“You are the light of the world ... Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:14,16 (NRSV)
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Annual Meeting of the Congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Western Springs and Meeting of the Corporation

February 9, 2020

Agenda

Moderator: The Rev. Erik P. Khoobyarian
Clerk of Session/Secretary of the Corporation: Elder Walter W. Kovalick

Call to Order and Determination of Quorum

Opening Prayer

Opening Remarks – The Rev. Erik P. Khoobyarian

Presentation of 2019 Financial Summary and 2020 Budget – Elder Peter Weber

Meeting of the Corporation – Peter Weber, President of the Corporation

Recognition of Church Officers – Rev. Khoobyarian

Election of Congregational Nominating Committee – Elder Steve Wennerstrum

Recognition of 50-year Members

Dorothy Andersen  John Kregg  Joyce Schneiderbauer
Janet Andersen  Shirley Pine  Donna Strunk
Mary Jo Blough  Larry Randa  Betty Toft
Ron Blough  Ruth Riordan  Vi Wennerstrum Butler
Sue Cushman  Susan Salak  Mary Anne Wilson
Mary Kae Headland  Jackey Scheibelhut

Transfer of Members to the Church Triumphant

George Slezak  •  Evie Meyer  •  Joseph Van Cura

Looking Forward – Rev. Khoobyarian

Closing Prayer

Adjournment
In Matthew chapter five, Jesus tells the people: *you are salt & you are light.*

**Salt & light.** These two descriptors aren’t an encouragement or aspiration – they’re direct statements. *You are salt. You are light.* What he means by being so directive is that we’ve got what it takes and we’ve got the means and the ability to be the salt of the earth and to be a beacon of light shining so that others are drawn to bring glory to God.

This has been a year of *salt & light* at PCWS and I hope that you are as encouraged about our future as I am. As you read through the pages of this report, you’ll see evidence of our saltiness including the ways that you engaged in mission through our volunteer days at the Greater Chicago Food Depository and by participating in our Pop-Up Mission Projects, and, of course, the significant undertaking of our summer mission project “Let’s Make A House A Home” where you all collected and assembled to bring light and love to the clients of Facing Forward to End Homelessness. Mission work has long been a commitment of this congregation and this year was a stellar year for your mission work!

2019 was a year of *salt & light* as we increased our visibility in the neighborhood by building an amazing new playground and improving our landscaping and campus lighting. We’re sending a message to those who see the church that we are alive and active and we’re creating a space for our continued ministry together and a place where we continue to welcome others as they do important work as well.

Our many activities and deliberate approach to the formation of faith of all ages of our congregation brought *salt & light* into our lives. We fellowshipped around tables, we met for book discussions at 7 a.m. for nearly half of the year (19 weeks!), we discussed scripture, we prayed with one another, we brought faith practices into our homes, and we walked alongside one another as we engaged in the adventure of learning what it means to be disciples of Jesus and a community of Christians.

**Salt & light.** We are salt and we are light and, my friends, let us continue to be *salt & light* in the coming year! Let us continue to bring God’s love into the world as we seek to better understand how to live into our calling!

I’m so glad to be on this journey with you and

I hope and pray that we can continue to find ways in 2020 to
be salty with one another and shine the light of Christ for all to see!

Peace,

The Rev. Erik P. Khoobyarian, *Pastor & Head of Staff*
Every week our journey is enriched with beautiful music. We are so blessed with many talented members who are so willing to share their gifts with one another in worship. Our No-Name Band, Chancel Choir, and Handbell Choir continue to provide beautiful and meaningful music throughout the seasons of the church year.

Along with the Band, Choir, and Handbells we have the musical gifts of those soloists, both instrumental and vocal, who enrich our worship services with their music monthly throughout the year. It is a marriage of music offerings; singing and playing, working together with one another in worship.

In the spring, four octaves of our handbells were sent into the Mallmark factory for refurbishing and re-tuning. For many of our bells, this process had not been completed in over 20 years and was very needed. When the bells returned, they not only looked great but played so much better as well! The bell choir has become a fluid group of members and we have had ensembles of 4 through 12 this year. The bells also increased in playing from twice a year to three times with the hope of more to come in 2020!

We were able to purchase a few auxiliary instruments (a triangle, claves, and guiro) to enhance our singing in worship thanks to the Leslie Memorial. These instruments will add a little extra “pop” to some of our hymns and musical selections. Be on the lookout for them in upcoming services. We also purchased eight musician chairs and Manhasset music stands. With our Brass Sextet and Quintet in December the chairs and stands really came in hand for use with these ensembles and will continue to do so in the future.

On a personal note, I would like to thank all our PCWS musicians who so tirelessly give of their time and talents to the PCWS family. I could not do what I do without all of you! For the rest of the congregation, come join us! Playing or singing with one of our groups is such an amazing fellowship here at PCWS and we would love for you to be part of our journey.

Stephanie M. Coates, Director of Music
Thanks for a great 2019! January was cold and cozy, our numbers have been intimate. February hosted a girls trip to the Dells in Wisconsin, special thanks to Val Blough who stepped up to chaperone. March was the Spaghetti Dinner, which was another delicious success under the direction of Steve Blough and family with the funds raised going to our amazing new playground! April brought another awesome Youth Sunday with thanks to Alison Weber for her creativity and coordination.

September brought some new life to our youth program as I tried something new. We have toured local restaurants in the surrounding areas including Starbucks, Noodles and Co., Ledos, and Palmer’s Place for conversation, connection, and, of course, some good laughs. A few youth participated in the CROP Walk, and my JUPYs helped with Trunk-and-Treat. We had two brave gals at a haunted house, thank you to the fearless Kevin McDermott for joining as an advisor! We shared a Friendsgiving meal, and in December we hosted another fund-tastic cookie walk. We had a blast caroling culminating at the Christmas party with special thanks to the Gertsmeiers for hosting.

I couldn’t have survived this year without the guidance, patience and friendship of Mindy McMahon my elder and Erik Khoobyarian my pastor, friend, and voice of reason, and of course my Faith Formation support from Kim Fronk, and Carolyn Bozak. Lastly, a welcome addition to the group as well as a familiar face back in the fold: thank you to Joey Benson for stepping up as youth advisor — you are all amazing!

Candice Mares, Youth Leader
What a spectacular year we had in 2019! The theme of the year was one of transformation and renewal. With Pastor Erik joining us in the fall of 2018, we were able to spend the full year of 2019 introducing new programs, events, and traditions, as well as reinvigorating some of the long-standing traditions of the past.

In spring, we replaced our long outdated phone and door system. Finally, we were able to have more than two people on the phone at once, and schedule the doors in the building to be unlocked for every event and meeting as needed. Both projects brought us forward professionally and technologically. While the snow still lay on the ground, we created a dream playground to energize our outdoor space, and made a list of to-dos that we set to accomplish once the weather allowed. We worked on a wonderful new Good Friday program that filled the sanctuary with the smell of beeswax and incense.

In summer, we repaired the Graham Charter Room outside doors so that they opened and closed with ease. We were able to open the doors out onto our wonderful new landscaping and beautiful playground. For months, we’d stared at the drawings and plans for both the landscaping and playground, and were so excited to have them in place. Before the caution tape came down, I christened the slide. I wanted to make sure that is was sufficiently fun for the kids. It is! We enjoyed the pleasant weather and each other’s company with many gatherings and events throughout the summer and into fall.

In fall, we replaced the carpet on the second floor in time for the kick-off to the Sunday School year. We also welcomed Patrick Rivers as our Financial Secretary. He’s been an amazing asset to the office and the church, and we’re so happy that he’s with us. With the wrap-up of the “Make a House a Home” summer mission project, we found every available space in the church filled with all of the generous donations that were made. We joked that the office was starting to smell like the laundry aisle in the grocery store. Who knew dryer sheets were so pungent!

