

# Annual Committee Reports 2017

## Christian Education

It was another active and full year for Christian Education at Sixth Presbyterian in 2017. We thank the many dedicated Sunday school teachers and volunteers that give countless hours to ministry to our children youth, and adults.

Nursery care was provided each week during Sunday school and worship. In addition to Sunday school classes for all ages, Extended Session was held each week during worship (following the Time for Children) for kids through 5th grade. This year we continued providing additional nursery and child care for parents during committee meetings, church events, and the women's retreat. Children and youth actively participated in worship throughout the year in multiple ways. These include serving as acolytes and water bearers, lighting peace candles, and being part of our lively Time for Children.

Many youth have participated in worship by serving as ushers and participating in dramas for Palm Sunday and other services. Sunday school students participated and volunteered for Squirrel Hill clean-up day in the spring. In May, church families attended a successful and fun family overnight retreat at Camp Crestfield. In July, we held three family nights as our Vacation Bible School program. The themes for this year was Neighbors. The topics of "Who is our Neighbor," "Welcoming our Neighbor," and "Loving our Neighbor " were explored with activities, crafts and songs. Each evening began with a shared meal. We also had a special program featuring the puppets from the Kids on the Block show from the Children's Institute. Participants also packed care packages for the homeless with items supplied by the Deacons.

In the spring, families were invited to attend our Palm Sunday family dinner where we began Holy Week with a meal together, crafts, activities and Holy Week Prayer Stations. Our annual Rally Day breakfast was planned and executed on the first day of Sunday school in September. 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.

The youth group participated in many activities and events throughout the year including weekly coffee shop gatherings, volunteering in the community at community at East End Community House, and packing care kits for the homeless.

In February, we began a Confirmation Class for those teenagers interested in becoming members of Sixth Church. Christian Education Director Jenny Newman led with class which met monthly. Five students - Liam Greenly, David Rothenberg, Lizzy Sindhi, Elly Bertolet, and Daedalus Brockner - completed the process and were confirmed into membership in October on World Wide Communion Sunday. In addition to meeting monthly and completing a statement of faith, the students participated in a service project attended a Pirates baseball game together and met with their senior partners.

In late June, Youth group member David Rothenberg traveled on a mission trip with Jenny Newman, Sara Berg, and friends from the Building New Hope organization to visit our mission partners at El Porvenir, Nicaragua. The group spent their time in El Porvenir delivering supplies and donations,

learning and working on the coffee cooperative, and sharing worship and fellowship with our friends there. We continue selling coffee from El Porvenir throughout the year here at the church.

The Christian Education Committee also help to support and host adult education programs at the church throughout the year. Our adult Sunday school class led by Bill Guy continued to meet throughout the year with a dedicated group studying the synoptic Gospels.

With the Social Justice/PIIN Core Team we presented speakers with a social justice theme during Lent. Those speakers and topics included:

- UPMC employee Nila Peyton, a leader in the Fight for \$15 movement joined us to speak and lead discussion on the injustice of low pay.
- Public transit advocate Molly Nichols, the executive director of Pittsburghers for Public Transit, who joined us to talk about the work of her organization in successfully reversing cuts in service to neighborhoods.
- Gale Schwartz, Project Specialist with the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, who spoke about affordable housing.
- The Rev. John Creasy joined us to give a front-line report from the struggle of the Sioux nation to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline. Creasy is the Associate Pastor for the Open Door, director of Garfield Community Farm, and a member of the Pittsburgh Presbytery Peacemaking Ministry Team.

In April and May, Rev. Kolb and members of the Anti-Racism Task Force of Pittsburgh Presbytery co- led a three-week discussion and study based on the book “Waking up White” by Debby Irving. Elder Peter Gilmore led Sunday morning classes on the Belhar Confession and the Reformation this past fall.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Newman on behalf of the Christian Education Committee

## Church and Community

During the past year the Church and Community Committee (C&C) and its various committees and groupings continued to actively support a variety of charitable causes while expanding involvement with social justice causes and other social issues.

