

February 2023

Sixth Sense

From the Pastor

A few of you asked me for the list I shared as part of my sermon, “What Do You Want?” that I preached on January 22. If you missed the livestream or weren’t hear, I basically said that Peter, Andrew, James, and John responded to the call of Jesus by the lakeshore because they were hungry for a more authentic life. Since Jesus calls us too, I think it is wise for us to ponder what it means to want a more authentic life for ourselves, informed by the values that have been instilled in us by our faith. Here is my list of “what I want”:

- I want the people I love in this world to trust that I love them; that includes you in this congregation.
- I want people who work for a living to be able to afford a living.
- I want us to take seriously that not everyone is treated the same in this country and that to say so is not political but faithful.
- I want leaders to tell the truth, and for the rest of us to expect the truth.
- I want children to be safe, and scientists to be believed, and music and dancing to be frequent.
- I want us to recognize we can’t love America while hating Americans.
- I want making a buck to be an honorable endeavor, but not an excuse for another’s suffering.
- I want freedom to be a declaration of my responsibilities more than an assertion of my rights.
- I want us to remember that truth is always complex, so you can, for example, condemn antisemitic violence and speech and at the same time advocate for the liberation of Palestinian people; you can support children and protect reproductive freedom.
- I want a willingness to sacrifice for the common good to no longer be seen as the life choices of losers, but as something to be admired.
- I want friendships to determine how we see the issues, rather than issues determining who our friends are.
- I want children to go to schools where they can learn not just skills for a job but can learn to be adults.
- I want kindness to be the power that defines human relationships.
- I want us to remember that worship is not just an experience, but a discipline, a regular return to the source of our lives.
- And I want to be more faithful tomorrow than I was yesterday.

What do you want?

Vincent



SIXTH
presbyterian
CHURCH

February Worship and Preaching

February 5 – Matthew 5:13-20, “Light and Heavy”

February 12 – Matthew 5:21-37, “Sin Is Our Only Hope”

February 19 – Rev. Erin Angeli preaching

February 26 – Matthew 4:1-11, “Do You Think There Is a Devil?”

What the Pastor Is Reading

Catching the Wind: Edward Kennedy and the Liberal Hour, Neal Gable

The Furrows, Namwali Serpell

CDC Community Risk and Worship

Masks are required in the building while Allegheny County is in a “medium” or “high” CDC community risk designation; N95 or similar masks are preferred while in “high.” Masks are welcome while in “low.”

Children and Youth Updates



February Youth Group

(6th grade and up)

Thursday, Feb. 6: 6 –8 p.m. Virtual games and fellowship via Zoom. Link will be emailed.

Thursday, Feb. 9: 6 - 8 p.m. In-person at the church.

Thursday, Feb. 16: Youth volunteering/serving meals at Hot Metal Bridge's The Table from 5 to 7 p.m. / Meet at the church at 4:30 p.m. for transportation with Jenny or meet at Hot Metal. You must RSVP to Jenny if you will be attending.

Thursday, Jan 26: 6 –8 p.m. Virtual games and fellowship via Zoom. Link will be emailed.

For more info email Jenny Newman
Jennyrunew@gmail.com

Sixth Presbyterian Church

Acolytes/Water Pourers: Friends! Don't forget to sign up in the narthex to be an Acolyte or Water Pourer! This is a very important part of our worship service.

Christian Education Meeting: There will be a meeting of the Christian Education Committee on Sunday, February 19 following worship. Those interested in helping us plan for Easter and the summer months are encouraged to attend.

Lent: Sunday, February 26th is the first Sunday of Lent! Beginning with our Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner, we will have resources available for at-home use. Recommended and available this year is the Lent guide *Bless the Lent We Actually Have*, written by author and professor Kate Bowler and *Faithful Families: Lent and Easter Reflections*, by author and pastor Traci Smith. Stop by our resource table in the Chapel or email Jenny Newman, Jennyrunew@gmail.com, for a digital copy.



Faithful Families

LENT + EASTER
REFLECTIONS



14 WEEKS OF REFLECTIONS
FROM ASH WEDNESDAY TO PENTECOST



Fat Tuesday Pancake Supper!!

After a 3-year hiatus, there will again be a Pancake Supper at Sixth! The date is Tuesday, February 21; the time will be 5:00-7:00. This year the Fellowship Committee will be asking that those who are planning to come to RSVP to the church office. The failure to RSVP will NOT prohibit anyone from attending – it is merely a way for the committee to do informed preparation.

Live-Stream Helpers Needed

We are seeking some additional helpers to run the live-stream and sound system during our Sunday morning worship. This job requires that the operator turn on the equipment, start the software, step through each item in the service, and make minor adjustments as needed. There is a small stipend offered for performing this service. You will receive training. Contact Kirk Howe at howeks@yahoo.com or 412-343-7438 if you or someone you know is interested.



