Dear Friends in Christ,

This past year was unique. We spent most of it apart. We worshipped from our homes through tv and computer screens. Committee meetings occurred virtually. Fellowship was limited to small groups outside. Easter and Christmas found our sanctuary pews empty. All were necessary precautions while enduring COVID-19, the worst pandemic since 1918.

Yet, we worshipped. We conducted our business at committee meetings. We fellowshipped in small groups by phone and by Zoom. We supported our mission partners and we spread the good news of the Gospel.

By its absence, we have learned how much more we enjoy fellowship that is person to person. We have a greater appreciation for seeing one another face to face – without a mask! We know more fully the value of being an incarnational disciples. We hunger for these things.

This was a year we did not imagine and there were times when we all wondered if it would ever end. As we gather for the annual meeting the pandemic rages on but a vaccine is being distributed and these hard days will soon yield to joyful ones. We have endured through the strength of the Holy Spirit and by the love of Jesus Christ.

When we emerge from this experience in the coming months, we will find our church at a crossroads. It will be time to adapt again to a changed and changing world. Online worship, a smaller membership, and the ability to broadcast our worship services far and wide will require some letting go.

For those of you who like to cook, you know one of the best kitchen items to have is a sharp knife. A sharp knife is made by honing it on a whetstone. By doing so, some of the metal on the knife is shaved away. But that honing process leaves you with a better, sharper, more useful knife.

This will be true for Webster Groves Presbyterian Church. The pandemic forced us to rethink how to do many things. Adding to this, our budget deficit requires us to reconfigure our staff and our ministry. So, as any church that has lasted for over 150 years knows, when times change the church must change too.

Therefore, we will be about honing in the months ahead and some things will need to be shaved away in order for this to happen. Do not fear. This honing process will prepare our church to be better focused and sharper for our future ministries.

I am looking forward to doing this work along with all of you as we listen for the Holy Spirit to lead us to the new thing that breaks forth. And I am reaaally looking forward to worshipping in person with you again!

Peace be with you!

Pastor Ed
What a year. I hardly know where to begin.

Three weeks after I returned from parental leave, ready to rejoin you in the pews and hallways of our church, ready to share my new family member with you and all of you with her, the novel coronavirus changed all our plans.

I have grieved the isolation so many of you have suffered, I have grieved all that your children have lost, I have grieved all the celebrations and services we have missed. I have grieved that my daughter’s first year of life has not been spent among you, immersed in the rhythms and patterns of a beloved and loving church family.

And yet.

In this year I have seen over and over again the strength of this community. I have seen the care and tenderness offered to our youngest and our oldest. I have seen the grace extended across difference and in the midst of difficulty. I have seen creativity, newness, energy, and imagination. Our Gathering Task Force has mobilized to connect those without internet to the life of our congregation. Our Advocacy and Environmental Stewardship teams have continued to educate, inform, and call us to action. Our Building Faith Fairies have organized, packed, and delivered monthly bags of Bible stories, activities, and supplies to our families. Thursday morning Bible study has met faithfully over Zoom almost every week, gathering for prayer, fellowship, and the world’s longest running study of the book of Acts.

You all have been willing to try new things, to throw out things that don’t work, to gather in new and creative and previously unthinkable ways. Every day you have shown that the Church is alive and well; you have shown that God is indeed doing a new thing in Christ among us; you have shown that nothing, not even COVID-19, can separate us from the love of God!

The Church – Alive and Well

“"I have seen care and tenderness..."

“I have seen grace...

“I have seen creativity, newness, energy and imagination.”

Associate Pastor
Hannah Zyla

We don’t know what this new year holds, but we can hold onto the assurance of God’s presence among us in this community of believers. Saints, it is an honor and privilege beyond words to minister with you.

peace,
Pastor Hannah
WEBSTER GROVES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OUR MISSION:
We seek to live Christ’s love, welcome all people and joyfully serve God.

AGENDA

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation

Sunday, January 31, 2021

Rev. Ed Zumwinkel III, Moderator

Announcement of a Quorum

Opening Prayer

I Approval of the Minutes from January 26, 2020
   Harriet Hall

II Clerk’s Report
   Membership Report
   Harriet Hall

III Reports of Church Life
   Personnel Commission
   Worship Arts Commission
   Faith Formation Commission
   Mission Outreach Commission
   Connections Commission
   Stewardship Commission
   Pastor Ed

VIII Report of the Nominating Committee
   Lynne Binder
   - Election of Michael Patrick to fill unexpired one-year term

IV Approval of the Minister’s Terms of Call for 2021
   Carrie Rao

V Presentation of the Church Budget for 2021
   Carol Ault

VI Adjournment to the Meeting of the Association
   Pastor Ed
WEBSTER GROVES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Congregation
January 26, 2020

A. OPENING

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation of the Webster Groves Presbyterian Church was held on Sunday, January 26, 2020 in the Sanctuary immediately following the 10:30 am Service of Worship in which incoming church officers were ordained and installed. The Clerk of Session declared a quorum. Rev. Ed Zumwinkel, III called the meeting to order at 11:35 a.m. and opened the meeting with prayer.

B. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion to approve the Minutes of the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Congregation as written was made, seconded and approved.

C. CLERK’S REPORT

Ed introduced Clerk of Session Harriet Hall who referred the congregation to the 2019 Annual Report. She highlighted the ways in which WGPC members participate at the presbytery on committees and teams and reported that we sent commissioners to every presbytery gathering in 2019. She invited interested persons to speak with her or Ed about ways to serve the presbytery. Harriet to the 2019 Membership Report in the Annual Report and briefly explained the process by which the membership was adjusted. Questions were invited; none received.

