

Annual Committee Reports

Fellowship

The Fellowship committee planned the "big ticket" gatherings for Sixth throughout 2015, including 3 Lenten gatherings: Shrove Tuesday pancake Supper, Agape meal on Maunday Thursday, and the Deviled Egg reception on Easter morning after worship. We held the Church Picnic at Schenley Park in early June, the fall Stewardship Luncheon and the annual

Christmas Dinner. We also held a special reception with cake for Vincent and Caitlin.

Fellowship pitched in with respect to becoming an Earth Care Congregation by using as much non-disposable serving dishes, flatware, and cutlery (including taking real silverware from Sixth to the church picnic). New members

to the committee are always welcome; if interested please contact Joe DeLucia, Jan Myers-Newbury or Sharon Manley.

Please join us for the annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on Tuesday February 9th from 5:00 to 7:00 pm in the Reidinger Room.

— Joe DeLucia

Church and Community

Sixth Church has always engaged actively in the community, but 2015 saw our congregation take new and varied directions in working for positive change to our city, state, nation, and even our planet!

Sixth rejoined the Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN), and many church members took part in large scale actions to demand justice. The Gun Safety Group accelerated its efforts to work for the adoption of common sense legislation to reduce the horrific toll of gun deaths in our country. And the leaders of several church committees joined the church's Earth Care Team to improve the way our congregation cares for God's creation. At the same time, Sixth Church continued to provide financial support for groups that help individuals and communities, and for organizations that advocate for change.

This year's report on Sixth Church in the Community, co-authored by Vincent Kolb, Joan Gaul, Nora Johnson and Peter Kaplan, reflects the changes in how we are putting our faith to work to create a better

world.

Sixth Church and PIIN: A Renewed Partnership

With the help of a PIIN organizer, 10 church members were trained in February and conducted a listening campaign of 100 conversations to discern how Sixth could continue to live out its More Light identity, engage in social justice, and plan for our church's future. Based on the listening campaign, the Session voted to rejoin PIIN in the fall of the year. Sixth Church members were active participants in several PIIN actions during the year:

Fifty members of Sixth joined 600 concerned citizens at the PIIN "Marches to Measurables" Public Action that won key agreements from Pittsburgh Police to improve community relationships, training, diverse recruitment, and tracking of crime.

Eighty-nine members of Sixth joined with 1200 concerned citizens at the annual Public Action Meeting, to roll out the new long term strategy to implement God's beloved community by dismantling

structural racism.

At the annual Public Action Meeting, PIIN secured commitments from the Mayor's office to use every means necessary, including legal, to ensure that green infrastructure is a part of the \$3 billion ALCOSAN project to rebuild the sewer system. Through PIIN, Sixth church members also advocated for a Customer Assistance Program for those who cannot afford their rising water bills.

Through PIIN, Sixth church members stood with the Islamic Center of Pittsburgh and won new commitments from the Pittsburgh Police to protect the Muslim community in the face of growing Islamophobia.

Through PIIN, Sixth church members marched for a living wage for fast food workers in April and November.

Frederick Douglass once said, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops

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without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters." Let justice roll down waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream.

An Active Year for Gun Safety

When the Gun Safety Group was initiated in 2013, we learned that PCUSA had issued "Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God's Call," which was approved by the General Assembly in 2010. Among the report's 16 recommendations are changes we can only dream of, but we are working to bring them about.

We started the year by attempting getting-to-know-you phone calls to our state legislators. This morphed into more specific contacts to stop Act 192 (later struck down by PA Commonwealth Court), which allowed any person or group, to sue local municipalities to rescind their gun safety laws, and efforts to support House Bill 1010 and Senate Bill 1049, which are intended to close Pennsylvania's gun registration loophole on private sales of long-barreled guns.

To chart our course, we surveyed our growing group of over 20 people on their major gun concerns and how they want to address them. Our group is most concerned about: 1) death and pain to people; and 2) the proliferation of guns. The group's preferred strategies are: 1) legislative advocacy; 2) joining with larger groups; 3) discussing issue church wide to formulate an approach church members can support; and 4) hosting a hymn

sing and dinner at Baptist Temple Church in Homewood. At the same time, thanks to Nora Johnson, we came up with a brief Purpose of the Committee: To inform and advocate.

