

# 2022 Annual Reports

## Christian Education

Welcome to the list of all things Christian Education at Sixth – bullet point style!

- We returned to in-person Sunday school Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> and continued through the end of May. During this time, we also offered a weekly virtual Sunday school class each Sunday and provided Sunday school lessons online for families to use at home. Sunday school from September through December was offered in-person only and we continued to post lessons online weekly.
- Adult Education: Bill Guy's Sunday school class was held weekly online as was weekly bible study led by Pastor Kolb on Wednesdays and a variety of other Education opportunities were held virtually including:
- Climate Change and the Green New Deal - This panel presentation, sponsored by the Justice Team of Sixth Presbyterian Church, examined the issue of climate change, its implications for racial and economic justice, and how we can combat it by building a mass movement for a Green New Deal.
- Freeing Congregational Mission: A Practical Vision for Companionship, Cultural Humility, and Co-Development - A book discussion with Hunter Farrell and Bala Khylllep, hosted by the Church & Community Committee at Sixth
- November Election Day Post Mortem led by Dr. Mary Radcliffe.
- During lent we provided church families with at home Lenten and Easter activities as well as a take-home Mardi Gras mask kits for Shrove Tuesday. A video series for church members to experience Stations of the Cross was available online. We held our Sunday school Easter Egg hunt outside for families in area in front of the church.
- In-person nursery care and extended session during worship was resumed in February and was offered through the end of year. We welcomed a new staff member, Katie Smith to our church family in September.
- We hosted Fridays on the Lawn, a time for families to gather for fellowship, in June and August.
- Youth Group met weekly via zoom and resumed in-person gathering in May. The youth volunteered at Hot Metal Faith Community serving meals and several youth attending a Confirmation retreat at Camp Crestfield.
- Our Children and Youth worked together to create a mural that was displayed during the Memorial for the Lost service that accompanied our church's hosting of the t-shirt display honoring those lost to gun violence.
- In December we held "Carols on the Steps" for member to gather outside the church and sing together.
- Our children and youth joined the choir for a service of Lessons and Carols as our annual Christmas pageant.
- Your children and youth participated in worship throughout the year by serving as readers acolytes and water pourers.
- 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. In the spring I was elected as the treasurer for the Eastern Regional chapter of APCE and

participating in organizing and hosting the spring conference. In October, I began a certification course in youth ministry coaching with the National Youth Ministry Association.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Newman, Director of Christian Education

## Church & Community

### Introduction and Welcome

There are many aspects to Sixth Presbyterian Church's identity as a faith community. We are a More Light Church that emphasizes Christian education for all ages with a strong devotion to music and mission giving. The Church & Community Committee (C&C) is privileged to play a role in Sixth's mission giving, and has prepared this report to discuss our work, invite you to become involved in 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.**

We believe our mission giving reflects who we are as a congregation:

- We seek to alleviate suffering and help meet basic human needs in our community and throughout the world, focusing our giving on organizations that offer direct assistance and/or advocate for change.
- We seek fairness, justice, inclusion, and positive change with a portion of our locally directed missions allocated to our four independent church committees that 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).
- We are committed to a democratic and thoughtful process for choosing which organizations we fund; that process starts with an open solicitation, thorough write-ups of the work they do, scoring based on previously agreed upon criteria, discussions at committee meetings that are open to all that are interested, and ultimately a vote from the committee members.

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](mailto:chan.laurence.f@gmail.com)), Tom Twiss ([ttwiss@pitt.edu](mailto:ttwiss@pitt.edu)) or Peter Kaplan ([pghpeter9@gmail.com](mailto: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 2022

The primary responsibility of C&C is the administration of funds budgeted for Locally Directed Missions, and the allocation of funds to support organizations in their advocacy and direct assistance efforts.

### C&C Committee Allocations

Our funding framework for 2022 was unchanged from the previous year with the funds budgeted for Locally Directed Missions initially allocated as follows:

- \$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.

Allocations for direct assistance and advocacy groups distributed by C&C are subject to a scoring process that helps the committee ultimately decide how much funding each organization will get allocated. In 2022, the committee voted to streamline the scoring criteria after careful consideration, analyses, and discussions. Specifically, the following changes were approved by the committee:

- Removed criteria based on number of people assisted recognizing that in many instances it does not provide an “apples-to-apples” comparison for organizations providing varied services (e.g. meals provided vs. children tutored).
- Removed criteria based on geographic scope recognizing that an emphasis on organizations covering a broader geographic area penalizes organizations focused on local or regional priorities.
- Introduced a process for Committee members to reallocate funding when certain organizations approved for funding do not meet the minimum funding threshold of \$600.