D. ADOPTION OF REVISED BYLAWS AND ARTICLES OF THE ASSOCIATION

Ed reminded attendees that the proposed revisions had been posted on the website (wgpc.org) for more than a month and that the Clerk of Session had held a Q & A session earlier this month. He stated that these revisions serve to update as there had been no changes since 2003. A motion to adopt the new Bylaws and Articles of the Association as presented was moved and seconded. Opened for discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

E. ELECTION OF TRUSTEES FOR CLASS OF 2021

Brandon Thurman, Chair of the 2020 Nominating Committee presented Jamie Scott and Steve Seele to fill unexpired terms (Class of 2021) on the Board of Trustees. The floor was opened for nominations. None received. Motion to approve their nominations was made and seconded. Jamie and Steve were elected by unanimous voice vote.

F. REPORTS OF CHURCH LIFE

Personnel – Carrie Rao referred to the written report. She affirmed the work of the commission as meaningful and important service to the church. She encouraged members to personally thank our staff members.

Worship Arts – Shawn Portell referred to the written report. He acknowledged the work of this commission in planning and executing four special worship services during the year from the ground up. He encouraged the congregation to volunteer for this commission. Shawn shared his delight with the Children’s Choir which has 16-24 children (including pre-K) participating on Sunday nights. He especially enjoys the fact that some of these children are the children of former Youth Choir members at WGPC.
Faith Formation – Pete Putnam reaffirmed that the commission is not called “Christian Education” as referenced on the agenda. The commission re-branded in 2018 to reflect that Faith Formation is a life-long challenge. He acknowledged Katie Petru and Amy Morff for their leadership of the commission and thanked all the teachers, and other volunteers who make these programs work. He recognized Summer Kohring who served as Interim Youth and Family Director while Brian Kuhn was on sabbatical. Pete referred to the Discipleship Milestones which the commission and session had adopted and which are posted on the website. He encouraged members to review them for personal spiritual reflection and shared that they are being used in planning programs. He clarified from the written report that no decisions have been made about the children and adult libraries, but that the commission is looking at ideas for how to help those books be better used.

Mission Outreach – Deb Grossman referred to the written report and expressed gratitude for the support of the congregation. She acknowledged the tireless work and dedication of Beth Kazlauskas, Mission Coordinator. The commission worked hard this year to determine how the Meyer funds designated for Mission would be used and ultimately focused on Hunger and Housing, Education and Empowerment, and Strong Communities. Deb highlighted the many ways people have been involved in hands-on mission including the October Mission Weekend in which over 110 people participated. The commission also includes the Advocacy and Environmental Stewardship teams both of which have been involved in significant events and efforts during the year.

Evangelism – No report from the Commission. Ed recognized Tracey Rapisardo, Connections Coordinator and Jan Scheurer, Business Administrator for their work on the new format Annual Report and also our “WGPC Connection” magazine. He also acknowledged the good work of Cherstin Byers, Assistant for Youth and Family Ministries for her efforts on the Friday Flash and website.

Stewardship – Ed reported for the Commission. The stewardship campaign did not yield the results we had hoped and the commission has spent time analyzing some possible causes. The budget the session approved is a “challenge budget”, reflecting about $53,000 in planned expenses over income. We have met and exceeded all of the challenge budgets in past years and Ed is confident we will again.

Planned Giving and Endowment – A written report was included in the Annual Report. Ed encouraged each member to think about their own legacy as a Christian and how they might include the church in estate plans.

Approval of Minister’s Terms of Call for 2020
Ed invited Carol Ault to moderate this portion of the meeting and he left the sanctuary. Carrie Rao presented the 2020 Pastor’s Terms of Call for Ed which had been made available in the meeting. She pointed out that Ed’s 2020 Terms of Call do not include any changes in his income and benefits from the previous year, per his request in recognition of the budget challenge. The Terms do include an additional week of vacation, bringing his to 5 weeks/year in addition to 2 weeks of study leave. A Motion to approve the 2020 Terms of Call for Ed was made and seconded. Discussion was opened and hopes expressed that Ed’s salary could be “revisited” again during the year if our budget looks good. Motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.
WEBSTER GROVES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Congregation
January 26, 2020

Carrie presented the Terms of Call for Rev. Hannah M. Zyla and made the motion to accept the Terms of Call as described. The motion was seconded and discussion opened. No further discussion. **The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.** Ed returned to the meeting and was greeted with applause. He resumed the role of Moderator and expressed his appreciation for the privilege of serving with us at WGPC and for the hard work of all of the staff.

**Presentation of the Church Budget for 2020**
Carol Ault, Chair of the Budget Committee reported that the 2020 budget which was approved by Session on January 21, 2020 reflects expenditures of $1,265,501 and a challenge of approximately $53,000. The description of the allocations is included in the Annual Report. Questions were invited; none received.

**Adjournment to the Meeting of the Association**
A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved. Ed closed the meeting with prayer at approximately 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

____________________________________  __________________________________
Harriet Hall                              Rev. Ed Zumwinkel, III
Clerk of Session                         Moderator
Certainly 2020 has been a year like no other in the life of our congregation. The session made up of elected ruling elders and moderated by Rev. Ed Zumwinkel, III, met regularly to fulfill its responsibilities to the congregation and to our Lord Jesus Christ with dedication, love, and extra measures of creativity and flexibility. After a "normal" start to the year in which the 2020 budget was adopted, revised by-laws of the congregation were presented for approval to the congregation, and discussions continued from the previous year, the work of the session changed significantly in March due to the pandemic. Session held its first Zoom meeting in March (luckily those revised by-laws had accommodated video conferencing!) and has continued to use this platform for monthly meetings.

