Partnering with Community
Dear Friends in Christ,

These are the words of Jeremiah 17:7-8: "Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit."

We are approaching the season of thanks. As you see in this edition of WGPConnector, our church has much to be thankful for and celebrates an abundantly fruitful ministry. God has blessed us with energy and enthusiasm for the important work of Jesus Christ. Our response to this calling is found in these pages and in the friendships we create with one another as we go about God's work.

Intertwined with bearing future fruit is our degree of gratitude to God expressed through our stewardship campaign. This year's theme is Growing in Faith. Your gifts allow us to respond to Christ's call and are important for us to continue the missions we do. Another important component of providing the resources needed to engage the needs of the world around us includes planned giving. Mary Lee Morris left a gift of $500,000 in her estate plan for our church to continue its mission. The session appointed a new Discernment Team to pray and discern how we can best fulfill God's will for this very generous gift. Please pray for them as they begin their work. The members include Tiffany Becker, Diana Likely, Todd Meyer, Jan Phillips, Bill Schwartz, Gina Smutz and J.R. Walters.

Stewardship and planned giving are both vital to growing and thriving as a congregation of believers. Check with our Business Administrator, Jan Scheurer, for information about either.

Looking ahead, the session has also appointed a committee to begin discussions about how best to use the education building. We house our Early Childhood Center and conduct much of our children's and youth ministry in part of the building. We also have some community partners using some of the space. However, it remains empty most of the time and is costly. It's time to talk about fresh possibilities for that space, which are best for future ministry. Please pray for Kathryn Duckworth, Dave Fleisher Jr., Marilyn Kuhn, Diane McCullough, Debbie Miali, Laura Putnam, Todd Ringkamp, Kris Roudebush and Allan Scott as they begin the first phase of this exciting, albeit long, journey.

Finally, it has been a long time since we examined our safety and security plan. Thus, the session has acted to form a committee to look into updating the safety and security plan for our church.

I hope you enjoy this edition of WGPConnector and I really hope it will inspire you to invite a friend to come and join you in the work of Jesus Christ going on at WGPC. As we cultivate our trust in the Lord, we look forward to the abundant and fruitful blessings of God. See you in church!
Meyer Mission Grants Awarded

WGPC’s Mission Commission recently announced awards of special development grants to St. Louis non-profit organizations totaling more than $330,000 over the next three years.

The grants include four St. Louis non-profits – Fathers and Family Support Center, which will receive $25,000 per year; St. Louis Internship Program, which will receive $25,000 per year; International Institute of St. Louis which will receive $30,000 per year and Urban Sprouts Child Development Center, which will receive $30,000 per year. These grants are renewable for two additional years based on successful reports following the first year’s grants.

The grants were made possible because of the generosity of church member the late Dorothy Meyer, who at her death split her estate between WGPC and St. Louis University. The church received $2.47 million.

After a thorough discernment process, the church allocated its Mission Commission $475,000 of the donation for the benefit of St. Louis nonprofits and their service to community.

These particular grants were given specifically to organizations that provide education or work force development training, commission moderator Julie Wood said.

The donations are intended to “create a pathway out of poverty, define our neighbors and support organizations that provide hope and breakdown systemic poverty,” she said.

She said working to choose the nonprofits that would receive the grants was rewarding.

“Overall the process was energizing for me. I loved the process of trying to hone in on a strategy for the Mission Commission and really think about where we wanted to focus.”

WGPC worked with the St. Louis Community Foundation to help identify, evaluate and award the grants to local non-profits.

Julie said working with the St. Louis Community Foundation was “fabulous” and its expertise with the agencies and the community helped the committee target organizations where church members’ “passions intersected with community need.”

“It made a big difference,” Julie said. Visiting the agencies and seeing the work they do was inspiring, she said.

The Fathers and Family Support Center provides educational programs, training and services for men who want to improve their family and relationships with their children. The non-profit’s goal is “to break the cycle of poverty, child neglect and abuse, and welfare dependence by educating and preparing fathers to become responsible parents with financial stability”…according to its website.

Commission member Diane McCullough said the organization is making a big difference in the lives of men and their families.