This winter, we refreshed the floors on the first floor hallway, Jones Room, kitchen, and first floor bathrooms. The fumes were strong, but the payoff was so pleasing. In December, I shared with everyone that I would be leaving at the end of January 2020. It was a challenging decision to make, but one that will bring great relief to me, and an amazing opportunity for PCWS to welcome someone with different skills and talents, than what I have. After reviewing many resumes, and conducting interviews, we are excited to welcome Terri Angarone to join us as Church Administrator in 2020!

There are many moving pieces to each of the projects, events, and programs that are held throughout the year, and the church office would cease to function without the dedication and enthusiasm of a wonderful group of people who volunteer their time and energy to helping. It’s impossible to express how grateful I am to all of them for their commitment and eagerness. Thank you for everything that you do!

Forrest Schroeder, Church Administrator
Church Staff

The Rev. Erik P. Khoobyarian ................................................................. Pastor & Head of Staff
The Rev. Grayson Van Camp & The Rev. Rebecca McClintock ................................ Parish Associates
The Rev. David Bebb Jones .............................................................................. Pastor Emeritus
Stephanie Coates .......................................................................................... Director of Music Ministry
Candice Mares ................................................................................................. Youth Leader
Forrest Schroeder ............................................................................................ Church Administrator
Patrick Rivers .................................................................................................. Financial Secretary

Church Officers

Elders

Walt Kovalick, Clerk of Session

Class of 2019
Marcia Buell
Natalie Carlisle
Condy Dixon
Loretta Gratias-Bremer
Jim Koning
Mindy McMahon
Sal Melilli, Jr.

Class of 2020
Bob Cushman
Michelle Hennessy
Mike Lobash
Suzie Mosher
Peter Weber
Steve Wennerstrum

Class of 2022
Diane Bonner
Mindy McMahon
Mike Pelton

Deacons

Class of 2019
Sheryl Allen
Carly Booth
Ann De Vries
Cindi Karstens
Amy Malone
Laurie Merrifield
Judy McAtee
Kim Yates

Class of 2020
Steve Blough
Gabrielle Cloutier
Laura Cordell
Ann De Vries
Nancy Glickman
Sue Kovalick
Aileen Pendleton

Class of 2021
Sheryl Allen
Betty Banovic
Sue Eck
Cindi Karstens
Laurie Merrifield
Bambi Tesmond

Congregational Nominating Committee

Steve Wennerstrum, Session Designee & Moderator
Condy Dixon, Session Designee
Matt Booth
Luke Gertsmeier
Kevin Hennessy

Sheryl Allen, Deacon Designee
Jane Melilli
Laurie Petersen
Tiffany Sellman
Membership Report

Active members on the church roll as of January 1, 2019 ................................................................. 319

Members received during 2019

Professions of faith and reaffirmations ........................................................................................................ 6
Lori Carsten  Stacy Restani
Mike Pelton  Otto Sherrick
Eddie Restani  Bambi Tesmond

Total additions .............................................................................................................................................. 6

Members dismissed in 2019

To another church ........................................................................................................................................ 2
Deceased ......................................................................................................................................................... 3
Total dismissals ............................................................................................................................................ 5

Active members on the church roll as of December 31, 2019 .................................................................. 320

Transfer of Members to the Church Triumphant

Evelyn W. Meyer  May 25, 1922 – October 1, 2019  Charter Member of PCWS
Joseph V. Van Cura  June 15, 1929 – October 23, 2019  Joined PCWS in 1976
Church Life

Church Life had a busy year as we have tried to engage the congregation in a myriad of ways.

We are grateful for the participation and encouragement of so many for trying new things and tweaking the events that have become “traditions!”

- Gatherings have included breakfast, lunch, appetizers and dinner with some gatherings meeting at a brewery. It’s been good to have folks think of a place or event where folks might like to gather to get to know people a little better. Thanks to Theresa Dixon for coordinating this.

- The Progressive Dinner was enjoyed and we are thankful for the Hennessys who opened their home once again for appetizers and for Laurie Merrifield and Sue Eck for hosting dinner.

- Several events were planned for families with young children: a Gym Night with pizza; an Easter Egg Hunt; a Movie Night with ice cream (and popcorn) was held as we dedicated the new playground; and Parent’s Night Out (free child care at the church to provide fellowship for the kids and an opportunity for parents to connect with one another).

- S'mores & Games – Many thanks to Jim Koning for keeping the fire pit going for gooey treats! Games for young and mature folks included bingo with prizes!

- Summer BBQs – What a great success as we enjoyed a time to eat and have fellowship once a month during the summer. Pastor Erik and Jim Koning did the grilling, and those who came brought the side dishes and desserts.

- Church Life and Faith Formation worked together on Kick-Off Sunday with a pulled pork BBQ luncheon and great entertainment from Kevin McDermott and his band!
- Trunk-and-Treat was enjoyed not only by our congregation but others from the community. We had a record 18 cars decorated this year!

- A potluck followed by a talent show! A highlight included a dance routine by the youth with Joey Benson leading those moves! Lots of talent in PCWS!

- Christmas Caroling – The group rode a school bus to four stops this year visiting members of our PCWS family in their homes and also singing for the communities in which they live. Many in the group continued the evening with fellowship having pizza together. Always a great time!

- Winter Family Camp – A long tradition at PCWS is a highlight for many. Always grateful to Lorraine Hoskins for her organizational skills.

- Not only did events happen at PCWS – but folks enjoyed a White Sox Game and a trip to see the Chicago Bulls play (2020).

The 2020 church calendar is already filled with events that are planned. Thanks to Theresa Dixon, Sarah Sullivan, Nancy Glickman, Val Blough, and Pastor Erik for planning the new year calendar!

Suzie Mosher & Loretta Gratias-Bremer,
Co-Moderators
The mission of the Faith Formation Committee is to meet the educational and faith development needs of all ages of our congregation. Our committee discusses ways to provide a variety of rich and meaningful faith experiences for each of you. Our goals could not be achieved alone and we are grateful to the numerous volunteers and participants who contribute to the meaningful activities we plan for our church family.

In addition to discussing scripture, praying together and continuing to build relationships, a continuous goal of Pastor Erik’s, we include many powerful examples of addressing this goal in our report. At the end of 2018, Pastor Erik hosted a brunch in the manse for college students during their winter break that allowed them to meet him while reuniting with each other. This year we were excited to have two baptisms, each with a unique approach. Pastor Erik shared the practice of walking the newly-baptized down the aisle of the congregation to introduce them to their religious family. At one baptism, the children of the church made promises to the baptized child, welcoming them, and giving a gift of a children’s Bible. All baptized individuals are presented with a candle to remember their baptism each year. This report shares about our faith formation process of continuous change to strengthen faith practices for all ages. Enjoy the quotations throughout, all gathered from individuals in our community who have experienced our programs!

“It was so much fun to have the opportunity to drink coffee with some old friends who will always be there for me! It’s always fun to catch up with old friends and hear how they are doing. It was also fun to meet Erik and hear about his past and present. To know that he is the pastor at the church is comforting and exciting.”

The Sunday School calendar of classes expanded so we were aligned with the school calendar and that meant volunteers taught more classes and Kick-Off Sunday took place the end of August. During our annual Kick-Off Sunday, families enjoyed an afternoon of joyful music led by Kevin McDermott’s band, Ring, Shout and Friends, while dancing and playing instruments, the cookie walk, jumping in the bounce house, and lassoing the horse.

Pastor Erik introduced the weekly lesson during Words for Children and then many Sunday School volunteers elaborated on the scripture. Volunteer teachers planned, taught and assisted preschool through second grade, third through fifth grade and our Confirmation Class of sixth through eighth graders. Mid-year we transitioned to a new curriculum by Spark. The Spark curriculum has appropriate lessons for all ages of our children and is more user-friendly for our volunteer teachers. Students explored stories, read the Bible, watched
videos and generated responses that we encourage parents to talk about afterwards.

New this year was the introduction of Presby the PCWS prayer bear! Children are invited to take home Presby to talk and pray with over the week. This is a key component of our hope that the faith formation work that happens at church would support faith formation in the home.

“I loved Presby the Prayer Bear and taking him to Disney World.”

