Still Connected through Christ
A Message from the Pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

One of the Great Ends of the Church is "...the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God...” The year of 2020 has reminded us of just how important spiritual fellowship is to our faith. We have spent most of this year apart from one another and yet we have remained connected through our common mission to serve Jesus Christ.

Paul often was apart from his churches and had to work hard to remain connected. He wrote the Epistles to maintain spiritual fellowship, even sending letters from prison. The letters were delivered by hand by leaders in the church who traveled miles and miles, over days and weeks to deliver them. So, while I find Zoom an unappealing way to connect, I am thankful for it when I consider how hard Paul and the early church had to work at spiritual fellowship!

This has been a hard year. We have felt like we have been in prison and that feeling may grow over the winter. Yet, the church is equipped to handle such a difficult time. We have a long history of persisting no matter what. WGPC has met this challenge to stay connected and to continue the mission of Jesus Christ incredibly well this year. Politics, social unrest, a pandemic, have been quite a test to be sure. But we follow Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with Us. This has been the source of our spiritual endurance as the pages of this WGPCConnector attest.

Our Book of Order also says, "In affirming with the earliest Christians that Jesus is Lord, the Church confesses that he is its hope, and that the Church, as Christ’s body, is bound to his authority and thus free to live in the lively, joyous reality of the grace of God." We are bound to Jesus and we are bound to one another in spiritual fellowship. That is enough to know we will thrive no matter what lies ahead. We live in the lively, joyous reality of the grace of God. We have hope that no matter what lies ahead we will thrive in Christ Jesus! Praise be to God!

With you!

Cover photos clockwise from top left: Judy Vansickle and Trixie drop off donations; Rebecca and Eliza Thompson do yard work at Urban Sprouts; Pete Putnam assembles furniture for Home Sweet Home; Deb Grossman, Bill Schwartz, Brandon & Westen Thurmon spread mulch at the ECC playground; Janice and Steve Seele prepare for notarizing ballots; Carina Dickie helps out at Urban Sprouts; Leslie McCormick cleans ECC equipment; a trunk is loaded with Give-a-Meal-a-Month deliveries.
A wonder-filled Mission Weekend

Mission Weekend, a WGPC tradition each year on the first weekend of October, presented a special challenge this year because of the COVID pandemic. The results, however, were impressive with 137 volunteers coming out to participate in 11 projects over the weekend of Oct. 3 and 4.

Mission Outreach coordinator Beth Kazlauskas usually makes her plans for the event over the summer, she said. “When it got to be June or July, it seemed like maybe we shouldn’t do it this year, but the Mission Outreach Commission felt strongly that more than ever we needed to offer ways to help people,” Beth said.

So, the challenge was to put together projects that both made an impact and that could be done safely. The plans had to be different and some things had to be cut, she said. “One thing I missed doing this year was having a team deliver furniture from Home Sweet Home – bringing clients the furniture they picked out,” Beth said. “It’s something we do that allows people to see what they do in a really concrete way, but Home Sweet Home wasn’t doing that this year.”

Instead, volunteers did an IKEA build of furniture pieces that included coffee tables, book cases and two-drawer bed-side tables, she said. Fifteen pieces of furniture were purchased and constructed in all and then donated to Home Sweet Home.

In addition, this year’s projects included: cleaning the outdoor toys and putting new mulch on the playground at WGPC, sending cards to members of the church who might need encouragement, collecting food for the Give-a-Meal-a-Month program and delivering it to Isaiah 58 Ministries, and cleaning and weeding the playground and garden at Urban Sprouts Child Development Center, one of our mission partners.

“The Urban Sprouts project was one I especially enjoyed because there were several families with kids and teenagers who came to help that I didn’t know very well, and it was nice to get to know them,” Beth said.

The Mabie family was one of the families that came out to help at Urban Sprouts, and they said they enjoyed the experience.

“We wanted to do something the kids could really get involved in,” Patty said.

Daughters Anne and Claire are 10 and 8 years old respectively. Patty said they worked hard.

“It is a good helping age and they were able to do some things and learn to give back,” she said.