“They are doing the very hardest work possible in the most holistic way. They are working with men who were formerly incarcerated and those about to be released,” she said. “Their clients are dealing with every kind of issue and need knowledge about everything. (Father’s Support Center) is offering help to them and over a long period of time. And they help them find jobs that provide a living wage. (The organization) has ties to companies like Boeing and major hospitals – places where these men can get real work,” Diane said.

See Meyer Grants continued on pg. 10
Members of WGPC share their time, their effort and their dollars with local missions faithfully, but they also have another resource that connects them to the local community and brings people in the church doors – space.

The congregation has been sharing space with several groups, some of them for quite some time. The Rotary Club of Webster Groves, for example, has been meeting at the church each week for more than 40 years.

Other groups include businesses, nonprofits, a support group, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and a sorority that holds its Spring Fling here at the church each year, said Business Administrator Jan Scheurer.

Jan Carver and Mia Walters along with Pastor Ed recently attended a seminar entitled Church Buildings: Blessings and Burdens. Jan said Webster Pres like many churches has been left with empty spaces.

"Church attendance worldwide in all religions is way down from what it used to be," she said. "We have empty space that we’re not using, but we’re supporting it with heat and electricity."

Inviting partners in from the community helps to offset the cost and serves as an outreach, she said.

"It’s working very well," Jan said.

Care and Counseling is one of our long-time partners. The agency has a satellite office in the education building on the second floor. Our own Marilyn Kuhn was the main resident in the office, although other clinical staff also served here. Marilyn was a constant source of care and counseling for more than 20 years, said Jennifer Pitcher, clergy and congregational care projects coordinator of Care and Counseling. Marilyn retired Sept. 30.

"She was the vital connection and made a significant contribution," Jennifer said.

Currently the office has two residents, Sarah Goldman and Amy Stark. The agency is planning to add another counselor. Jennifer said there is a great need for counseling in the Webster Groves area for people who do not have insurance.

PJT works directly with artisans to provide fair prices for their goods and works with consumers for sales and to provide education on the importance of fair trade practices and partnerships. The goods, which include bags and accessories, jewelry, toys, garden décor and musical instruments come from Peru, Cambodia, Haiti and Palestine. PJT sells to 60 stores across the nation and has partnerships with 40 churches. It also has a selection of goods for sale in its office, Alyson said.

PJT's hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays from noon until 5 p.m. and the second Sunday of the month from 8 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

Patterson Performing Arts began its partnership with WGPC in August. Heather Patterson owns the business and is also an adjunct voice instructor at Webster University. She teaches private voice lessons, an accelerated voice lab in a small group format that includes one on one lessons with the teacher. She also teaches sight reading and acting skills. Her students often consist of music teachers and sometimes performers. Currently, her students range from age 9 to 67 years old.

Beginning in February, Heather plans to open a new program for kids aged 7 to 11 who are interested in learning to sing or play the piano. Questions? Email admin@pattersonperformingarts.com

Thimble and Thread Quilt Guild of Greater St. Louis is one of the largest quilting groups in the area. The group recently began meeting at WGPC on the second Friday of the month from 7 to 9:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.
Wednesdays are music days at the Early Childhood Center. Nearly every Wednesday morning at the church, the sound of children singing, bells ringing or hands clapping makes its way down the hallway of the first floor. Sometimes the children come in short parades singing Yankee Doodle or bellowing a barnyard of animal sounds from Old McDonald’s Farm.

On one special music day, in mid-September, about a dozen four- and five-year-olds, marched down the hall and into the big sanctuary where they had a very special lesson about the largest instrument around, WGPC’s church organ.

Music Director and Organist Shawn Portell was the instructor and ECC Director Robin Cannon said she had been looking forward to the lesson.

“Last year, I started teaching music, and I wanted Shawn to do a lesson, but we never connected, so I decided this year I would start with Shawn’s lesson,” Robin said.

Shawn brought along a large book – The Auckland Town Hall Pipe Organ Book by Ksenia Bonig and special shoes made for organ pedals. After showing the children the book and explaining the pictures, in a rather Mr. Rogers moment he changed his shoes to play the organ.