Allocations for direct assistance and advocacy groups distributed by C&C are provided to organizations that either provide direct assistance or advocate for social change. Organizations that do both are categorized as “hybrid” organizations. Given the above updates to this year’s scoring criteria, both direct assistance and advocacy groups are scored using the exact same criteria; namely:

- Participation of Sixth Church members;
- Financial need;
- Percentage of people of color on the board; and
- If it is faith-based.

Below are the organizations that received C&C distributed funds for 2022. We encourage you to review the appendix to learn more about all the work these great organizations do.

#### *Allocations for Direct Assistance and Advocacy Groups*

The following organizations received funding based on our scoring criteria.

Organization	Amount	Type
Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center	\$2,007	Advocacy
Pittsburgh United	\$2,007	Advocacy
Just Harvest	\$1,204	Advocacy
Pittsburghers for Public Transit	\$1,204	Advocacy
Wilksburg Community Ministry	\$1,169	Direct Assistance
Lazarus Fund of Pittsburgh Presbytery	\$1,364	Direct Assistance
MHY Family Services (FKA Mars Home for Youth)	\$1,169	Direct Assistance
Table Ministry of the Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community	\$779	Direct Assistance
Deacons' Hunger & Homelessness Initiatives	\$1,364	Direct Assistance
Fishes & Loaves Cooperative Ministries	\$1,364	Direct Assistance
Church World Service	\$892	Hybrid
El Porvenir Coffee Cooperative	\$1,116	Hybrid
Casa San Jose	\$1,116	Hybrid
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$15,755</b>	

#### *Rainy-Day Fund*

The purpose of the Rainy Day Fund is to address domestic and international health, natural, and humanitarian disasters. Below are the organizations selected to receive Rainy Day Funds in 2022.

Organization	Amount
412 Food Rescue	\$931
Church World Service Ukraine/Moldova Assistance	\$931
United Nations Central Emergency Relief Fund	\$931
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,793</b>

#### **Independent Committees**

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. Below are the organizations the independent committees decided to fund in 2022. We encourage you to 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 (Marcus Robinson).

Organization	Amount
<b>Justice Core Team</b>	
Hill District Consensus Group	\$1,047
Regional Housing Legal Services Honoring Bob Damewood	\$1,047
<b>Earth Care</b>	
PA Cleanways of Allegheny County	\$698
Garfield Community Farm	\$698
Pittsburgh Green New Deal	\$698

Organization	Amount
<b>Gun Safety</b>	
CeaseFirePA	\$900
South Pittsburgh Peacemakers	\$500
Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund	\$294
Heeding God's Call (sponsor of Memorial to the Lost, October 2022)	\$200
Music Director Douglas Burn (music for Memorial to the Lost service)	\$200
<b>More Light</b>	
SisTers PGH	\$698
Shephard Wellness	\$698
LAMP (LGBTQIA + Affirming Ministries of Pittsburgh)	\$698

### Youth Group

C&C allocates \$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

C&C is also glad to highlight in its annual report Sixth's participation in the annual CROP Hunger Walk sponsored by Church World Service. As in past years, the full Walk is six miles, but participants are encouraged to choose a distance which is comfortable and a personal challenge. (This year we had to reroute because of the closure of the Fern Hollow Bridge!) Sue Koehler and Pam Twiss co-chaired the Sixth Church team, which included twelve people. This year's walk was dedicated to the memory of Maggie Ritchie, who had been a faithful walker for many years.

The money donated to sponsor our walkers totaled \$9,578, an extraordinary 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.

### Other Activities

In the spirit of mission giving, C&C helped facilitate the below discussions to members of Sixth Church:

- Hunter Farrell and Bala Khylllep's gave a presentation on their new book "Freeing Congregational Mission" which speaks to how organizations can more effectively use their resources in their mission activities, highlighting in particular how C&C has utilized scoring criteria in allocating its mission driven funding.
- Chenoa Stock discussed her work with Presbyterian Mission In Peru, specifically as it relates to her role as delegation and partnership coordinator for the PERUSA program of Joining Hands-Peru, a program providing opportunities for Presbyterians to participate in short-term mission service.