They also helped their grandparents, Bob and Judy Weng, put together some IKEA furniture. The family put together two coffee tables. Claire said she liked building the coffee tables best and Anne liked both working with her grandparents and helping at the childcare center.

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Grant and Anne Mabie volunteer at Urban Sprouts
The Gift of Mary Lee Morris

There are a couple things that anyone who knew the late Mary Lee Morris could tell you about her— one, she loved her sports and two, she had a kind heart.

The sports were Blues Hockey, Cardinal Baseball and golf. She had season tickets to the St. Louis teams for years and played many, many rounds of golf with her husband, Herb, and friends.

Her heart, however, well, it was more than just kindness, said John Rawlings, Pastoral Assistant for Congregational Care. He described her as having a humble spirit with an attitude of thankfulness.

“She was the sweetest person I think I’ve ever known,” said John Rawlings. “She always had a smile and a kind word for you, and as we’ve learned from what she left the church, she was an extremely generous woman.”

When Mary Lee died Dec. 12, 2017 at the age of 88, she left a gift of almost $500,000 to the church, and actually, it was her second gift. During her life, she also had made another large gift of almost $450,000 to the church, which was divided in nine annual installments of about $50,000 each.

Mary Connor, a dear friend of Mary Lee’s and executor of her estate, said she loved Webster Pres.

“Mary Lee’s church was everything to her, and she represented what the church meant to her. She was a wonderful human being,” she said.

Mary Lee joined Webster Pres in 1947 and was a member for 70 years. Here she served others as a Stephen Minister, delivered flowers and gathered food for the pantries. Most people said she was a quiet woman who had a way of putting the focus on others and not on herself.

“Mary Lee Morris was a person who existed under the radar for 70 years. She was a quiet blessing who has now made a significant contribution which will continue to bless this church,” Pastor Ed Zumwinkel said.

Now the work of allocating the funds Mary Lee Morris gave the church is finished. Just over a year ago, seven members, each representing various committees in the church, came together and formed a covenant with God, each other, and the congregation. They promised to listen, respect one another and prayerfully consider God’s purpose for Mary Lee Morris’s bequest.

Members of the committee included Tiffany Becker from Session, Diana Likely from Endowment, Todd Meyer from Trustees—Property, Jan Phillips from Deacons, who served as the moderator, Bill Schwartz from Endowment, Gina Smutz from 2019’s Session and J. R. Walters, from Trustees—Finance Committee.

The Discernment Process

Diana Likely said being a part of the discernment process in its mission to allocate funds to God’s work was “extremely instructive and educational.”

“I didn’t know that discernment was a thing,” she said. “I didn’t believe that the Holy Spirit would interact with a group of people trying to make decisions. Now I know I was wrong because of the experience I had with discernment,” she said.

Diana said the time, about a year, they took to allocate the funds was well worth it. The committee put first things first, setting aside personal differences and really getting to know each other.

“Pastor Ed had this really neat candle and we opened our meetings with prayer and didn’t even talk about money for several months,” she said.

The group looked at Bible verses and discussed them. They talked about the church and asked important questions just like the members did with the Meyer bequest.

“We asked what was our church about, what made it special, and what inspired us. We asked what we would like to see changed or improved and interviewed people on a variety of committees – the choir, prayer group,
ECC staff and asked them the same questions, typed up their answers and put them in a document," Diana said. “Then, we dreamed for the future of the church,” she said.

Finally, the committee met person to person in Tiffany’s backyard, masked and social distanced, of course. Once the group started to focus on the task at hand, it didn’t take long to finish it, Diana said.

“In about 1 ½ hours we basically agreed on how to spend the money,” she said.

Of the $500,000 bequest, $475,000 was on the table. When a large bequest is received, the first $25,000 is designated for the general fund.

The following is the breakdown for the allocation of Mary Lee’s gift according to the distribution document approved by Session on September 15.

- $300,000 for endowment, which will ensure a financial contribution to our General Fund for years to come. This honors the faithful giving of Mary Lee.

- $125,000 to renovate the Chapel and the adjacent entrance out onto Lockwood to make the space more useful and the church more inviting to those who pass by.

- $15,000 for the personnel commission for special staff needs.