Webster’s organ is a Gress-Miles pipe organ which was originally built in 1981. The organ has 3,000 pipes and can duplicate the sounds of a variety of instruments including reed, brass, string and percussion instruments. More unique sound effects like birds, waves, doorbells, even ghosts also are a part of its repertoire. In addition, Shawn can record parts of a musical piece and then play it back while he plays other parts on Sunday mornings, as he did with a flutter of birds and a song of God’s creation earlier this year.

The duality is possible because of a renovation of the organ with tonal additions that was completed in 2013. The organ is now a hybrid with both pipes and digital sound. At the time it was renovated, it was the largest example of a hybrid in town, Shawn said.

The children who perhaps never looked beyond the console to the organ’s pipes were amazed at the size and sound of it.

“The kids are really fascinated by how the organ works,” Shawn said. “I start by talking about whistles. An organ is really a bunch of whistles.”

In addition to learning about the organ, the children were able to hear and play the organ themselves.

“The cute thing is that I asked them who wants to be an organist, and they all raised their hands. The neat thing is they recognize what I do,” Shawn said. “They know I’m the organist here, and know what I do. It’s just a small concept of what this is all about.”

ECC director Robin Cannon took on the role of the children’s music instructor last year after the ECC’s music teacher retired. She was a little shy about it at first, but she felt God pushing her in that direction. Now she’s glad she made the leap.

“I love it. It’s so much fun,” Robin said. “They learn really well from music. It’s a totally different expression and everyone can do some kind of music.

She said Shawn’s lesson is a great addition to the curriculum.

“It was wonderful. Shawn was wonderful,” Robin said. “It was exciting, and he made it fun. The children liked the shoes and the pedals and the sounds that came out of the organ. Even the teachers were inspired by his lesson.”

The following Wednesday, Robin took the children for a second encounter with an organ, this time in the chapel where they each had some solo practice time as they prepare for their careers.
There is a new space for the smallest babes among us and their parents. A room adjacent to the Nursery has been turned into a Nursing Room.

The room comes complete with glider rockers, ottomans, portable privacy screens, a changing table and cribs. Pastor Hannah Zyla conceived of the idea some time ago.

“I wanted to provide some kind of space for parents with new babies,” Hannah said. “This was before I was pregnant. It’s been on my list.”

The room that adjoined the nursery was no longer being used for anything. Originally, it was a crib room for babies left in the care of the nursery.

“The trend now is for parents to keep their babies in worship with them and there is not as much need for a crib room,” Pastor Hannah said. Eventually, the room turned into a storage space.

The opportunity to make the space a more serviceable and welcoming place came with a donation from Georgia Urban in honor of her mother, the late Alice Urban.

“She was very active in the church. She taught Sunday school and loved children’s ministries,” Georgia said.

Although there were several projects, all “hopes and dreams” that lay outside the church’s operating budget, this particular project “lined up perfectly,” Pastor Hannah said.

Georgia was pleased with the idea and the project is timely with several new babies arriving and others on their way.

“I think God was calling,” Pastor Hannah said.

So did Georgia.

“I'm a retired nurse who worked in maternal and children’s health and education,” Georgia said. “I was a lactation consultant. This is a legacy for my mom and me.”

The room was cleaned out. The walls were painted a peaceful, gray color. The carpet was replaced. The furniture added. In addition to the changing table, we also added a cabinet of supplies – diapers and wipes – “in case of an emergency,” Pastor Hannah said. There also is a sink and a door to the nursery, as well as a separate door for mothers who want to keep from disturbing a sibling child who might be in there.

The plan for the nursing room was well thought out, Pastor Hannah said.

“We consulted with parents, specifically mothers. We talked to Pete Putnam who is a pediatrician and we talked to Pastor Ed for some dad input. No one was excluded,” Pastor Hannah said.

Georgia said the end result makes her happy.

“It’s stunning – warm and welcoming. It gives me joy to walk in there, and my mom would be thrilled,” she said.

Providing a private space for nursing mothers has become a trend in the business world, Pastor Hannah said.

“I don’t know of any churches that have one. Most have cry rooms, but not a nursing room,” she said.

The fact that the church has a nursing room does not mean that parents must use it when a child needs feeding, however, she said.

“We support parents feeding their children anywhere in our building. We don’t want to limit anyone but just provide another option that gives parents privacy, quiet and a dedicated space to be with their babies,” Pastor Hannah said.