Individual members of our group have undertaken some notable efforts. Among them, Lori Swenson and Judy Schryer met with young parents in the congregation to discuss gun safety issues. Committee members and many congregants participated in a meeting at Homewood Temple. Norma Farquhar attended a meeting with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, which is strong on the East Coast and has hopes of organizing here. Judy and Tony Schryer, Pastor Vincent Kolb, and Joan Gaul attended Cease Fire PA's Leadership Institute. We have also tried to keep the congregation informed through newsletter articles, bulletin inserts, and moments for mission.

Members have also participated in such related activities as witnessing in White Oak/McKeesport for community concerns, attending PIIN's Public Safety Task force, and a PIIN Public Action, and attempting to better know our police.

Earth Care Moves Forward

At the first Church and Community Committee of 2015, held in January, the Committee discussed how to move ahead with the process of the Earth Care Congregation application. Because the application requires congregations to take a holistic approach to care of the planet, we agreed to bring the

application questions to the Worship, Christian Education, and House Committees for their input. We also agreed that we would keep the congregation informed of our progress and that when we were ready to complete and submit the application to PC(USA), that we would approach Session for its approval.

An Earth Care Team was formed in April, and during the next few months and over the summer, we went through the application form with the committees, discussed our Earth Care-related activities, and were able to fill out the application's questions with reliable information. At the same time, we used the Sixth Sense newsletter to let the congregation know how the process was going. Session was updated at its April meeting.

In the fall, we learned that PC(USA) had reorganized its Earth Care application process so that both new and renewing congregations' applications would be received during the first month and a half of the new year. The old process allowed congregations to apply at any time during the year. Because the number of Earth Care congregations has increased significantly since the program began the six years ago, administration of the applications will be more manageable with the applications coming in during the one period of the year.

In December, the text of the Earth Care Pledge appeared in Sixth Sense as well as in the worship bulletin. At its meeting on December 16, Session took the final action needed for Sixth's application: by a unanimous vote,

Church and Community, continued, continued

Session affirmed the Earth Care Pledge. We are now set to submit our application in January, and held our first meeting of 2016 on January 3 to make plans for the coming year.

Our Continuing Tradition of Active Giving

A core responsibility of the Church & Community Committee, which

has over 20 members, is to allocate the funds set aside for Locally Directed Missions in the Church budget, which for 2015 was \$18,000. The following table shows how the Church & Community Committee distributed these funds. We strive to both provide aid to those in need and to support advocacy for social justice that will reduce these needs. We support efforts in Pittsburgh

and around the world. We invite you to participate in the allocation process during the coming year. Our support of these groups goes beyond writing checks. Sixth Church members serve these organizations through board membership, delivering and serving meals, packaging medical supplies, and mission trips.

— Peter Kaplan, Vincent Kolb, Joan

Organization	Amount
East End Cooperative Ministry	\$2,700
Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank	\$2,250
Wilksburg Community Ministry	\$2,250
Neighborhood Academy	\$2,205
Camp Crestfield	\$1,800
El Porvenir Community, Nicaragua - Community Health Fund and General Support	\$990
MHY Family Services	\$950
Church World Service (in addition to money raised by CROP Walk)	\$765
Global Links	\$610
Lazarus Fund	\$600
Just Harvest	\$500
Amos 5:24 Anti-Racism Task Force of Pittsburgh Presbytery	\$500
Cease-Fire PA (Gun Safety Group)	\$400
Reimbursement for EECM Community House Dinners and Neighborhood Academy Lunches	\$364
Table Ministry of the Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community	\$318
Pittsburgh Pastoral Institute	\$318
Sixth Presbyterian Church Care Closet	\$270
Baptist Temple Church of Homewood (Gun Safety Group)	\$110
Everytown for Gun Safety (Gun Safety Group)	\$100
Total	\$18,000

Christian Education

It was an active and full year for Christian Education at Sixth Presbyterian in 2015. We began the year by working to make sure teachers, staff, and volunteers have updated clearances in compliance with new state clearance guidelines. The church's child

safety policy was updated to reflect new state regulations and a training led by Jenny Newman, director of Christian Education, was held in March for teachers and volunteers to review clearance and mandated reporting guidelines.

Nursery care was provided each week during Sunday school and worship and an extended session held for children in preschool through 5th grade. This year additional nursery and child care was provided for parents during several meetings, church events,

Christian Education, continued

and public action events.

The Christian Education Committee would like to thank Malena Howe and Gregson Vaux for volunteering for Extended Session in 2015.