- $15,000 for technology upgrades in the Sanctuary to enhance in-person and online worship.

- $10,000 for the Early Childhood Center.

- $10,000 for the ECC Board to consider using for a feasibility study assessing the childcare needs of the Webster Groves community.

Diana said of all the designated purposes, the renovation of the Chapel and the adjacent entrance will be something the congregation can see. The idea is to create a multipurpose space that can be used for creative worship as well as a meeting space. Plans include replacing the pews with chairs, upgrading technology in the space, including the sound system, adding new flooring, lighting and paint, according to the distribution document.

Pastor Ed Zumwinkel said it is time to make changes to the Chapel.

“There has been a real desire for several years now to reimagine the Chapel so that we can utilize it more since it’s such a sacred space, he said. “Currently, it is hardly ever used.

“The Morris Discernment team suggested, and session approved money to begin that process. It’s also more clear now that our work with Sacred Partners will not likely include the chapel in terms of scope,” he said. “So, the next step will be for the session to appoint a team of folks to start thinking about how best to reimagine the Chapel—something which has been done before in the church’s history. The focus will be on flexibility since the building will be a shared space in terms of gathering and worship. I suspect that the team will be appointed after the first of the year.”

The upgrade to the Lockwood entrance will involve replacing the aluminum doors with a more welcoming entrance and adding a couple of tables with umbrellas on the grounds along Lockwood Ave.

Diana said throughout the process, the committee had its priorities straight.

“First, we had God in mind and second, we had the congregation in mind. We always had the congregation in mind in all the things we discussed,” she said.
Connecting, Sharing & Caring

Gathering in fellowship with friends, having conversations, learning and sharing ideas are some of the sweetest blessings that God provides through the church, and something the pandemic definitely impeded when the church closed its doors to public gathering last March.

In response, members doubled down on their effort to keep people of the church connected. WGPC’s Reopening Task Force proposed a separate committee be formed to that end and Session approved. Since that time, the Gathering Task Force, with its 8 members and liaison Associate Pastor Hannah Zyla, has gotten down to business, working on “creative ways to gather to share worship, prayer and celebration during the pandemic,” Committee Chair Marilyn Kuhn said.

“I think we hit at trying to connect,” Marilyn said.

Basically, there were three areas the group worked on to keep people connected and bring them together – worship, fellowship and education, she said.

For education, the group began a discussion group on Barbara Brown Taylor’s book Gospel Medicine. Those interested met in person wearing masks and social distanced on the parking lot. The meetings were open and anyone could join at anytime because each chapter of the book was a sermon and could be discussed separately, Marilyn said.

“Hannah added liturgy, and we could have prayer and discussion about that sermon,” she said.

They began meeting on Sundays beginning Sept 13, and had between 10 and 25 people in attendance each Sunday until the weather turned cool and rainy near October’s end.

As far as fellowship was concerned, the group decided to have gatherings they called Mini Meets on Tuesday afternoons. The goal was just to talk, catch up and enjoy each other’s company, Marilyn said.

“This enabled some especially older people to come, although there were a variety of age groups,” she said. “A number of people came that might not be able to participate in other things, and it was easy to get out.”

For the most part, the weather cooperated with warm sunny days, she said. The church, however, purchased both a fire pit and heat lamps to extend the days people would be able to meet outdoors.

“The last few times, we were able to sit around the fire pit,” Marilyn said.

Throughout the autumn months, the Task Force also continued its effort to connect people to worship. After the pandemic began last spring, WGPC quickly purchased equipment to record worship and make it available online. That effort, however, brought to light that some people in the congregation did not have access to or did not know how to use the internet to connect with the church.

Georgia Urban said she realized there was a problem earlier this year when her Disciples Bible Study went to Zoom. She began calling those who didn’t have internet.

“I was keeping them up to date and they were very appreciative,” she said.

Judy Weng was taking some members sermons, Georgia said.

“With the task force, we came together and went through the church directory,” Georgia said. “We made a list of people who were in long term care and who were independent at home. We
asked them if they would like to have the sermon. Some had internet and didn’t know how to use it. Some had email addresses. In the process, we found people who had passed away. We found a lot of useful information,” she said.