Jamie Dubbs and her son Garrett, who was born in June, enjoyed their time in the nursing room, she said.

“I really like the colors. The gray – it’s really calming,” Jamie said. “It’s also really clean. When you come and want to nurse, you want it to be clean. It’s really comfortable and it’s nice to have a place other than the bathroom to nurse.

Diane Watson, mother of Eddie, likes it too.

“It’s really fantastic. I like how calm it is, but mostly I like that it’s available,” Diane said.

Eventually, plans are to have a T.V. screen in the nursery that would stream the worship service for parents.

In the meantime, members of the congregation seem to have embraced the new space. Another donation recently was made to the nursing room to nurture new parents and their babies.

Pastor Hannah said she hoped the room also would bring people together and be “a place of fellowship for women who are in a similar place in their lives.”

“This is just another part of our welcome, one way we celebrate people of every age,” she said.
There is nothing like new babies to bring mothers together, and babies are arriving in a steady stream at WGPC.

“There are ten babies who will have been born from April of 2019 to April of 2020,” said Pastor Hannah Zyla. “Five are here now and five more are expected. It’s amazing.”

All these babies are bringing mothers together and an “experimental” mothers group is forming, she said.

“All these moms are on maternity leave, and they are enjoying each other’s company,” Pastor Hannah said.

The group is getting together almost every Wednesday at 9 a.m. in the new nursing room, next to the Nursery. Moms without babies are invited too.

We provide coffee, tea and water and we bring something to snack on and hang out until the babies tell us to stop,” Hannah said.

Emily Odum said she enjoys the group.

“Hannah shot a couple of moms an email and asked if we wanted to hang out and eat donuts. She told us Cherstin (Byers) will hold your babies,” Emily said.

Cherstin said she’s found fellowship with other mothers to be a plus.

“It’s like a group I went with when my kids were little that became so important to me,” she said.

Pastor Hannah said the women have time to share and enjoy a Sabbath down time and moms are just hanging loose to see what comes of it.

“We’re just going to keep going. Women will come in and out as their maternity leave begins and ends,” Pastor Hannah said.

“We’ve had some really good feedback,” she said. “But we’re interested in more feedback on what might make it better.”

Anyone who is interested in coming can contact Emily Odum at emmaodum@gmail.com for details.

Dear church family,

Thank you, thank you, thank you for the wonderful stroller (it folds up! using only one hand!!) and the even more amazing party! Thank you for celebrating us and surrounding us with joy and pie. Even more than that, thank you for all the love and prayers and support. We are truly overwhelmed, and rejoice daily that we have found a home among you. We are so glad and grateful that there is already such an extraordinary cloud of witnesses to love, nurture, guide, and teach Baby Z.

All our love,
Hannah and Adam and Baby Z
Mission Weekend 2019 is behind us now, but the memories of how our church family came together to serve the community will surely linger as warm, rewarding moments in God’s service.

The weekend was scheduled for Oct. 4, 5 and 6 and Missions Outreach Coordinator Beth Kazlauskas said it was a good turnout for the event now in its seventh year. She sent an enthusiastic “thank you” to everyone who came out.

“We had 109 members plus 25 Boy Scout and Girl Scout friends (who all together) gave more than 300 hours of service over the weekend! That is so amazing,” she said.

Areas of service included a broad range of missions that spanned the interests of many members of the congregation from providing for the homeless, to caring for the environment, to visiting homebound members, Beth said.

“We sorted tons of donations at the Home Sweet Home warehouse, helped with the ECC Rummage Sale, gave blood, provided much needed mattresses and furniture to a mom with five kids, sorted clothes at the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition resale shop, prayed for the many agencies and clients we were serving, did some cleanup on the ECC playground and in the nursery, marked storm drains with tags to remind neighbors to send only water down the drains, cleaned up inside and out at Webster-Rock Hill Ministries, collected Halloween costumes for Syrian neighbors, made sandwiches for St. Patrick Center, wrote cards to members and letters to representatives, prepared detergent for a food pantry, visited some of our members in their homes, baked desserts, and organized the congregational dinner,” Beth said.

Deb Grossman from the Environmental Stewardship team also was pleased with the turnout to mark storm sewers and remind residents that any substance that enters the drain also enters our waterways.

