keeping the rolls of the church organized and our database accurate.

The Church Life part of the task is about fellowship and fun. Our goal is to strengthen our church community and relationships through fun events. For the past several years, teams of individuals have come together to host various family-friendly activities.

In 2015, wonderful teams planned for Family Camp and hosted the Bunny Brunch, Baccalaureate Breakfast, Ice Cream Social, Rally Day (in coordination with Faith Formation), Progressive Dinner, and Christmas Caroling.

Have ideas for another fun event? Please contact Elder Kathy Boxell in 2016. We'll put a team together and have a great time!

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Leadership and Ministries Committee

The Leadership and Ministries Committee members for 2015 were Stephanie Carlisle, Stacie Wilson and advisor Jennifer Lewis. The committee supported the following initiatives:

Earth Day

In honor of Earth Day, the committee supported a battery recycling program. All dry cell batteries were accepted and recycled in an environmentally-friendly manner. The majority were recycled through Battery Solutions and the remainder through local programs.

Sixty for 60 Challenge

In honor of the church's 60th anniversary, the committee initiated a "Sixty for 60" challenge. The purpose of the challenge was to commemorate this milestone by completing sixty acts of kindness. Members and friends responded with a wonderful variety of thoughtful ways in which acts of kindness were extended to friends, neighbors, colleagues and the community. We were thrilled with the responses and felt this was an exciting and meaningful endeavor on behalf of the congregation.

Stewardship Campaign

In conjunction with the Sixty for 60 Challenge, the annual stewardship drive kicked off in October and concluded on Pledge Sunday, November 15th. In light of the upcoming capital campaign, we encouraged members and friends to continue their support at similar levels to last year.

In 2015, pledges submitted totaled $391,500. To date, pledges submitted for fiscal year 2016 total $353,422, with the following breakdown:

Range	Pledge Units	Total Commitment Amount
$1-$1,040	16	$9,116
$1,041 - $5,200	66	$169,116
$5,201 - $10,400	13	$103,750
$10,401+	5	$71,440

Additional pledges are expected to come in, as has been the case historically, and the Committee also plans to re-approach the congregation via mail, small group discussions and an update during church in order to raise congregational awareness about the shortfall, and increase the total pledge amount to meet budget projections.

Respectfully submitted by Stephanie Carlisle and Stacie Wilson

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Endowment and Special Gifts Committee

The church receives gifts beyond those received via annual contributions in the form of bequests, annuities, transfer of property, memorials, endowments and special gifts. This committee is responsible for monitoring, investing and dispersing these funds with the approval of Session. We take appropriate time reviewing the performance of our funds that are invested in mutual funds created by the Presbyterian Foundation. These funds abide by the General Assembly criteria for socially responsible investing. A summary of our fund activities is reported on another page in this Annual Report.

2015 Committee Members: Julie Kelly, Moderator;
Barb Vaughan, Mark Burt; Mike Lobash, Matt Booth, Dan Lewis,
Pat Ravanesi, and Pastor Jennifer Lewis.

Endowment and Special Gifts Fund Activity

2015 Memorials Received in Memory of

Mary Randa
Paul Seus
Neil Stark
Hank Strunk

2015 Gifts Funded by Memorial Funds

Gift or Program	In Memory of
Sign Installation	Richard Sheridan Memorial
Classroom Upgrades	Brian Neal Memorial
2nd Grade Bibles	Robert Cushman Memorial
Classroom Upgrades	Susan Eichler Memorial
Classroom Upgrades	Sharon Sheridan Memorial
Sign Installation	Marge Bunt Memorial
Microsoft Word Class	Carol Morrison Memorial
Children's Workshop Guide	Betty Brown Memorial
Classroom Upgrades	Miriam Hubbard Memorial
Organ Repair	R. Anderson Memorial
Deacons Receptions	John Buehler Memorial
Benevolence Fund	Minnie Stone Memorial

Gifts Funded by Endowment Funds

McCormick Seminary	Boxell McCormick Gift
Snacks for Sunday School	Costello Designated Gift

Committee Reports

Personnel Committee

We are so blessed with an incredible team to plan, direct and teach God's ministries, lead us in worship and maintain PCWS. Our staff helped make 2015 a wonderful year.

