

February 2020

# Sixth Sense

## From the Pastor

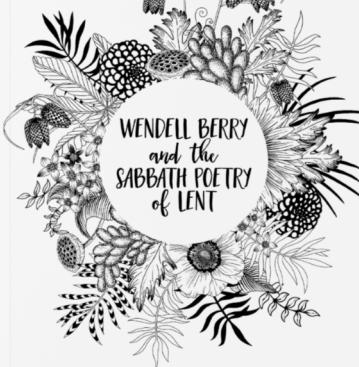
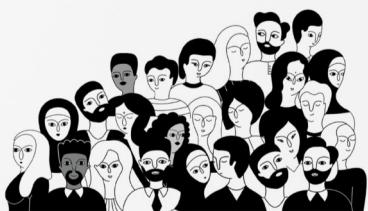
A rabbi once asked his students, "How do we know that the night is over and the dawn is coming?" One of the students said, "when it is light enough to tell the difference between a dog and sheep?" "No," the rabbi said. Another student said, "when you can distinguish between a grape vine and a sycamore tree?" "No," the rabbi finally said. "How do we know when the night is over and the dawn is coming? It is when you can look into the face of a stranger and see a member of your own family." Friends, the whole world, and everything in it, is our neighbor. There are no strangers. Let's continue to do all that we can at Sixth Presbyterian Church to awaken the dawn.

Peace!

Pastor Vincent

*Lent begins February 26!  
Take home one of these devotions –  
copies will be available in the Chapel*

40-DAY  
"LOVE BUILDS UP"  
FAMILY CHALLENGE



*Notes from Session will resume in the  
March 2020 newsletter*



SIXTH  
*presbyterian*  
CHURCH

## February Worship and Preaching

February 2 – Matthew 5:1-12, "Upside Down"

February 9 – Isaiah 58:1-9,  
"The Silence of God"

February 16 – Matthew 5:17-19, 21-24, 27-30, "Don't Even Think About It"

February 23 – Matthew 17:1-9, "Fearing Love"



## What the Pastor Is Reading

*Eternal Life*, Dara Horn

*Early Work*, Andrew Martin

*The Friend*, Sigrid Nunez

## Save the Date!

### Family Overnight Retreat at Camp Crestfield

May 9-10

## Youth Group Happenings, February

**Sunday School**—Sunday school class for junior and senior high will be held each week (10 - 10:45 am) upstairs in Jenny Newman's office. Come for discussion on the week's scripture passages, current events, and other assorted topics. There is always hot chocolate!

**Youth Fellowship**—Youth are invited for games, snacks, and discussion from 6 to 7:30 on Thursdays:

February 6 at the church  
February 13 at the church

February 20 at the church  
February 27 at Crazy Mocha (Murray Ave.)

Questions? Contact **Jenny Newman, (412) 720-6392 or**  
**Jenny@Sixthchurch.org**

## Mark Your Calendars

### Let's talk about Children and Youth

Join us for FutureCast! A meeting for youth, parents, church leaders and volunteers and congregation members interested in talking about the future of Children's and Youth Ministry at Sixth Church. We will be meeting following that Shrove Tuesday Pancake dinner at 6:30 p.m., February 25, in the chapel. Child care will be provided.

The purpose of this gathering will be to share results of our recent assessment survey, and participate in discussion and activities that will help us establish our mission, core values, and goals for the our children's and youth ministry.

Please visit the church website to RSVP for the gathering and take the assessment survey.

### Sunday school Safety Drill

On Sunday, February 16, we will holding a safety drill during the Sunday school hour. Children and youth will be practicing how we will exit the building in case of an emergency.

More details will be coming soon via email and the church website. Parents of children and youth are asked to fill out the Individual Emergency and Lockdown form that can be found on the church's website at [www.sixthchurch.org](http://www.sixthchurch.org).

## Upcoming Adult Education Opportunities

"Our Criminal Justice System": Public Defender, Lisa Middleman. Join us on Sunday, February 9, at 10 am in the Church Chapel to hear this talk on the current state of our penal system.