During the summer months and some holidays, worship bags were provided for children remaining in Worship so they could select books and activities and be more engaged while there is not a Sunday School class. At Easter and Christmas, Forrest designed an attractive interactive bulletin for our children.

For teacher appreciation we gave thyme plants to all teachers and assistants to recognize their time teaching our children.

“During Words for Children, I like going downstairs and listening to Pastor Erik.”

“I like putting money in the basket.”

“I love Sunday School because it’s fun, and I get to learn more about God and Jesus. I enjoy seeing my friends at church and having a chance to play with them.”

“She recalled a time in Sunday School where she and her friends decided to use blocks to make a temple, just like the one they had learned about in the Sunday School lesson.”

“I like Sunday school and saying prayers and crafts.”

Yee-haw VBS, Celebrating God’s Gifts, was offered at no cost to participants for two hours on two afternoons during summer months with tremendous participation from children and adult volunteers, which culminated on Kick-Off Sunday with the BBQ. Children even contributed to many of the Pop-Up Mission Sundays and additionally during VBS made jars of banana bread mix with great enthusiasm to be included in our “Let’s Make a House a Home” gift baskets.

“As a parent, I can tell you that our girls love coming to church. They honestly are excited about it, and we feel so fortunate to have the PCWS family. Everyone has embraced our girls and shown them how much they are cared for. Nothing better than knowing your children have such strong examples of God’s love in their lives.”

The Advent Fair provided several opportunities to make crafts at seven different tables and enjoy the photo booth, hot cocoa bar and cookie walk. We appreciated the donation of cookie boxes from Kirschbaum’s Bakery for the cookie walk.

New this year, Pastor Erik, Kim Fronk and Forrest designed take-home Advent wreaths and a “Family Guide to Advent at Home” that were distributed to families with children so that they could bring (another!) connection between practices at church and practices at home.

“Our family very much enjoyed the Advent wreath and the Family Guide. We had it set up in our living room and made it part of our Sunday night dinner routine to light the candles, say the prayers, and share. Our children helped set up the wreath.”
We excitedly continued our traditional Christmas Pageant with the leadership of Laurie Merrifield who recruited so many of our youngsters, parents, grandparents, and congregation members to enact the story of Jesus’ birth. She had numerous volunteers to assist, and also designed interactive audience opportunities.

“I like acting, but haven’t been in many plays. Being in the pageant was a chance to try it out. Mrs. Merrifield makes it fun too.”

“It was fun. It helped me focus on Jesus and His birthday... because this is why Christmas is important. It’s not about the presents.”

“I liked the earlier time for the pageant followed by cupcakes. Audience participation was fun! The music was beautiful. And the program was great!”

“I thought this year was particularly nice. I really like the inclusion of the whole family in the pageant – and Hank must always be Caesar, forever.”

We had a few Mission Sundays. March Mission Sunday focused on cooking a meal for residents of Constance Morris House. In October the children learned about the CROP Walk and ways our children and their families could be involved.

Candice Mares, our Youth Leader, led the youth (JUPY and UPY) lessons and discussions, along with Joey Benson who assisted. Monthly Junior High Sunday School lessons and discussions took place during worship. Fellowship and meaningful discussion continued at other venues such as Ledo’s over pizza, while watching football. We also encourage our youth to invite their friends as that brings together a variety of backgrounds and experiences for richer exploration. They played and laughed together at Fast Food Frenzy, game night, Haunted House, Friendsgiving and Sabbath Dinners, broom ball, and Harry Potter cooking lessons. They went to Wisconsin Dells Water Park for a long night of fun! JUPYs and UPYs also hosted the annual Souper Bowl of Caring while they collected donations for St. Cletus Food Pantry. The spring year culminated at the manse with Pastor Erik hosting a BBQ and games.

“I loved the process of getting together as a group and baking cookies at Candice’s to sell at the cookie walk.”

To offset some of the summer mission trip costs and build comaraderie, youth hosted several fundraising events. The car and dog wash and cookie walk are always popular. New this year, the youth baked cookies together to add to the delicious cookie walk donations. Additionally, youth and families delivered more than 300 Balloon-a-Grams. Youth sold the Grams on Sundays and together organized them on a Friday night.

“Delivering Balloon-a-Grams made me feel good to spread love.”

Additionally, there was a summer mission work camp in Tennessee. Mission Trip Advisors, Candice Mares and Lance Smith guided eight youth with leadership from Kathy Wennerstrum and
Nate Yates. Afterwards, they presented trip reflections during worship. We invite your high schoolers to participate in this year’s Mission Trip so they can reach out and positively impact the lives of others while growing in their faith.

“The mission trip gave us an opportunity to make meaningful, tangible change and it was a good bonding experience.”

“The mission trip showed me how much my church family is capable of.”

“It felt good to be able to help those less fortunate than us on the mission trip. I loved building relationships with the people we worked for there.”

We are grateful to the Gertsmeiers who always open their home to the JUPYs and UPYs. The Christmas Party took place there after caroling and included cookie decorating thanks to supplies from Kim Fronk.

“Gertsmeier’s Christmas party was fun with presents, games and laughs”

“The Christmas party is always such a fun time to get together with my church family and just have fun!”

We celebrated the graduation of two high school seniors, Tanner Booth and Pierce Wilson, during worship and celebrated as we heard about their future goals. They were wrapped by their parents in a PCWS blanket to send them off with our warmth and blessings. Dessert during fellowship provided time for conversation about their future goals.

Confirmation Class of seven sixth through eighth-graders began their studies and conversations with Rogers Malone and Pastor Erik along with Amy Malone and Carolyn Bozek. Elders join them for spiritual conversations each month. The class participated in a mission project at Margaret’s Village and took a trip to a mosque and a synagogue to learn about other faith traditions. Confirmation continues through May 31, 2020.

“Gertsmeier’s Christmas party was fun with presents, games and laughs”

“Gertsmeier’s Christmas party was fun with presents, games and laughs”

“The Christmas party is always such a fun time to get together with my church family and just have fun!”

The UPYs celebrated their Youth Sunday tradition, titled “We are One” to blend in with Pastor Erik’s “Encountering Jesus” series. Their message was well received.

“Youth Sunday allows me to bring my beliefs and talents into the worship space which helps me see God in new ways.”

“Adult Education varied with those young at heart who had a variety of ways to come together and explore, reflect and discuss the meaning of Bible scriptures planned by Pastor Erik. He held weekly Pastor’s Bible Study on Wednesday afternoons. This drop-in Bible Study (meaning you don’t have to prepare beforehand!) focused on the scripture texts for the upcoming Sunday and weekly had 4-9 participants.

“I enjoy attending the Wednesday Bible Study as it delivers a bit of scripture in the middle of the week. It is also nice to hear how others interpret the passage. It is a nice way to spend an hour and walk away feeling fulfilled!”
During Lent, Pastor Erik gathered with a group each Thursday morning at 7 a.m. to discuss the book *The Last Week* by John Dominic Crossan and Marcus Borg documenting the final week of Jesus's life using the Gospel of Mark.

Early Risers met again for 12 weeks during the Fall at 7 a.m. with Pastor Erik to discuss the book, *What is the Bible?* By Rob Bell and they had a lively group of numerous participants every week.

“I discovered lots of others (as many as 20 some days) giving it a try, some for the first time, like me. Interesting questions and a safe space to ask them with new outlooks and new insights on an ancient text.”

On Sunday mornings in September, Pastor Erik presented a four week series titled “Divine Omniscience & Human Freedom” with teaching, discussion, and group conversation.

Trying a new education time, during Lent, Pastor Erik led a class titled, “A Lenten Journey Through the Psalms” that provided for good discussion.

In the Spring, Pastor Erik shared his “Reflections from the Holy Land” with photos and stories mixed with some education and information.

