

Hello!

Please take the time to read the following committee reports. Our committees work hard throughout the year to do their best by Sixth – and the chairs to write these reports.



Christian Education

In 2021 we again navigated our way through the continued pandemic with a mostly all virtual educational ministry. We thank everyone in our church family for their patience, support, and creativity as we try to move through this uncommon time together. We have done our best to provide ministry and educational opportunities despite not being able to gather in person.

We began the year with Sunday school and youth group meeting weekly on Zoom. I continued to record Time for Children videos for each week's online worship service. Each week I provided families with the Sunday school lesson and resources that they could use at home. Bill Guy's Sunday school class also resumed online.

Between January and April, the following Adult Education opportunities were held virtually:

- **January:** "Pandemic Update" with Drs. Frank and Maria Guyette; "When in Romans" a study of the book of Romans with Pastor Vincent Kolb (continued in January)
- **February:** "2020 Election: Reflections of a Researcher" with Mary Radcliffe; "Common Sense Gun Legislation: Something We Can Do" with Josh Fleitman
- **March:** "The Virus has been my teacher: Reflections on a year of Lent with Pastor Vincent Kolb
- **April:** "Mental Health and the Criminal Justice System" with Gail Kubrin, MD.; "Perigee": a presentation of and discussion about Diane Kerr's new book of poems.

During lent we provided church families with at home Lenten and Easter activities. I also created a video series for church members to experience Stations of the Cross and

created a virtual Holy Week escape-room type activity for children and youth.

Over the last year I worked, with the Christian Education Committee and the church's reopening task force to create safety protocols and plans for returning to in-person program. In September, when 11 a.m. worship resumed we began offering childcare in our church nursery and Extended Session for children preschool through 3rd grade. I also resumed presenting the Time for Children "live" during the service. Our weekly Sunday school classes and youth group remained virtual as did our weekly Bible Study and Bill Guy's Sunday school class. All other adult education offerings were postponed. Our annual Sunday school Christmas pageant was created and presented as a video that is available for viewing on the church's website. Christmas and Advent resources were sent home to all families.

Christian Education hosted three outdoor events to give our children, youth and families a chance to gather in Fellowship. In July we held a "Play in the Park" event and August we hosted "Birthday Party for Everyone" at Prospect Shelter in Schenley Park. In December we held "Carols on the Steps" for member to gather outside the church and sing together.

On a personal note, this year I attend virtual conferences for the Association of Presbyterian Christian Educators and participated in a monthly study cohort for educators organized by Union Theological Seminary.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Newman, Director of Christian Education

Church & Community

Introduction and Welcome

Sixth Presbyterian Church has a unique and complex identity as a faith community. What distinguishes Sixth Church from other congregations? Some facets of our identity that may come to your mind are that we are a More Light Church, or our emphasis on Christian education for all ages, or our devotion to music.

As members of the Church & Community Committee (C&C), we believe that another aspect of our church life that is unique - our mission giving. We've prepared this report to tell you about our work, invite you to become involved this vital aspect of our faith community, and to encourage you to engage with one or more of the many groups we support.

Each year, Sixth Church devotes 10% of its total budget to mission and benevolence. Of this amount, Sixth provides 40% to the mission programs of our denomination. The remaining 60% goes to what we call "locally directed missions" - money that our congregation decides how to spend. As a percentage of our budget, the amount we give to mission activities may not be extraordinary. But the groups we support, and the care and thought we give to choosing them, are unique to Sixth. **Simply put, we believe that who we give to, and how we go about our giving, are important aspects of who we are as a congregation.**

Here's what we think our mission giving tells us about who are as a congregation:

- Our giving shows that we are compassionate. We seek to alleviate suffering and help meet basic human needs in our community and throughout the world.
- Just as important, who we give to shows that we seek fairness, justice, inclusion, and positive change. We use 60% of our locally directed mission funds to support groups that promote these goals over a range of causes. Of this amount, half goes to four independent church committees which seek protection of the environment (Earth Care),

racial and economic justice (Justice Core Team), LGBTQIA rights (More Light), and common-sense gun laws (Gun Safety).

How we go about giving also reflects our values as members of Sixth Church. We are committed to a democratic and thoughtful process for choosing where our money goes. We decide on how we divide our funds within broad categories of giving such as direct assistance and advocacy for change. We then evaluate groups to fund using a combination of reports written by committee members and a range of objective criteria. We make our spending decisions at meetings which are open to all interested members of the congregation.

During 2021, we continued to actively encourage your involvement. We maintained contact with 40 Sixth Church members via email, we offered a “Minute for Mission” during the March 7 worship service, and we prepared a mid-year report on our work to the Session. Fourteen church members attended one or more of the five meetings we held between February and October. In addition, several other Church members prepared reports on organizations with which they engage.