"Natural Earth Burial": Peter McQuillin and Laura Faessal. Join us on Sunday, February 16, at 10 am in the Church Chapel to hear out about this option for end of life, sponsored by our Earth Care committee.

# 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!



## Christian Education

It was another active and full year for Christian Education at Sixth Presbyterian in 2019. 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. Our Sunday school teachers and youth volunteers are Megan Fogt, Malena Howe, Tricia Delnay, Linda May, Meghan Jones, Chris Pistorius, Joe Ashenden, and Trish Calloway.

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 2nd grade. Malena Howe and Megan Fogt volunteered to host Extended Session time for older kids (3rd through 6th grade) who are not yet ready to stay in the sanctuary for worship. This year we continued providing additional nursery and childcare for parents during committee meetings and church events. Our childcare staff includes Jenn McCartney, Rachel Todaro, Izzy Nelson, Clove Roses, and Sonia Panic. The wonderful Bella Barden and Gianna Petrella are also with us in Sunday school and Extended Session as helper to the smiling and amazing Malakai W. and are a special part of our Sunday school family.

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. 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. Our ukulele club which was formed in the fall of 2018 continued to meet through the spring until the conclusion of Sunday school in May.

In May, the last day of Sunday school was celebrated with an Art Show

organized by Sunday school students Sadie DeLucia and Eve Guyette and featured art created during the Sunday school year by the children from our church.

During the summer months, vacation Bible school was replaced with the formation of the Kid's Stewardship club. Interested kids met together with Jenny Newman and Mary Radcliffe to talk about stewardship and ways they could serve their church and community. As a result of this the kids planned and executed a free "Be Kind" Lemonade stand in front of the church during the neighborhood's Market Night in August and held a bake sale in October.

Families attended our annual Advent/Ornament dinner organized by the Christian Education committee with a meal provided by the Fellowship committee. Resource tables with calendars, books, and at-home activities were provided to families for Advent and Lent. Our Sunday school students presented their annual Christmas pageant. The script, by Jenny Newman and Verna Robinson, emphasized the message of joy and love, while also noting the differences between the gospels—and reciting the genealogy from Matthew! Ben Cornelius-Bates played a big part in the Christmas pageant as well. Ben composed the music used in pageant and played the organ and piano for our worship service.

The youth group participated in many activities and events throughout the year including weekly coffee shop gatherings, movie and game nights, and packing care kits for the homeless during Sunday school. Thank you to Cozy Cornelius-Bates who volunteers as terrific game-playing youth chaperone/mentor.

The Christian Education Committee also help to support and host adult education programs at the church throughout the year. The following adult study classes held and speakers welcomed in 2019:

- Speaker Wynona Harper from Jamal's Place of Peace
- A study of Robin DeAngelo's book, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* was led by Pastor Vincent.
- Amy Whipple and Pastor Vincent led and discussed *The Poetry of Lent: A Lenten Companion to Mary Oliver's Devotions*.
- Speaker Ted Hoover, Community Safe Zone Coordinator for PERSAD, presented a special Program "Still, They Resisted," celebrating some of the unsung heroes of the LGBTQ+ movement.
- Book discussion with Pastor Vincent on *Holy Envy* by Barbara Brown Taylor.
- Speaker the Rev. Janet Edwards led "How Do We Stay Hopeful in a World That is Going Completely Crazy?" Edward shared her disciplines for happiness in this present time.
- Book discussion with Pastor Vincent on *Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel*, Kate Bowler.
- Speakers Elizabeth Beck and Pamela Twiss discussed their work October 20, *The Homeless Industry: A Critique of US Social Policy*, tracing the transformation of homelessness from being a social-justice issue to one with solutions based on medical models and zero-sum games analyses.
- Book discussion led by Pastor Vincent on *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* by Dr. Amy Jill-Levine.
- Speakers Donna Coufal, President of the Dor Hadash synagogue, and Jon Pushinsky, attorney and past President of Dor Hadash. The pair shared deliberations that led the Dor Hadash synagogue to craft the letter to United States Attorney General to not seek the death penalty for the shooter.
- Speakers Sue Koehler and Linda Davoli who led a discussion about "Lazarus," the Sixth Presbyterian Church commissioned choral work that was debuted in November.