“Erik's four week Fall God series guided us on a well groomed trail with thoughtful and stimulating rest stops (God questions) along the way. Erik is an expert spiritual GPS! “

“While the Lenten Bible Study book was rather daunting at first, as it was dense with intellectual writing, we had the best discussions. Thank goodness I had so many others to bounce ideas off of, and Erik was great answering questions. It was wonderful to study the history of holy week prior, what it was about, what happened on what day, and different theories about those mysterious events. Also of importance was the culture and politics of the time. I highly recommend participating in a future study of this sort.”

“A trip to the Holy Land is a bucket list item for me. Erik’s photos, descriptions, stories, & historical context made that one on my best hours of the year!”

Early in 2019, we sponsored a “Rise and Thrive” workshop series with presentations and discussions over six weeks for 26 men and women. The series was led by Jane Anderson (Donna Strunk’s daughter) and invited participants examine, practice and discuss positive character strength-based practices. Participants continue to seek ways to reflect and be positive thinking in their actions.

“Rise and Thrive was an amazing awareness workshop facilitated by Jane Anderson. We discovered our strengths and weakness in dealing with communication with others. The take away helped us to discover where we could emphasize certain characteristics become effective and meaningful in relationships and responsibilities.”
“The concept of becoming more aware of, focusing on and improving on one’s Character Strengths is a far better methodology than always focusing on and trying to improve weaknesses. The workshop gave practices and tools to not only learn and improve your own strengths, but also to notice and be more aware of others’ strengths. Anyone interested in self-improvement and to help define who you are and what you do when you are at your best could benefit from this workshop.”

Fourteen women gathered for their annual fall retreat at Manitouqua Adult Retreat Center which was facilitated by Intentional Energy3 leaders. Lively conversation, games and spiritual reflection, as well as time to relax and laugh, is a highlight of these retreats. Friends that are not church members are welcome as well.

“For me the retreat was spiritually uplifting, with nice weather and time to strengthen our friendships.”

What might we plan next for you? We invite your input so we can fulfill the faith needs of all ages.

Faith Formation Committee includes:
Carolyn Bozek, Kim Fronk, Rev. Erik Khoobyarian, Candice Mares, Moderator Mindy McMahon,
Mindy McMahon, Moderator

Safe Space

In 2019 the Session decided to make the Safe Space Committee its own committee. The intention here is to make it clear that the priorities of this committee are of utmost importance to our ministries at PCWS. Each of us must be encouraged to be a part of working toward a safe environment for all who engage in our ministries here. The work of the Safe Space Committee is guided by a policy that includes prevention of abuse and responses relating to abuse of all kinds, including but not limited to sexual misconduct, verbal abuse, and physical abuse sexual misconduct and/or abuse among participants in PCWS events and programs. The prevention part of the program includes education and training.

Training and 3-year refresher training sessions for congregation and staff continued to take place facilitated by Loretta Gratias Bremer and Pastor Erik.

This year the committee has been reviewing all aspects of the Safe Space Policy and evaluating the effectiveness of our training as we continually seek to learn from best practices for child safety. Continuing into 2020, the committee will be making revisions to the Policy with the approval of the Session.

Committee members:
Jon Gertsmeier,
Loretta Gratias-Bremer, Mindy McMahon (Moderator), Matt Mosher, Tiffany Sellman, and Pastor Erik
Mindy McMahon, Moderator
Deacons

To start off the year, Pastor Erik introduced us to a book called, The Presbyterian Deacon. During 2019, the Deacons have been reading and studying this guidebook and thoughtfully discussing what it means to be a Deacon at PCWS and how to best support, care for, and share God’s love with those around us.

2019 brought the Deacons many opportunities to show that love and care. We hosted receptions for memorial services and other special receptions and celebrations. We organized Sunday morning fellowship hour every week and took turns as Deacon of the Day, assisting with any needs during morning worship and delivering flowers to honor the joys and concerns of the congregation. We delivered meals, sent cards, and visited those in need of support due to illness, grief, or life’s many other trials. And, we said many prayers asking for God’s loving presence and strength to be with those in our care.

November brought us the opportunity to care for our college students. We mailed care packages filled with goodies to students both away at school and those studying at home. These boxes of PCWS love are always anticipated and appreciated by these members and we want to thank all who donated to the project.

Thank you also to all members in support of the Deacons efforts as we continue to look for new ways to make PCWS a place where caring and love are offered to all.

Ann De Vries, Moderator

Stephen Ministry

The Stephen Ministers of PCWS continue their work. There are six active ministers: David Boxell, Dom Garino, Marilyn Hanson, Michelle Hennessy, Lorraine Hoskins, and Joyce Smyers. No additional training class is planned at this time.

Stephen Ministry is, at its heart, service to God’s hurting people through listening and journeying alongside. Our Stephen Ministers are dedicated and conscientious and have been caregivers for three individuals this year. In addition they have distributed grief support materials to people experiencing loss.

This has been a year of maintaining our ministry. It is invisible to most of the congregation partially because confidentiality is a basic tenet of the ministry. We continue to meet once a month for continuing education and supervision.

In the fall of 2019, the Stephen Ministers began a new practice of being available following every worship service for prayer. As part of Pastor Erik’s goal of having more members of the congregation actively engaged in prayer, the Stephen Ministers have used this as an opportunity to help people on a regular basis. In looking for other ways to uplift our congregation in prayer, the Stephen Ministers are designing prayer request cards which will soon be placed in the pews to allow people to share their requests and receive prayer.

We continue to look for ways to bring the gifts of our ministers to others!

Joyce Rodos, Leader
Technology

The technology crew at our church was involved in one major system change this year. New phones were selected, purchased and installed utilizing internet protocols. We carefully researched and discussed phone vendors before making a final selection. To setup the new phones, over 700 feet of ethernet cabling needed to be run. This wiring allowed us to upgrade the church office, Pastor Erik’s office, the Graham Charter Room and the upper room. Pastor Erik and Forrest did great work collaborating with the vendor for configuring and implementing the new system. Colleen Sullivan was very helpful in the installation of the new wiring. This new phone system has been serving our church well and has a lower operating cost than the previous setup.

We are grateful to have a very talented group of volunteers. Our team of sound system operators this year provided coverage for all of our services and special events. They are; Paul Banovic, Roger Dold, Jim Koning, Mike Lobash, Kevin McDermott, and Colleen Sullivan. In addition, Hank Vaughan has continued to provide support and to help with troubleshooting for the computers used by our staff as well as overseeing the network that operates our facilities.

Jim Koning, Moderator

Flower Guild

The goal of the Flower Guild is to contribute to the worship experience by providing flowers for the chancel area every Sunday. Members may sponsor flowers for special occasions and memorials.

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 sponsor them or taken by the Deacons to members of the congregation not able to attend worship.

For Advent 2019, we continued the new design for Hanging of the Greens including the two 7 ½ foot lighted Christmas trees. Eight artificial boxwood wreaths were again hung with red ribbons in the Sanctuary windows during worship, two wreaths were added to the chancel area, and additional wreaths were added in the narthex. This year the Advent candle stand displayed another wreath and enhanced the practice of lighting the candles. Poinsettias were added in the chancel area in anticipation of Christmas. Following the Christmas Eve services, poinsettias were delivered to members and taken home by members.

Current members are Sue Kovalick, Sue Eck, Nancy Glickman, Jan Fortina, and Laurie Merrifield. We continue to welcome others to join us. Please call or email Sue Kovalick if you have any interest.
The Leadership and Ministries Committee organized and successfully completed a fall financial campaign, receiving approximately $395,000 in pledges to fund the church’s 2020 operating budget.

Members pledged more than $25,000 over the previous year. Since 2018, pledge commitments have increased almost $50,000. Pledging and the subsequent receipt of financial gifts are vital to the church’s existence and its ability to conduct mission work. Donations from pledges account for nearly 90 percent of the church’s revenue. The remaining amount comes from a mix of loose offerings, nonpledge member receipts and proceeds from renting the church facilities to outside organizations, among other sources.

The fall financial pledge drive focused on asking PCWS members to consider what it means to be stewards of God. Stewardship is the act of taking care of God’s earth, not ours. It begins with understanding that nothing, including our financial success in life, is given to us without God being involved. With that understanding, pledging and then making financial gifts to church becomes an extension of taking care of everything God has given to us and the church.