The decisions regarding how we would worship and gather given the serious nature of the Covid-19 virus fell to the members of the session. Ultimately, a Re-Opening Task Force was named to research and make recommendations about in-person worship. This group has served prayerfully and diligently. Other programs and activities were approved by session and implemented through the work of various commissions and committees during the year.

A Gathering Task Force was created and has implemented creative ways for members to remain connected. The Advocacy Team provided education and support for important issues including Medicaid expansion, voter accessibility, and racial equity. This team and the session worked together with our pastors to listen and respond to individuals with different opinions about how WGPC should be involved in racial equity actions. Of course, the Mission, Personnel, Faith Formation, Worship Arts, and Stewardship commissions of the session continued their good work with energy, imagination, and love – and technology!

Pastor Ed has shepherded the session through this difficult year with wisdom and grace that can only be demonstrated by one so fully committed to the Living Christ and Christ’s church. Pastor Hannah’s creativity and dependability have enriched and comforted us. As we anticipate 2021, meetings and worship will continue to be virtual, at least for a while. The pandemic will continue to challenge us as a congregation, as will the deep divisions in our country. With God’s help will we continue to respond creatively and faithfully to the need for change. The 22 ruling elders who willingly serve as leaders for WGPC will need your support and prayers as they seek to guide the ministry of Jesus Christ in this place.

Respectfully submitted,

Harriet Hall, Clerk of Session
Annual Report of the Personnel Commission 2020

2020 was indeed a very challenging year for everyone! I am proud to report that the staff at WGPC has handled the unique challenges of this past year with strength and grace.

Clearly, the main focus this year has been working out our response to the COVID 19 pandemic. We elected to give our staff flexible options, and many of our employees have adopted a hybrid model. They work from home at times, and work in their offices at church as needed.

Fortunately, our office set-up lends itself to social distancing, as none of our administrative staff share an office space! Everyone has complied with our facial covering requirement, and all have carefully respected social distance among their coworkers.

Our brave and dedicated custodial staff have continued to work hard in our building and have kept it clean and sanitized all year!

We did have one case of COVID among the staff, and they have recovered from the illness and have returned to work safely.

We have experienced a few changes on our staff this year. Brian Kuhn, our longtime and much-loved Director of Youth and Family Ministries, retired from youth ministry and is now pursuing other career passions in counseling and program development. Robin Cannon, another long-time member of our staff as ECC Director, also retired and is enjoying more time with her family. We also hired Rev. Patricia Cleeland for one year as Interim Youth Director. She is working hard to keep our youth engaged and grounded during these chaotic times. Finally, our wonderful organist Ted Cronbaugh also retired and returned to his family home in Iowa. We will miss his gifts!

The Personnel Commission engaged in a vigorous review of our staffing model in 2020. The staff responded to a new review questionnaire largely focusing on the scope of their work, their overall workload, some details of working remotely, and ideas for increasing efficiency. We have a very intelligent, thoughtful, hard-working crew who gave us much to consider in their responses!

We also formulated a plan for changing the way our clergy divide responsibilities, and we continue to work on ways to bring a diversity of theological skills and perspectives into our flock while respecting the limitations of our budget.

When you see members of our staff around the building, including Ed, Hannah, Valerie, Jan, Beth, Shawn, Joyce, Cherstin, Tracey, Pat, Pete, Ken, and Pierre, please take a moment to thank them for their dedication and hard work on behalf of our congregation. Thank you!

Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

28 Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

29 Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

John 6:27-29
The year 2020 was a year where we all had to think about how to do ministry in a different way. While some of my colleagues sat back feeling like their hands were tied by the pandemic, I searched for ways that we could safely continue on making music at the church. Some things came to a halt for a while - others were recreated on a smaller and different scale.

To begin with the youngest, our Children’s Choir was reaching new heights again with about 25 children participating prior to the pandemic. Come March, the entire program shut down for an entire year, however, they still needed to make music in some way. Thanks to an organization that we are associated with – Choristers Guild – we were able to send monthly music packets to each child. Choristers Guild was quick to develop an “at home” version of the “Growing in Grace” curriculum that we have been using for many years. In the packet was a lesson plan, copies of all the music, a “Kids Page” activity that coordinated with the lesson, as well as online recordings of the songs. In addition, there was also a rhythm or music movement activity that each child could access from our Children’s Ministry website. We are not sure how many families used these materials, however we felt as if we were still connecting in some way.

Youth Handbells came to a halt after our dear Carol Fleisher passed away. She was “the face of” our Youth Handbells for many decades and honestly was a successful over-achiever in all that she did with the group. There was always amazing work from such a dedicated volunteer and good friend to all. She will always be in our thoughts. Children’s Bells also came to a halt after weekly Sunday children’s gatherings ended because of the pandemic.

The largest impact of the year was trying to muster through the many challenges of live-streaming worship services so that all can attend church from home. This is an on-going project as we learn more every day about what works and what doesn’t work in this virtual world. I am not a technology wiz, so for me it was frustrating and I still am always unsatisfied with the final production – however, we keep trying to improve. For music, it meant that everything now has to be amplified, which is easier said than done. Thanks to gifts from various sources we were able to purchase audio and video equipment that allows us to produce a live-streamed service in the best way we know how. Even after the pandemic, live-streaming will continue to be a part of our worship services. Over time, we will improve, so thank you for being understanding.

An integral part of our worship are our music ensembles, most notably the Chancel Choir and the Informal Worship Band. With only one service, the goal was to try to keep as many elements intact and still keep everyone safe. A rotating schedule of choir, band, music guests, and handbells was developed to keep all involved as much as possible.