We welcome you to join us! To receive email notices of our upcoming meetings (virtual or in-person depending on Church policies), please contact C&C Chair Larry Chan (chan.laurence.f@gmail.com), Tom Twiss (ttwiss@pitt.edu) or Peter Kaplan (pghpeter9@gmail.com.) We also encourage you to engage with the organizations that we support. At the end of this report, you will find an appendix with web addresses for these groups, brief descriptions of what they do, and the names of church members who can tell you more about them.

Review of 2021

The primary responsibility of C&C is the allocation of funds budgeted for “Locally Directed Missions.” For 2021, the C&C Committee oversaw the distribution of \$26,423 to support organizations in their advocacy and direct assistance efforts.

At our first meeting in late February, we established a work schedule for the year. We agreed to make funding decisions for our Rainy-Day Fund by late March, and to make decisions on our other resources by mid-year. To enable the committee to achieve the goal of mid-year decisions, committee members and other church members received assignments to prepare written reports on groups under consideration for funding.

At our second meeting in late March, we voted to continue using the funding framework and methodology we developed through extensive discussion in 2019:

- \$500 for the Youth Group to support group(s) of its choice, with remainder allocated as follows:
- 60% to organizations engaged in advocacy for social change, with half distributed by C&C, and half by the four independent church committees to groups they choose;
- 30% to organizations engaged in direct assistance to alleviate suffering and address human needs; and
- 10% to the Rainy-Day Fund, which we spend to address domestic and international health, natural, and humanitarian disasters.

At the March meeting we also agreed to continue our two-part evaluation of advocacy and direct assistance organizations which receive a combined 60% of our locally directed missions’ budget: 1) reports prepared by C&C members on organizations for which we are considering for donations; and 2) based on the reports, scoring of each group based on several objective criteria. We developed these criteria with the help of Rev. Dr. Hunter Farrell and Bala Khyllap of the World Mission Initiative at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

The scoring criteria are slightly different for direct assistance and advocacy groups. For groups providing direct assistance, we include participation of Sixth Church members, the group’s financial need, the percentage of people of color on the board, whether it is faith-based, and number of

people served. The scoring criteria for advocacy groups is the same, with the exception that we replace the number of people served with a measure of geographic scope. Several of the organizations we fund engage in both direct assistance and advocacy. We refer to these groups as “hybrid” organizations and we score them based on both sets of criteria.

Rainy-Day Fund

At the March meeting we also made our allocations of the Rainy-Day Fund, and the Church distributed those funds in May. The Committee had originally approved \$411 to fund coronavirus relief for Presbyteries with significant Native American populations, but we learned that this program was no longer in operation. At the suggestion of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance staff, the Committee voted to fund Jubilee USA’s efforts to advocate for increased and equitable disaster relief for Puerto Rico. This change was in keeping with our desire for disaster relief funds to address the needs of marginalized people. Here is the list of Rainy-Day recipients and the amounts we funded:

Organization	Amount
El Porvenir Coffee Cooperative	\$1,000
412 Food Rescue	\$411
Jubilee USA Network for Advocacy for Advocacy Efforts for Puerto Rico Disaster Assistance	\$411
Church World Service Coronavirus Response Fund	\$411
Sixth Church Deacons Fund Hunger and Homeless Initiatives	\$411
Total	\$2,642

C&C Committee Allocations for Direct Assistance and Advocacy

At our May meeting, the Committee elected Elder Larry Chan as our new Chair, replacing Keith Gillogly who has moved back to his hometown of Buffalo, NY. At that meeting C&C members presented the reports they had prepared on their assigned organizations. Following that meeting, outgoing Co-Chair Tom Twiss used these reports to apply our scoring criteria to all of the advocacy, direct assistance, and hybrid organizations.

At our June meeting, Tom presented the scoring results and proposed the resulting allocation of funds. After some discussion of the scoring methodology (which would continue at our October meeting), the Committee approved the proposed allocation without change, resulting in the allocations listed in the table below. The Church distributed these funds in July.