The Leadership and Ministries Committee is charged with overseeing two tasks annually. In April, the committee has traditionally arranged an environmental awareness event to coincide with Earth Day. In 2019, Elder Condy Dixon, committee chair, arranged for an electronics recycling company to collect old and unused computers, televisions and other electronic devices that should not be disposed in landfills. Those electronic items often contain harmful elements and materials that decompose.

For two hours after worship, church members formed a parade of cars full of video cassette recorders, CRT monitors, televisions and other electronic devices that should have been disposed a decade earlier. The recycling company removed the harmful elements from the devices and recycled metal components before disposing the items.

In the fall, the committee heads the pledge drive. As part of that effort, the committee works closely with the Session to ensure necessary funds are secured to pay the church’s personnel, building operating expenses and to fund all committee budgets, including mission.

With the success of 2019, the committee is planning in the upcoming year to more fully engage members in being good stewards. The committee plans to reach beyond its annual task of conducting the fall financial campaign. It plans to lay a foundation of informing church members of how they could engage in a life of stewardship and leave a legacy of that life to serve as an example to future generations.

Condy Dixon and Mike Lobash, Co-Moderators
This was a busy year for Mission! We continued to look for new ways to share our congregation’s time, talents, and treasure with those in need globally, nationally, and in our own backyard.

This year, in an attempt to bring mission opportunities to the congregation, we added P.U.M.P. – Pop Up Mission Project – to our gifts of support for several organizations. P.U.M.P. projects take place monthly following Worship with help from folks of all ages and abilities. We assembled hundreds laundry kits (quarters, detergent, and a dryer sheet) for BEDS Plus clients, more than 600 brown bag lunches for the Second Presbyterian Church of Chicago lunch program and bundles of cookies for Night Ministry.

As in years past, a significant portion of the 2019 Mission budget was allocated to denominational support through gifts to the General Assembly, the Synod, the Presbytery of Chicago and the PCUSA Theological Education Fund. For a congregation of our size, these gifts were substantial. We shared stories about our Mission budget support through a series of Glad Tidings articles. Our giving reflects financial support of global, national and local agencies through traditional budgeted giving.

PCWS also participated in several hands-on mission opportunities across Chicagoland during 2019, including our annual Margaret’s Village work day, three group outings to the Greater Chicago Food Depository, a summer outing to Bernie’s Book Bank, and the annual Western Springs-LaGrange CROP Walk (supporting 5 local food pantries). PCWS raised over $2,400 for the CROP Walk and hosted mid-walk refreshments. Our congregation’s aluminum recycling program has grown substantially and now provides significant support to hunger programs in the Chicago area and to our Cuba partnership. Loose change collected during worship continues to provide much-needed funds to both the Pine Avenue Food Pantry in Chicago and the Greater Chicago Food Depository.
Mission also engaged the congregation in a summer-long project, “Let’s Make a House a Home,” in support of the work of Chicago-based agency Facing Forward to End Homelessness. Over the course of the summer, together we collected a number of household and hygiene basics and filled 50 laundry baskets, which have served as Welcome Home gifts to Facing Forward clients transitioning from homelessness to a new apartment home. The baskets included a special “touch of home” in the form of a kit for making banana bread and a liquid soap from Thistle Farms.

With regard to our partnership with Nueva Paz, Cuba, a group of four from PCWS, including Pastor Erik, visited our partner church in mid-November. We spent six days celebrating our mutual mission and discussed at length their desire to re-construct their vacant manse. In the spirit of making (another) house a home (continuing our summer mission project!), we pledged to help them complete this long-considered goal and have allocated existing funds in financial support of the project.

Our December Alternative Giving Fair saw over $6,500 in donations and purchases which generously supported the annual stalwarts: Heifer International, Church World Service, and gift cards for Margaret’s Village residents. Product sales this year supported Ten Thousand Villages, Fair Trade Chocolate and Thistle Farms. Mission also collected and distributed 78 coats to Margaret’s Village and shared 53 new hats and 80 new mitten/glove sets with Sharing Connections and Margaret’s Village and collected and delivered about 40 bags of non-perishable food items to the Pine Avenue Food Pantry to restock the pantry for the new year.

Mission continued our Faith Formation partnership building on the Mission Sunday program started in 2018. Incorporated into the Sunday School curriculum is the goal of engaging more children and their families in PCWS’ mission activities. The first Sunday of most “school-year” months is designated as Mission Sunday. Through activities the youth learn more about mission through hands-on opportunities such as preparing a meal for Constance Morris Shelter helping families overcome domestic violence.

Our goals for the upcoming year include continuing to provide ways in which to broaden our
congregation’s engagement with Mission from a time and talents standpoint; to continue to partner with Faith Formation to share these opportunities with our kids and their families; to be intentional and knowledgeable in our budgeted giving and to continue to celebrate our congregation’s partnerships both near and far.

On behalf of the 2019 Mission Committee, which included Janet Andersen, Mary Jo Blough, Ron Blough, Kevin McDermott, and Kathy Wennerstrum, we extend thanks to Loretta Gratias-Bremer for generously supporting the Committee as our liaison to Session.

Janet Andersen & Kathy Wennerstrum, Co-Moderators

2019 Budgeted Mission Giving

*Denominational Mission Support*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Assembly</td>
<td>$9,888</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presbytery of Chicago</td>
<td>$17,922</td>
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<tr>
<td>Synod of Lincoln Trails</td>
<td>$3,090</td>
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*State, National, and World Mission*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feed My Starving Children</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nueva Paz Church (Cuba)</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity International</td>
<td>$600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amka Africa</td>
<td>$600</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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*Metropolitan Mission*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facing Forward to End Homelessness</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret’s Village</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night Ministry</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Boulevard</td>
<td>$500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Umoja Student Development</td>
<td>$500</td>
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*Local Community Mission*

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>LATH</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interfaith Community Partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pillars Community Health</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,100</strong></td>
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**TOTAL MISSION BUDGETED DISTRIBUTIONS** $44,700
### 2019 Mission Distributions
From Contributions & Mission Reserves

**PCUSA Special Offerings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offerings</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Great Hour of Sharing</td>
<td>$3,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecost</td>
<td>$1,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace &amp; Global Witness</td>
<td>$870</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christmas Joy</td>
<td>$8,632</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$14,284</strong></td>
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**Mission Support**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nueva Paz Church Breakfast Fund</td>
<td>$1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church World Service/CROP Walk</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nueva Paz Church (Cuba)</td>
<td>$1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Youth Summer Mission Trip</td>
<td>$6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Souper Bowl of Caring</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Chicago Food Depository</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine Avenue Presbyterian Church Pantry</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret’s Village Work Day Expenses</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Let’s Make a House a Home” Summer Mission</td>
<td>$1,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heifer Project International</td>
<td>$740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watts of Love</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop-Up Mission Projects</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Disaster Assistance</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$18,740</strong></td>
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**Alternative Giving Fair Donations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donations</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church World Service</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heifer Project International</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret’s Village (gift cards for clients)</td>
<td>$1,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nueva Paz Church (Cuba)</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,220</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*a* Forty percent of the funds collected this year (amounting to $630) was distributed locally to Chicago’s HOPE for Kids.

*b* Twenty-five percent of the funds collected this year (amounting to $226) is designated to support the January 2020 peacemaking visit from The Rev. Izett Sama Hernandez from our partner presbytery in Cuba. An additional 25% of the funds remain locally in the Presbytery of Chicago for peacemaking purposes.

*c* Funds raised through aluminum recycling at PCWS.

*d* Additional funds raised by PCWS members donated directly to the CROP Walk totaled approximately $2,500.

*e* Additional in-kind contributions were made by the congregation in the form of supplies brought by the mission team in November. Additionally, mission team participants self-funded their trips and PCWS funds were used to pay for travel expenses for Pastor Erik. These funds are not included here.