See Mission continued on next page

Top: Frank Bloemke, Pete Kazlauskas, Jim Roberts, Lia & Jane Fairbanks, Jean & Linda Magre, Nancy Currinder, Beth Kazlauskas and Don Oliver load a truck at Home Sweet Home.
Bottom left: Lesli McCormick and Carol Ault sort items at Home Sweet Home.
Bottom right: Barb & Jim Rigby and Connie Wagner make sandwiches for St. Patrick Center.
Opposite page from top: Carina Dickie sorts clothes at ReFresh; Dave Morris donates blood; Jim Rigby and Dennis Frink move furniture at Home Sweet Home; Kathryn, John & Annie Duckworth and Keira Blank mark sewer drains.
On Nov. 3, exactly one year before the November election of 2020, Pastor Ed Zumwinkel was one of many Christian pastors from a variety of theological perspectives across the country to introduce a new kind of platform, one that promotes civil discourse in the political arena — Golden Rule 2020.

The effort was proposed at a meeting of religious leaders at New York Ave. Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. last May. The meeting was hosted by the National Institute for Civil Discourse and hinges on the golden rule, Christ’s principle of treating others as we, ourselves want to be treated.

See Golden Rule continued on page 14
St. Louis Internship Program (SLIP) works with high school students in the St. Louis Public School system to provide training and paid summer internships for students with financial needs.

Students must be a sophomore or junior in high school, have a 2.0 or better grade point average, have financial need determined by federal guidelines for the free and reduced lunch program, have good attendance and citizenship, and be committed to SLIP year-round activities, according to the organization’s website.

The students then participate in a training program held for five hours each Saturday, for ten weeks where they learn life and job seeking skills and develop a work ethic.

Commission member Deb Grossman said, “They do a tremendous job.”

“It’s a huge commitment to give up every Saturday,” she said.

Students learn to present themselves, come to work with the right attitude, dress well and be on time, Deb said.

The program is unique in that the participants include students that are not necessarily at the top academically, she said.

Then, over the summer, they work for eight weeks in paid internships, five days a week, eight hours a day. The internships are provided by businesses, nonprofits, government, hospitals or education.

The grant WGPC provides will help pay the salaries of those interns working for non-profits and government agencies, Mission Outreach Coordinator Beth Kazlauskas said.

International Institute of St. Louis is an agency that provides economic and integration services for immigrants. Those services include English classes, employment assistance, orientation and preparation for citizenship. The International Institute also works to educate people about the importance of welcoming immigrants and building relationships of mutual respect through presentations and events such as the Festival of Nations, according to the organization’s website.

Beth said the key reason for this grant to the International Institute is that the agency receives funding from the federal government to resettle refugees in the St. Louis area based on the number of refugees that are allowed into the country each year through the Refugee Resettlement Program. Any change in the number of refugees admitted to the U.S. affects the Institute’s revenue. The challenge is that the Institute is required to provide services to all refugees that have arrived over the past five years. So while the Trump Administration “has set the limit at 18,000 admitted refugees nationwide in 2020, the Institute is still providing services to those refugees who arrived in 2016 when the number was 85,000 nationwide” Beth said. “They will be losing significant funding in 2020 and still need to pay for staff to serve a higher number of refugees who arrived over the past few years.”

Commission member Mia Walters said the grant will help “pick up some of the slack for the funding they lost.”

“I’ve always been intrigued by the people that come here with no idea about the culture, the language. They don’t know how to grocery shop, handle the money, find transportation, anything,” she said.

“I think the Institute does remarkable work with a small paid staff,” Mia said. “When you walk down the halls, you hear all these languages. It’s an inspiration to see these people appreciate their freedom and working so hard. They are so grateful to be in the United States. If you want to learn an attitude of gratitude, that’s where to go.”

See Meyer Grant cont. on next page
Money Matters

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6: 21

At year’s end...
At last count, the budget for 2019 and the pledges received in our latest campaign offer a mixed bag of financial blessings and concerns, says Business Administrator Jan Scheurer.

“As far as revenue is concerned we currently are $48,841 short of the income from pledges in the budget for 2019,” she said. “Without careful spending and a special gift, the budget passed for 2019 would have left us in the red by $41,832.”