Children and youth actively participated in worship throughout the year in multiple ways. These include serving as acolytes and water bearers, creating Alleluia banners for the beginning of Lent, and being part of our lively Time for Children each week. Many youth have participated in worship by serving as ushers, singing with the church choir, sharing languages on World Communion Sunday, and participating in dramas for Palm Sunday and other services. Our Sunday school students presented their annual Christmas pageant and families attended our annual Advent/Ornament dinner organized by the Christian Education committee with a meal provided by the Fellowship committee. Sunday school students participated and volunteered for Squirrel Hill clean-up day in the spring.

In October CPR, training was coordinated by Larry Van Dyke to certify and recertify nursery workers, teachers and other church members.

The youth group was busy this year with many activities and events. Four youth along with Jenny Newman participated in a week-long mission trip with Broad Street Ministries in Philadelphia. Youth service projects which included volunteering in the community at East End Community House, The Table ministry, and Book 'em.

Youth also volunteered to provide several babysitting nights and holiday present wrapping for Sixth families at the church. Fellowship activities included movie nights, game nights, bowling and weekly youth fellowship coffee house discussions.

In May nearly 30 people (about 12 families) attended a successful and fun family overnight retreat at Camp Crestfield May. Throughout the summer, we held three Family Faith Night Events as a Vacation Bible School outreach at Greenfield Presbyterian Church. The theme of "Heroes" was explored and each night featured Bible stories, crafts, science experiments and a meal. We welcomed as our guest an officer from the Greenfield Police station to talk with the students. We had 6-8 volunteers each week from both churches and 16 different kids participating.

Our dedicated Sunday school teachers continued to volunteer each week providing Sunday school for ages preschool and up. Our annual Rally Day breakfast was planned and executed on the first day of Sunday school in September.

Throughout the year, Bill Guy's Sunday school class meets in each week on the parlor give participants the opportunity to study the scriptures using the original Hebrew and Greek.

Adult Education offerings for 2015 included the following:

- Evening movie screening and discussion of the film "King: A Filmed Record from Montgomery to Memphis led by Bev Gaddy. A Sunday school

hour on MLK, Jr. was also hosted by Bev.

- Peter Gilmore hosted a Sunday school hour class discussing the book "One Nation Under God" by Kevin Kruse
- Pastor Kolb led an evening study called "Rethinking Justice - What does the Lord Require."
- Susan Rothenberg gave an evening presentation about her trip to Sudan with pastors from Pittsburgh Presbytery.
- Tom Twiss gave an evening presentation about his trip to visit libraries in the West Bank
- Pastor Kolb led a Sunday school hour class/discussion based on "Toxic Charity- the Changing Face of Charity."
- Evening program with guest speaker Tara Simmons from the Women and Girl's Foundation of Pittsburgh who presented about the status of Women in Pa.
- Evening program with Ted Hoover from Persad who presented about the History of Pride.
- Evening program with Ron Elder who spoke about Climate Change.
- Evening program with Catherine Balsamo from PIIN who led a program called "Holy Conversations for Change"
- Evening Program with Rev Rodney Lyde from Temple Baptist in Homewood about PIIN public action.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Newman on behalf of the Christian Education Committee

Evangelism

In 2015, Evangelism expanded efforts to welcome new members to the congregation. During the course of the year, Millie Barnes has led several sessions for prospective members during which she provides a valuable introduction to the church's history and provides a summary of current concerns and ongoing projects which are the focus of church committees and church leadership.

Mary Lang continues her work of

managing the ushering schedule for service for each month of the year.

A special event was the return of a summer concert as a means of raising awareness of Sixth Presbyterian's presence in the Squirrel Hill community and in essence, a social gathering for our members and passerby. The concert, performed on the church's front lawn, was given by The Early Mays, a trio specializing in Appalachian-inspired folk songs

and ballads. The concert was well attended and enjoyed by all.

In April of 2016, our committee will be actively involved with Pastor Vincent Kolb in organizing the pieces needed for the production of a new photo directory for our church members. The dates are April 27-30, 2016. Stay tuned for more information!

—Patty Halverson

Personnel

At New Year 2016, the State of Sixth's Personnel is . . . fantastic!

Pastor, Rev. Dr. Vincent Kolb begins his second full year at Sixth. With his strong leadership, Sixth has seen growth in membership, congregational life and worship. There are challenging sermons, informative education programs and Bible study, caring pastoral visitation, active participation in justice and peace issues and increased involvement and visibility among decision-makers in the community.