Our church leaders and families participated and supported a variety of public actions and events this year including marching in the annual Pride parade, participating in the International Workers' Day March, and rallies held at the church by Team 26: Peace, Hope, Cease Fire PA, Squirrel Hill Against Gun Violence, and Moms Demand Action.

In April, Jenny Newman began work to complete the certificate program in Youth and Theology from the Youth Institute at Princeton Theological Seminary. The program concludes in

April 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Newman on behalf of the Christian Education Committee

## Church and Community

It was an exceptionally busy year for the Church and Community committee (C&C). We completely rethought and reorganized our local mission allocations; in collaboration with Adult Education we sponsored four social justice programs; we were responsible for allocation of the local portion of Sixth's annual Peace & Global Witness Offering; and we organized Sixth's participation in the annual CROP Hunger Walk.

## Mission Allocations

This year we decided to reconsider the values that inform our contributions to mission and the process by which we make our mission allocations. It had been a few years—a period of significant change for Sixth—since we last explored our values, so it seemed an appropriate time for us to do that. At the same time, we wanted to ensure greater consistency between our values and our allocations. Ultimately, we decided on a three-step process: 1) discussions to clarify our values, 2) the proposal of organizations to assist and development of value-based criteria for evaluating organizations, and 3) the evaluation of proposed organizations and allocation of funds.

In the first step, Rev. Dr. Hunter Farrell and Rev. Balajiedlang (Bala) Khyllep led us in a values clarification exercise on March 3. Hunter was formerly director of World Missions for PC(USA), and is currently director of the World Mission Initiative at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Bala is associate director of the World Mission Initiative. In the exercise, members of C&C and other members and friends of Sixth identified characteristics of Sixth that they most valued. The following word cloud visually represents the responses that were submitted. In each case, the size of the font indicates the number of times the value was named.



Led again by Hunter and Bala, our meeting of March 24 ranked and grouped these values and used them to identify our mission priorities. Subsequently, our priorities were beautifully expressed in a mission statement crafted for us by Kit Ayers:

Sixth Church's mission allocations are made through studied and prayerful alignment with our congregational values, with

compassionate hearts open to the call of the Spirit. We value courageous action for social justice, inclusion, and stewardship of God's earth and people. Jesus instructed us to love one another, a charge we recognize as a call to action: from providing food for the hungry in body or spirit to addressing the systemic roots of injustice in our community and our world.

Our meeting of March 24 also agreed on guidelines for our distribution of mission funds. We decided that 30% of our funds would go to direct service or "compassion" organizations, 60% would go to advocacy or "justice" groups, and 10% would be set aside as "rainy day" funds for local, national, or global situations or emergencies – most likely, situations calling for "direct service" assistance. This distribution represented a major shift in our focus from direct service to an enhanced emphasis on advocacy.

In the second step, on May 5 we agreed on the distribution of funds to the youth group and various committees at Sixth. As in the past, each committee was to determine for itself how to allocate these funds to justice organizations. The youth were given the option of making allocations to either justice or direct assistance organizations.

C&C allocations to Youth Group and Committees	2019
Youth Group	\$500.00
Earth Care	\$2,173.35
Gun Safety	\$2,173.35
More Light	\$2,173.35
Social Justice Core Team	\$2,173.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$9,193.40</b>

C&C also approved an Indicators Committee recommendation regarding values-based criteria for evaluating different organizations. These criteria included: participation by members of Sixth, need (for funds Sixth could provide), percent of people of color on the organization's board, whether or not the organization was faith-based, the geographic scope (for advocacy organizations), and the number of people served (for direct assistance organizations). The same meeting approved a list of organizations that members or friends of Sixth and members of C&C proposed we assist.