The various departments in the church budget, however, are efficient with their spending and expenses have been coming in under budget. And, although pledges are almost $50,000 behind in the year to date budget projection, we are ahead of where we were in pledge receipts in 2018, she said.

Another plus was the Morris bequest gift. Although the bulk of the money is the focus of an ongoing discernment process, $25,000 of any bequest is allocated to the operating budget, Jan said.

“After adjusting for the large bequest received, we are currently almost $20,000 in the black, and with grace and the generosity of this congregation project that we will continue to remain in the black for the rest of the year,” she said.

“The overwhelming willingness of WGPC members to share time, talent and treasure is inspiring. We are truly blessed to have such a generous congregation! And, in October, the church has received a clean opinion from Anders CPAs + Advisors in the church’s financial audit,” Jan said.

The concerns for the coming year however, are real. Costs continue to rise and the budget for 2020 seems tight. We are still in the first month of the Stewardship campaign, and believe that the strength and generosity of this congregation will continue to see WGPC Growing in Faith as we head into 2020.

Please remember us in your year-end giving.

And on to the future...
The Christmas season is upon us and from now until Christmas Day our focus will be on family and feasting and celebrating the great gift God has given us in Christ. Before the holidays are over, however, please remember your gift to the church.

Making a donation before the new year provides blessings several ways. One, it finishes the year with thanksgiving for all that God has given us and provides the church with the resources it needs to serve God and our community in the coming year. It also makes the most of your family's giving by providing a charitable tax deduction for 2019.

There are many ways to give. Make an appointment with your financial advisor and ask about the best way for your family to make a contribution.

Possibilities include: cash, appreciated securities or funds from your retirement plans, or you can decide on a more structured planned giving by providing an endowment to the church or listing the church as recipient in a donor-advised fund or life insurance. For more information, visit wgpc.org/give/ways-of-giving or call the business office at 314-962-9210 3206.

At WGPC, members can make their donations online, by mailing a check or placing a contribution in the basket on any Sunday.

To receive a charitable tax deduction for the 2019 tax year, make sure that all gifts are completed by Dec. 30. The church will be closed Dec. 31. Please keep in mind that certain gifts require additional time to process.

Meyer Grant continued

Urban Sprouts Child Development Center in University City is an early childhood center where the student population is blended racially and economically. Fifty-seven percent of the students are in Head Start or Early Head Start programming, Beth said.

“We want to support the belief that children from all neighborhoods and all socio-economic groups deserve high quality education,” she said. “This gift from Dorothy Meyer addresses that belief and one of Dorothy’s passions, education for everyone.”

Urban Sprouts uses the Reggio Emilia approach with its students. The curriculum is student centered, self-directed and uses experiential learning. Teachers are facilitators in the program based on the principles of respect, responsibility and community, according to a Scholastic article.

In addition to the four renewable education and job training grants, the church’s Mission Commission made a one-time dedicated grant of $36,000 to Home Sweet Home, a non-profit organization located in Brentwood, to help the agency acquire a second truck to expand the number of clients it can serve, and a dedicated grant of $36,000 to the Council of Protestant Churches of Nicaragua’s capital campaign to construct a building and strengthen the organization’s ability to train and support communities in Nicaragua.
Honoring our long-time members

Eleanor Roosevelt once said that beautiful young people are accidents of nature, but beautiful old people are works of art. During the Traditional Worship service on Sunday, Oct. 27, the church was filled with beautiful old souls celebrating 50 to 60 years of church membership and beyond. Members were honored with their names in the bulletin, recognition during the service and a reception following worship. They also each received a red carnation and a certificate.

At least 33 members came out on the special day, some of whom people hadn’t seen in a while.

“I think it’s fabulous,” said member Debbie Miali. “Some of the people who came are those who normally wouldn’t be able to come, and it was lovely to see them again.”

Member Nancy Knight said the event was wonderful and the church should hold it on a regular basis.

“It’s a good witness to others in the church, especially to those in their 40s and 50s,” she said.

The deacons of the church decided to honor long-time members after a review of the yearly calendar of events. It seems that the church formerly honored members who reached the milestone of 50 years, but the practice had lapsed and hadn’t been held for five years or more, Anne Carpenter said.

Organizers set out to make up the difference with an invite to those who were members for 50 to 60 years and then they heard from those who were members even longer than that, Anne said.