Organization	Amount	Type
Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center	\$2,309	Advocacy
Pittsburgh United	\$1,443	Advocacy
Just Harvest	\$1,443	Advocacy
Wilkinsburg Community Ministry	\$1,797	Direct Assistance
Lazarus Fund	\$1,348	Direct Assistance
MHY Family Services (FKA Mars Home for Youth)	\$1,348	Direct Assistance
Table Ministry of the Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community	\$1,123	Direct Assistance
Church World Service	\$968	Hybrid
El Porvenir Coffee Cooperative (in addition to Rainy-Day Fund contribution)	\$905	Hybrid

Casa San Jose	\$839	Hybrid
The Neighborhood Academy	\$710	Hybrid
Global Links	\$644	Hybrid
Critical Community Needs Fund of the POISE Foundation (a Black-led Pittsburgh-based charitable foundation)	\$644	Hybrid
Total	\$15,521	

Independent Committees

As mentioned earlier, the four independent church committees receive 30% of locally directed mission funds and are responsible for selecting organizations to fund which work in their respective areas of interest. During 2021 the independent committees decided to fund the following organizations:

Organization	Amount
Justice Core Team	
Alliance for Police Accountability	\$440
PA Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN)	\$1,500
Earth Care	
Protect Penn Township	\$388
Penn Environment	\$388
Group Against Smog and Pollution	\$388
Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania	\$388
Green New Deal Pittsburgh	\$388
Gun Safety	
CeaseFirePA	\$440
South Pittsburgh Peacemakers	\$1,500
More Light	
Human Rights Campaign	\$647
Persad Center	\$647
Association of Inclusive Presbyterian Churches of Pittsburgh	\$646
Grand Total	\$7,760

Youth Group

As noted earlier, C&C allocated \$500 for the Sixth Church Youth Group to make donations to one or more organizations. The Youth Group had a lengthy discussion about giving and chose to donate its entire amount to Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation. The Foundation was founded in 2017 to improve the health of the LGBTQ+ and HIV communities. It provides a variety of services and supports to our communities, as well as expert training for organizations to improve their capacity to serve LGBTQ+ clients and staff. The main reason the young people chose the Hugh Lane Foundation is that a few of them have had some involvement with the organization or know young people that have benefitted from the Foundation's programming and outreach.

CROP Walk

In 2021 Sixth Church once again participated enthusiastically in the annual CROP Hunger Walk sponsored by Church World Service. As in 2020, Pittsburgh East had a modified walk because of COVID concerns. Walk organizers made it possible for participants to plan their own private walks or to gather outdoors on the designated day to walk in small, socially distanced groups. Sue Koehler and Pam Twiss led the Sixth Church team of twenty people, including four children. Half of the group chose to join in the traditional designated walk, and half walked on their own.

The money donated to sponsor our walkers totaled \$6,951, a record amount for Sixth Church! Church World Service's global programs in agricultural and sustainable development received 75% of the proceeds. The remaining 25% went to support the food programs of Wilkinsburg Community Ministry.

Looking Forward to 2022

C&C held its final meeting of the year in October. Potential changes to the scoring system and the preparation of this report, were the main topics of the meeting. While we are generally satisfied with the organizations selected and the amounts allocated, we determined that a review of the scoring criteria would be beneficial. Following the meeting, C&C leadership formed a subcommittee to assess if modifications to the scoring criteria are appropriate. If the subcommittee recommends any changes, the full Committee will vote on them early next year.

We also discussed the form of this annual report. C&C is happy to oversee and administer Sixth Church's locally directed mission giving, but we would also like to serve as a resource for Church members who want to further engage with the organizations that C&C supports. For this purpose, the Committee decided that the report should contain a list of the organizations we've supported this year, each group's website, a brief summary of each group's mission, and the names of Sixth Church members who have served as advocates or volunteers for each organization. We've included this information as appendix to this report.

There are two ideas we did not discuss at the October meeting, but which we spoke of earlier in 2021: the creation of a C&C page on the Sixth Church website; and the revival of a speakers' series which we had planned prior to the onset of the pandemic. These will be additional topics for discussion as we resume our work in 2022.

We appreciate your taking the time to read this report and once again invite you to join us!

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Chan, Chair; Tom Twiss and Peter Kaplan, outgoing Co-Chairs

Active Members in 2021: Carol Emerson; Norma and Jack Farquhar; Joan Gaul; Peter Gilmore; Nora Johnson; Myra Kazanjian; Sue Koehler; Maggie Ritchey; Alice Scales; Diana Wood.

Additional Report Contributors: Sara Berg, Dana Canelli, Jane Fox, Sharon Manley, Kathi Robinson-Dassel and Jason Shifflet.

Appendix – Information on Groups Supported by C&C

Due to space considerations, we are not able to include the organizations which the four independent committees (Justice Core Team, Earth Care, Gun Safety and More Light) have chosen to support. Please contact the chairs of the independent committees for information on these great organizations: Justice Core Team (Peter Gilmore); Earth Care (Lynn Kawaratani and Cosy Cornelius-Bates); Gun Safety (Lori Swensson) and More Light (Kate Davoli).