Director of Christian Education, Jenny Newman, begins her third year at Sixth with a growing and joyfully noisy children's education and Sunday School program. She has recruited and trained a dedicated team of teachers, built youth programs for 'tweens and teens, facilitated church-wide week-night adult education opportunities, and has planned and executed successful inner-city youth and the inter-generational mission trip to Nicaragua.

We will shortly celebrate Music Director Gail Luley's 20th year at

Sixth! She continues to amaze and educate us with the leadership, quality, and repertoire of our loyal choir and sacred the music program. Although Gail works part-time and has several job responsibilities other than at Sixth, she continues to successfully foster a stellar music experience during the weekly Worship Service.

Amy Whipple joined our staff as half-time Office Administrator last August and quickly organized the office files and space, mastered the computer system and programs, redesigned the Newsletter, and aided the work to upgrade the church's electronic communications. She manages clerical tasks with ease and is the friendly first public face for visitors and callers, and even shares her work space when staff gather to share Wi-Fi connectivity and camaraderie. As a Deacon, youth teacher and church school parent, Amy works to manage her dual role as Sixth member and staff by maintaining a policy of "gracious boundaries."

Custodian Harry Kirk can be seen

at Sixth not only early on Sunday mornings, but at all hours of the day and night! Sharing his time and service with his near-by home church and another job, since August of 2014, Harry has diligently tended to the maintenance and cleanliness of our large church facility with energy and good cheer. He works closely with the Building and Grounds committee to address major projects, work with contractors and even provide comic relief to staff and visitors.

The Personnel Committee works with each staff member in the hiring process, developing current job descriptions and policies, annual performance conversations, making salary recommendations to the Budget Committee and as an advocate to Session. We hope that each of our staff personnel is as glad to be at Sixth as we are pleased to have them here. It has been a privilege to work with each of you during my three-year term on Session.

—Carol Emerson, Chair; Barbara Pares; Phyllis Ruppert

House

Harry Kirk continued to keep the building looking good throughout the year in spite of the fact that he now works a total of three jobs after accepting a full-time job with J.C. Penny. He performs the usual inside cleaning, set-up, and small repair tasks and keeps the grass cut. In addition, during 2015 Harry repaired and repainted the water-damaged walls in the basement Sunday school room and refinished the interior partition in the upstairs bathroom near the Pastor's study. Presently he is working with an electrician to finally locate and install a suitable electric motor to drive the second fan that is needed for the proper operation of the forced air heating system that serves the sanctuary. This has been a long-standing problem.

Other noteworthy tasks that were carried out during the year 2015 were the following:

- Thanks to a most generous gift from a member of the congregation who prefers to remain anonymous a custom-made curved Bruno stairlift was purchased and installed (by 101 Mobility LLC). It shares the stairs on the West side of the building between the main floor level and the Ridinger Room level, making the lower level accessible for the first time to persons who cannot climb the stairs. It went into operation just before Easter.
- Two weeks after Easter a contractor (Twin Flooring of Carnegie, PA) replaced the carpeting throughout the Sanctuary. Thanks to the efforts of many volunteers the entire job (including the removal and

re-installation of all pews) was begun and completed during the six days between successive Sunday services. But it turned out that the "wood" floor in the entrance hall on the Forbes Avenue side was actually made of engineered wood that could not be sanded and refinished. That problem remains to be solved.

- While this carpet replacement was underway we noticed that during a rainfall some water was running down the rear wall of the sanctuary near the last stained glass window on the Murray Avenue side. An inspection by Bob Conrad, Superintendent of Roofing and Sheet Metal Contractors Miller-Thomas-Gyekis, Inc. revealed that the leak originated in the flat roof on top of the Bell Tower (the membrane had begun to pull away at the edges). At our request this contractor performed a temporary repair of the Bell Tower roof in May which prevented more damage to the sanctuary ceiling, walls, and paneling.
- After reviewing the Building and Rooftop Lease agreement PIT JL95-SH, which Sixth Presbyterian Church initially entered into in November 1997 and which presently governs the use of the interior space within the Bell Tower and the exterior top of the Bell Tower by Verizon Wireless to install and operate communications equipment and antennas, we confirmed that the LESSEE is responsible for maintaining the leased portion of the roof in a watertight

condition. Pursuant to that agreement Verizon Wireless has not only reimbursed Sixth Presbyterian Church for the temporary repair of the Bell Tower roof last May but also agreed to engage a roofing contractor to replace the defective Bell Tower roof once warmer temperatures return this spring.