The first friendly face one meets at the church or hears on the phone during the week is our unofficial church ambassador, Kristene Hiepler-Hartwig, Office Administrator. She also supervises many faithful office volunteers. Other staff volunteers, like Hank Vaughan, Director of IT; Linda Murray, Director of Lay Ministries; and Michelle Hennessy, Director of Communications, also enhance church administration. Without Kristene and all these volunteers, we would not get our church phones answered, bulletins printed, emails communicated, new members recruited, weekly and monthly newsletters distributed, website redesigned, Facebook updated, acknowledgements sent, letters written and... and….and…..

The Rev. Matthew Schmidt has "EXPLORƎ'd" new and wonderful ways to enhance faith formation for all of us, of all ages. Matt's passion for teaching God's grace and love is obvious in our youth ministry and the many new learning and reflective opportunities he has brought to youth and adults alike. Carolyn Bozek, Christian Ed Administrator and Youth Ministry Asst., works closely with Matt and a host of volunteers to masterfully orchestrate and program it all.

Patti Mangis, Director of Music, and Stephanie Coates, Organist, make a harmonious team to enhance our worship experience through directing and supporting the adult, JAM, Bethlehem and handbell choirs and our various instrumentalists. What would worship be without their gift of music ministry?

Kurt Smyers, Director of Operations, keeps our building and grounds in working order and deals with many emergencies over the course of the year that most of us are unaware of. He faithfully recruits, trains and supervises our corps of sextons, including for 2015: Ross Bartolomei, Paige Dold, Brian Kral, Hunter Pendleton, Alex Rodriguez Katie Sindelar, Mary Smyers, Erin Sullivan, Dan Wennerstrum, Tom Wennerstrum. Kurt deserves our thanks for his hard work and dedication in keeping us all comfortable in church and making the church building feel like home.

Many thanks go out to Cory Hoskins who is our Nursery Care Attendant every Sunday. This is a special ministry much appreciated by our parents and visitors. And to Joyce Rodos for her Stephen Ministry leadership and training of volunteers to help provide care and support for those of our congregation in need.

Mere thanks do not seem to be nearly sufficient to recognize what Pastor and Head of Staff Rev. Jennifer Lewis means to PCWS. She not only leads worship and resources several of our Church Committees, she also supports mission, outreach, personnel, and spends many hours—night and day—in pastoral care to those in need. We are also rightfully proud of her serving the larger Church in important roles and meaningful ways, the latest being elected Moderator of The Presbytery Assembly of Chicago for 2016. Bundle it all together and this is a commitment not merely of hours but of love and faithful dedication to her ministry among us.

Respectfully submitted by the Personnel Committee: David Boxell, Julie Kelly, the Rev. Jennifer Lewis, Elaine Wood, and Paul Banovic, Moderator.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Faith Formation Committee

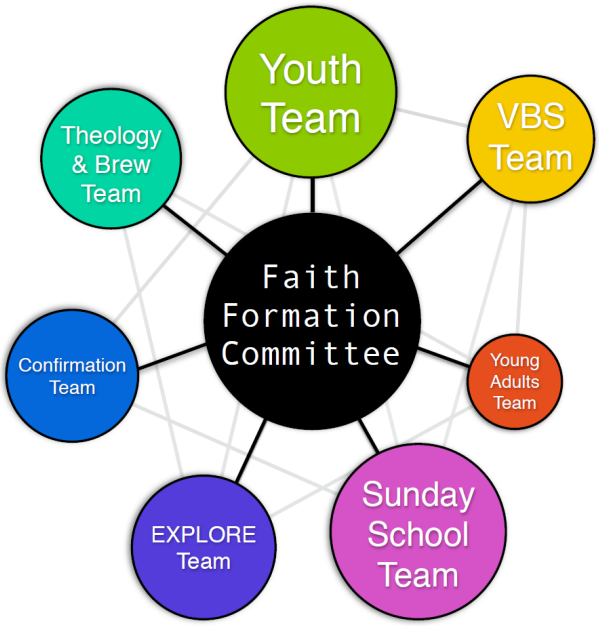
Faith Formation, formerly known as Christian Education (CE), oversees seven sub-committees; Confirmation, EXPLORE, Sunday School, Theology and Brew, VBS, Young Adults and Youth. Faith Formation members include Kim Fronk (Elder), Loretta Gratias-Bremer, Kim Yates, Carolyn Bozek and Matt Schmidt. The Youth committee includes Lance Smith (Elder), Nate Yates and Matt Schmidt.