*f* Includes fundraisers and transfers from reserve accounts only (not participant fee).

*g* Funds this year were donated to the St. Cletus Food Pantry. Each year, the youth raise these funds on Super Bowl Sunday and decide on a local hunger program.

*h* Funds distributed from the loose change collected on Sunday mornings and split between the Greater Chicago Food Depository and Pine Avenue Presbyterian Church Pantry.

*i* These donated funds were used to purchase the baskets and other items for the summer mission benefitting Facing Forward to End Homelessness. In addition, approximately $5,000 worth of donated goods were brought to PCWS for the 50 baskets!

*j* The children of the church voted to use the offerings they collected to sponsor a cow, a sheep and two colonies of rabbits!

*k* Contribution to support members on a mission trip to Uganda with U4Uganda and Watts of Love.

*l* This does not include purchases of goods at the Alternative Giving Fair. Only direct contributions are included on this list.
The role of the Personnel Committee is to ensure our staff is well-positioned to support the overall mission and goals of PCWS and to assist with all matters related to employed personnel. The Personnel Committee is made up of the following Members: Elder Steve Wennerstrum, Paul Banovic, David Boxell, and Julie Kelly.

We are very fortunate to have a wonderful staff at PCWS. Please join the Personnel Committee in thanking our team for their hard work and for their many contributions. People are what make a place special and we have a great team.

Rev. Erik Khoobyarian, Pastor and Head of Staff: 2019 was Erik’s first full year at PCWS and it safe to say that he has already made a meaningful mark on PCWS, bringing new ideas, energy, insights and passion. Erik has introduced and supported many new programs at PCWS including Gathering Around the Table, new book/discussion groups, and has breathed new life into our Adult Education Program. He brings fresh perspectives to not only the pulpit, but also to PCWS as a whole. We are blessed to have Erik as our pastor.

Stephanie Coates, Director of Music Ministries: Music is an important part of our worship experience and we are fortunate to have Stephanie as our Director of Music Ministries. Stephanie is a talented musician and leader. The quality and variety of the music she brings to PCWS is wonderful. Stephanie’s talent, creativity and joyous approach are evident in every performance. Thanks also to the members of the Choir and our other musicians for your many contributions to our musical experience.

Forrest Schroeder, Church Administrator: As the Church Administrator, Forrest does so many things for PCWS, and she does them all extremely well. For Forrest, the old saying of “Jack of all Trades, Master of None” needs to be revised – “Jack of all Trades, Master of All.” Whether it is greeting visitors or volunteers to PCWS, coordinating with outside vendors, working with our team of Sextons, producing the weekly bulletin, or following up on a request from Erik, Forrest follows through with professionalism and attention to detail. Forrest is a true team player and we are fortunate to have her on the PCWS team.

Candice Mares, Youth Leader: Candice has a passion for youth and it shows in her work and interaction with our youth. The smiles on the faces of the youth when interacting with Candice tells an important story – building meaningful relationships is important to Candice. Thanks to Candice for all she does for our Youth Programs.

Patrick Rivers, Financial Secretary: Patrick joined the staff of PCWS this past fall. In his role, Patrick works closely with the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurers to maintain PCWS’s financial records, including processing financial transactions, reporting and financial control. Patrick brings a wealth of financial experience to PCWS and is off to a great start. Patrick has been a great addition to the team.

Special thanks to Cory Hoskins and Noor Hafeez for their work in the Nursery. Cory and Noor enable parents to participate in worship knowing their children are in good hands.

Thanks also to our Sextons to keep our Church home clean and orderly. The following individuals served as Sextons for all or part of 2019: Miles Blackburn, Sarah Blough, Matt Carver, Jimmy DiLoretto, Dominic Enrietti, Jack Evans,

Finally, we thank the many volunteers that work with our staff to make everything happen. PCWS would not be the same without your dedication and hard work. You are instrumental in carrying out our mission.

Steve Wennerstrum, Moderator

Properties

Look around! Seriously, look around our church and it’s grounds. It has been nothing short of an amazing transformation in the past two years. And we are not done yet with improvements still happening and more on the way.

This is only possible due to our members and staff. The list of workers and volunteers are too long to list that have put countless hours in to improve our property. It has been through the generosity of our members with their time, talents, and treasures that enabled this process to be successful.

The following projects were completed in 2019:

- Exterior pathway lighting on stairs from 53rd Street to the Sanctuary repaired and replaced by Walt Kovalick and Scott Karstens
- Complete landscape design and installation by Heidi’s Garden Creations with design consultation with Mary Jo Long. Thank you to Jane Melilli, Pastor Erik, Forrest, and Mindy McMahon who nursed our new landscaping with watering in between rain storms!
- Playground design and installation (see article specific to this project)
- Installation of a new Voice Over IP (VOIP) telephone system replacing the aging/failing wired system
- Upgrade of electronic door control system
- First floor hallway flooring rehabilitation
- Deep cleaning and sealing of tile flooring in the first floor restrooms
- Jones Room floor stripped, cleaned, and waxed
- Significant preventative maintenance to the heating system and repairs of existing equipment
- Installed compressor blankets on new air conditioners to help manage sound
- Kitchen floor tile deep cleaning and sealing
- Replacement of kitchen work tables with stainless steel kitchen-grade tables (thank you to Walt Kovalick, Eddie Restani, and Scott Karstens for working to remove the old tables!)
- Construction of dish cart storage and service buffet in Jones Room
- Repairs to stained glass window panels in the sanctuary
- Installation of carpet in Church Office and pastor offices funded completely by a donation (thank you!)
- Replacement of outside entry doors to Graham Charter Room providing ingress/egress (and fresh air!) for the first time in many years
- Completion and final inspection by the Village of Western Springs of the water drainage project (thank you to Herb Smyers for coordinating this project)

These needed improvements send a tremendous message not only to our members but potential new members. We are blessed to have accomplished so much and in such a short period of time. We will all enjoy these improvements for years to come.

In addition, we had a wonderful Spring Work Day organized by Walt Kovalick during which many hands painted, trimmed trees, cleaned the property, and enjoyed fellowship while caring for our church.

The Session has approved several projects for 2020 which will continue to add value to our property and protect it for years to come. Look forward to the redesign of the Narthex and the addition of safety features to the chancel steps and the steps leading to the sanctuary from 53rd Street.

Last, as I cycle off the Session, I’d like to thank the “working volunteers” that really did the work as well as Forrest and Pastor Erik for their leadership, diligence, covering for me with my travels and their passion to make our church what it is as you look around today.

Sal Melilli, Moderator

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**Welcoming**

This year the Session created a new committee we are calling “Welcoming.” You may wonder, “Why? We are already a friendly church.” PCWS is a friendly church, but there is more we can do. Welcoming is not just greeting people. Welcoming is thinking about the concept of “dual use.” Creating new programs/events that encourage attendance by members, friends, and the community and helping everyone feel comfortable inviting friends to worship and events.

The Welcoming Committee will help coordinate and put some additional structure in place to help create and improve a welcoming and hospitable climate. We will take a look at where welcoming begins: at the curb and continue into the heart of the congregation. The ministry of welcoming is not the responsibility of a few people or a committee. It is the responsibility of the entire church family. This committee will be the group to formalize processes to create a “Welcoming Church.”

As we continue the process of forming a new committee and looking for ways that we can involve more people in creating a welcoming environment, during 2019, faithful volunteer directors of lay ministry Kay Kelly and Jane Melilli have coordinated contact with visitors and prospective members. In March, they coordinated a new member class with Pastor Erik as 6 individuals decided to formally join our membership. Thank you, Kay and Jane, for your leadership and relationship-building!

In 2019, Welcoming also worked with Session to have a new logo designed for PCWS. In addition:

- A new template was designed and implemented for the January Glad Tidings issue.
- The new logo and colors have been incorporated into the website, online donation pages, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter.
- Our website is in the process of being updated to incorporate the new logo and colors. Watch for a cleaner and updated content.
- We will have new letterhead, envelopes, and business cards.
Pew Pads have been re-designed (thank you Forrest!).
- To provide the opportunity to wear our logo, we worked with a vendor to create an online store for members and friends of PCWS to order apparel other other items.