This year’s report on those activities is co-written by Sue Koehler and Tom Twiss (Church and Community), Myra Kazanjian and Nora Johnson (Earth Care), Myra Kazanjian (Gun Safety), Mary Crossley (Social Justice Core Team), Sue Koehler (CROP Walk), Diana Marston Wood (Assistance to Neighborhood Academy), and Trish Calloway (Support for the Wilkinsburg Community Ministry Holiday Food Drive). Thanks to all who helped with this report, and to all members of C&C for their remarkable work this year. Also, a special thanks to Sue Koehler and Peter Kaplan for their extraordinary and continuing assistance with C&C leadership!

## Church and Community: Continuing and Deepening Our Emphasis on Social Justice

In 2017 the entire Church & Community Committee deepened its growing emphasis on social justice advocacy. This was evident in its allocations of budgeted funds and the annual Peace and Global Witness Offering, educational initiatives, participation in the New Sanctuary Movement, and support for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine.

The committee continued the pattern established in 2016 of increased donations to advocacy organizations; such donations now comprise 29% of our contributions. Our total contributions include a variety of local, national, and international charities, listed below. We strive to stay closely in touch with all of these organizations.

<b>Locally Directed Mission Budget 2017</b>	
<b>Committee-directed</b>	
Wilkinsburg Community Ministry	\$2,400
Neighborhood Academy	\$1,765
East End Community Ministry	\$600
Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank	\$1,265
MHY Family Services (formerly Mars Home for Youth)	\$1,025
El Porvenir Community, Nicaragua	\$980
Crestfield Camp and Conference Center	\$980
Lazarus Fund	\$980
Reimbursement for EECM/Neighborhood Academy Meals	\$600
Anti-Racism Transformation Team, Pittsburgh Presbytery	\$885
Just Harvest	\$1,075
Church World Service	\$840
Global Links	\$600
Table Ministry of the Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community	\$495
Pittsburgh Pastoral Institute	\$350
<b>Directed by other entities</b>	
Social Justice Core Team (Annual PIIN dinner contribution, PIIN local leadership training, & United Pittsburgh)	\$1,570
Gun Safety Group (CeaseFirePA & Moms Demand Action)	\$1,175
Earth Care (Penn Environment, League of Conservation Voters, & Recycling Expenses)	\$1,175
Youth Group (Dreams of Hope)	\$490
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$19,250</b>

The Church and Community Committee is also responsible for distributing 25% of the funds donated to the annual Peace and Global Witness Offering – money which is intended to address systems of

injustice across the world. Three causes received \$225 each from an accumulation in the fund:

- Legal challenges to the Dakota Access Pipeline and legal defense of challengers to the construction
- Peacemaking efforts of the PC(USA) Israel/Palestine Mission
- Refugee resettlement program of Church World Service, facing federal cutbacks

When new funds were donated later in the year, we supported two additional local organizations:

- \$180 to Sisterfriend, which makes hygiene products available to vulnerable and homeless women
- \$100 to Pittsburgh United, a social justice organization

### **Social Justice Program Series**

A new initiative of Church and Community this year was its organization, in collaboration with Adult Christian Education, of a semi-regular series of programs devoted to social justice topics. Peter Gilmore, Peter Kaplan, Myra Kazanjian, Leila Richards, and Tom Twiss participated in the subcommittee of C&C that planned the series. Programs included:

- June 13, a showing of the “At the River I Stand,” a powerful documentary about the strike of Memphis sanitation workers
- July 11, “The Elusive Struggle for Justice in Palestine,” with speakers Ahmed Arafat and Tina Whitehead
- Aug. 15, “Mass Incarceration: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Systemic Slavery,” with speaker Rev. Buena Smith Dudley
- Sept.12, “Beyond the Charitable-Industrial Complex,” with speaker Rev. Dr. Hunter Farrell
- Sept. 26, “Further Beyond the Charitable-Industrial Complex,” with speaker Rev. Dr. Hunter Farrell
- Oct. 1, “Sharing Our Mission: Nicaragua 2017,” with speakers from Sixth mission team & friends from Building New Hope
- Oct. 29,” Fighting Hunger and pursuing Economic Justice,” with speaker Ken Regal; and
- Nov. 5, “Why Gerrymandering is Bad and What You Can Do to End it,” with speaker Eileen Olmsted