### Looking Forward to 2023

C&C held its final meeting of the year in September. In that meeting we discussed a subject that the committee agrees needs more attention, and this

is raising awareness of the C&C Committee and the engagement needed to ensure our allocations represent the values of the entire congregation, and highlighting the work of the organizations we fund. Ideas discussed included a poster session to be held after service, distribution of flyers, Sunday School sessions, and minute for mission presentations. For 2023, we hope to increase engagement with C&C Committee members and with Sixth Church members in general.

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

**The Church and Community Committee:**

Larry Chan, Chair

Tom Twiss and Peter Kaplan, former Chairs

**Active Members in 2022:** Carol Emerson; Peter Gilmore; Nora Johnson; Cliff Johnson; Sue Koehler; Alice Scales; Diana Wood.

**Additional Report Contributors:** Sara Berg, April Clisura, Jane Fox, Gwen Harcar, Sharon Manley, Jenny Newman and Youth Group members, and Kathi Robinson-Dassel.

**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 (Marcus Robinson).

**Rainy-Day Fund Recipients:**

<b>412 Food Rescue</b>
<a href="https://412foodrescue.org/">https://412foodrescue.org/</a>
A Pittsburgh non-profit that prevents perfectly good food from entering the waste stream by redirecting it to those who are experiencing food insecurity.
Carol Emerson

<b>United Nations Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF)</b>
<a href="https://crisisrelief.un.org/about">https://crisisrelief.un.org/about</a>
UN Humanitarian Funds include CERF, a global fund that provides immediate rapid-response aid when disasters strike, and individual Humanitarian Funds for ongoing crises in specific countries.
Peter Kaplan

<b>Church World Service Ukraine Crisis Response Fund</b>
<a href="https://cwsglobal.org/ukraine-response-fund/">https://cwsglobal.org/ukraine-response-fund/</a>
CWS established Ukraine Crisis Response Fund to address the unique needs of Ukrainians displaced by Russia’s invasion. CWS is on the ground in the neighboring country of Moldova, where nearly 100,000 Ukrainian refugees are living with host families or staying in hotels, apartments and shelters.
Sue Koehler

**Youth Group Recipient:**

<b>Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation</b>
<a href="https://hughlane.org/">https://hughlane.org/</a>
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.
Jenny Newman and Youth Group members

**Advocacy Recipients:**

<b>Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center</b>
<a href="https://sabeel.org/">https://sabeel.org/</a>
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."
Tom Twiss

<b>Pittsburgh United</b>
<a href="https://pittsburghunited.org/">https://pittsburghunited.org/</a>
"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."
Peter Kaplan

<b>Just Harvest</b>
<a href="https://justharvest.org/">https://justharvest.org/</a>
Just Harvest addresses "hunger in Allegheny County at its root - economic injustice - through a focus on public policy, food access, and community power."
Nora Johnson

<b>Pittsburghers for Public Transit</b>
<a href="https://www.pittsburghforpublictransit.org/">https://www.pittsburghforpublictransit.org/</a>
Pittsburghers for Public Transit is a grassroots union of transit riders, workers and neighbors. PPT organizes for an expanded, affordable and accessible public transit system that meets all needs, with no communities left behind.
Peter Kaplan

## Direct Assistance Recipients:

<b>Wilkinsburg Community Ministry</b>
<a href="http://wcm15221.org/">http://wcm15221.org/</a>
“Wilkinsburg 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.”
Jane Fox

<b>Lazarus Fund</b>
<a href="https://www.pghpresbytery.org/justice-ministries/lazarus_fund/">https://www.pghpresbytery.org/justice-ministries/lazarus_fund/</a>
“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.”
Gwen Harcar

<b>MHY Family Services (FKA Mars Home for Youth)</b>
<a href="https://mhyfamilyservices.org/">https://mhyfamilyservices.org/</a>
“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.”
Kathi Robinson-Dassel

<b>Table Ministry of the Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community (HMBFC)</b>
<a href="https://www.hotmetalbridge.com/our-mission">https://www.hotmetalbridge.com/our-mission</a>
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.
Sharon Manley