This year the Faith Formation committee implemented the Safe Space policy which protects our congregation, both young and old, from physical and emotional abuse. All adults working with youth were given background checks and went through safe space training to ensure the safety of our PCWS family.

FF Elder: Kim Fronk Members: Loretta Gratias-Bremer, Kim Yates

Staff: Matt Schmidt, Carolyn Bozek

58 - children(infant-8th) enrolled in the **church school program**
27 - **high schoolers**
58 - children attended **Vacation Bible School** in July
54 - members attended **Winter Family Camp** in January
35 - children participated in the **Christmas pageant**
11 - faithful **teachers** on Sunday morning
Nursery: Cory Hoskins, Pre-K: Kathy Boxell, Candice Mares, Dawn Mansfield, Val Blough
1st-3rd: Lorraine Hoskins, Kim Yates, Hank Vaughan, Laura Gertsmeier
4-5th: Kim Fronk, Liz Slezak, Aileen Pendleton
4 - New International Bibles presented to **2nd graders**
10 - graduating high school seniors. Hosted a **Baccalaureate Breakfast**
1 - **Advent Fair**
1 - **Lenten Fair with classroom show and tell**
Sunday School curriculum – Presbyterian curriculum, Growing in Grace and Gratitude



Committee Reports Faith Formation Cont.

Confirmation

Twelve seventh and eighth graders are growing together in Christ as they prepare for their May 2016 Confirmation. Under the amazing teaching of Jessi Bozek, Jennifer Burns Lewis, Rogers Malone and Matt Schmidt, confirmands have been busy asking hard questions about their faith, helping at Maria Shelter and visiting a synagogue and mosque to learn more about the world around them.

Confirmand/Mentor Pairs are:

Sarah Blough/Candice Mares
Ellie Pendleton/Claire Bellamy
Jessie Fronk/Hillary Schmidt
Alex Boxell/Katherine Skeels
Emma Weber/ Jorie Malone
Natalie Carlisle/Danielle Bozek
Caroline Murray/Sarah Hoffman
Luke Gertsmeier/Erik Boeckman
Drew Hughes/Mark Burt
Christian Cloutier/Chad Sellman
Salvatore Melilli/Zach Karstens
Colleen Sullivan/Ashley Glickman

EXPLORƎ!

In 2015, Explore continued to balance thoughtfulness, reflection, fun, and trying new things as we experimented with all ages learning together. Sometimes adults led interesting workshops, sometimes youth taught everyone, sometimes the whole Jones Room was filled with children, teens and adults. Throughout the year, Explore themes included: faith, resurrection, self-awareness and prayer, caring for creation and fruit of the spirit. It was a gift for everyone involved to experience a wide variety of ways we learn—with striking visuals, like when the youth filled fish tanks with our trash; practical Experiences, like when we quietly did Holy Yoga; Wacky hands-on mission activities, like when we made tie-dyed shirts and scattered love seeds all over our neighborhoods, and also through thoughtful exercises whenever someone lectured. We used our hands, our hearts, our minds, and our bodies all to learn about God and be shaped by God's Spirit. This fall, we've learned deeper into this holistic approach by learning the Shema prayer together in Hebrew, with hand motions. We're so thankful for all the involvement, the hard work that teachers put into their lessons, and the energy to learn together.

Sunday School

We have 66 enthusiastic children enrolled in our Sunday School program with 11 faithful teachers. This past fall we started the new Presbyterian curriculum, Growing in Grace and Gratitude which replaced the Sparks curriculum. Following words for children, Preschool, 1st-3rd grade and 4th-6th grade classrooms share and discuss the same liturgy as in worship. This year we had a classroom open house for our Lenten Fair, made parable boards in the summer, gave 8 New International Bibles to our second and third graders, had 6 craft tables and a photo booth set up for our Advent Fair, children received baptismal birthday cards, had Kid's Worship and Communion on the first Sunday of the month and had 35 students participate in our Christmas Pageant. Our new curriculum helps children continue to grow in their faith and learn of God's grace in the world around us.