Karen Schneider said when the honorees came into the narthex it was like “old home week.”

“They were all standing in the hall talking, and they had the cutest conversations. I think it was really beneficial for them and everyone,” she said. “Several people came up to Jan Phillips and said what a nice recognition it was. This is really worthwhile to do, to honor these people. They have been the pillars of the church.”

A special recognition was given to Edie Curtis, who at the age of 99, has been a member of the church for 86 years. She said she, her mother and father, Edith and John Marsalek, brother George “Woody” Marsalek and grandmother Anna Woodruff all transferred from Oak Hill Presbyterian Church to Webster Pres. in 1933.

A musical person, Edie sang in the youth choir in those early years.

“On Easter Sunday, 1937, I sang a solo in the anthem from the balcony,” she said.

Edie continued to sing and still sings in the choir today.

See Members continued on next page
Lift Your Prayers to God

Baptisms

*Dylan Matthew Scott*, son of Matthew and Jamie Scott, was baptized on Oct. 13.

*James Bering Keenan*, son of Katherine and Tim Keenan, was baptized on Oct. 20, 2019.

*Dorothy Payne* was baptized Oct. 27, 2019.

*Millie McAuliffe Odum*, daughter of Pete and Emily Odum was baptized Nov. 3, 2019.

Welcome to the church Dylan, James, Millie and Dorothy!

Deaths

Please keep the families of the following individuals in your prayers:

*Helen “Mary” Hager* passed away Sept. 3. She was 94 years old and had been a member of the church for 62 years.

*Barbara Bauer* passed away Sept. 22, 2019. She was 97 years old and had been a member of the church for 66 years.

*Bess Dutson* passed away Sept. 26, 2019. She was 104 years old and had been a member of the church for 26 years. She was formerly a Circle Leader in Presbyterian Women and also participated in the Disciples Bible study.

*Edward “Ted” Forsyth* passed away Oct. 28, 2019. He was 88 years old and a member of the church for 43 years. He formerly served as a deacon and greeter at the church.

New Members

Five people joined us in October as members of Webster Groves Presbyterian Church. Please welcome them and keep them in your prayers as they and their families become part of the body of Christ here at Webster Groves.

They include: *Nicole Clynes, Allison Byrne, Matt and Becky Byrne and Dorothy Payne*

New member *Dorothy Payne* was baptized Oct. 27, 2019.

*Millie McAuliffe Odum*, daughter of Pete and Emily Odum was baptized Nov. 3, 2019.

Welcome to the church Dylan, James, Millie and Dorothy!

Members continued

“I don’t want to quit,” she said.
She enjoyed the event on Sunday.

“I thought the service was one that could be appreciated by all members not just those being honored,” she said.

Bob Smutz, 88, and a member of the church for 72 years also attended the event. He said he began going to Sunday school at Webster Pres when he was in the fifth grade.

“My friends were in the sixth grade, but I went with them,” he said. “We had a Sunday school teacher that had been the captain of a P.T. boat (during the war.) We would just ask him to tell us about the P.T. boat and that was it – we would talk about that the rest of the time,” he said. His parents joined the church and the family set down roots at Webster Pres.

He remembers when the chapel caught fire on New Year’s Day in 1958. He came down to the church and saw the flames and the billowing smoke.

“It took the chapel and a lot of fellowship hall,” he said.

The sanctuary, however, was unharmed.

He and his wife, Joycelynn, had four children – Bill (Gina) Smutz, Mark Smutz, who died in 1980, Jennifer (Mike) Blumenkemper, and Julianne Smutz, he said.

“Bill went to God’s school and (became a Presbyterian minister),” Bob said.

“He was ordained here. He’s now the interim pastor at First Congregational Church in Clayton.”

Gini Hille also came out for the honoring of long-time members. At the age of 97, Gini has been a member for 71 years. Originally from Woodbury NJ, she met her husband, Bob, while he was in the military. She came to Webster Groves after they married and became a member in 1948.

“I’m still here and I’m still going strong,” she said.

Gini said she stays because of the people.

“It’s been very gratifying. I’m very grateful for our church -- the warmth and friendship of the pastors and the congregation,” Gini said.