### **Justice for Immigrants**

Another new area of activity was the movement for justice for immigrants regardless of their immigration status. In February Session asked Church and Community to make recommendations regarding the participation of Sixth in the sanctuary movement. Kate Davoli helped the committee explore our questions about sanctuary; C&C members attended sanctuary meetings held in Pittsburgh; and Opal Middleton, a new attendee at Sixth and member of the leadership of the New Sanctuary Movement of Pittsburgh (NSMP), reported to C&C about the needs of immigrants in

Pittsburgh and the activities of the NSMP. Then, in June C&C held a special meeting for all members and friends of Sixth where Opal led a more extensive discussion of these questions. We concluded that although it was not necessary or feasible for Sixth to provide *physical* sanctuary, our participation in the NSMP would be both welcome and helpful. Our recommendations that Sixth affiliate with the NSMP and that Peter Kaplan, assisted by Mary Radcliffe, represent Sixth in the NSMP were approved by Session.

### **Hewlett-Packard Boycott**

A final social justice issue addressed by the C&C was Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Recalling that PC(USA)'s decision in 2014 to divest from Hewlett-Packard because of its involvement in the occupation, and noting the current campaign by the Christian ecumenical organization Friends of Sabeel North America to boycott HP, Peter Gilmore proposed that C&C recommend a boycott by Sixth of all HP products. This resolution was extensively discussed and approved by the C&C, then approved by Session.

### **Earth Care**

In 2017 Sixth was approved for our second year as an Earth Care Congregation.

April was an especially busy month for our Earth Care Team. On April 22, Earth Day, several of us participated in the large March for Science in Oakland. The next day we led an Earth Day observance for the Sunday service at Sixth. Then, the following Saturday committee members and other members of Sixth marched in People's Climate March 2.0 in Washington DC and in the Pittsburgh March for Climate, Jobs, and Justice.

Throughout the year the Earth Care Committee continued its work on the recycling of hard to recycle items. In this regard, we found a new location for smaller items to be recycled in the former men's room in the basement.

In the fall, representatives from our committee participated in important training opportunities. Nora Johnson, Myra Kazanjian, and Maggie Ritchie took part in training by Pennsylvania Interfaith Power and Light on how to influence those with whom we disagree. Pennsylvania Interfaith Power and Light is an interfaith group seeking to approach climate change as a moral issue. Myra and Nora also attended and completed the three-day Climate Reality Leadership Corps activist training sponsored by Al Gore's Climate Reality Project.

Finally, Earth Care initiated plans for a major program to be held at Sixth in early 2018. At a meeting of Church and Community and Earth Care our committee proposed a program that would address climate change and the construction of the petrochemical plant in Beaver County. This was approved by the joint meeting and subsequently approved by Session. Since then, a planning committee has outlined plans for this program. On March 25 Larry Schweiger, former president and CEO of PennFuture will speak, followed by breakouts led by various environmental groups.

### **Gun Safety**

The committee remained active in distributing information on legislation and encouraging member actions. On June 3 we held Wear Orange National Gun Violence Awareness Day at Sixth for a second year. Church members assisted with set-up and serving refreshments, and Kirk Howe provided

music. The committee also helped publicize the campaign by Moms Demand Action for PA SB 501, the Domestic Violence Homicide Prevention Bill. This bill was introduced by Sen. Tom Killian in October. Moms is currently working to get co-sponsors.

## **Social Justice Core Team**

in 2017 a “Core Team” of eight Sixth members and Rev. Kolb met monthly to coordinate Sixth’s involvement in social justice-oriented activities, particularly the initiatives of the Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN). Core Team members and other members/friends of Sixth regularly participated in and supported PIIN’s work to confront and address economic inequality and structural racism. Members of the Core Team were especially active in ongoing PIIN efforts relating to the Clean Rivers Campaign, Affordable Housing (including testimony before City Council in support of a Housing Opportunity Fund), and Fight for \$15 (living wages) and a Union. For example, members of Sixth marched and participated in a “Fight for \$15 and a Union” rally and parade on Labor Day. In addition, Core Team members Opal Middleton and Peter Kaplan spearheaded Sixth’s connection with the New Sanctuary Movement in Pittsburgh.