In 2020, Welcoming will be looking at where we can improve on creating a welcoming atmosphere based on Henry Brinton’s book *The Welcoming Congregation*.

Michelle Hennessy, Moderator

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**Worship & Music**

The collaborative effort of the Worship & Music Committee, Flower Guild, Music Ministry, and the pastoral leadership of Pastor Erik brought beauty, joy, surprise and spirituality to our congregation this year and it was received with great enthusiasm.

We began the year celebrating Epiphany and quickly moved toward preparations for the Lenten season. For the first time in several years, our friends at Highlands Presbyterian Church did not join us. A wintry Palm Sunday began with the blessing of the palms on the Tower Green with other Western Springs churches. Iris, the donkey, joined us at PCWS to lead the palm procession into the church. (Iris had other ideas and declined to lead, but provided great photos!) As a congregation, we observed Ash Wednesday with Bowl-and-a-Roll simple supper in the Jones Room, followed by a service in the Sanctuary with distribution of ashes. Maundy Thursday we gathered for dinner in the Jones Room with worship and communion following. Good Friday was new for us: interactive stations were set up in the sanctuary for personal reflection. The sanctuary was open from noon until 7 p.m. to welcome all who wished to participate.

We watched the sun rise on Easter morning with an outdoor sunrise service to celebrate the risen Christ as well as a 9:30 a.m. service in the sanctuary with wonderful music.

April 28 marked music appreciation Sunday, and Youth Sunday followed on May 5.

“Encountering Jesus” was the theme of Pastor Erik’s sermons leading to Pentecost, which was June 9. We also honored our graduates during this service. Trinity Sunday was June 16 when all fathers were also honored for Father’s Day. October 6 was World Communion Sunday. Our communion table was decorated with a cloth of the world and breads representative of other countries.

December 1 was the first day of Advent when the sanctuary was decorated with greens and our new creche. During words for children, wreaths were hung, lights were lit to complete the “greening” of our space, and the first advent
candle was lighted. Stephanie and our musicians created beautiful music for Advent, with bells, brass and a guest harpist as well as our choir.

December 19 was a Longest Night service with all invited, but especially those who may have been struggling during the holiday season. We welcomed Christmas Eve at our 5 p.m. family service and 10 p.m. (changed from 11 p.m. in previous years) candlelight communion service. Luminarias along the walk lit the way to worship.

There were a few additions to enhance worship this year. Colorful informational cards for each season of the church that included dates, times, and activities were made available to all. A Stephen Minister was available after worship in the sanctuary each Sunday to pray with those in need of prayer. We added new communion pottery and provided separate cups and gluten free bread for those with allergies. A new baptismal bowl was added and a new tradition of gifting a children’s bible to the newly baptized child began.

Thank you to the many people who help bring about our meaningful worship services at PCWS! This includes our Head Ushers: Bruce Barnes, David Peterson, Steve Blough, Ron Blough, and Herb Smyers. We are also grateful to the Flower Guild (see separate article below), the “Pew Elves” (Janet Andersen and Diane Bonner) who tidy and re-stock the pew racks, our Communion Coordinator, Sue Eck, and her team of communion preparers: Marsha Martinaitis, Laura Cordell, Harriet Potenza, and Karen Neal; our liturgists (and Amy Malone who coordinates the scheduling), and of course, all of our musicians, sound operators, and greeters. Thank you!

Thank you also to the Worship & Music Committee: Sue Eck, Dom Garino, Amy Malone, our Music Director, Stephanie Coates, and Pastor Erik. This is a team of good minds and kind and faithful hearts.

Marcia Buell, Moderator
2019 was a memorable year with many wonderful milestones. Pastor Erik was in his role for the full year and our financial health is remarkable. We started the year with an approved budget at break-even knowing we had much to accomplish within the mission of our church, while re-establishing our roots after much transition. We had complete faith that your pledges and support would match our needs. We had also completed and finished many projects funded by the capital campaigns. Through the capital campaigns, in 2018, we were able to invest in our physical plant, refurbish the sanctuary, purchase a new organ, ensure that we properly welcomed Pastor Erik to his new home and were able to complete projects that were core to our current and long term needs.

While all the planned projects were completed in 2018 and 2019, we also were able to work in a few additional projects based on the capital we raised, tightly managing our budgets and excess reserves to further direct our future. Most notably, the new playground has created a place for the children of our church to gather and make memories.

We have finished the 2019 year with increased contributions coupled with cost savings that have allowed us to earmark a wonderful surplus. We have set aside additional capital/repair reserves for our intended 2020 projects, we earmarked additional mission giving to continue our mission to give back and we still had excess for future needs. I would like to humbly thank you for your generous giving that has created a strong financial position and stability to move us into 2020. A few years ago, we were not in this position and we found ourselves looking to cut expenses in ways that would hinder our efforts to grow our church and increase its impact. This year, we had significant cost savings from reduced staff/personnel costs with the open budgeted fulltime ministry staff position. This is not our goal as this role is vital to the ongoing health of our ministry. Over time we have also reduced our staff and seen our volunteer base shrink which has put more pressure on the staff to keep up with the demands of our church. We look forward to filling the open ministry position and seeing our members give of their time and talents in the coming year.

Important to note that each our of ministries led by our session team managed their budget and spending closely. For our 2020 budget, all submitted budget categories were approved as submitted based on the strength of our pledges. We have also expanded programs to further enhance our plans for 2020. We welcome your involvement in all our ministries as there are many opportunities to be involved, participate and enjoy the activities within the Church.

A special thank you to Forrest Schroeder who came into the administrating role in early-2018 and shaped it to be so much more, literally being Erik’s right hand in all things to day-to-day. While she has made such an impact at PCWS in a short time, we will also wish her well in her move to Washington. Her mark has been left and we will be well served to keep in place all her processes. Forrest, we cannot replace your smile or your commitment to us, you will be missed. Pat Ravanesi has completed another year as Treasurer and his tireless dedication to keeping our books and records is always appreciated. Thank you as well to the finance committee (Larry Glasscock, Howard Habenicht, Herb Smyers and Kevin McDermott) for supporting our mission.

Respectfully submitted,
Elder Peter Weber
## 2020 Budget Approved by Session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Budget 2020</th>
<th>Actual 2019</th>
<th>Actual 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pledge Income</td>
<td>393,997</td>
<td>420,208</td>
<td>364,964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-pledge Income</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>39,008</td>
<td>37,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Income</td>
<td>1,350</td>
<td>1,172</td>
<td>1,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loose Offerings</td>
<td>7,637</td>
<td>8,132</td>
<td>7,858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest Income</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Building Income</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>3,995</td>
<td>5,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>1,150</td>
<td>1,055</td>
<td>1,147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$454,384</strong></td>
<td><strong>$473,867</strong></td>
<td><strong>$418,419</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor Expense</td>
<td>105,500</td>
<td>99,843</td>
<td>102,407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Personnel</td>
<td>165,875¹</td>
<td>95,165</td>
<td>137,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office/Administration</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>28,142</td>
<td>27,570</td>
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<tr>
<td>Per Capita ($36 per member in 2020)</td>
<td>11,304</td>
<td>10,745</td>
<td>13,142</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faith Formation</td>
<td>5,950</td>
<td>5,848</td>
<td>6,927</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worship &amp; Music</td>
<td>11,350</td>
<td>11,535</td>
<td>8,387</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church Life</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>3,266</td>
<td>2,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcoming (new in 2020)</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe Space (new as separate budget in 2020)</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,144</td>
<td>2,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deacon Expenses</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properties</td>
<td>62,205</td>
<td>73,743²</td>
<td>67,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>51,000</td>
<td>47,050</td>
<td>44,956</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**End of year transfers:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Budget 2020</th>
<th>Actual 2019</th>
<th>Actual 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastor’s Administrative Fund</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve for Major Repairs³</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Discretion Fund</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expense</strong></td>
<td><strong>$454,384</strong></td>
<td><strong>$455,825</strong></td>
<td><strong>$414,281</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Income/(deficit)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$0</strong></td>
<td><strong>$18,042</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,138</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Includes $45,000 which was also budgeted but not spent in 2019 for an additional ministry staff member anticipated for a partial year in 2020.