Rainy-Day Fund Recipients:

- **El Porvenir Coffee Cooperative, Nicaragua** (No website) / Sara Berg

A cohesive and self-reliant community in the mountainous northwest region of Nicaragua which seeks a better life for its residents.

- **412 Food Rescue** (<https://412foodrescue.org/>) / Carol Emerson

A Pittsburgh non-profit that prevents perfectly good food from entering the waste stream by redirecting it to those who are experiencing food insecurity.

- **Jubilee USA Network for Advocacy Efforts for Puerto Rico Disaster Assistance** (<https://www.jubileeusa.org/pr>) / Peter Kaplan

Jubilee USA is a coalition of religious, development and advocacy groups that has won more than \$130 billion in debt relief for the world's poorest economies. Across the United States and around our world, Jubilee USA works on debt, tax, trade and transparency policies that help end poverty.

- **Church World Service Coronavirus Response Fund** (<https://cwsglobal.org/appeals/updated-emergency-appeal-coronavirus-response-fund/>) / Sue Koehler

The pandemic has impacted every part of CWS' work, and its programs worldwide have adapted and expanded to meet new needs while continuing to provide high-quality services to vulnerable groups. The top priority of CWS Coronavirus Response Fund is protecting staff, partners and communities while continuing to serve the most vulnerable with its programs and services.

- **Sixth Church Deacons Fund Hunger and Homeless Initiatives** (No website) / Dana Canelli

The Deacons support the neediest households in our community by assembling homeless packs to help people survive on the streets, and by making cash contributions to both the Lazarus Fund and Wilkesburg Community Ministry.

Youth Group Recipient:

- **Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation** (<https://hughlane.org/>) / Jenny Newman and Youth Group members

The Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation offers a variety of services and supports to Pittsburgh's LGBTQ+ communities, as well as expert training for organizations to improve their capacity to serve LGBTQ+ clients and staff. It strives to address bias across the many intersections of our communities to create spaces and opportunities for LGBTQ+ and HIV+ individuals to be their authentic, courageous selves.

Advocacy Recipients:

- **Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center** (<https://sabeel.org/>) / Tom Twiss

Sabeel is an ecumenical grassroots liberation theology movement among Palestinian Christians. Its mission is "to strive towards theological liberation through instilling the Christian faith in the daily lives of those who suffer under occupation, violence, injustice, and discrimination."

- **Pittsburgh United** (<https://pittsburghunited.org/>) / Peter Kaplan

"Pittsburgh United is a coalition of community, labor, faith, and environmental organizations committed to advancing the vision of a community and economy that work for all people."

- **Just Harvest** (<https://justharvest.org/>) / Nora Johnson

Just Harvest addresses "hunger in Allegheny County at its root – economic injustice – through a focus on public policy, food access, and community power."

Direct Assistance Recipients:

- **Wilksburg Community Ministry** (<http://wcm15221.org/>) / Jane Fox and Jane Opgard
“Wilksburg Community Ministry, a non-profit organization supported by area residents, congregations and community organizations, responds to persistent needs of people of all faiths, addressing the human service crises in our community.”
- **Lazarus Fund** (https://www.pghpresbytery.org/justice-ministries/lazarus_fund/) / Jason Shifflet
“The Lazarus Fund provides financial assistance to families and individuals of Allegheny County for rent, mortgage payments, security deposits, and utilities, enabling them to overcome their economic difficulties through the giving of individuals and congregations of the Pittsburgh Presbytery.”
- **MHY Family Services (FKA Mars Home for Youth)** (<https://mhyfamilyservices.org/>) / Kathi Robinson-Dassel
“MHY Family Services (MHY) offers a therapeutic campus environment, individualized education programs and community services where learning and healing occur for youth and families. MHY also provides youth and families with the opportunity to learn skills that help them manage and cope with trauma-based issues and to re-engage with home, school and community.”
- **Table Ministry of the Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community** (<https://www.hotmetalbridge.com/our-mission>) / Sharon Manley
HMBFC is a congregation planted congregation on Pittsburgh’s South Side which offers a bi-weekly meal to needy individuals and families and works with the Pittsburgh Latino Community Center and the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank to provide food boxes for others in need. HMBFC is affiliated with the Presbyterian and United Methodist denominations.