Following the high level of congregational engagement in the PIIN-sponsored “Sacred Conversations on Race + Action” in 2016, the Core Team began sponsoring social justice-oriented educational programming at Sixth. These programs addressed topics ranging from equitable public transportation to the Standing Rock protest regarding the Dakota Pipeline, and included a four-part series on the book *Waking Up White*. The programs attracted a high level of participation (typically 20-50 attendees), and during the year the Christian Education Committee and the Church and Community Committee began co-sponsoring and then taking the lead on educational programs.

In the spring of 2017, Sixth Presbyterian made important contributions to PIIN’s major fundraising effort for the year: its Annual Banquet held on May 7. Led by Core Team members Peter Kaplan and Mary Crossley, Sixth’s fundraising efforts raised \$8,650 (including program ads, patrons, and dinner tickets), exceeding the funds raised by any other PIIN congregation! Attendance at the Banquet allowed PIIN supporters to meet with members of other PIIN congregations and hear about PIIN’s accomplishments during the preceding year.

In June 2017, Core Team members Pam Howe and Peter Gilmore travelled to Washington D.C. with Rev. Kolb to participate in Gamaliel’s national Race and Power Summit, which drew participants from across the nation. Finally, in the fall PIIN welcomed a new Executive Director, Jamaal Craig, after a search in which Rev. Kolb played a leadership role.

Many advocates for social justice found 2017 to be an exhausting year, with profoundly troubling political and social events. Members of Sixth’s Social Justice Core Team are sobered by the challenges our community and nation face regarding economic inequality and structural racism. We find inspiration, however, in working together and with others for the beloved community that God wishes for people on earth. Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

## **Thirty Walkers from Sixth Join CROP Hunger Walk**

The Pittsburgh East CROP Hunger Walk (on October 8) raised \$22,500, and the contribution of the Sixth Church team was very important to that success. We had our largest Sixth Church team ever – thirty walkers! They and their sponsors contributed an impressive \$5,590.

The funds raised will go primarily to the hunger and development projects of Church World Service, which is faithfully and effectively engaged in combatting hunger and poverty around the world. A smaller portion of the funds will return to help fund hunger programs in Pittsburgh – 5% to the East End Cooperative Ministry and 20% to the Wilkinsburg Community Ministry.

Thank you to our Walk heroes: the Bertolet family, April Clisura and Shawn Patton with Jillian, Louise Craft, Sean Evans, Patty Halverson, Cliff Johnson, Nora Johnson, Peter Kaplan, Lynn Kawaratani, Myra Kazanjian, Sue Koehler, Peter Koehler, Vincent Kolb, Joan Markert, Opal Middleton with Daedalus, Jenny Newman, Leila Richards, Maggie Richey, Nickie Rodgers, Pamela Twiss, Lauren Ward, Amy Whipple with Malakai, and Diana Wood.

## **Update on the Neighborhood Academy**

*Last year...*

During the spring of 2017 we prepared and served two lunches at TNA. This meant purchasing the ingredients, cooking in the church kitchen or at home, transporting the large pots and other food items like bread, canned fruit etc. to the school and serving approximately 100 students and staff. While many additional people have helped in past years, the 2017 team included Sue Koehler, Louise Craft, Trish Callaway, Kathi and Bob Robinson-Dassel.

*Historical perspective...*

Founded in 2001 TNA is a faith-based, college preparatory school serving low-income students in grades 8-12. The school's original location consisted of rented space in Garfield. Since 2006 Sixth Church has contributed annual financial support to TNA. Starting in 2008 we began preparing three meals per year for students and staff and this activity continued for the past nine years. In 2011 TNA started the school year in their newly built school on N. Aiken. This new space allowed the school to double its population to 100.

*Current situation...*

This past Fall (2017), TNA opened with a new Middle School wing built onto the school. This addition accommodates about forty 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys. "By catching these young men earlier, they will be better prepared academically and more acculturated, which will create more success in high school."