Chancel Choir was divided into four different small groups or “singing pods” with about 12-13 people singing about twice a month. Rehearsals and Sunday mornings had restrictions in place that included social distancing and a unique “singers mask” was purchased for all of our
singers. The mask has three layers: a tightly woven cotton fabric on the exterior, a removable hepa filter placed in an internal pocket and a tightly woven bamboo layer on the inside. The mask also is built on a plastic frame that comes out away from the face so that one can breathe without inhaling fabric. Rehearsals were shortened to 45-50 minutes and focused only on the immediate Sunday. Music and hymns, often with a recording were sent out a week in advance for singers to learn before rehearsal to maximize time. Many members of the choir gathered to rehearse a large choral work, a new setting of the “Magnificat” that was presented as part of our Lessons and Carols service on Dec. 20. Some of these rehearsals were held on “off weeks” which made this project doable because we were able to focus on the piece separately from the rest of our Sunday responsibilities. I thought the project was a tremendous success. I can’t thank our professional quartet enough for stepping up to the plate to help in whatever way was needed.

**The Informal Worship Band** has been brought into the main Sanctuary where the live-stream equipment is located. They have the same restrictions as the choir. In the rotation they also provide music for worship about every 2-3 weeks. These talented musicians offer more diversity to our worship services. I never know what to expect; however, each time they play I am amazed at what they dream up.

**Ely Ringers** continues; however, they are now playing in the balcony and are invisible to the live-stream in order to provide more room for them to social distance. We always need new ringers. We meet at 10:30 each Monday. If you want to learn to ring, now is the time to learn.

As far as **Music in a Great Place** is concerned, I am so glad that we had guest musicians scheduled through the course of 2020. This was a perfect addition to our rotation and helped keep our people safer because they did not have to be at the church on a weekly basis. On the scheduled Sunday, the guest musicians were the only musicians in place. Of concern as we move forward though, is an additional fee by St. Louis Musicians Union members for live streaming. This might impact who we can bring in. Time will tell; however, we might have to think about the number and type of events we have in the future.

I can honestly say that we have not missed a beat with the many music activities that we have – but we carry on in a much different way. We have come a long way from the beginning of the pandemic. I recall the initial article I wrote about the dangers of singing. Although we still follow most of the regulations set out in the original document, I am glad that with safety measures in place, that article became null and void in some ways and was a premature statement made before we had any hard facts about the spread of Covid 19. I can also say as of this writing, we are one of the few churches that still maintain a music schedule. I keep in touch with many church musicians across town and beyond. Most are live-streaming services but utilizing only a soloist and accompanist. We have been blessed that the plan created here has worked, however, we also realize that at any moment we might have to change. We have learned a lot from the season of Covid-tide. We have also realized that in the end that everything might not be as we left it before the pandemic. Please pray for us as we work those things out.

This is my 25th year with you. This year is not exactly what I anticipated, however, I am grateful for the freedom to express a wide variety of worship and music experiences that has been given to me at WGPC. Thank you for being flexible and open to new ideas. I am blessed and thankful for each of you.
The Faith Formation Commission of Webster Groves Presbyterian Church continues to guide faith development activities for people of all ages in our church and our community.

The year started normally with our usual selection of classes and activities for kids, youth and adults. But when the pandemic hit in March, we struggled like others to determine what Faith Formation would look like in a socially distant world.

At first, there were some Zoom youth meetings and study classes, but these were less than fulfilling. Many of our usual events - Confirmation, Agape Mission Trip, Vacation Bible School - could not happen in a safe manner. And in the midst of this difficult time, we bid adieu to Brian Kuhn, our Youth Director for the last 20 years, with a drive-by send off in the parking lot in August.

As the pandemic wore on, we developed the following concepts to guide us:

Guiding Faith Formation Principles during Ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic:

We prioritize safety for our participants and families, our teachers, volunteers, and our staff.

Change will be celebratory - We will try to have less cancellation and hope that when our programs must change, it is because the situation is improving.

Equip parents and grandparents to fold Faith Formation into family life. This approach applies to youth and adults too - that Faith Formation is an ongoing experience, not just confined to Sundays at church.

We will use new, creative methods for teaching. We recognize that only providing our usual content in an online format may not be the best strategy since children, youth and adults already are spending lots of time looking at screens for school and work from home.

So by the Fall, our Faith Formation activities had adapted as they needed to, giving us the opportunity to try some new things.

Children/Families - Currently, since children can’t come to church - church comes to them in the form of a Story Bag delivered monthly by Pastor Hannah and her team of volunteers. The bag is full of Bible stories, games and activities for families to enjoy together with kids of all ages. The Story Bag gives families a welcome, self-paced Faith Break from the structure and fatigue of online school and work. In addition, Kid Spaces offers families with kids some self-guided activities in a few rooms at church for a change of scenery. With a reservation, a family can enjoy the Holy Moley Room (videos and coloring), the Art Studio (a collaborative art project about Hope), or the Activity Room (toys and room to get the wiggles out) for an hour and half.

Youth - In September, Rev. Pat Cleeland (https://wgpc.org/about/staff/the-rev-pat-cleeland/) joined us as the Interim Director of Youth Ministry. Pat jumped right in, leading both Celtics and Agape groups with masked, socially distant meetings outdoors on the parking lot at the church. This has helped Pat connect with the youth and the youth with each other in a safe manner. As the weather grew colder and cases surged, youth activities have returned to Zoom for now until the weather warms.

Adults - WGPC continues to offer a variety of opportunities for adults of all ages to grow in their faith.

The Disciple Bible Study on Thursdays mornings continues. Plus, there are new offerings including: Gospel Medicine, a reflective book study on Sunday afternoons, a Comparative Religion webinar on Monday evenings, and the Lectionary Series led by Pastors Ed and Hannah via Zoom on Tuesday evenings. You can learn about all of these opportunities in the latest Friday Flash or at wgpc.org.