February Birthdays

February 2 Chris Berg

February 3 Doris Bell

February 9 Kit Ayars

February 10.....Beth Hazlett

February 14.....Peter Kaplan

Glenna Van Dyke

February 15.....Kathleen Myers

February 16.....Maria Guyette

February 18.....Cyril Fox

Brenda Jordan

John McCall

February 19.....Greg Cooper

February 20.....GG Loyd

February 21.....Linda May

February 23.....Diane James

February 26.....Jan Myers-Newbury

Amy Whipple

February 27.....Janet Kanaskie



Notes from the January Session Meeting

(NB: notes from Session are pulled from yet-approved minutes)

CLERK'S REPORT:

Worship Attendance: 12/4, 83 (in-person), 68 (YouTube); 12/11, 135 (in-person), 64 (YouTube); 12/18, 94 (in-person), 56 (YouTube); 12/24, 120 (in-person), 94 (YouTube); 12/25, 72 (YouTube only); 1/1, 36 (in-person), 50 (YouTube); 1/15, 77 (in-person), 40 (YouTube); 1/22, 136 (in-person), 58 (YouTube)

SESSION CORRESPONDENCE AND REFERRALS:

- Thank you for support on behalf of Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh
- Invitation from Unique Church Creations to plan a new church directory. Will refer request to Deacons to organize if desired
- Request from Valley View Presbyterian Church in East Liberty for monetary assistance. Will be referred to Church and Community to seek more information and determine donation.

OMNIBUS MOTION:

Five motions were pulled for minor corrections or discussion. Once the motions were corrected or clarified, Ruling Elder Peter Kaplan moved that the entire Omnibus Motion be approved. The motion passed unanimously.

- Motion to approve the minutes of the Session Stated Meeting, November 30, 2022-*Attendance correction*
- Motion to approve the letter of transfer for Elliott Hilton from Greenfield Presbyterian Church, *Berkley MI*. (Elliot has been ordained as a Deacon.)
- Motion to approve 2022 Statistical Report to the General Assembly. *It was noted that the report needed the financial information. Once added, the Statistical Report will be approved electronically before being sent to Presbytery to meet the 2/9 General Assembly deadline.*
- The Personnel Committee requests approval of a policy that there will not be an expectation that the Pastor return from vacation to conduct any funeral unless the circumstances are extraordinary, as determined by Rev. Kolb and the Personnel Committee. Without such a policy, the Pastor will never be on vacation, but will essentially be on call 24/7, 365 days a year. *Approved after discussion and clarification. Also noted that Rev. Kolb and Rev. Susan Rothenberg have a reciprocal agreement of coverage, as needed.*
- Motion to approve Sapp Painting proposal for the Chapel for \$4,200. *Clarification that funds will come from Capital Campaign.*
- Motion to approve the letter of transfer for John Stage, from the First Presbyterian Church in Logan OH. (John is a ruling Elder)
- Motion to approve the letters of transfer for John and Carol Ladebue, from Southside Presbyterian Church. (John and Carol are Ruling Elders and have served as Deacons)
- Motion to approve Peter Gilmore as Elder Commissioner to Presbytery, February 16, 2023.
- Motion to elect Erik Fogt to be the Church Treasurer of 2023.
- Motion to approve the 2023 budget.

- Motion to approve the Rev. Erin Angeli to be our guest preacher on Sunday, February 19.
- Approval to Pastor Vincent to take one of the unused, previously approved weeks of vacation from 2022 to use from February 13-20, 2023.
- The Personnel Committee recommends that the Pastor be approved to work remotely from Charlotte Monday, March 6 through Friday, March 10. (The Pastor will be in the pulpit on March 5 and March 12)
- Motion to approve the Fat Tuesday Pancake Supper on Tuesday, February 21, 5-7 p.m.

FINANCES:

Ruling Elder Frank Davoli discussed the December Treasurer's Report

- Report shows a \$31,000 surplus for 2022, which came close to making up for the \$38,000 (approximately) taken out of reserves.

HOUSE:

Ruling Elder Tom Juring reported that they are seeking more bids for the window wells, as the one received seemed very high. Once more bids are in, the Executive Committee will review and make a recommendation to Session.

STEWARDSHIP HISTORY:

Elder Peter Kaplan referenced the report and commented on how positive this year's campaign was, reflecting the confidence the congregation has in the staff and the overall health of our church and the commitment and care shown to each other.

REPORT FROM PRESBYTERY: The report made by Carol Emerson was referenced.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MATERIALS:

Materials for the Congregational Meeting, January 29, were referenced.