In the third step, an Allocations Committee scored all the organizations we had agreed to support, and it recommended specific allocations based on these scores. C&C meeting of May 19 approved the Allocation Committee's recommendations:

C&C Committee Directed Allocations	2019
New Sanctuary Pittsburgh	\$2,062.41
Sabeel Jerusalem	\$1,696.27
Church World Service	\$1,565.12
Wilkinsburg Community Ministry	\$1,433.96
El Porvenir	\$1,385.87
Just Harvest	\$1,173.84
Neighborhood Academy	\$1,084.22
MHY Family Services	\$1,075.47

C&C Committee Directed Allocations, continued	2019
Lazarus Fund	\$1,075.47
Table Ministry of the Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community	\$1,075.47
Pittsburgh United	\$1,060.17
Global Links	\$978.20
412 Food Rescue	\$872.18
Anti-Racism Transformation Team, Pittsburgh Presbytery	\$848.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$17,386.80</b>

Finally, on Dec. 1 C&C approved a recommendation from the Allocations Committee to divide our Rainy Day fund (\$2697.80) equally between the Brother's Brother Foundation for disaster assistance to Puerto Rico and Church World Service for its for refugee support.

The reconsideration of our values and reconstruction of our method of making allocations was a lot of work! But in the end we all seemed generally happy with the outcome. We now have a much clearer idea of what we are hoping to accomplish with our mission allocations, and a clearer method of ensuring a match between our allocations and our values. The credit goes to Hunter and Bala for their guidance and support, to Kit Ayers for contributing a beautiful mission statement, to all the members of Sixth who contributed their ideas, to the untiring efforts of all the members of the Church & Community committee throughout this long process, and especially to the enormous dedication and hard work of our Indicators Committee (Mary Crossley, Peter Kaplan, Myra Kazanjian, and Sue Koehler) and our Allocations Committee (Mary Crossley, Peter Gilmore, Peter Kaplan, and Sue Koehler). Thank you everyone!

### **Peace & Global Witness Offering**

A separate allocation decision made by C&C this past year was the donation of the local portion of our Peace & Global Witness Offering for 2018. The Peace & Global Witness Offering enables the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of conflict and injustice across the world. Individual congregations are encouraged to utilize up to 25% of this Offering to connect with the global witness of Christ's peace. Our local portion from this offering was \$262.40. We decided to donate this to HIAS, an aid organization for refugees. Our gift was in solidarity with our neighbors at Tree of Life who were targeted due to their relationship with HIAS.

### **Social Justice Programs**

Work on the allocations process absorbed so much of our attention this year, that we were not able to schedule quite as many social justice programs as we had in past years. Still C&C, collaborating with Adult Education, managed to organize four important and timely programs:

- Tuesday evening, July 23. Dr. Bob Ross spoke on "The Historical Geography of the Israel/Palestine Conflict," introducing the key myths, moments, and themes of the Israel/Palestine conflict, from the beginning of the Zionist movement to the present.
- Tuesday evening, Aug. 6. In the second of this two-part series on Palestine, Rev. Chad Collins spoke about "Sabeel and Palestine Liberation Theology." This program explored the mission of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem and its inspiration in Palestinian Liberation Theology.
- Sunday morning, Oct. 20. Dr. Pamela Twiss spoke on "The Homeless Industry: A Critique of US Social Policy." Pamela led a discussion about the book with this same title that she co-authored with Dr. Elizabeth Beck, tracing the origins of contemporary homeless policy.
- Tues. evening, Dec. 3. Marshall Dayan and Elizabeth DeLosa spoke about "The Case Against Capital Punishment," addressing the inherent injustice

of state-sponsored homicide and what can be done to stop it.

Thanks to C&C's social justice program series committee (Peter Gilmore, Peter Kaplan, Myra Kazanjian, and Leila Richards) and to Rev. Vincent Kolb and Jenny Newman for their work in organizing these programs!