Hybrid Recipients:

- **Church World Service** (<https://cwsglobal.org/>) / Sue Koehler
Church World Service brings together 37 religious denominations to provide services and resources to support global relief and development, to address the needs of displaced people, and to respond to disasters.
- **El Porvenir Coffee Cooperative, Nicaragua (in addition to Rainy-Day Fund contribution)** (No website) / Sara Berg
Please see the El Porvenir entry under the Rainy-Day Fund.
- **Casa San Jose** (<https://casasanjose.org/>) / Peter Kaplan
Casa San Jose is an independent non-profit created to helping Latinos navigate the health system, social services, and the legal system to survive and to thrive in Pittsburgh. Its mission is to serve as a “community resource center that advocates for and empowers Latinos by promoting integration and self-sufficiency.”
- **Global Links** (<https://www.globallinks.org/about-us/mission-guiding-principles>) / Myra Kazanjian
“Global Links is a medical relief and development organization dedicated to supporting health improvement initiatives in resource-poor communities and promoting environmental stewardship in the US healthcare system.”

- **Critical Community Needs Fund of the POISE Foundation** (<https://www.poisefoundation.org/>) / Peter Kaplan

POISE is a Pittsburgh-based Foundation whose mission is to “assist the Black community in achieving self-sustaining practices, through strategic leadership, collective giving, grantmaking and advocacy.” All of its Trustees, and virtually all its senior staff, are African American. In response to COVID-19, POISE created the Critical Community Needs Fund “to provide support to small, Black Led Organizations (BLOs) responding to critical needs in the Black community resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic”.

Deacons

The Deacons continued their regular meetings via ZOOM in 2021. As the committee charged with the attention to and care of the congregation, the Deacons checked in with each other at the beginning of each meeting, to be sure to care for and support each other first. The overall responses were a reflection of the ups and downs of the past year with COVID.

PRIMARY ACTIVITIES

Lazarus Fund: The Deacons continue to manage the Lazarus Fund, including organizing the interviews, determining the appropriate responses, and sending the checks once the funds were approved and distributed to Sixth Deacon treasury by the Presbytery. Jason Shifflet was the Deacons’ Lazarus representative through June, when he cycled off of the Deacons. Jason was very involved with creating and working with a steering committee with other churches involved with Lazarus, where a number of improvements in the system were made or attempted; raising the amount of the funds available to each applicant, providing some churches with grants to distribute funds as they deemed appropriate, working to create an online application option, and looking for other ways to support those in need in the community. Pittsburgh Presbytery has decreased their support and participation, partly due to some staffing issues. Funding continues to be funneled through the Presbytery.

Since the transition to the Deacon class of 2023/24 in June, Gwen Harcar has been learning about and taking over the responsibilities of the Lazarus Fund. She is planning a ZOOM meeting of those who have expressed interest in interviewing applicants and has had the opportunity to interview and award applicants with assistance. Lori King has graciously continued to handle the Deacons’ treasury, which includes writing cover letters and sending checks to the Lazarus recipients. (Utility, landlord, etc.)

Interviewing and reviewing information with applicants has been done via phone or internet rather than in-person due to COVID, which is not ideal. It has worked for some for whom transportation is an issue.

Homeless Packs: For the past few years, the Deacons have created homeless packs, consisting of a variety of items (e.g., socks, gloves, snack bars, tuna packs, bandages etc.) to be distributed, and this past year or so Lynn Kawaratani and Eliot Kennedy have been managing the purchase and distribution of the packs. For some time, Deacons worked with PCSI, but then communication with them became less reliable. Recently, Lynn and Eliot, through the suggestion of Sharon Manley, were able to work out a more satisfying arrangement with Hot Metal Bridge Ministry. Hot Metal has been very interactive and appreciative. And, Walmart has offered \$100 toward the cost of the items purchased, as well as having lower prices overall.

Care List: The Deacons maintain a list of the church community who may need some attention or assistance, to be checked on regularly. One to three Deacons agree to be point person(s) for our friends who may need some extra support. The list is fluid, as issues are resolved and/or new issues arise, and is reviewed carefully and thoughtfully at each meeting.

Other Activities: Wilksburg Community Ministries; Judy Schryer and Leila

Richards coordinated a collection for WCM for Easter and reported that it was successful. There were several bags of groceries and cash donations collected on Leila's porch, which were then transported to Wilkinsburg.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathi Robinson-Dassel, Secretary

Fellowship

For obvious reasons, Fellowship Committee remained mostly inactive in 2021.

We did contribute to June's Worship and Picnic in Highland Park, providing beverages, bagged chips and ice cream treats. It was the first time that members and friends were able to meet and greet face-to-face, and the opportunity was relished by all who were able to come.

In December we put out a call for cookies so that we could have a Christmas Eve Cookie Event. Donated homemade cookies were festively bagged for all to take home with them at the close of the Christmas Eve Worship Service.