<b>Sixth Church Deacons Fund Hunger and Homeless Initiatives</b>
No website
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 Wilkinsburg Community Ministry.
Gwen Harcar



<b>Fishes &amp; Loaves Cooperative Ministries</b>
<a href="https://fishes-and-loaves-hazelwood.org/about-us">https://fishes-and-loaves-hazelwood.org/about-us</a>
Fishes & Loaves Cooperative Ministries is a non-profit corporation operating in Hazelwood. It offers Meals on Wheels, Congregate Lunch, Emergency Food, and a Buying Club for those in need living in Hazelwood, Glenwood, Glen Hazel, and most of Greenfield. Its mission is to provide the community with fresh healthy food at reasonable prices.
April Clisura

**Hybrid Recipients:**

<b>Church World Service</b>
<a href="https://cwsglobal.org/">https://cwsglobal.org/</a>
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.
Sue Koehler

<b>El Porvenir Coffee Cooperative, Nicaragua (in addition to Rainy-Day Fund contribution)</b>
no website
A cohesive and self-reliant community in the mountainous northwest region of Nicaragua which seeks a better life for its residents.
Sara Berg

<b>Casa San Jose</b>
<a href="https://casasanjose.org/">https://casasanjose.org/</a>
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.”
Peter Kaplan

**Deacons**

The Deacons continued their regular meetings via ZOOM in 2022. 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 taken 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. Chuck Herrold has graciously agreed to handle the Deacons' treasury, which includes writing cover letters and sending checks to the Lazarus recipients (Utility, landlord, etc.), as well as funding the Hot Metal Ministry meals and Homeless Packs, among other occasional requests.

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.

Metal Bridge Ministry: With the twice monthly efforts of Sharon Manley and her team (Robin Holtje and Laura Miller and others) the Hot Metal Ministry feeds 80 hungry people. With our financial support and under the auspices of Hot Metal, Lynn Kawaratani and Eliot Kennedy create packs for the homeless. These consist of a variety of items (e.g., socks, gloves, snack bars, tuna packs, bandages etc.). They purchase the items at Walmart, which has offered an occasional donation of \$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 members who may need some attention or assistance, to be checked on regularly. Due to increased need, five Deacons agreed to be contact 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: Wilkinsburg 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,

Linda Davoli

## Earth Care

The Earth Care committee has focused this year on getting our recycling programs in order. We re-did the recycling room, revamped what we take, and set up a Michael Brother's recycling carpool. We have also re-committed to exploring organizations and places we can make an impact locally, starting with a day volunteering at Garfield Farms.

Respectfully submitted,

Cosette Cornelius-Bates

## Fellowship

Thankfully, we returned to some of our annual activities again in 2022. Pancake mix and maple syrup were provided "to go" for Shrove Tuesday. Receptions were held after services on Easter Sunday and More Light Sunday. Beverages and snacks were provided at the Picnic in the Park. Cake and fruit were provided for Stewardship Sunday's cake reception. Christmas cookies were solicited, bagged, and distributed after Christmas Eve service.

Sadly, 2022 also included far too many memorial services. Refreshments were provided after services for Maggie Ritchey, Anna Grace Watt-Morse, and Heather Vallone.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori King

## Gun Safety

**Members:** Judy Schryer, Diane Scanlan, Lori King, Martha Funderberg, Myra Kazanjian, Lara Miler, Joan Gaul, Lori Swenson

**Focus:** We continue to work toward the passage of gun safety legislation by putting pressure on legislators in Harrisburg and enlisting others to join this effort.

**Actions:** February zoom call with the three churches who responded to our invitation. One of them mentioned serious concerns for gun safety particularly in the schools.

Many hours went into this endeavor to enlist other churches to join us in asking our legislators to pass gun safety regulations. Unfortunately, efforts to continue and strengthen these relationships have not succeeded so far.

Two of us attended the CeaseFirePA "Taking a Stand in Harrisburg Advocacy Day" to lobby for gun safety legislation.

Two of us attended another CeaseFirePA event in the Hill District where we heard from the city's community support liaison.

Much time was invested in preparing for the Memorial to the Lost display on our church grounds in October. We cannot overstate our appreciation to the entire Sixth community for their essential help in setting up, taking down, attending the dedication service, seeking signatures on letters to legislators. Given the prominence of our location in Squirrel Hill, many people saw the display and the banner explaining it.