For us at Sixth Church this is wonderful news since this unique school is growing and prospering. HOWEVER, our TNA lunch team is unable to continue providing several lunches each year. Given our available personnel we cannot manage to prepare and serve a meal for 200 people. We ARE ABLE to continue financial support through our Church and Community Committee's budget and there are ample opportunities for tutoring in the school's Writing Center. Please contact Diana Wood (dmwood@pitt.edu) if you are interested in midday or early evening tutoring times.

## **C&C and Deacons Organize Support for the Wilkinsburg Community Ministry Holiday Food Drive**

Jane Fox is on the board at Wilkinsburg Community Ministries and became our "team captain" of this campaign since she is very familiar with the organization and the clients being served. Amy Whipple designed and managed all the communications in the bulletin with love and care. We greatly

appreciate her help and encouragement with her 21st century talents.

Sheila Kier, Jane Fox and Trish Callaway served as helpers to transport the groceries, assisted with set-up day as well as the distribution days.

Our report is a "Big THANK YOU" to the congregation!!! We collected an amazing amount of soups, cereal, corn bread and non-perishable canned foods for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Jane even arranged that WCM bring a van over around Christmas to pick up the many boxes of food. The collection of cloth grocery bags to help the clients transport their items back on the bus or walking was greatly appreciated. We hope that this connection to Wilkinsburg Community Ministries will continue all year. Jane Fox reminded me that "soup is easy to take home and heat up." The canned tuna fish or packets of meats are also easy to give as well as receive by our neighbors.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Twiss, chair

## Fellowship

The Fellowship committee plans and executes some of the large gatherings and meals for Sixth throughout the year. The Lenten season is particularly busy with our Shrove Tuesday pancake Supper, Agape meal on Maundy Thursday, and the Deviled Egg reception on Easter morning after worship. We organized the Church Picnic in Schenley Park this year in early June. The committee was involved in the Rally Day Breakfast this year, also recognizing the 25-year anniversary of Pastor Vince's ordination, and welcoming new members by transfer from Greenfield Presbyterian Church. The fall Stewardship event was a breakfast again this year, and was well attended. During Advent the Fellowship crew hosted a meal for the tree trimming event on the 2nd Sunday of Advent. Our biggest event of the church year is the Christmas Dinner, held on the 3rd Sunday of Advent, following the Children's Christmas Pageant. A cookie reception with punch is provided after the Christmas Eve Service. Finally, various members volunteered to host the fellowship hour after service in the chapel during the month of December. We welcomed several new members to our committee throughout 2017, and new members are always welcome; if interested please contact Jan Myers-Newbury or Sharon Manley.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe DeLucia, chair

## House

The House Committee is tasked with everything having to do with our real property, the church building (the House of God) and the landscaping. We work closely with the custodian, Harry Kirk, who often spots problems before they can become major problems. The following is a list of problems and issues the House Committee has worked on this year.

### Drainage/downspouts

- **Problem 1:** 2016 floods in the kitchen and Ridinger room during heavy rains  
⇒ Solution: Investigation by remote video camera showed that the underground drains of three



downspouts from the roof fed into a single 4" iron pipe that ran under the kitchen floor before connecting to the main drainage pipe in the furnace room; in addition to being undersized this pipe was also partially blocked by debris. We dug up the kitchen floor to replace this pipe with a new 6" plastic pipe, pressure-cleaned the remaining pipe to the furnace room, provided for three clean-out ports, installed a large area drain at the bottom of the exterior stairs with a sediment basket to collect debris before it entered the pipes under the kitchen floor. The trench was back-filled and the concrete subflooring was replaced by the contractor (Sembower-Mikesell, Inc.); after the new concrete had cured, the kitchen floor was retiled (Peter Koehler).

- **Problem 2:** We experienced persistent dampness in the corner of the Ridinger Room nearest the restroom. Investigation and excavation revealed that the underground drain for the downspout nearest to the base of the handicap ramp was no longer connected to anything. (It may have been disconnected during the construction of the ramp in the 90's.)
  - ⇒ Solution: A sloped pipe was installed above ground that channeled the water from this downspout to an existing pipe that drained the rain water from the top of the handicap ramp into the sanitary sewer.