We hope to resume some of our "normal" annual events in 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Myers-Newbury, Chair

House

It was another relatively tame year in 2021 for the House Committee, with COVID continuing to prevent many things, but here's what did occur:

- Exterior and Grounds
 - Emmel and Koller Ornamental Iron completed repairs and painting of the outdoor railings and concrete, including the damaged railings from last year, as well as numerous other railings that rusted through at ground level
 - The Session approved prepaying David Skonieczny for snow removal
- Interior
 - In February, a downspout inside a wall in the narthex separated from the roof allowing a large amount of meltwater into the wall and narthex. Collection skirting was erected and fans set up to control the water and dry out the area.
 - Phillips Roofing was quickly contacted and the downspout was repaired. This required large portions of the wall to be removed.
 - A gutter cleaner was contacted around the same time to clean the gutters around the exterior of the narthex to avert similar damage in the future.
 - The water damage to the plaster on the wall was extensive, in addition to the large portions that were torn out to access the downspout. Robert Dell' Aquila Plastering

performed the repairs to the walls in early May.

- In March, Toth Carpeting replaced the carpet in the Groom's Room beneath the bell tower that had been damaged last year by the leaking Verizon air conditioning. This completed the remediation of that room.
- Peter Koehler completed a catwalk system in the attic that will make replacement of lightbulbs in the ceiling in the future much safer and easier
- Stanley Convergent Security Solutions installed a comprehensive fire alarm system throughout the church building. This was part of the Capital Campaign.
- New chairs were purchased for the chapel, the old ones being donated. This, too, was part of the Capital Campaign.
- Miscellany
 - A couple times over the summer, volunteers from the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance to distribute masks and cash assistance to minority locals burdened by the pandemic.
 - Sixth was a polling location for the primary elections on 18 May 2021. Interior access to voters was restricted to only necessary locations to limit any potential contamination spread.
- Verizon-Related Events
 - The contract with Unison Site Management was finalized and went into effect at the end of January. The one-time lump sum payment was made and the money put into the trust.
 - Verizon finally repaid us for the remediation efforts after the air conditioning leak last year. There were two separate payments, one for the mold remediation done last year and one for the carpet replacement done this year.
- COVID-Related Actions
 - Weekly services have been live-streamed. To improve the experience, a few upgrades were made.
 - Microphones were permanently mounted for the organ/choir on the screen behind the organist
 - Multiple microphone cables were run into and through conduit in the choir loft
 - During the annual inspection, the filters in the furnaces were replaced with high-efficiency filters
 - Sembower-Mikesell has been contacted about installation of switches to allow the furnace blowers to operate continuously. They're investigating our options for how to accomplish this.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Winner, Co-Chair

Gun Safety

Active Members: Judy Schryer, Joan Gaul, Diana Wood, Cliff Johnson, Myra Kazanjian, Maggie Ritchey, Martha Funderberg, Lori King, Norma and Jack Farquhar, Lori Swensson

Our committee continues to focus on legislative action concerning issues of gun safety. We are also working to develop connections with other individuals and organizations to grow the number of voices calling for legislative action for gun safety.

Helping us in this endeavor is the new Western Pennsylvania Manager of CeaseFirePA, Josh Fleitman. We support their three-part agenda:

- Extreme Risk Protection Orders
- Mandatory Reporting of Lost and Stolen Guns Universal Background Checks—closing all loopholes
- To this list we add our own item—Safe Storage of Weapons—following recent tragic events.

Actions: We asked Senator Toomey and also Pittsburgh Police Chief Scott Schubert to support David Chipman as Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. Unfortunately, his nomination did not succeed. The Bureau has had only an active director since 2015 and consequently lacks the strong leadership needed to lobby for support from Congress.

We investigated Gun Buy-Back programs with the Pittsburgh Police Department. At this time, because of legal complication, the department does not support them.

We learned about the problem of “ghost guns.” They have no serial numbers so ownership is not traceable. One of these was used last year for the first time in a homicide in Pittsburgh.

We sent letters to PA Presbyterian Churches inviting them to join us in the work of keeping our communities safe from gun violence. The letters were sent to churches in districts of some members of the PA Judiciary Committee. Subsequently, we made follow-up calls to the pastors of these churches again inviting them to join our efforts.

We are preparing a possible Zoom meeting of these pastors with our committee for later this month.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Swensson, Chair

More Light

COVID continued to impact Sixth's More Light traditions: Pittsburgh's summer Pride events had to be very tentatively rescheduled for the fall; the Reverend Alex McNeil was not able to travel to Pittsburgh to preach in person this spring. With optimism, the group committed \$300 to the local Association of Inclusive Presbyterian Churches to support their work in trying to develop a safe celebration of Pride in the fall. Kate Davoli will stay in touch with Alex regarding possible dates for him to preach at Sixth in 2022, though he has stepped down from his paid position with More Light Presbyterians (MLP).