The task force decided to hand deliver packets weekly to people without internet and the effort is now underway. The packets include a copy of the sermon, a copy of the bulletin, prayer requests, a monthly newsletter and, every quarter, a daily devotional.

Georgia said based on her earlier experience she believes the effort will be well received.

“People were so appreciative, I don’t think there is anything this church could do that would be better. They are being remembered and thought of,” she said.

Finally, the last piece (so far) for the Gathering Task Force was to initiate correspondence projects to support young families, Marilyn said.

“We sent out cards to 75 parents to support them with at-home schooling and all they are going through, and we have a birthday card ministry for children aged 3 to 18,” she said.

Marilyn said members of the Gathering Task Force should be commended.

“It’s been a great group of people,” she said. “I think everybody in the group volunteered to be on it. Some people were doing some of this already.”

She said now that the weather has grown colder, the group will have more challenges, however, and connecting with people who remain isolated at home will be important whether the church is open or not.

“If anyone has ideas or knows of anybody who doesn’t have the internet or has a limited ability to use it, please get in touch with us,” Marilyn said. “It really has been a joy to work on this. People who have participated in the things we’ve done appreciated it. As we move forward we plan to create new opportunities and we hope more people will participate.”

If you have an idea on how to create connections for the congregation, or would like to help with the committee’s efforts, Marilyn can be reached at 314-369-6614.
Together Again

On October 25, Webster Groves Presbyterian Church opened its doors for members to worship for the first time since March 15, when services were cancelled because of the pandemic.

The seating was limited and spacious. Those who attended were asked to register in advance. Masks were required, and there was a protocol for entering and exiting the building.

There were just 34 who attended that first Sunday including staff and the musicians, but when members were seated and the music began, there was an air of reverence, and a sense of peace thick with satisfaction.

“It was amazing. I loved it,” Carol Barnard said.

“It was really nice. She had tears,” said her daughter Dayan about Carol.

“It was fantastic,” Carol Ault said.

“It was fantastic, awesome, and wonderful to be back,” Brian Tobin said.

The call to worship echoed their sentiments.

“I was glad when they said to me: Let us go to the house of the Lord!” read Liturgist Brian.

“How lovely is your dwelling place, O God of hosts,” the people responded.

Associate Pastor Hannah Zyla gave the sermon. She said speaking to members directly was a good feeling.

“It was WONDERFUL to preach with people in the room,” she said. “While I can always feel the spirits of those worshipping with us from home, it was a gift to have people physically present, too. Preaching is a conversation, and it was so good to be able to see and hear my conversation partners—most especially little Clark Furtick, our newest Christian!”

Making a way

The opening of the doors for the first service, however, took some time and effort from those who made up the Reopening Task Force.

The first order was to scour for resources to find out how they could address safety issues, Deb Grossman said.

“We found expert sources and determined what the city and county required and the CDC recommended. We had to decide what would be the best and safest procedures for our community. We knew everyone wanted to be together, but it took a lot of time to find the best way forward,” she said.

When the number of people getting COVID decreased mid-summer, the group set the wheels in motion to open the church on July 19, however, it was not to be.

“July failed. The numbers went through the roof,” Deb said.

Over time, the group had to adjust its planned procedures before it began to train the ushers.

“At first we were going to take everybody’s temperature, but we found it wasn’t necessary,” Deb said.

Now that the church is open, however, the work is not ended. The committee will meet each Sunday evening to look at the numbers and decide whether the church will be open for in-person worship the following Sunday.

“We will be looking at the St. Louis County positivity rate,” said Bob Weng, a member of the task force. “I download the numbers every day. We will look to see if it’s heading up, staying stable or heading down."

If the committee decides to close the church on any given Sunday, it will continue to meet each week to monitor the numbers and reopen when it determines members can attend in relative safety with protocols in place, Bob said.

“Nothing is permanent,” he said. “I expect it to be like this for at least the next three or four months.”

If they plan to open the church, the sign up will be available on Tuesday
each week on the Online Worship page at WGPC.org.

“The most important thing is that everybody recognizes that church is church whether people decide to worship at home or in person at the church. It’s okay,” Deb said.