Many people signed letters to legislators. We feel our effort was absolutely worthwhile.

In response to our request for advice, PA Senator Jay Costa suggested we try to reach out to "like-minded organizations to strengthen your efforts, especially in the rural areas of the State." As mentioned above, we had limited success with our outreach to Presbyterian Churches in districts controlled by Republicans on the Judiciary Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Swenson

## House

It was a decent year in 2022 for the House Committee, and thankfully COVID restrictions lightened up throughout the year:

- Exterior and Grounds
  - David Skonieczny was suddenly and unexpectedly unable to continue snow removal. Comment Ndhlovu was contacted to resume snow removal services and was added to the payroll accordingly.
  - In May, Leslie Kaplan organized a Saturday to tidy up the grounds of the church, when we:
    - Pruned trees and bushes around the yard
    - Pulled weeds around the flower beds and bushes
    - Planted annuals in the flower beds and underneath the church sign
  - The woodwork surrounding the front door surround at the Forbes Avenue entrance was stripped, sanded, stained, and refinished.
  - The narthex is the area just inside the Forbes Avenue entrance. The walls, ceiling, and cornice had water damage from roof leaks last year, so they were sanded and repainted. In addition, the wood trim around the edge of the walls was sanded of old paint smears and refinished, and the junction between the wood and plaster was filled, sanded, and painted.
  - In light of some vandalism around the grounds of the church, signage was purchased to dissuade loitering and additional vandalism
  - Hausler Roofing was contacted to repair the source of some light roof leaks we've been experiencing. The work will take place in early 2023, but the contract was placed in later 2022.
- Capital Campaign
  - Chapel project: We purchased a 65" Smart TV for the chapel, which has been mounted on the west wall for group presentations, after determining that the purchase of an automatic screen and ceiling mounted PowerPoint projector was very expensive, complicated, and not flexible enough. From a laptop connected by HDMI cable, the Smart TV can play PowerPoint presentations, movies, and other media. We anticipate completion of the Chapel renewal project in 2023, with painting, installation of a picture rail, a Sunday School Bulletin Board and sound absorption panels. The quilt will be reinstalled when the painting is completed.
  - Stained glass window project: We have restored three windows since the project has begun. The fourth, the larger center window on the West side of the sanctuary, was removed in January of 2022. It has been restored and is currently being reinstalled. As soon as it is back in, the new exterior tempered glass, vented protective covering will be installed. Hunt Glass will then remove the two flanking windows for restoration. Hunt Glass predicts that they will be completed by the end of the year. In addition, in 2022 Sixth Presbyterian was awarded a \$10,000 matching grant from PHLF to help pay for the restoration project. We anticipate that the last Sanctuary window will be restored in 2024.

- AV improvements
  - Weekly services have been live-streamed. To improve the experience, a few upgrades were made, including an improved camera and microphones.
  - A new amplifier and new speakers were purchased and installed to improve the sound quality in the sanctuary.

## Personnel

*The Personnel Committee is responsible for ensuring that policies, procedures and processes are in place, that are compliant with state and federal labor laws, to support church staff and volunteers.*

Throughout the year, the committee meets and connects with staff, as needed, to conduct business related to benefits, compensation, vacations, workload, opportunities for growth and challenges or emerging needs.

A review is conducted annually with committee members meeting individually with each staff to conduct a formal review process. We think it will come as no surprise that we find our staff to be incredibly competent, high performing individually and as a team, and exceeding our expectations in ways we couldn't even anticipate.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Parees, Carol Emerson and Andrew Swensen

## Stewardship

Committee Members: **Peter Kaplan** (Chair), **Beth Hazlett**, **Patty Halverson**, **Barb Parees**, and **Vincent Kolb** (ex officio/quarterback)

The 2023 Stewardship Campaign reached (and slightly exceeded!) its goal of \$358,037, with total pledges of \$361,275 as of January 11, 2023. This total represented an increase of 3.9% or \$13,666 over the 2022 campaign goal of \$347,609. Many dedicated members of Sixth played important roles in this success, and a major focus of this report is to highlight their contributions. But even more vital to the Campaign's success were the generosity, dedication, and love that members of Sixth showed for our church home and for each other. We affirmed the Campaign's theme, that **LOVE WILL WIN!**

### Creating the Plan

The Stewardship Committee began planning for the Campaign in July, when we agreed upon the Campaign theme, identified candidates for both Sunday morning "Moments for Stewardship" and written testimonials for the Stewardship brochure, and agreed on a campaign schedule.