Plus, be on the lookout for a new outdoor Faith Formation activity for adults and families coming soon!

Faith Formation Chair
Pete Putnam
Thanks to all who supported our Mission Outreach ministries with their time and financial contributions in 2020. Now, more than ever, our focus needs to be on reaching out to others and supporting our community. A few items that we would particularly like to celebrate include:

The creativity and support of our commission and congregation when the COVID pandemic hit. Although we miss engaging in hands-on projects, we are grateful for the creativity and support of all who shared ideas for ways we could still serve and joined us in our projects. We immediately allocated funds from our food pantry fund to support the increased needs at Isaiah 58 and Webster Rock Hill Ministries food pantries. We allocated funds from the Mission Endowment Fund to provide crucial support to Beyond Housing as they expanded their services. We provided additional funding to two of our Meyer Grant partners (Urban Sprouts and St. Louis Internship Program) so they could continue to provide programs to their students. We held a drive-thru donation drive to collect canned goods as well as items for Home Sweet Home and recycling. A group of very committed members sewed almost 2,500 masks to donate to several of our partner agencies and the Webster Groves School District.

We are in the process of assessing our year one Meyer Grants and approving requests for year two funding with great appreciation for the amazing work these four organization do. Finally, the Giving Tree was well supported and we were able to provide over $9,000 in gifts and checks to ten partner agencies.

Our hands-on Mission Weekend in October. Despite the pandemic we went forward with Mission Weekend, and it was a great success. We had 137 members participate in 11 projects over the weekend! We spread mulch on the ECC playground, gave blood, built IKEA furniture for Home Sweet Home, pulled weeds and raked at Urban Sprouts Child Development Center, donated canned goods for Isaiah 58 Ministries’ food pantry, wrote cards to members and friends, delivered “VOTE” signs, notarized ballots, delivered Sunday School kits, sewed masks for students in the Webster Groves School District, and youth made kits to share with those who are homeless around St. Louis. It was wonderful to see so many members, and we are grateful to all who shared their time and talents!

The continued work of the Environmental Stewardship Committee and the Advocacy Team. Both teams continued to meet throughout the year via Zoom, and they did not let the pandemic diminish what they could accomplish.
Mission Outreach cont.

The Environmental Stewardship Committee kicked off the year by organizing a sharing event with 30 attendees from St. Louis area churches. Their work continued with a very successful guest speaker Zoom from the Missouri Prairie Foundation that included our congregation and other friends. The focus for this program year is on pollinators, and information about how members can support this crucial component of our earth can be found regularly in the Friday Flash. The Advocacy Team began the year by organizing a bus load of members and friends to travel to Jefferson City for the Moms Demand Action Advocacy Day to support sensible legislation to prevent gun violence. They also hosted guest speakers to focus both on voting issues, and to learn about work being done by Beyond Housing to create greater equity in our city. Voting registration, rights, and ballot notarization efforts were a big focus during this election year. The committee also did great work around racial equity, and how our congregation can better support all members of our community. Thank you to all who serve on both of the committees.

The 2020 Mission Outreach Commission: Deb Grossman, Jean Magre, Diane McCullough, Betsy Wacker, Julie Wood (moderator), Sara Yates and Beth Kazlauskas, Mission Outreach Coordinator. The Environmental Stewardship Committee is currently chaired by Dennis Wacker, and the Advocacy Team is chaired by Janice Seele and Julie Burchett.

14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

James 2:14-17

The Community Connections Committee

The CCC has not been meeting regularly and has no report at this time.
The Stewardship Campaign 2020 began on 10/4/2020 with an invitation to be “Faithful, Hopeful, and Loving, as we seek to live Christ’s love, welcome all people and joyfully serve God.”

As always, WGPC responded to this invitation with prayer, service and generosity as powerful agents of God’s goodness in our world.

During our campaign, almost $900,000 was pledged by 175 members of this congregation, with an average pledge of $5,031. This was an increase over the average pledge in 2019 which was $4,817. Eighteen pledges were received from new pledgers; 62 pledges made were increases over the pledge made from 2019; and, an additional 62 pledges were made at the same level as the prior year.

Combined, these pledges met our goal at 84% of the Budget Committee’s original goal of $1,067,868. As a result, adjustments were made to the preliminary budget presented. Following these adjustments, a 2021 budget accepted by Session, with supplements from endowment funds and the abundance of generosity from 2020 gifts, presents a challenge budget of $25,748.

Of course, it is not too late to make a pledge, to increase an existing pledge, or to make a gift to WGPC!

We are grateful for God’s gifts as we “live Christ’s love, welcome all people and joyfully serve God”.

Submitted by the Stewardship Committee

Brad Goss, Chair
Carol Ault
Debbie Miali
Jim Roberts
Bob Weng
Gifts

Despite the struggle of the pandemic in 2020, Christ’s disciples at WGPC continue to financially support the mission of our church.

We received total revenues of $1,146,602 in 2020. These revenues consisted of $984,200 in pledged gifts (including $172,001 of prepaid pledges) for 2020, plus an additional $38,361 from 2019 pledges. Combined, all pledge payments totaled 86% of the revenues. See the attached chart titled: 2020 General Fund Income. Other income of note includes Memorials and Bequests, Benevolent Gifts and Investment revenues.

The 2020 year ended with a General Fund budget surplus of $55,843. Net expenditures totaled $1,090,760 and were supplemented by $149,928 of endowment funds, $57,781 of which was from our general permanent endowment fund, and $92,146 of which came from specific endowment funds, including mission, building and music. See the chart entitled 2020 Actual Expenses to see how the budget supports the business of the church.