She said age and underlying conditions should be considered.

“Every family, every individual has to make their own choices, and it’s okay,” Deb said.

Hannah laid it out in the sermon, talking about the priesthood of all believers and reminding them that the church is the church wherever they are.

“What is the church if not the people gathered? Well, Church, it’s you because this has always been your story,” she said. “You are the church in the world – your lives, your loving kindness, you doing justice. Far flung upon a world desperate for God’s good news. There is nothing we are doing here that you can’t do on your own.”

As members left the building after the service, however, they were hopeful about a new beginning.

“I thought it was fine,” said Dave Fleisher. "I’d like to see more people but we’re just getting started."

Katie and Ryan Furtick said Clark was kind of talkative, but they enjoyed the service.

"It felt good," Katie said.

"It was great to be back," said Ryan.

Opposite page: Janice & Steve Seele give a minute for mission for the Stewardship Pledge Drive.
From top: Katie, Clark & Ryan Furtick; John & Kathryn Duckworth, Bryce Rawers and Pastor Hannah; Worship in the Sanctuary; Dayan & Carol Barnard
A Look Back: The Chapel Reclaimed

As members of WGPC look ahead to the new year, there are some things that brighten the visage. One is a gift that will provide a new look and more usable space in the Chapel in the future.

The project may be new for this generation but fits well in the history of Webster Groves Presbyterian Church. We’ve done it before. In 1938, member, Woodson Kidder Woods, Sr. presented the church with a newly renovated chapel in memory of his wife Elizabeth.

There are parts of the Chapel, namely the present front wall and tower, that date back to 1891 when the building was erected to replace WGPC’s original church. The first church built in 1867, which faced N. Gore Ave. burned to the ground in 1890, according to the history told in the 100th Anniversary booklet of 1966.

Our current “church” space was built in 1924 and completed the following year. The Chapel portion of the building then was used for Sunday School until 1937, when member Woodson made a proposal that the Chapel be renovated and return to its use as a sanctuary for smaller more intimate worship services. He provided a gift to cover the cost and asked that it be dedicated to the memory of his late wife, Elizabeth “Bessie” Holloway Woods.

He also challenged the church to erect a new building that would be used for a Sunday School, and the church accepted that challenge and erected a new Sunday School building adjacent to the Chapel. The building was named the Rev. David M. Skilling Building of Christian Education in honor of the recently retired pastor who served the congregation for 35 years.

When the work was completed on the Chapel in 1938, Woodson presented the newly completed worship space to the church on October 2, 1938 with a memorial to his wife.

“Thirty-five years ago, yesterday, a lovely girl entered my life and became my bride. For 25 years, no wife was ever more considerate, more thoughtful or more helpful to her husband and children. She was such an inspiration to me that shortly after her death, nearly 10 years ago, I determined that I would some day erect a memorial to her memory. Hers was a happy disposition, and one of her greatest joys in life was to brighten the lives of those with whom she came in contact. It was only natural that I should decide that the memorial should be something worked around the church she loved and in which she worshipped.”

A full weekend was dedicated to the opening of the new Chapel with speeches, services and music. Family, friends and business associates of the Woods family from all across the country were invited, according to church records.

Unfortunately, 20 years later, another fire on Jan. 1, 1958, left the chapel and other rooms in the building a total loss. As the building burned, however, the portrait of Elizabeth Woods fell into the cellar unharmed by the blaze or the water from fire department hoses. Once again, however, the church moved forward to restore the building.
Woodson and Elizabeth Woods

Born in 1871, in Frankfort, Kentucky, Woodson Kidder Woods was the son of a riverboat captain, George Marshall Woods, who owned a vessel that traversed the lower Mississippi in trade. His mother’s name was Louisa (Woodson) Woods and the couple had nine children.

George died young, however at the age of 50 in 1884. Woodson came to St. Louis in 1897 along with his mother and a brother.

He married Elizabeth “Bessie” Holloway of Wichita, Kansas on Oct. 1, 1903 at Central Presbyterian Church in Kansas City, and they had three sons—Woodson Kidder Woods Jr., James Holloway Woods and David Mead Woods who died in infancy.