## Furnace Repairs

- The leaking hot water boiler was replaced with a new, higher-efficiency boiler; a new control system for both boilers and the circulating pumps for the different heating zones was installed. . This system heats the whole building except the Sanctuary
- The Sanctuary is heated with forced air, blown into the room by two huge fans. For many years only one fan motor was operable, leading to come cold mornings in church. Two new, matching electric motors to power the fans for the forced-air sanctuary heating system were installed, along with a new control system and a programmable thermostat.

## Outdoor Painting

- **Problem:** The wood on the outside of the church (primarily windowsills, windows and doorways) had not been painted for many years, probably not since the 1980's. Most of the paint was peeling, and many of the windowsills and surrounds were deteriorating.
  - ⇒ Caulked, primed and painted all outside exposed wood (did not remove acrylic window covers to paint underneath). Some damaged areas received additional treatment with penetrol before painting.
  - ⇒ Replaced rotted door jambs on back door with trex (plastic wood), painted to match.
  - ⇒ Wrapped three particularly deteriorated window sills with metal
  - ⇒ Removed ancient air conditioner and rotted support from Jennie's office window. Boarded up the window till Spring

## Doors

- **Problem:** The double doors in the Chapel and Ridinger room were difficult to secure. Also, it was impossible to maintain weather-stripping on them, so there was a huge infiltration of cold air.

- ⇒ Purchased and installed two new sets of metal security doors with integral weather-stripping in the Ridinger Room and Chapel. Painted inside and out.
- **Problem:** the historic oak entrance doors facing Forbes and Murray Avenue were deteriorating, and the finishes were degraded by sunlight (ultraviolet) and salt damage.
  - ⇒ Stripped, sanded and refinished 6 historic oak doors in the narthex and at the Murray Avenue entrance.
  - ⇒ Stripped, sanded and refinished ornamental oak door surround at Forbes Ave entrance.

### **Landscaping and clean up**

- The house committee sponsored a church clean up in May. We hired a dumpster bag for debris. Church volunteers cleaned out the Sunday School rooms, cleaned silver, rebuilt the walkway from the back door, weeded furiously, removed shrubs, and mulched.
- New ornamental plantings, many native plants, were installed where ancient yews had been removed in 2016.
- Annual flower planting, ongoing weeding. Volunteers always welcomed!

### **Kitchen**

- Replaced the ignition system on the stove
- Repaired the warming oven pilot light
- Repaired the refrigerator and installed a new thermostat
- Peter Koehler stripped peeling paint off the exhaust duct

### **Telephone**

Two new telephone lines were run from the Verizon panel located in the ceiling of the room under the Church Office: one (requested by Amy) carries the FAX line to a second phone jack in the office, located near the copying machine; the other (requested by Gail) carries the Pittsburgh Camerata line to a phone jack in Gail's new office. (The line that used to carry the Pittsburgh Camerata line to Gail's former office on the 2nd floor was switched to the office line for Jen's benefit.)

### **Other improvements, most executed or led by Peter Koehler:**

- Replaced second floor bathroom fan
- A team of brave volunteers replaced the incandescent lightbulbs in the six spotlights 30 ft above the choir pews with LED bulbs (Long life, low energy costs)
- The right (East) outside light fixture near the Forbes Ave. entrance was rewired;
- The security lights in the back of the church were rewired/repared/replaced;
- All outside lights are now controlled by automatic timers;
- The wooden trim on the endposts of the west staircase railing to the lower level was reduced in

size (to allow the chair glide to pass), replaced, and refinished;

- The section of drywall encasing one of the ceiling beams in the Ridinger Room that had split and partially fallen down was removed, replaced, and refinished;
- A 2" diameter cable duct was installed in the ceiling of the Sunday School Room below the Church Office to protect the cables of the security system from further damage by hungry rodents; the camera was replaced.
- New welcome and directional signs at entrances (one so far, two more to come)
- Repaired the plaster and repainted a portion of the ceiling in the Ridinger Room
- New coat of varnish on the woodwork in the Narthex
- Refurbishment of the Men's room off the Narthex - plaster repair, refinishing of the oak wainscoting.