Vacation Bible School

This year's theme for Vacation Bible school was EVEREST led by Kami Booth, Carolyn Bozek, Kim Fronk and Aileen Pendleton. We were at full capacity with 54 campers attending and over 15 youth and adult volunteers. Children gathered from July 20-24, 9-11:30 a.m. to explore the Bible through storytelling, music, mission, outdoor recreation, science and crafts.

COMMITTEE REPORTS FAITH FORMATION CONT.

Youth

2015 was another great year for youth! The UPY's celebrated their Youth Sunday tradition with the theme "Gonna have a Good Day." The day included a mix of skits and music with a message that a good day can come in many different forms. The UPY's held their traditional fund raising events: Balloon-a-grams, Spaghetti Dinner, Car Wash/Bake Sale and Cookie Walk, all of which were a great success. The proceeds from the fund raisers were used to help subsidize the cost of the 2015 Mission Trip, which was to Hancock, Tennessee to participate in the Appalachian Service Project. The trip included 19 youth and eight adult advisors, who worked on various repair projects, including painting, porch replacement and floor replacement. There was even time for a canoe trip down the Clinch River. The UPY's also introduced some new education ideas including THUBBS (Thursday Evening Basement Bible Study), and helped lead Explore a few times by teaching us about social media like Instagram and Twitter, and helping us learn about how much trash our church produces each week. We also had tons of fun doing a variety of wacky activities together like a scavenger hunt, whirly ball, and more.

The JUPY's also had a great year. We gathered on Wednesday afternoons for thoughtful Sync discussions, we played and laughed together often at various parties for Valentine's Day, Halloween and Christmas! We made the world's largest Ice Cream Sunday at Pack the Place, we played dodgeball together, and in short we had SO much fun! Our Secret Safari adventure brought us on a crazy road trip to Indiana Beach. This past fall, many of our beloved JUPYs started their Confirmation journey to be continued into 2016.

We encourage the participation of all youth within our church home. We also encourage our youth to invite their friends. We have found that brings together youth with various backgrounds provides a richer more rounded experience. Youth programs cannot be successful without the support of adult leadership. We would like to thank the following volunteers:

UPY Advisors: Nate Yates
JUPY Advisors: Val Blough

Special Thanks to Christmas Party hosts:
The Melilli home and the Gertsmeier home.

Mission Trip Advisors: Kay Kelly, Amy Malone, Linda Merrifield, Matt Schmidt, Scott Wennersturm, Steve Wennerstrum, Lance Smith and Nate Yates

Youth Committee: Carolyn Bozek, Jorie Malone, Tom Kelly, Matt Schmidt, Nate Yates, Lance Smith (Moderator)

Youth Representatives: Michael DeVries, Katie Sindelar, Alison Slezak and Jamie Smith.

Young Adults

The PCWS young adult "Supper Club" has been busy these past few months trying a wide range of restaurants in the Chicagoland area, spanning many different ethnic varieties. The club, which consists of members and friends of PCWS in their 20's and 30's, has sampled Cuban, Thai, Italian, Indian, Spanish, and American cuisine. It has been a great way for young adults in the church to connect over great food and conversation, while exploring different neighborhoods and palettes. We are looking forward to our coming adventures!

COMMITTEE REPORTS FAITH FORMATION CONT.

Theology and Brew

2015 was another successful year in providing an opportunity to "dine and discuss" issues and topics of interest and concern to people of faith from PCWS and beyond. Discussion topics were drawn from blogs and articles ranging from unique interpretations of Biblical passages to social justice issues to income inequality to Papal pronouncements. Led by Pastor Matt, the Theology and Brew planning team consisted of Walt and Sue Kovalick and Dom and Julie Garino with participation from many members and friends of the church. This year also marked the regular offering of both a daytime version and an evening edition that frequented a variety of area restaurants.