Woodson was one of the partners that helped establish Ralston Purina in St. Louis, where he worked as its bookkeeper. Eventually, he became the executive vice president of the company and ran Ralston Purina in 1918 while founder William H. Danforth served in WWI, according to an article in the Webster-Kirkwood Times.

Woodson and Elizabeth came to Webster Groves shortly after their marriage. They built a home at 430 W. Swon in 1909. It was a two and a half story house with four bedrooms and one bath and housed servants in separate quarters, according to the Times article.

On May 31, 1922, Woodson was elected as an elder at Webster Groves Presbyterian Church. He also served as president of the Board of Trustees for a time, according to the minutes of the Congregational Meeting July 11, 1937. His wife was an accomplished musician, a pianist for Bible School and other organizations in the church. She held a special interest in the education of the children of the church according to comments from members in the minutes.

Bessie, however, died young. On July 22, 1929, she had a stroke and died at the age of 49, and from that moment on, Woodson was determined to make her a memorial and he accomplished that goal renovating the chapel space in her honor.

Some years later in 1945, granddaughter Elizabeth “Beth” Holloway Woods Bradbury, of Creve Coeur, also became a memorial to her grandmother. She was named after Elizabeth at her grandfather’s request.

“My mother told him yes, if she could call me Beth,” she said. “I had three older brothers, and he was so thrilled that I was a girl, they sent a doctor to his house to give him a sedative,” Beth said.

Beth, 75, remembers attending church at Webster Pres. when she was small. She remembers his later house on Brentmoor Park in Clayton and sitting on her grandfather’s lap.

“He had a mustache and he was very regal looking,” she said. “We called him Fa, sometimes Fa Fa, but mostly Fa. He used to have Sunday dinners at his house and would send a chauffer to pick people up and I used to sit on the jump seat,” Beth said.

Her grandmother and namesake died long before she was born. Her father told her about Bessie.

“She was frail and sickly, he told me. She must have had a bad heart for a while, and of course, she was very sweet.”

Fortunately Woodson did not see his beloved chapel burn. He died on Feb. 10, 1950. Both he and Bessie are buried in Oak Hill Cemetery.

Beth remembers attending the funeral, she said. Although she followed her mother’s faith into the Episcopal Church, she’d like to attend a service here someday when COVID is behind us.

“I still have a Presbyterian hymnal,” she said. “I also have an Anglican Hymnal. I’m very ecumenical.”

The beautiful window that serves as the backdrop for our traditional worship service also was donated by Woodson in 1949.
Improvement projects for our church space continue. Several upgrades and new technology projects are in various stages from planning to completion including -- quicker connections for our internet and phone service, air cleaning equipment, plans for a new secure Hale entrance and paint.

**Internet Service**

AT&T just completed the turn up for the church’s connection speed for faster internet, said Business Administrator Jan Scheurer.

“Our internet speed was slow, with frequent messages that our connection was unstable,” she said. “These problems have been ongoing since I started at WGPC. AT&T said they didn’t have a solution and so we did the best we could with temporary solutions.”

Eventually persistence triumphs! The church accepted a proposal for an upgrade to AT&T’s dedicated internet and voice bundle. The service took the church from a 10 MB ps x 10 concurrent calls connection to a 300 X 75 MB fiber internet service.

A contract was signed August 19. Since then there were workmen in the building almost weekly, with the final upgrades completed on Oct. 30. Since then, Zoom meetings, where in the past various people were thrown offline, are, so far, connecting smoothly and staying connected.

In addition, ten analog phone lines are now digital. For the improvement, the church was responsible for a “turn up” fee which pays for the subcontractor to install the new service. The estimate was $630, but a final bill was not received before The Connector went to press. Otherwise the new service is “cost neutral,” Jan said.

Because of firewalls at the Early Childhood Center and the Sanctuary, however, the wireless service in those areas remains poor. Still to come is a hardwire connection to improve the recording of online worship services through Boxcast.

**Ionization Air Cleaning Equipment**

New air cleaning equipment was scheduled to be installed the first part of November as we go to press.