The 2021 budget with total expenditures of $1,196,591 was approved by Session on Jan. 19, 2021. The chart to the right, 2021 Projected Expenses, Illustrates the 2021 Budget with the areas it supports. This budget will be supplemented by General Endowment funds (spending ratio) in the amount of $79,843 as well as programmatic endowment funds (donor restricted) as applicable.

“And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.” 2 Corinthians 9
The Planned Giving and Endowment Board

The Endowment Foundation was established in 1990 as a vehicle for the investment and management of WGPC Endowment Foundation Funds. The PGEF Board has fiduciary responsibility to oversee and manage the investments as required by the Foundation Constitution.

There are 9 permanently restricted Foundation Funds with 12-31-20 balances as follows:

**General Fund** – for Church general operative expenses- $769,151

**Maintenance Fund** – for Church property repair and maintenance expenses- $647,190

**Mission Fund** – for mission projects and program expenses- $700,258

**New Program Development Fund** – to support new programs- $50,054

**Music Fund** – for music program expenses- $111,847

**Agape in Mission Fund** – for mission work by Agape youth- $60,386.

**Adults in Mission Fund** – for mission work by adult church members- $120,762.

**Gibbs Renewal Fund** – for conferences or retreats to enhance spiritual growth- $60,386.

The above Funds totaling $2,522,554 are invested at the direction of the Foundation Board. It is currently invested with the Presbyterian Church (USA) Foundation through its New Covenant Trust Company (NC) in the NC Balanced Growth Fund (comprised of 60% NC Growth Fund, 40% NC Income Fund).

**Mission Coordinator Fund** – to help pay Mission Coordinator salary- $585,053

The donor of the Mission Coordinator Fund required investment in the Vanguard Wellington Admiral Fund with earnings designated to support the Mission Coordinator’s salary.

All designated gifts or bequests to the above funds must remain in trust. Distributions from these funds are quarterly with the spending ratio (ratio) determined annually by the Foundation Board. The ratio is determined by a review of average annual investment results and church needs. The 2021 ratio is 4% of the 9-30-20 balance in each fund. The 2020 ratio was 4% of the 9-30-19 balance of $2,177,165 with total distributions of $87,087. During 2020 the 8 funds gained $249,763 in market value in addition to the $87,087 in distributions.

The PGEF Board appoints two committees: Planned Giving and Long Range Financial Planning. Planned Giving is entrusted with informing church members about planned giving options and conducts helpful educational classes and meetings. The Long Range Planning Committee’s objective is to quantify projected long term Church financial requirements, particularly those that need to be provided by Foundation distributions. The pandemic, paired with church closing and social distancing, greatly hampered the work of both committees in 2020. Work to develop a comprehensive Investment Policy Statement (IPS) continued throughout the year, and the IPS is expected to be adopted by the fall of 2021.

In 2015, a process to handle large undesignated gifts received by the Church was approved by the Session. In 2019, a Discernment Committee went through that process to determine how Dorothy Meyer’s $2.4 million bequest could be used by the church.

In 2019, WGPC received a generous gift of $500,000 from the estate of Mary Lee Morris. A Discernment Committee was selected and was able to use assessment material from the Meyer Discernment including a comprehensive review of the church, its programs and the notes on the effort to effectively listen for ways forward for the church and its community. Ultimately, the Discernment Committee through careful review decided to place a $300,000 allotment into the General Endowment. Based on the good returns from Meyer money invested utilizing Vanguard Balanced Index Fund Admiral shares (VBIAX), the Board voted to use the same fund for the Morris money.

A spending ratio of 3% was applied to the 9/30/2019 VBIAX balance of $1,040,933 resulting in $31,230 being available for 2020. Adding the contribution from Fund 1 of $26,555 to $31,230, yields a total supplement to the 2020 Budget of $57,783. For 2021, a spending ratio of 4% for funds held in New Covenant as of 9/30/2020 resulted in $28,560 being available for the General Budget. For 2021, a 3.5% spending ratio was applied to Vanguard Balanced Index Fund balance from 9/30/2020. Although the Morris money was not officially in the General Fund until 10/16/2020, the Board voted to include the $300,000 in the ratio calculation, especially since these monies had been in church accounts since early 2020. Accordingly In 2021, the General Budget will receive $51,283 from the VBIAX holdings and $28,560 from Fund 1 (above) resulting in a total contribution to the General Budget of $79,843.

See PGEF Report on pg. 17 on the side bar.
It has been a challenging yet rewarding year for the Board of Trustees. Our Church is financially secure, the building and grounds have never looked better and our staff and clergy have been dedicated yet flexible in carrying out their duties and the mission of our congregation while reflecting the spirit of Christ. I thank all our members and staff for their faithfulness and look forward to the changes and challenges we face going into 2021. Below, I have listed some of the highlights of the various Boards and Committees who serve with and report to the Trustees.

**FINANCE**: Under the leadership of J.R. Walters, the Finance Committee, building off the successful Audit in 2019 accomplished the following as presented to and passed by the Board:

- Established the Paid Leave Account which will be used to fund expenses incurred by WGPC when staff or clergy are on sabbatical, maternity/paternity leave or FMLA not otherwise covered by short-term disability.
- Implemented an annual finance review by Anders & Associates in compliance with the Book of Order.
- Continued to work on making the financial reports provided to the Trustees, Session and the congregation easier to read and understand.