### **Sixth again gives great support to the CROP Hunger Walk – Sue Koehler**

The Pittsburgh East CROP Hunger Walk (on October 9) raised \$23,427, and the contribution of the Sixth Church team was very important to that success. Our walkers and their sponsors contributed \$4,930. The team also shared the Golden Sneaker award with Waverly Presbyterian, given to the two teams with the most walkers who each raised at least \$25.

### **Wilkinsburg Community Ministry – Jane Fox and Jane Opgard**

The year 2019 has been very busy at Wilkinsburg Community Ministry. Since 2012, about the time Sixth Presbyterian Church has been giving to WCM through the Church and Community Committee, our distribution of food (by pound) has increased from about 5,000 pounds to over 45,000 pounds (as of mid-December 2019). That is an 800% increase in food distribution. This reflects the changing needs of the working poor-. Most of our clients are seniors struggling to make their static income cover rising food and housing costs. Generally, half of our clients are seniors.

Pantry distribution occurs Monday through Friday from 9 to 1 pm, Monday and Tuesday we have fresh produce and baked goods. Wednesday we have fresh baked goods from the Market District. Sometimes we get bread from Five Points Bakery. The walk-through program encourages people to come for fresh produce two times a week and cans and other items once a week. If they need more, we coordinate their sign up for St. James Church's monthly distribution. In addition to Wilkinsburg residents, we provide for those in Swissvale and other nearby boroughs.

We have especially welcomed Sixth Church having contributed to the holiday giving at Thanksgiving and Christmas. We plan to continue these special times, as well as including Easter, Fourth of July, and Labor Day.

Thank you so much for helping us this past year.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Twiss, chair

## **Deacons**

It was a busy 2019 for the Deacons. The year started with a training session on caregiving. This training created a shared foundation of caring for new and veteran Deacons alike. A Deacon's main responsibility and calling is to provide support for those in need within and outside of the walls of Sixth Church. By providing rides to medical appointments, help with meals, or just some caring support—the primary work of the Deacons has been attending to our care list of church members in need.

Throughout the year the Deacons have also helped in the life of the Church. By serving home and Sunday Communion, helping with rides to Sunday service and Bible study, an emphasis was made to promote pastoral care that ensured those in need never felt forgotten. Everyone should feel the power of a caring neighbor to support them whatever their need.

To help those outside of our community, many Deacons performed interviews, took intake calls, and provided monetary support to the Lazarus fund. The bulk of this work was completed through in-person interviews where Lazarus applicants could share their story in a supportive and caring environment. These interviews culminated in \$200 grants to approved applicants. Grants helped provide

Section 8 housing security deposits and help with utility bill back payments.

In addition to the Lazarus fund, many Deacons were also involved in homeless ministry. In order to help some of the most vulnerable in our community, a care closet with warm clothes and hygiene products was maintained. Throughout the year care packages for homeless individuals were also made. These packs contained food, hygiene products, and basic clothing.

From maintaining a care list to homeless ministry, I have been humbled, inspired, and privileged to serve such a caring group. Thank you for your service, leadership, and model of caring.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana Canelli Thompson, moderator

## Earth Care

As a certified Earth Care Congregation, Sixth Presbyterian Church and its congregants continue to strive to act as good stewards of the earth. In February, the Earth Care Committee hosted guest speaker Lucy De Barbaro of the Conservation Consultants group to discuss home energy efficiency. Lucy talked about the significant ways that homes and infrastructure contribute to climate change and what can be done about this. In April, prominent environmental activist and filmmaker Mark Dixon discussed regional air quality issues and how U.S. Steel, the Shell cracker plant, and the local climate exacerbate these issues, while also promoting activism.