Worship Committee

The Worship Committee, working with Pastor Jennifer, is responsible for the Sunday morning worship, special and seasonal worship opportunities. Thank you to the many people who helped throughout the year serving as greeters, ushers, communion servers and lay leaders!!

We thank the Flower Guild members, led by Sue Kovalick, for the beautiful flower arrangements gracing our Sanctuary each Sunday. We appreciate their artistry in creating floral creations for special occasions and the dynamic Easter and Christmas displays. To learn more about the Flower Guild members and activities, see their 2015 Annual Report.

On Rally Day in September we presented families with children in first grade or younger the delightful book, *A Children's Guide to Worship*. Copies are also available each week in the Narthex for sharing with young visitors to PCWS.

Thanksgiving Eve we hosted a community worship service of thanksgiving. Over 100 people attended with pastoral staff from seven Western Springs churches leading the service. A delicious pie fellowship with time for conversation with neighbors, new and old, followed our time of worship.

October 18th marked the celebration of our 60th anniversary with a lovely, jubilant Worship service. Rev. David Bebb Jones, Pastor Emeritus, preached. Pastors Jennifer and Matt and former Associate Pastors Tom Brown, Mark Gauen and Jennifer Parker Wrzeszcz led the other portions of the service.

We culminated our celebration by producing our own 'Reflections on Advent' devotional booklet. This devotional with writings from current and former members, staff and friends offered daily reflections of the season.

Thank you to Rev. Jennifer Lewis for her help, insight, encouragement and ideas related to Worship. We heartily acknowledge Sue Eck, Harriett Potenza, Dorothy Andersen, and the Fronk Family for providing communion preparation during the year. Thank you to the 2015-16 Confirmation class and their mentors for leading the candle lighting in Worship during Advent. Thank you to Kurt Smyers and the sextons for all their assistance each week in preparing our Sanctuary for Worship and their able assistance with special events.

Respectfully Submitted,
Janet R. Andersen, Moderator
Members: Sue Eck, Dom Garino, Hillary Schmidt and Harriett Potenza

Committee Reports

Mission Committee

Your Mission committee continued to support many agencies on local, national and global levels again this year. Some Highlights:

Food for Life
Every fourth Tuesday, Mission volunteers prepared, delivered and served a complete meal to the needy at First Presbyterian Church in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago. We are proud of our lengthy relationship with this program, our relationships with the determined people of First Presbyterian who continue to provide this service to those in their greater community and of our relationships with those who depend on this gift of food every week.

Maria Shelter
Mission generously supported the clients of Maria Shelter and Believe Family Shelter with willing hands and generous hearts. A PCWS team effort on November 7 brought much needed updates and upgrades to the shelter, while a combination of significant planned mission giving and Alternative Giving Event donations of over $1000 for Walmart gift cards provided shelter, relief and hope for their residents.

Special Offerings
In addition to our planned Mission giving to the General Assembly, Synod and Presbytery, we have also been faithful givers to PCUSA through our 4 denominational special offerings this year. Over $6000 was collected through Christmas Joy Offering (Dec 2014), the Peace and Global Witness Offering, One Great Hour of Sharing and the Pentecost Offering combined. Through those offerings, Mission has also supported the work of Hands of Peace, Umoja Student Development Corporation and the Caribbean mission work of JoElla Holman, while also making a contribution of over $1000 to the PCWS Benevolence Fund.

CROP Walk
More than 20 members of our congregation participated in the annual CROP Walk, walking with others from area churches to raise awareness of and much needed funds for five local food pantries.

Alternative Giving Event
This annual event, held during the Advent Fair, raised more than $5000 in support of the work of Heifer Project International, Church World Service, Presbyterian Mission, SERRV, Motown Soup, Maria Shelter, Divine Fair Trade Chocolate and the Christmas Joy Offering. During the Advent season, Mission also collected and shared 28 coats, 40 hats, 24 pairs of mittens/gloves and 10 scarves with our friends at Maria Shelter and Sharing Connection. In addition, over 200 food items were collected and shared with the Pine Avenue Food Pantry.