**PROPERTY**: Under the leadership of Todd Meyer, and with the invaluable time and efforts from Jan Scheurer, the Property Committee has been busy keeping our wonderful church a great place for worship and prayer that is inviting to our members and the larger community in order to serve Christ:

- Monitoring and updating the HVAC system including consideration of an energy audit.
- Monitoring and implementing security system updates including the fire alarm.
- Performing repairs on the Scout Garage.
- Monitoring and ensuring compliance by Regions Bank with the new construction.
- Inspecting the nearly 130 year old church bell.
- Approving the remodel of the Hale Entrance to include new doors for outside access, new doors for inside access into the ECC, security access hardware and cameras to tie into the church’s security system. Jordan Gatewood’s firm, Mackey Mitchell Architects, provided 40 hours of pro-bono architectural services. The construction contract with Hof Construction has been signed and permits have been issued. The total cost is approximately $40,000 with half of those funds coming from Dorothy Meyer funding and the rest from other memorial funds.
- Overseeing the repair, repaving and restriping of the primary parking lot which was initiated by a $10,000 gift.

**Receiving a bid for a new elevator** which has been deferred for now.

**Implementing necessary technology and phone system upgrades by AT&T.**

**Contracting for the installation of an ionization air cleaning system.**

**Memorial Garden**: The Committee presented and the Board passed a motion by which an individual or family who purchases a niche then later decides to not use it can redirect those funds as a memorial garden donation.

**Early Childhood Center**: As reported by Jaimie Scott- The ECC has had a good year given the COVID-19 complications. Robin Cannon resigned as Director and the ECC Board has decided to operate without a Director for now. Enrollment has held steady and plans for growth are in the works. The ECC is financially stable and used COVID-19 grants and funding from St. Louis County to cover applicable expenses. A tuition increase was approved for the next school year.

I want to express my gratitude on behalf of the Board of Trustees to the outgoing members who are Jon Schickedanz, Dick Peterson, J.R. Walters, Karen Imse and Jean Magre. Their contributions in serving on their respective committees and the Board have been greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Tobin,
President Board of Trustees
Deacons are the “servants” or “caregivers” of a congregation and the deacons at WGPC serve the church in three different ministries — Hospitality, Keeping in Touch, and Life Transitions and Milestones.

The Hospitality Ministry organizes many large receptions, like the Church Picnic, the Deacons’ Tea, the Christmas Luncheon, and the New Members Barbecue. They also are responsible for the communion servers, greeters and ushers.

The Keeping in Touch Ministry cares for members in need with cards and meals, transportation, and visits to members in nursing homes as well as the homebound.

The Life Transitions and Milestones Ministry is responsible for marking some of the happy times in life with cards for members with birthdays, graduations, and new babies. They also help celebrate longtime church members each fall. The Memorial Garden and Memorial Guild subcommittees also are a part of the Life Transitions and Milestones committee. The deacons want to recognize Karen Schneider for her long-term service to the Memorial Garden.

Early in 2020 many deacons worked on coordinating reminders to greeters, ushers, communion servers, flower deliverers, and members bringing Sunday snacks.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the deacons to shift gears and serve the church in new ways this year. Beginning in March each deacon was assigned a Shepherd Group - church members to contact every few weeks to see how they were doing and if they needed anything. The deacons also helped to deliver church bulletins, sermons, or recordings of church services to elderly church members. Deacon Nancy Hansbrough also served on the Gathering Task Force seeking ways to safely connect church members with each other during the pandemic. The deacons, under the leadership of Beth Downey, also organized a blood drive at church in October.

David Kimball was moderator of the deacons in 2020. David thanks the other deacons for their service to the church during this challenging year. Laura Putnam will be moderator and Judy Weng will be vice moderator in 2021.

Deacons are elected, but volunteers can serve on almost any deacons committee. If you would like to serve in Hospitality contact Donna Bellows at 314-481-6754 or dbellows@swbell.net. To serve in Keeping in Touch, contact Mike Kearney at 314-488-8404 or newstlou@swbell.net. If you would like to serve in Life Transitions and Milestones contact Laura Putnam at 314-963-1806 or hemmputnam@sbcglobal.net.
In 2008, the Memorial Garden was established to honor and remember our loved ones and church family members. The garden was thoughtfully created as a peaceful and beautiful resting place that captures the rich history and architecture of our church and the beauty of nature.

Since 2008, 33 niches have been purchased along with 104 pavers and 7 plots for in-ground interments. In 2020, there was one purchase of a niche and five inurnments of members. There is currently $33,708 in the Memorial Garden account.

The Memorial Garden Committee consists of three Deacons—one from each class, a member of Trustees assigned to the committee, the gardeners who tend the aesthetics of the Garden and members at large.

Beginning in January, the committee will be chaired by Saneta Thurman. Members who would like to serve on the committee are encouraged to call Saneta and are welcome to join.

The day to day operations of the Garden are ably handled by the custodial staff. A dedicated group of gardeners care for the planters and plantings in the garden. The Business Administrator Jan Schuerer meets with families as they make arrangements for purchase of niches and pavers. The pastors work with the families to create a meaningful service to remember their loved ones. This team effort has continued despite the difficulties of the past year.

Thanks to everyone involved with this important ministry of the Church.

Karen Schneider,
Committee Chair

Environmental Stewardship

Despite COVID, the Environmental Stewardship Committee continued to raise awareness, educate, and advocate on issues that impact the world God created for us.

Before the onset of the pandemic, we hosted a dinner with churches in our area where we could share ideas about earth care. We had 27 in attendance representing 10 churches. It was a very successful evening with many new ideas about how we could care for God’s world.

This past fall, we hosted Ms. Carol Davit, Executive Director Missouri Prairie Foundation who spoke about the use of native Missouri plants. The Zoom presentation had about 35 attendees, some of whom were people from outside our church.

We presented our WGPC Steward of God’s Earth Award to Steve O’Loughlin for his environmental work at the St. Louis Aquarium.