- Quite unexpectedly the roof inspection by Mr. Conrad last May also revealed defective workmanship in the roof over the sanctuary that was replaced in 2011. While this is not causing any leaks presently, these defects will have to be fixed in the not-too-distant future if we want to avoid a major problem. The first step will be getting a cost estimate. (Unfortunately the contractor who replaced the roof in 2011 has since closed his business when he retired.)
- Just prior to the Christmas Holidays two lighting projects were carried out: (a) a total of 17 round fluorescent ceiling light fixtures throughout the building were replaced with new LED fixtures of the same size that provide greater luminosity but save energy; (b) the 6 (out of a total of 10) floodlights in the sanctuary ceiling that had burned out over time had new 500 Watt halogen bulbs installed. (This only merits to be mentioned in this report because this job required a team of volunteers who were willing and able to climb into the dark and dirty attic above the sanctuary to get to these light fixtures.) As nice as these 10

House, continued

floodlights are, collectively they use a total of 5 Kilowatts! Therefore the breakers that control them have now been marked with the instruction that they only be turned on during a church service.

- Late this past fall I finally succeeded in finding a local

wood craftsman who was interested in the long overdue project of designing, fabricating, and installing wooden handrails on both sides of the 4 steps in front of the sanctuary that lead up to the table with the candles. I am awaiting a final design and cost estimate for this work, which is likely to be completed

early in 2016.

- Our snow/ice removal contract with Spherical Land Solutions, LLC was renewed for a second year; they served us well last year and the cost remained essentially the same.

– Peter Koehler

Worship

“Worship is at the very heart of the church’s life. All that the church is and does is rooted in its worship. The community of faith, gathered in response to God’s call, is formed in its worship. Worship is the principal influence that shapes our faith, and is the most visible way we express the faith.”*

“In worship, through Word and Sacrament, the church is sustained by the presence of Christ. Joined in worship to the One who is the source of its life, the church is empowered to serve God in the world.”*

Our Worship Committee worked with our pastor, the Rev. Dr. Vincent Kolb, and our musician, Gail Luley, to help plan and implement our services that celebrate the liturgical year and the Sacraments of Eucharist and Baptism. In addition, our responsibilities involved many aspects of worship, including preparation of the worship space, training and scheduling of liturgists and acolytes, preparing communion elements, the annual church picnic, hosting guest

preachers, and so forth.

Sacraments continue to be central to our worship. We have celebrated the Baptisms and the Eucharist. In addition to our monthly celebrations of the Eucharist, we celebrated the Lord’s Supper on Epiphany Sunday, during Lent on Maundy Thursday, on Easter, Pentecost, World Communion Sunday, All Saints’ Day, and at both the Men’s and Women’s retreats.

We have continued to incorporate youth in our worship services in several ways including the participation of acolytes who bring in the Light of Christ, children who pour the baptismal water each Sunday, youth musicians and readers, youth and children who enacted the Magi story for Epiphany, the “locking” and “unlocking” of our Alleluias for Lent and Easter, and “Time for Children” offered during most worship services. With appreciation for our Sunday School teachers and the leadership of Jenny Newman, we have seen strong family participation grow in our worship.

We have celebrated the seasons of Lent, Easter, Advent and Christmas and several special worship services including Epiphany of the Lord, Baptism of the Lord, Transfiguration of the Lord, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Easter Sunday, the Day of Pentecost, our annual Worship in the Park, World Communion Sunday, and All Saints Day.

Worship provides us with an opportunity to “glorify and enjoy God” with a community of faith and to offer our service as part of the body of Christ, serving as a corporate priesthood.

I want to thank all members of the Worship Committee who have been devoted to creating meaningful worship for our congregation: Pam Howe, Kirk Howe, Margaret Miller, Jenny Newman, Verna Robinson, Kathi Robinson-Dassel, Pam Twiss, Pamela Bower, Gail Luley, and Rev. Dr. Vincent Kolb.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Bower, chair

*Book of Common Worship

You made it all the way through the reports! I’m really proud of you.

I hope you’re not just reading this message because it caught your eye. People work really hard on the committees that make our church run, and committee reports are pretty thankless. Do the committees, their members, and their chairs a solid and go back.