² Includes approximately $12,000 of Session-approved additional capital improvement expenditures as described in the Properties report. These expenditures were approved using current-year funds in light of the anticipated budget surplus rather than relying upon dedicated funds.

³ The Session has approved approximately $32,000 in 2020 capital improvement projects funded from this reserve account. The remaining balance in the Reserve for Major Repairs will be approximately $50,000 for unanticipated future needs.
### Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Fund Balances

#### Arising from Cash Transactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>As of 12/31/2019</th>
<th>As of 12/31/2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and equivalents:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking account</td>
<td>194,128</td>
<td>66,259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invested accounts</td>
<td>581,401</td>
<td>609,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cash and Equivalents</strong></td>
<td><strong>775,529</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,506</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepaid Expenses</td>
<td>8,506</td>
<td>6,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$784,035</strong></td>
<td><strong>$681,494</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIABILITIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued expenses</td>
<td>6,175</td>
<td>3,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In &amp; out accounts – net</td>
<td>33,260</td>
<td>29,572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pledges received in advance</td>
<td>53,048</td>
<td>53,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>$92,483</strong></td>
<td><strong>$85,672</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUND BALANCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating fund</td>
<td>72,695</td>
<td>54,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quasi-endowment funds</td>
<td>83,044</td>
<td>78,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial funds</td>
<td>20,299</td>
<td>29,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Campaign 2016-2018</td>
<td>13,668⁴</td>
<td>51,548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reserve funds</td>
<td>182,622</td>
<td>78,364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated funds</td>
<td>143,499</td>
<td>127,893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanently:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment funds</td>
<td>175,725</td>
<td>175,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Fund Balances</strong></td>
<td><strong>$691,552</strong></td>
<td><strong>$595,822</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities &amp; Fund Balances</strong></td>
<td><strong>$784,035</strong></td>
<td><strong>$681,494</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁴ This amount represents the cash set aside to cover outstanding payments on the new organ which are paid-out monthly.
When Pastor Erik first arrived at PCWS in 2018, he saw the playground structure and was concerned with the safety of the aging wood playset. But he also saw that the children absolutely loved playing outside! During the winter months, David Boxell bundled up and gradually dismantled the old structure. The removal of the old structure came with a promise from Pastor Erik to the children and an appeal to the Session – we will rebuild!

In discussing the creation of a new playground, the Session decided to focus on creating a space that would be safe and of significant quality to provide a place for children to play with one another for years to come. Working with NuToys in La Grange Park, Pastor Erik and Suzie and Matt Mosher consulted with the children of the church to have them review designs and look at various playgrounds in the neighborhood. After several rounds of designs, a playground for a wide-range of ages and abilities was starting to come into sight!

The Session decided to fund the playground using funds available supplemented by fundraising for this project. It was decided that it would be good for the children to see and know that they are a valued part of the congregation and that a continued strong ministry to our children and families remains a high priority.

The annual Spaghetti Dinner was the backdrop for the fundraising effort! Steve Blough organized his team of volunteers in the kitchen and Mindy McMahon coordinated the volunteers who were serving the meal at two seatings. Candice Mares obtained donations of food from Western Springs Fruit Store and Hinsdale’s Prime and Tender Meat. Several volunteers prepared beautiful and tasty desserts and families (and especially the young children!) volunteered throughout the day. The event was a great success! Not only was there wonderful food and great fellowship, but by the time all of the contributions for the playground came in, we received more than the $10,000 goal set by the Session. We utilized a new-to-PCWS technique of placing numerically-labeled envelopes on a wood board. As people removed the envelopes (and donated the dollar amount written on the envelope!) it revealed a beautiful mural of a playground! Thank you to the Bozek family for creating the mural.

During the summer, the great news came that our playground
was being manufactured by Landscape Structures, Inc. in Minnesota. The parts all came on a flatbed truck. Matt Mosher and a friend had spent a day preparing the ground by digging the post holes, and when the materials finally arrived, he was joined by the playground construction team of Walt Kovalick, Pete Hanson, Pastor Erik, Mark De Vries, and Eddie Restani and the construction started in earnest! The first day the poles started going up and just a few days later the final touches were put on the structure and several dumptrucks of playground-grade woodchips arrived! The playground was ready!

On Friday, September 28, the heavens opened up with a dramatic fall lightning storm which seemed as though it might derail the grand opening celebration and ribbon-cutting. But then a wondrous thing happened! There was a break in the weather! We were able to gather outside and Pastor Erik dedicated the playground reminding all who were gathered that this playground would be a place, like our sanctuary and our classrooms, and even our homes, where we can share and love God. We said a prayer of dedication and then we played on the new playground! With the next round of storms coming, we quickly went back into the Jones Room for ice cream sundaes, popcorn, and the fall movie night!

Thank you to everyone who made this new playground possible. It is a strong image for our community and for our congregation, that PCWS is investing in our neighborhood and our children for years to come. The financial support of PCWS made this possible. Thank you also to the efforts of those people listed above who worked so hard to design and build the playground!

2019 was another year of growth in faith and mission for the Women of PCWS. All women of PCWS are considered members of PW and are welcome to participate.

These past few years, PW’s from two neighboring communities (First Presbyterian Church of LaGrange and Highlands Presbyterian Church) have joined PCWS in coordinating and cosponsoring monthly meetings. Each has a program director that looks for ideas of interest to our memberships, often encouraging mission giving and growth opportunities.

### The PW Purpose

Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves:

- To nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study.
- To support the mission of the church worldwide.
- To work for justice and peace: And to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God’s kingdom.
These meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month, at 12:30 p.m., September through December, and February through May. Each group hosts two to three meetings a season providing a program as well as a luncheon/brunch.

PW offers a study group that is Bible-centered. They are using the study prepared by the Presbyterian Women USA publication *Horizons*. The study group meets on the third Thursday of each month at 1 p.m. in the Graham Charter Room.

PW of PCWS has a special interest in mission giving through the Presbytery of Chicago as well as mission opportunities offered through outreach within our community. Our budget is supported through membership donations in addition to funds raised through the sale of luncheon tickets.

PW looks forward to 2020, another year in which growth in membership and continued support of our alliance with First Presbyterian Church of LaGrange and Highlands Presbyterian Church continues to provide opportunities to grow in faith and mission.

Marilyn Hanson, *Moderator*

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**PW Annual Financial Report**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning Balance</strong></td>
<td>1/1/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Receipts</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pledges</td>
<td>753.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Events</td>
<td>1,161.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank Offering</td>
<td>210.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least Coin Offering</td>
<td>10.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Misc. Receipts</td>
<td>75.00</td>
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<td><strong>Total Receipts</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Disbursements</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>255.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luncheons</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies, misc.</td>
<td>45.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church World United Dues</td>
<td>35.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mission</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PW General Mission</td>
<td>450.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Disbursements</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ending Balance</strong></td>
<td>12/31/2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Interfaith Book Group**

The Interfaith Book Group is in its tenth year of reading together as friends in several faiths. Words to describe the group: hospitality, friendship, interchange of ideas, equal sharing of responsibility, sharing our different faith practices and beliefs. The women of the group choose the books we read each year and lead the discussions of those books. We alternate between meeting at PCWS and the Mosque Foundation in Bridgeview. Our goal is to build bridges of acceptance, friendship and understanding of one another in this diverse world. All women are welcome.

Current organizers: Mary Jo Blough of PCWS, and Carol Lambert of Mosque Foundation
PCWS is a welcoming, intergenerational and mission-focused community seeking to reflect God’s inclusive love. We are a vibrant, joyful congregation of people of all ages. We have members from all over the Western Suburbs of Chicago and visitors are always welcome.