Sixth's annual budget includes dues to the More Light Presbyterian (MLP) organization; while this year's dues are \$700, the group noted that dues, based on congregational size, will increase to \$1000 in 2022.

[In Our Own Write](#), a Pitt program endorsed by Sixth, completed its pilot year of online writing workshops for LGBT+ elders, who worked on personal histories/experiences in a

supportive group environment.

We marked the loss of trans lives during worship in November.

We asked that Church+Community funds designated in support of the congregation's More Light mission be distributed equally to three organizations: [Human Rights Campaign](#); [Persad Center](#); and the Association of Inclusive Presbyterian Churches of Pittsburgh. These three organizations address the spectrum of activity that live out our values as a More Light congregation: national policy issues, direct service, and a strengthened Presbyterian commitment to inclusivity.

Recognizing that the portion of Capital Campaign funds will decrease each year, the group made a note to itself that [SistersPGH](#) (the current recipient of the More Light portion of Capital Campaign funds) should be considered when determining allocation of subsequent year's Church+Community funds.

We will engage a speaker from the [Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation](#) to offer Sixth an educational session on sexual orientation, gender identify, and gender expression (SOGIE).

Respectfully submitted,

Kit Ayars, Chair

Nominating

The Nominating Committee of Sixth Presbyterian Church includes members appointed by Session and by the Board of Deacons as well as at-large members elected by the congregation. In January 2021, Sixth amended its by-laws to enable the congregation to rotate officers in the summer rather than at the end/beginning of the calendar year; Class of 2021 elders and deacons agreed to continue to serve until the June 2022 transition.

This year, Elder Keith Gillogly resigned from Session when he moved out of the region; the Nominating Committee nominated – and the congregation elected – Tom Juring to fulfill Keith's term on Session.

The 2021 committee members included Kit Ayars, Chuck Herrold, Leslie Kaplan, Kathi Robinson-Dassel, and Tom Twiss; Dana Canelli has agreed to serve as the deacon's representative in 2022 (Deacon Kathi Robinson-Dassel will be serving as Clerk of Session). The Nominating Committee of 2021-22 will work to identify a new slate of elders and deacons who will begin their service in Summer 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Kit Ayars, Chair

Personnel

The personnel committee helps to ensure policies, procedures, and processes are in place to support church staff and volunteers. This essential team also ensures that the ministry operation is compliant with state and federal labor laws.

Annual Meeting

The year 2021 began with the outlining of the Pastor's annual terms of call for a congregational vote at January's virtual annual meeting.

Reviews

- Conducted Annual Review of Pastor by Personnel Committee on behalf of Session;
- Participated in Annual Reviews of staff by Pastor;
- Gathered survey input from and for staff focused on value to the organization and, of course, the feedback was glowing.

The entire team brought tremendous value to the congregation amidst extraordinary circumstances. All members of the team are performing at a high level individually and well as a cohesive team.

Personnel Changes

- Convened a Director of Music Search Committee;
- Provided a Personnel Liaison to that Committee.

Committee Changes

- Welcomed a new Committee member this Fall;
- Said goodbye to a current Chair this December.

Budget and Benefits

- Submitted 2022 Personnel Budget recommendations for Pastor and staff salaries and benefits that included a \$500 FSA employer contribution for healthcare expenses;
- Researched, outlined, and finalized the 2022 Board of Pensions employer agreement inclusive of separate Healthcare savings account and employee savings account agreements;
- Communicated the overview of offerings for open enrollment securing paperwork as needed.
- Presented to session and a subsequent congregational meeting for approval a funding solution to remedy Pastor income that had been unreported to the Board of Pensions.

Gratitude and appreciation

The Pastor, Staff, Treasurer, the Executive Committee and Session at Sixth were excellent in giving their counsel. They were instrumental in and gracious with their time and expertise throughout. Presbytery staff and Board of Pensions representative and service staff are recognized for their assistance. In particular treasurer Erik Fogt and office administrator Amy Whipple warrant special recognition as co-laborers in the activities and perils of this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Personnel Committee (Carol Emerson, Kate Kennedy, Barbara Parees, Phyllis Rupert)

Stewardship

Committee members: Beth Hazlett (Chairperson), Carol Emerson, Patty Halverson, Peter Kaplan, and Vincent Kolb (ex officio)

Goals for the year were to be:

- Follow up Capital Campaign donors

- Develop and implement a Planned Giving Campaign
- Send out mid-year Stewardship Thank you letter
- Develop and implement the 2022 Stewardship Campaign

February

- Stewardship Committee thank you in the Sixth Sense to members and friends for their pledges to the 2021 Stewardship Campaign

April

- Stewardship Committee met virtually
- Capital Campaign: Decided to send out a mid-campaign Capital Campaign letter to all donors updating them on Projects completed so far, Mission donations that have been made so far, and projects remaining to do. Letter also to confirm donors pledge amount remaining if any
- Stewardship Campaign: Discussed timeline for the year
- Planned Giving Campaign – Discussed having one in Winter of 2022 and that Beth would reached out to a Consultant for proposal

June

- Capital Campaign letter (as described above) sent to all donors
- Mid-year Stewardship letter in July Sixth Sense

July

- Vincent sent to the committee possible themes with scripture

August

- Stewardship Committee met virtually
- Planned Giving Campaign: Reviewed Consultant’s proposal but committee decided they did not have the bandwidth for a full blown Planned Giving Campaign. May do a “light touch” campaign in 2022.
- Stewardship Campaign: Decided on Stewardship Campaign theme “On This Road Together”; put list together of possible Moment for Stewardship speakers and Brochure Testimonial writers

September

- Stewardship Campaign letter and brochure were written and finalized with an emphasis on trying to increase the number of members/friends who pledge.

October

- 2021 Stewardship Campaign began on Sunday, Oct 3 with the first of three Moments for Stewardship during Octobers’ Sunday Worship services
- Moments for Stewardship were also given October 17 and October 22, with a Stewardship sermon given on October 10
- Stewardship Campaign packets (letter, brochure, pledge card and return envelope) were sent to Sixth

November

- November 7 was Dedication Sunday – the Committee had asked that pledge cards be mailed to the Church or given in the offering plate by this Sunday.
- Stewardship Committee met in person mid-month to divvy up those members/friends we had not heard from yet.
- “Friendly Reminder” calls and emails were done by the Stewardship Committee” regarding returning 2022 Stewardship pledge cards.
- “Friendly Reminders” updates in Sixth Sense and the Sunday Worship Bulletins

December

- Stewardship Committee gave final push to those members/friends we had not heard from yet.
- “Friendly Reminders” updates in Sixth Sense and the Sunday Worship Bulletins

2022 Stewardship Campaign

Pledge Goal: \$347,609

Pledge Actual: \$347,609.24

Average Pledge: \$3,476.09 – up from last year’s \$3,387.11

Total Pledges: 100 (including 9 new) up from last year’s 99 pledges

Commentary: Given that we were half the year in online only worship, I am very pleased that we were able to increase the number of new pledges. Our new pledgers along with our steadfast members and friends helped us make 100% of our goal!! Thank you! Thank you!!

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Hazlett, Chair

Worship and Reopening Task Force

After being closed for 14 months, and using live stream to connect our Worship service with the congregation, we were finally able to open in June. It was still a limited service at that time with only a few singers and no congregational singing. Everyone wore masks to protect each other.

Finally in September, we were able to restart our full Worship service including choir and hymn singing. We continued to require masks and have been fortunate to not have any outbreaks of Covid from June through December.

Everyone in the choir and congregation were grateful when the choir could resume singing. The choir even found that we could still sing well with masks on! Gail Luley announced her retirement at the end of the year in September. We are very happy for her but also sad that she is leaving after 25 years. A search committee has been set up and are actively looking for her replacement.

It was decided that the live stream would continue and about 30-40% of the congregation are worshipping in this manner. Kirk Howe updated the equipment needed for the live stream to

make the system more automatic. Four people have now been trained to run the system on Sunday mornings.

They are Karl Greenley, Liam Greenley, Greg Winner and Noah Twiss.

Most families have not started bringing their children back yet as the younger ones could not be vaccinated until November. However Children's Church was started for children 3rd grade and under for when they did come.

Although we were not able to do all of our traditions for Advent, we were able to keep or modify some things. Under the guidance of Jenny Newman, the children again created a wonderful version of the Christmas Pageant remotely. We had a session of Christmas caroling on the front steps.

Four children were liturgists for one Sunday. Sadie DeLucia, Calvin Tantalo, Elly Bertolet, and Louis DeLucia did a marvelous job and it was wonderful to have the children participate in the service.

Also, at the conclusion of our candle light Christmas eve service, we were able to enjoy our cookie exchange by bringing in cookies ahead of time. Some wonderful people including Jan Myers-Newbury and Beatrice Tantalo then bagged the cookies that were handed out after the service!

Respectfully submitted.

Pam Howe, chair