Mission also supported the Greater Chicago Food Depository with a workday and a portion of the over $1200 collected via our aluminum recycling program. The parking lot Donation Center supported the LaGrange Second Baptist Food Pantry, the Menaul School in New Mexico, BEDS and Sharing Connections.

We are grateful for the opportunity our congregation gives us to make a difference in the lives of others and look forward to sharing more news of the agencies we support in 2016.

Many thanks to the tireless members of the Mission committee: Mary Jo and Ron Blough, Becky Glasscock, Jan Fortina, Marilyn Hanson, Judy McAtee and Laurie Petersen and to Janet Andersen for her continued support of Mission. Thanks, also, to Pastors Jennifer and Matt for their creative guidance and to our generous congregation for participating in and providing financial support to the vibrant Mission tradition of PCWS.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Wennerstrum and Scott Karstens, Mission Elders

CHURCH MINISTRY

Music Ministry

Our theme verse for PCWS Music Ministries is from Psalm 63:

"I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.
Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.
I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands."

This year we had ample opportunities to see God's glory in worship and to respond with praise. We ended the year reflecting on the light of Christ as 25 musicians played and sang "The Promise of Light," a 45 minute Christmas musical. Festival choirs also led worship on Christmas Eve and in October for our 60th anniversary celebration and for four Holy Week services. Our adult choir joined forces with Highlands Presbyterian choir for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Highlands also helped us kick off our 60th anniversary celebration on Sunday, April 26 where together we sang "Bring Us Together, Lord." Later that afternoon we were treated to a glorious recital of English organ music by guest artist Steven Taranto followed by a delicious tea complete with scones, strawberries, and cream.

It wasn't all large forces and big celebrations. We had quieter moments too, through worship led by Handbell trios and quartets rung by Mike Lobash, Deborah Matthews, Michelle Hennessy, Erin Sullivan, Jim Koning, Tricia Koning. Solos/ ensembles were offered by Amy Malone, Donna Kanak, Hillary Schmidt, Paul Banovic, Steve Foster, John Leslie, Kara Leslie, Colin Leslie, Dan Lewis, Claire Bellamy, Kay Kelly, Kate Kelly, Stephanie Diebel, Carmen Wilwert, Keith Wilwert, Diane Wood.

We are thankful that Stephanie Coates led the handbell choir in December: Jim Koning, Jan Martin, Laura Martin, Tricia Koning, Erin Sullivan, Sarah Blough, Steve Blough, Andrea Claeys, Michelle Hennessy, Mike Lobash.

This year JAM Choir began learning to ring chimes and handbells (Natalie Carlisle, Abby Gertsmeier, Sarah Blough, Nick Boxell, Shannon Sullivan, Marin Yates). JAM led worship 3 times, and so did Bethlehem Choir (Jillian Yates, Carter Yates, Robert Mansfield, Olivia Mansfield, Charlie Carlisle). Plus in June we had 25 kids for MAD Camp telling the stories of Jesus in "Once Upon a Parable."

Chancel Choir carried the bulk of the worship leading load with 21 Sundays, including in Advent when they joined forces with JAM Choir to sing "Climb to the Top of the Highest Mountain." Chancel Choir members include John Leslie, Kevin Hennessy, Bruce Geary, Dan Lewis, Craig Harris, Amy Malone, Jan Fortina, Sheryl Allen, Cheryl Kroon, Laura Fruit, Laurie Peterson, Mary

InterFaith Book Group

An ecumenical group of women meet as the Interfaith Book Group to share with one another by discussing a large variety of books which the group chooses. We meet from September to May, excluding December and alternate between PCWS and the Mosque Foundation in Bridgeview.

These groups of Christian and Muslim women have formed bonds of trust and friendship and we all cherish these relationships.

If you would like to join us please contact Carol Stoub and you will be warmly welcomed.

Carol Stoub PCWS

Jeanean Othman Mosque Foundation

CHURCH MINISTRY

Stephen Ministry

In January, PCWS celebrated the completion of 50 hours of training for five members: David Boxell, Dom Garino, Nancy Glickman, Michelle Hennessy and Lorraine Hoskins. By June, all three of the women had been assigned as care-givers and continued those assignments throughout the year. Appropriate assignments have not been found for the two men. (Remember, Stephen Ministers are always assigned to same sex care-receivers.) At the same time, this group has also met every three weeks for continuing education and supervision.