The Global Plasma Solutions equipment from TMI a member of the Daikin Group is designed to reduce particles and control smoke, neutralize odors, kill pathogens like bacteria, viruses and mold in the air and save energy by reducing outdoor air intake, according to company literature.

The church is working with WGPC member Jeff Escott to select and purchase the equipment and arrange the installation.

Each unit is attached to an HVAC unit. Coverage will include the ECC, Chapel, Fellowship Hall, the Sanctuary, as well as offices and corridors on the two floors of the church building.

“This should give us a healthier, safer environment, and increase the comfort level of everyone” Jan said.

**Security Renovation**

The church is working with member and architect Jordan Gatewood, of Mackey Mitchell architectural firm, who is drawing plans for a security renovation of the Hale entrance. Both Jordan and the firm are doing the work pro bono.

Currently, there is a camera and monitors at four work stations. Once the new entrance is finished, monitors of the doorways of the church and ECC will have the option of opening the door from their station or with an app on their phone.

The church again will be partnering with Benson Electric and Tech Electronics for the project and will be looking for a general contractor who will oversee the work.

**Painting**

In addition, custodians have painted the choir room and nursery area as well as the space vacated by Partners for Just Trade for occupation by Patterson Performing Arts. Areas damaged by water in the past have again been repainted. The project was completed once, but water continued to leak and marred the new paint. Additional sealing was done to protect the walls and they are now (fingers crossed!) watertight and freshly painted.
ECC Opens

WGPC’s Early Childhood Center opened Nov. 2, and the sun was shining that first week as parents dropped off and picked up their children.

This year the ECC got underway late because of the pandemic. Generally, the pre-school opens when the Webster Groves School District opens in late August or early September, but this year in-person learning in the district just got underway in late October, said ECC Administrator Amanda Kingsbury.

In addition to waiting for the school district to open for in-person learning, the ECC also was working on safety protocols, she said.

One change is that parents are no longer allowed in the building. Children are dropped off and picked up at the sidewalk near the parking lot where they are escorted indoors by teachers. Children and teachers also must wear masks and hands are washed many times throughout the day, Amanda said.

The ECC has 22 students enrolled, about the same as last year, with a waiting list, she said.

“We may take a couple of more students in January,” Amanda said.

Classes include a 2 & 3s class, a 3 & 4s class and Jr. Kindergarten.

“We are also offering Kids Day Out (KDO) on Wednesdays for families who are already enrolled in the school,” Amanda said.

In the meantime, everyone is enjoying the reunion of students and teachers at WGPC’s ECC, she said.

“We are thrilled—the kids, the parents and the teachers. There have been very few tears. We are all glad to be back in the routine and hear those sweet voices in the hallway,” Amanda said.

Money Matters

Making adjustments as we learn to live with the pandemic can sometimes bring changes that are beneficial and simplify our lives. Even small things like setting up regular contributions online can make life just a little bit easier now when we are hemmed in at home and in the future. There are no checks to write, envelopes or stamps, and your record of contribution is tallied for you. Most importantly, each week, each month, however often you give, is given without a thought.

To set up your regular contribution online, follow these steps.

Log on to WGPC.org. Under the get involved tag click WGPCConnect.

Press the blue button to log in. Add your email address or username and password and “sign in.”

(Your email address and password must be the ones we have in our database.)

On the menu tab under “Giving,” click online and choose your amount and the type of gift you are giving – 2021 pledge, per capita or for a special donation.

Then choose how often you want to give -- once time for a special gift, or each week, once a month, every quarter etc. for your regular giving.

Add your card information, billing address and email, then push the give button.

That’s it. You made the decision and made it happen. Giving should be smooth sailing from then on.
Mission continued from pg. 3

In addition, other church commissions also had projects going that weekend. Volunteers for the Faith Formation Commission were delivering monthly activity boxes to children. A blood drive, sponsored by the Deacons was held in Fellowship Hall on Saturday. The Advocacy Team had notary services available on the parking lot on Sunday and were distributing Vote signs. And members of the Agape Youth Group made kits to give to people who are homeless that they might meet on the street.

Patty said it was good to have a variety of projects

“I thought it was wonderful that there were so many options and ways to get involved,” she said.