COMMITTEE MINUTES: Meeting minutes were referenced,

DEACONS MINUTES/CARE LIST: Information was referenced and updated.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Bethel AME Overture to Presbytery proposal was supported by Session and the hope is this will open the door to the Presbytery beginning to address the subject of reparations for historically black Presbyterian congregations in Pittsburgh Presbytery, once Bethel's historic case has been resolved. Note was made that the negotiations with the Penguins look promising, with perhaps an even better settlement than first envisioned.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ruling Elder Barbara Pares raised some issues about safety and emergency training. Further discussion and investigation will be undertaken by Elder Barb, Pastor Vincent, and the House Committee for consideration in February.

COFFEE HOUR ASSIGNMENT: Choir, February 5

NEXT MEETING: February 22, 2023, 7 p.m.

How Can Pittsburgh Move from Environmental Racism to Environmental Justice?

This will be the concern of a zoom panel on Sunday, February 19, at 7 pm, with **Alyssa Lyon**, Director, Black Environmental Collective, UrbanKind Pittsburgh, **Patrick Campbell**, Executive Director, Group Against Smog and Pollution and **Michelle Naccarati Chapkis**, Executive Director, Women for a Healthy Environment, Allegheny County Councilperson, District 8.

Environmental racism is a condition in which places where people of color live are disproportionately affected by air pollution, toxic waste, extreme weather, and other hazards. Environmental justice is a condition in which fairer participation in decision-making removes these dangers. Join us on February 19 to learn more about how you can contribute to a better future for all of us. The panel is free and open to all.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82415414027?pwd=cnVQSE9aa3FUd3IrTGV1ODZvellrQT09>

If needed: Meeting ID: 824 1541 4027 Passcode: 390840

This panel is sponsored by the Social Justice and Outreach Committee, Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, with co-sponsors Pennsylvania Interfaith Power and Light (PAIPL) and Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN). If you have questions, contact Marianne Novy, SJO chair, mnovy@pitt.edu

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. Thanks!



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. 6th 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), 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 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
Total	\$15,755	

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
Total	\$2,793

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

Organization	Amount
Gun Safety	
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
More Light	
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:

412 Food Rescue
https://412foodrescue.org/
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

United Nations Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF)
https://crisisrelief.un.org/about
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

Church World Service Ukraine Crisis Response Fund
https://cwsglobal.org/ukraine-response-fund/
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:

Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation
https://hughlane.org/
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:

Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center
https://sabeel.org/
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

Pittsburgh United
https://pittsburghunited.org/
"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

Just Harvest
https://justharvest.org/
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

Pittsburghers for Public Transit
https://www.pittsburghforpublictransit.org/
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:

Wilkinsburg Community Ministry
http://wcm15221.org/
“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

Lazarus Fund
https://www.pghpresbytery.org/justice-ministries/lazarus_fund/
“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

MHY Family Services (FKA Mars Home for Youth)
https://mhyfamilyservices.org/
“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

Table Ministry of the Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community (HMBFC)
https://www.hotmetalbridge.com/our-mission
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

Sixth Church Deacons Fund Hunger and Homeless Initiatives
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

Fishes & Loaves Cooperative Ministries
https://fishes-and-loaves-hazelwood.org/about-us
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:

Church World Service
https://cwsglobal.org/
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

El Porvenir Coffee Cooperative, Nicaragua (in addition to Rainy-Day Fund contribution)
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

Casa San Jose
https://casasanjose.org/
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 13th, 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

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We are an open and affirming community of faith in Jesus Christ. At home in an urban neighborhood of many faiths, we acknowledge that we are not alone on the path to understanding God. In worship, study, and fellowship, we celebrate our Presbyterian roots and find joy in our diversity. We strive for the grace to love one another as we seek a deeper understanding of life in the Spirit, working for justice and serving as stewards of God's wondrous creation.



The deadline for the March newsletter is February 15th. Please email articles and announcements to Amy in the church office (office@sixthchurch.org).

You can also put printed copies on her desk.

Thank you!

Food for Thought...

“A Benediction,” Sophie Strand

May your heart be as soft as rain
on the hungry soil. May your heart
be hungry soil. May the next year
be today. And every day a kingdom.
May your day be filled with presence.

May presence bloom with such intensity
that you stand transfixed. May there
be snowdrops and trillium and columbine
hung like lace across the limestone
of your closed eyes. May your eyes open
inwards. Downwards. Heart-towards.

May your day be as purple as your own song.
As blue as your own thought. As red as
the string of love you are following,
step by step, through the spiral.

May you trust the seashell curvature
of your becoming. May you feel yourself
becoming the shape and flower
of your own belonging in this one
breath. This welcome, spacious hour.