We planted, mulched and watered the bed of Missouri native plants at the rear of our main parking lot.

We continue to recycle many items and just added candles to our list last fall.

We are beginning an Environmental Book Club this month with our first book being The Story of More by Hope Jahren.

We meet the 4th Sunday of each month from 8:30–9:15 a.m. Currently we meet on Zoom. New members are always welcome. If interested, please contact Dennis Wacker at wackerd@att.net.
The Advocacy Team has had a productive and challenging year. As we support the priorities of the WGPC Mission Commission, Advocacy is called to follow the example of Jesus Christ by acting for social change to promote justice for all God’s people. We act according to Biblical imperatives as we understand them and address issues supported by the Presbyterian Church USA.

Poverty with an emphasis on food and housing insecurity, gun violence prevention, and education reform were the priorities of the team at the start of the year. Addressing systemic racism and voter education and rights were added as priorities with the realization that systemic racism is the root of many of the social ills in these areas and that changing legislation via the vote of all citizens is a means of change.

Our year started in January with an education hour discussing legislative priorities with Jo Doll. This was followed up with a weekend of events in February to address gun violence prevention. Our special guest was Reverend Deanna Hollas, Presbyterian Peace Fellowship’s Coordinator of Gun Violence Prevention. She encouraged our congregation to get more involved in our community to end gun violence and restore safety to citizens. This was followed up by a number of Advocacy Team members taking a bus to Jefferson City to advocate our legislators for gun violence prevention with the Moms Demand Action group. The Advocacy team also endorsed and supported the issues of Medicaid Expansion and Clean Missouri.

The team worked on the issue of voter suppression throughout the year. We offered rides to the polls and took actions to help people cast their vote due to the new COVID-19 voting rules. A number of our members became notaries and we offered ‘Drive-up’ Ballot Notarization for the August and November elections. Our meeting in June played out as a viewing of the documentary “Rigged” which showed the many ways voters are kept from exercising their right to vote. The viewing was followed by small group discussions via Zoom and in small socially distanced groups.

After George Floyd was killed, our church was invited to participate in weekly vigils for racial justice along with other churches up and down Lockwood Avenue. A few members of the congregation expressed concern that we were aligning our church with the Black Lives Matter organization. The Advocacy Team met with those who were concerned and held listening groups with these members, showing our commitment to hearing all voices. These listening groups led to a greater understanding of the concerns some have about
the organization vs. the movement. Discussions and votes were held within the Advocacy Team and Session which ultimately led to the original signs being replaced with a banner stating, “We Stand for Racial Justice - Black Lives Matter” along with a Presbyterian Church logo.

The summer and fall were filled with Zoom Education Hours and work on the issues of Medicaid Expansion and Clean Missouri through Zoom meetings. Notaries were available at Drive - Up Ballot Notarization events. These events will continue for all elections moving forward, as needed, depending on any changes to the voting laws.

We began a Social Justice Film Club in the fall. A documentary or film was chosen, those wanting to participate watched the film on their own, and then joined a Zoom meeting for a guided discussion. The purpose of the Film Club is to learn about the history of social justice topics that we may not have learned in school, and to see how we might relate our reflections on the film to real world change and action. If possible, we try to tie our Zoom education hour to the film club topic.

Films viewed:
- Rigged: A Voter Suppression Handbook
- Slavery By Another Name
- Freedom Riders
- Selma

Education Hour Topics:
- Legislative Priorities - Jo Doll
- Voting Laws During the Pandemic - Laura Arnold and David Kimball
- Medicaid Expansion “Yes on 2” - Mikel Whittier, Healthcare for Missouri
- Amendment 3 - David Kimball
- The Work of Beyond Housing - Chris Krehmeyer
- Issues Facing the Missouri Legislature and Their Impact on WGPC Mission - Missouri Senator Scott Sifton

In 2021, in addition to continuing our work on the issues listed above, the Advocacy Team is looking forward to reaching out to other churches, locally and throughout the region, in order to promote understanding and unity in many different ways.

Special thanks to the original coordinators of the Advocacy Team, Sue Scott and Emmy McClelland, for starting this group and providing their guidance, expertise, and wisdom as we move forward to provide social justice for all God’s people.
This past year has brought about a significant amount of challenges for the ECC, but with that, it’s also revealed that through perseverance, hard work and creative thinking, we can navigate our preschool through an unprecedented pandemic.

In January, we hosted a very successful open house to jumpstart interest and get families registered early on. During the open house we were able to showcase many of the physical changes that we’d made: painting, new signage, and an introduction to the very eager and energized Parent’s Commission members! In the winter we were also able to have a few successful fundraisers at various restaurants around town.

This summer, Robin Cannon retired from her role as Director, a position she held for more than 20 years. Then former Commission member, Amanda Kingsbury, stepped up as administrator for the center which has been a huge blessing and a large credit to the success of this year. Amanda, along with our chairperson, Julia Ringkamp have been the guiding lights of the Commission and helped navigate everyone through many difficult changes.

From March to August, the commission met monthly to strategize about school reopening, much of which centered around monitoring the community spread of COVID-19 and preparing new protocols for what is now our new normal. We ultimately opened for in-person learning on November 3, 2020 and while there has been a lot of pivoting, both for our teachers and students, we feel like the year has been a success thus far. We hired several new teachers and aides to various classrooms, we’ve added yoga to the curriculum and will soon add back in our Lunch Bunch program. Our enrollment numbers, while still low, remained steady from the previous year and are now starting to grow.

We have lots of things planned for this year and feel so much gratitude that we are all able to be a part of a pre-school program loved and cherished by so many.

Submitted by Emily Odum, Commission member