Because we had requests for female Stephen Ministers that we could not fill, we recruited a second class for training: Marilyn Hanson and Joyce Smyers. The new class will take place in the first six months of 2016.

Joyce Rodos

Stephen Ministry Leader

Flower Guild

The Guild is a small but dedicated group. Our goal is to provide flowers for the chancel area every Sunday. Members may sponsor flowers for special occasions and memorials. This year flowers were sponsored on 29 Sundays by members and friends of the church.

We provide roses to celebrate new babies and arrangements for memorial services, when requested. The committee orders special flowers for Lent (pussy willows), Palm Sunday (palms from Eco Palms), Easter (lilies combined with annuals to be planted in the church gardens) and Christmas (poinsettias). Flowers are either taken home by the individuals who sponsored them or taken by the Deacons to members of the congregation not able to attend worship.

In 2015, Herb Smyers refurbished the flower stands that are used during Advent, Christmas and Easter. The stands are designed to fit on either side of the cross, are lower profile, and make it easier to arrange and water the flowers. They have increased the useable space for various events in the chancel. Current members are Sue Kovalick, Sue Eck, Nancy Glickman, Jan Fortina, and Carol Coughlin. We continue to welcome others to join us. Please call or email Sue Kovalick if you have any interest.

Sue Kovalick

Presbyterian Women and Communications Team

The Presbyterian Women at PCWS had a full year of fellowship and faith in 2015.

The month of January kicked off with Church Women United as we celebrated the "sweetness" of our faith by enjoying pie at Baker's Square. Our much loved book review luncheon was a success in February. March was truly full of " Madness" as the PCWS women enjoyed an evening of games and friendship. April was full of showers but it was all sunshine as the PCWS women strutted our stuff in the thrifty fashion show luncheon. In May the annual report was received and we enjoyed a lunch program with Jane Austen & Her Women.

In the fall of 2015 we continued our dedication to PW by hosting a kick off luncheon where our circle leaders gave a brief description of each study option for 2015. In October we hosted a good old fashion time of fellowship where we all discussed "What is Happy". In November, we were blessed to have our very own Nikki Rodos share stories and images from her Medical Mission Mercy Trip. We ended 2015 with a wonderful music program at The Presbyterian Church of LaGrange.

As true to our traditions PW continued our circles. The Thursday afternoon circle used the Horizon Study while the Tuesday and Thursday evening circle continue to study different books. Jan Paddock has remained on as our faithful treasurer. Below please find our 2015 budget.

PW Annual Report	2015
Beginning Balance 1/1/2015	**2120**
	2015 Actual
Receipts	
Pledges	**1030**
Monthly Events	**507**
Thank Offering	**133**
Study Guides	**88**
Total Receipts	**1,758**
Disbursements	
Programs	**150**
Luncheons	**125**
Study Guides	**209**
Thank Offering	**383**
Supplies, Misc.	**91**
Church Women United Dues	**35**
Total Disbursements	**993**
Ending Balance 12/31/2015	**2,885**

During 2015, the Communications Team:

- Developed a Children/Youth Brochure highlighting programs and activities that we offer here at PCWS.
- We continue to explore, with the Technology team, ideas for easy ways to store pictures of PCWS events and for members to share pictures for use in publicity and on our website. Michelle Hennessy looked for different venues to post news of events happening at or sponsored by PCWS.
- The church website is updated at least monthly and this year we added a page on Planned Giving.
- We have "claimed" our site on Yelp and will look at ways to encourage members to rate us via that site. We are seeing visits to our page at least every other week – it's one more social media site that we hope to utilize to help people find out about PCWS and in turn visit us.
- The church Facebook page consistently is viewed by members and Friends and we see this as an important communication tool to promote PCWS and events.

Respectfully Submitted by Michelle Hennessy, Director of Communications. Members: Alison Weber, Roger Dold, Linda Murray, Walt Kovalick