She hopes more people find a home at Webster Pres.

“I hope we can continue to grow in this very difficult time because what the church stands for is what the world needs,” Gini said.
Music, the arts and her Scottish heritage are at the heart of almost everything WGPC member Diane McCullough does. With a career in music and education for years, Diane sang opera in Germany, taught music at a Laboratory School at the University of Chicago, and guided the notes of students locally at a visual and performing arts middle school in the St. Louis Public School System.

But did you know that she has her own band? Peat Fire Flame, a four piece band that features Connie Bellinghausen on the flute and whistle, Diane on the keyboard, Tyler Moore on the fiddle and Mark Clark on guitar, specializes in traditional Scottish Music and original tunes. All four musicians are classically trained, Diane said.

They perform on a regular basis for the St. Louis Scottish Games, weave some Scottish tunes into the mix at the Festival of Nations each year, and play for private Ceilidhs (Scottish music parties).

She said in Scotland the parties are a long standing tradition.

“They are Scottish country dances, and every little town in Scotland has them on the weekend where people gather to do the traditional dances. The Ceilidhs are the forerunner of square dancing and (country) line dancing for that matter,” she said.
Carol Fleisher
30+ years of ringing

Sometime during the 1980s, more than 30 years ago, Carol Fleisher set out to serve the congregation at Webster Groves Presbyterian Church with music, a baton and bells.

“Well, I wanted to do something for the church in an area where I could contribute,” she said. “I knew about music. I knew about kids.”

So she decided to take on the Praise Ringers Bell Choir and taught students in the 7th-12th grades how to ring.

“There were people ahead of me that had groups,” she said. “Jackie Gabel had the adult group and Sylvia Stoll had children’s bells.”

Jackie and Karen Lovell, who also directed a handbell group, helped her get started, Carol said.

Handbell groups first started at WGPC in 1978, so Carol was directing almost from the beginning, Music Director Shawn Portell said.

“Carol has literally taught hundreds of kids through the years,” he said.

She said she enjoyed working with youth, and they enjoyed working with her.

“When I got them, they stayed. I often had them for six years,” she said. “I tried to give each of the seniors a chance to direct.”

Lynne Rapp, who is the director of the Celebration Ringers, said she played in Carol’s group with the youth for five years.

“She always had challenging and interesting music,” she said. “She was a good director. We always started with the dynamics of the piece.”

Carol said the rewards were great.

“It was fun to get to know the families and get to know the kids, fun to be a part of their growing up,” she said.

“Some of them really liked to ring,” Carol said. “Some would tell me it was the highlight of their week. When you are doing something that you think people really enjoy, it’s very rewarding.”

Now, however, she said that it’s time to let it go. Last year’s small group and competition from other activities made it difficult to find a good time for practice, she said.

But there may be more children coming up through the ranks, she said.

“Shawn has a strong, young group just starting. Maybe it will get built from the bottom,” she said.

“We’ve had some good strong groups and great attendance (in the past),” she said. “If kids come and get going on it, they like to stay with it.”

Carol said she plans to work with special groups and help Shawn when needed.

“For bells are the voice of the church; They have tones that touch and search The hearts of young and old.”
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Bells of San Blas.
December Worship

Join us in the month of December as we anticipate and celebrate the birth of the Christ Child! Through the season of Advent, come rest from the busy-ness of the world in the company of your church family, enjoy a moment to pause and breathe in God’s love, and delight in the music of the season. For Christmas Eve, come welcome the infant Christ in a joyful family-friendly service or choose a more contemplative time of music, Word, and Communion. All are welcome as we walk through these holy seasons together!

Sunday, December 1
8:30 a.m. Informal Service
9:30 a.m. Advent Café
10:30 a.m. Traditional Service

Sunday, December 8
8:30 a.m. Informal Service
9:30 a.m. Advent Café
10:30 a.m. Traditional Service: Advent Pageant

Sunday, December 15
8:30 a.m. Prayer Service
9:30 a.m. Advent Café
10:30 a.m. Traditional Service: Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 22
9:30 a.m. Advent Café
10:30 a.m. Hymn Sing Service

Tuesday, December 24
4:00 p.m. Family Christmas Eve Service
10:00 p.m. Traditional Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 29
10:30 a.m. Worship Service