### **Closing of the Church**

House committee members (Tom Cummings, Peter Koehler, David Wood, Leslie Kaplan and Lauren Ward) take responsibility for closing the church each Sunday after services. New volunteers would be welcome to help with this service!

### **Grant Writing**

With the approval of Session, the house committee applied for a matching grant from the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Religious Properties fund for stone and mortar repairs to the building. We should hear from them in February.

### **Preparation for a possible Capital campaign**

As hard as we work to keep the building in good repair, time inevitably wreaks more havoc on the building than our small budget and enthusiastic volunteers can fix. We made great strides this year on important projects (see above) due to a \$60,000 surplus from prior years that session dedicated for this purpose - the drainage project, the outside painting, refinishing of the doors and furnace repairs. These were all longstanding problems that only the application of significant funds could alleviate.

We have begun discussions with the congregation about other significant needs: restoration of the 115-year-old sanctuary stained-glass windows; improvements for accessibility to the second floor of the church and repair of the handicap ramp, and; paint and plaster finishes all over the church, from the sanctuary to the basement kitchen. We have collected estimates for the proposed scope of work for each of these projects and will be participating in a feasibility study this spring for a possible capital campaign in the fall.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Kaplan, Chair

## More Light

2017 marked the 20th year of Sixth being a More Light congregation. The More Light Committee honored that legacy with a special worship service of remembrance and celebration on the anniversary of our official More Light designation on May 21st. Chair Kate Davoli preached and led worship, Chris McAdams was liturgist, and Louise Craft provided a sumptuous anniversary celebration cake during fellowship. Amy Whipple presented a Moment for History recollecting the patient and gracious way Sixth wrestled with the original question of whether to become a More Light church. The Moment is part of a larger project for which she conducted interviews with people involved in that decision and will (hopefully) be finish in 2018. As usual, Sixth had a strong presence at the city's PRIDE march in June and Rev. Dr. Kolb spoke about the importance of intersectionality for marginalized queer people at the People's Pride march immediately following. New plans for the coming year include some adult education activities around the "rest of the alphabet" – the parts of the LGBTQIA acronym, and other alternative sexualities, beyond the L and the G.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Davoli, chair

## Personnel

The Personnel Committee – Carol Emerson, Phyllis Rupert, and I – have the great pleasure of interacting with the staff of Sixth to be certain they have all they need to accomplish their many tasks to do their important work. We make salary and benefit recommendations annually based on their performance review. We conducted reviews this year using a feedback method with each staff member selecting three members or friends of Sixth and the Personnel Committee selecting three who then responded to an electronic survey. We used the results as the basis for our individual discussions with them.

We are so fortunate to have such an amazing group of high performing staff who provide all that we need to experience all that Sixth church offers. They do it so effortlessly, I fear we may, at times, take it for granted. Next time you see them, tell them how they make a difference in your life!

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Parees, chair

## Stewardship

Stewardship activities began in October with worship "moments for stewardship" made by Jen Joy, Keith Gillogly, and Margaret Miller. A church mailing went out which included a letter and brochure highlighting our church budgetary needs and providing a testimonial by member Kit Ayars. The brochure also highlighted our campaign theme, "For such a time as this," based on the story of Esther. Special thanks go to the worship committee for re-telling Esther's story as part of a worship service. We officially kicked off our stewardship campaign at a breakfast on Nov. 5 with a goal to raise \$320,000. Thanks to the generosity of the congregation and friends of Sixth, we secured 107 total pledges for \$324,146.75. Important to note is that we received 21 new pledges for a total of \$18,637.75 and 53 increased pledges for a total of \$223,119. The average pledge amount increased by 11 percent.

While the Church made its fundraising goal, we always welcome new pledges, and hope to receive additional ones throughout the year as we receive new members.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Ward, chair

## 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.”\*

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 of infants, children, and adults, 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 the Women’s Weekend.

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, and “Time for Children” offered during most worship services.

We have both youth and adults participate in Liturgical Dramas to highlight Biblical passages throughout the year, and our children & youth present an annual Christmas Pageant.

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.

We 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 and Verna Robinson, co-chairs

*\*Book of Common Worship*