Patty said the timeframe was flexible as well, and the furniture was put together Monday evening. The projects also felt safe.

“There were lots of ways to get involved for people with different comfort levels with COVID,” she said.

Beth was pleased with how the weekend turned out.

“It’s something I look forward to every year, and I was glad we could do it in a slightly modified way,” she said. “I think about two or three weeks beforehand, before the sign-ups, I was worried.”

After she saw how people responded, however, she was confident it was going to work.

“I was just thrilled how it turned out,” she said. “I think those who came out were pleased to participate and I was so happy to see so many people face to face.”

Nobody knows what next year holds, but Beth said she has faith in WGPC members.

“Hopefully, we will be able to do more face to face, but at least we know we can make it work in different circumstances,” she said.
Lift Your Prayers to God

“Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.”
Romans 12:12

Births

Clark Ryan Furtick, son of Ryan and Katie Furtick, was born September 15, 2020.

Riley Judith Weng, granddaughter of Bob and Judy Weng, was born on October 21, 2020 to Steve and Courtney Weng. And here is a smile for you – Judy said Riley was born on her cousin Anne Mabie’s birthday. “Anne decided Riley was the best birthday present,” she said. “I hope she still feels that way 10 years down the road when she is likely to be babysitting!”

Deaths

The following members and former members have died since the last Connector was printed. Please keep their families in your prayers.

We recently discovered that member Virginia Coleman had passed away December 11, 2017.

James “Jim” Arden Wright passed from this life on August 22, 2020.

Harlan Tappmeyer passed from this life on October 9, 2020.

Mary Gloeckner passed from this life on October 28, 2020.

Baptisms

Emerson “Emma” Stewart, daughter of Kyle and Jessica Stewart, was baptized Sept. 27.

New members are joining

New members are coming. Despite the closing of the church for more than seven months, several visitors that committed to joining last spring still plan to join the church this fall.

A meet and greet was held on Nov. 1 for some potential new members. When they are ready to make their commitment, plans will be made to introduce them to the congregation.

We look forward to new faces and new friendships with new members.

Email Tracey Rapisardo (tar@wgpc.org) with announcements to be included in the WGPC Connector.

From top left: Doug Stanley relaxes after donating blood; Mary Ann Wallace drop of cards; Julie & Charlie Ringkamp work on the ECC playground; Pete Kazlauskas lays mulch at Urban Sprouts; Andrew & Adrieanne Lamb pick up furniture to assemble; Lynne Rapp drops off donations; Ed & Josh Zumwinkle put together furniture for Home Sweet Home; Deb Grossman prepares to drop off Building Faith Children’s Ministries bags
Calendar

Music in a Great Place: Singer-Songwriter Sherdonna Denholm
November 29, 2020
9:30 a.m. live-streamed worship service or on demand
Sherdonna is an American singer-songwriter and hymn writer who integrates thought-provoking lyrics with a rich, soulful, folk sound. Her writing is honest and without pretense, weaving together beautiful melodies and textures. Her voice is pure and soothing, and her songs speak to the heart of the human experience.

Children’s Advent Pageant
December 13, 2020
9:30 a.m. online worship service or on demand
The pageant will look a little different this year. We’ll be recording our parts at home ahead of time and then broadcasting the pageant for worship. Think of it like our own pageant movie!

Lessons and Carols: "Magnificat" - Taylor Scott Davis
December 20, 2020
9:30 a.m. live-streamed worship service or on demand
The service will feature the Chancel Choir ensemble, Organist Ted Cronbaugh, Harpist Amy Camie and Percussionist David Michelson. The Magnificat of Taylor Scott Davis is his interpretation of the rich and historic “Song of Mary.” As he approaches the text, Mr. Davis divides the song into five movements beautifully cycling through all of Mary's emotions - joy, honor, bewilderment, agony, uncertainty, fear, and jubilation - as the story elicits.

A Quiet Christmas
December 24, 2020 (Christmas Eve)
This unique worship experience will be offered online only with the broadcast beginning at 5 p.m. and on demand after its conclusion. Take some time to contemplate on the true meaning of Christmas during the holidays.