Shortly after our meeting, we met with the Executive Committee, and it was agreed that we propose a 3% increase in the Stewardship and Household Goals for 2023. This decision was based on potential increases in employee salaries and health care costs, increased investment in livestreaming, and the inflation we were seeing (and are still experiencing) in the economy. In August, the Session approved our plan.

### Carrying Out the Plan

Our first steps, taken in August and September, were to recruit church

members for Sunday Stewardship moments and written testimonials for the Campaign brochure. We were both fortunate and grateful that the following people agreed to share their love for Sixth Church with the congregation:

Moments for Stewardship: **Marnie Bertolet; Linda May; and Mary Lang**

Brochure Testimonials: **Gwen Harcar and Katie Foust; Cliff and Nora Johnson; and Jessica Craft and Carlos Rivera-Morales**

On each of the five Sundays of October, church members were reminded of how important their pledges are to Sixth. **Pastor Vincent** preached eloquently about Stewardship on the first and fifth Sundays of that month, and Marnie, Linda, and Mary offered their heartfelt Stewardship Moments on the other three Sundays.

In mid-October, the Stewardship letter, brochure, and pledge cards were mailed to the congregation's households. **Amy Whipple** did her usual magic and combined the engaging written testimonials, their accompanying photos, and budget pie charts into an attractive and compelling brochure.

On Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, the congregation dedicated the pledges we had already received and those yet to come. Thanks to the initiative of Chair **Jan Myers-Newbury**, the Fellowship Committee offered two cakes, coffee, and fresh fruit to celebrate the occasion. Fellowship Committee members **Lori King** and **Linda May** were the fellowship volunteers. Stewardship Committee members **Beth Hazlett, Peter Kaplan** and **Barb Parees** also helped with preparations and clean-up.



**The splendid Dedication Sunday Table**

### **Race to the Finish**

By the end of November, we had received pledges from over 60 households, a quicker than anticipated response. As a result, **Members of Session** had a large but manageable number of follow-up calls to make. Each member of Session took on two calls, with the Stewardship Committee making the rest. The importance of the Session's willingness to make these calls, and **Pastor Vincent's** wisdom in making the initial suggestion that they do so, can't be overstated! As we moved rapidly toward the finish, **Amy Whipple** kept meticulous track of pledges as they came in.

After nearly three years of COVID-19 hardship and separation, the Sixth Church family demonstrated its resilience, its commitment, and its confidence that **LOVE WILL WIN!**

### **The 2023 Stewardship Campaign in Numbers**

Pledge Goal: \$358,037

Pledge Actual: \$361,275

Average Pledge: \$3,724 - up from last year's \$3,476

Total Pledges: 97 (including 7 new), down from last year's 100 pledges

Pledge Increases: 51 of the 90 households who pledged in 2022 increased their 2023 pledges by 3% or more compared with 2022.

With Thanks to All!

Peter Kaplan, Stewardship Chair

## **Worship**

As we all know COVID-19 was still around for the year 2022. However we were able to have a live Worship service most of the year. Overall there was a steady increase in the number of people attending Worship. The number of children has also increased significantly.

However, because of the concern of exposure to COVID or just difficulties coming to Worship, we have continued the option of worshipping with us via live-stream. Approximately 15-20% of the congregation are using this option each week.

As people have returned, we have found ways to increase participation of the congregation in the Worship service. Each week, various adults and youth are reading parts of the liturgy. Children have also resumed the tasks of lighting the peace candle and pouring the water in the baptismal font.

We were also excited to welcome our new Choir director, Douglas-Jayd Burn who started in February. He has been well received by the choir and has encouraged their growth as singers.

He is also a very talented organist and performed an organ recital in the spring. This recital raised money for the Bethel AME church reparations fund.

During Advent, we were pleased to be able to have a live Christmas pageant with both children, choir and congregation participating in a service of Lessons and Carols.

Overall, this year has brought a welcome return to a more normal Worship experience. And the committee continues to evaluate how to make the Worship experience more meaningful for all.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Howe, Chair