Sixth began using Green Mountain Energy, a renewable energy company, as its electricity supplier in 2019. Our church also explored divesting from fossil fuels with our endowment through Presbyterian New Covenant Funds. In August, church governance agreed to transfer the Sixth Presbyterian Endowed Portfolio to the New Covenant Trust Company, which provides fossil fuel-free stocks and bonds. The Earth Care Committee deliberated recipients for its annual mission allocations and decided to support the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Plastic Pollution Coalition, and the local Group Against Smog and Pollution (GASP), which included Sixth Church as a sponsor of its 50th anniversary celebration.

This summer, the Earth Care Committee looked at conducting an energy audit for Sixth's church building. The audit would enable us to see where and how the building could be made more energy-efficient. However, the cost of conducting the audit and implementing infrastructural changes (in the tens of thousands) was considered prohibitive. The committee is exploring other means of improving energy efficiency and making the church more green, such as harnessing runoff and rain water.

Sixth's recycling program continues to be popular. While recycling regulations and permissions for both curbside recycling and hard-to-recycle items (which Sixth collects) continue to be in flux, Sixth's recycling collectors have been dutiful in collecting and processing recyclables. A useful reference guide was compiled that lists the hard-to-recycle items that we collect and where these items are taken for recycling. This list is a great resource for other churches and groups that wish to recycle similar items. Finally, the website RecycleThisPGH.com continues to be a great resource for understanding what can and cannot be recycled curbside.

I extend my thanks to the Earth Care Committee and to everyone who helps make Sixth Church, and our community, a greener place.

Respectfully submitted,

Keith Gillogly, 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. On the last Sunday of April we presented a special reception honoring John McCall, our Pastor Emeritus; a dedication to John was painted on one of the stained-glass windows and it was unveiled. We organized the Church Picnic in Highland Park this year in early June. Various members volunteered to host the fellowship hour after service in the chapel during the month of August. The fall Stewardship event was an expanded coffee hour following worship on November 10. 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. The committee provided receptions following the Memorial Services of two long-standing members of Sixth.

We had the JOY of working in the newly refurbished kitchen starting with the fall events! We welcomed several new members to our committee throughout 2019, and new members are always welcome; if interested please contact Jan Myers-Newbury or Sharon Manley.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Myers-Newbury, chair

## Gun Safety

Members of Sixth have been very active in lifting up tragedies caused by gun violence and educating ourselves about legislation that has the potential to reduce gun violence. Families from our congregation have lost close relatives and all of us have been torn by the carnage.

### Community Presence

There have been too many events to list in the past year. Many of us have attended multiple actions and educational events.

### Legislative work

**HB1075 EXTREME RISK PROTECTION ORDER.** This bill empowers families, household members or law enforcement officers to temporarily remove a person's access to firearms when they are believed to be likely to harm themselves or others. A petition must be filed and the court issue a temporary order upon finding probable cause. A petition for ERPO must be supported by a signed affidavit specifying facts justifying an order and a list of all known firearms in the person's possession. At the hearing the court must find by clear and convincing evidence that the person presents a danger of suicide or causing serious bodily injury to another person.

**Work Against SB531 THE SUE OUR CITIES BILL** This bill is a bullying tactic to punish cities which take action to protect citizens. Under this law, if adopted, anyone who lawfully owns a gun in PA could sue any town with a gun ordinance. This is a fundamental change in law. And it would be a burden on taxpayers because the city would have to pay its own court costs and the other sides cost. This would be a burden on taxpayers.

### Budget Allocations (including a surplus carried over from last year)

*CeaseFire* local staff person is Rob Conroy – who is a lawyer, their statewide Director of Organizing, and their lead staff person based in Pittsburgh--comes to almost every one of our

committee meetings and geographically builds support for gun violence prevention initiatives in every corner of the western part of the state through advocacy trainings, informational meetings, and events. At our meetings, he shares the insider's view of what is happening in Harrisburg with all facets of gun legislation, both good and bad, and is a resource that we call upon for the history behind current bills and representatives' voting records/level of affiliation with the gun lobby. Several us of have traveled on CeaseFirePA provided buses to Harrisburg, attending rallies and advocating for common-sense gun legislation. We provided \$1000 towards this work in 2019.

*Black Women for Positive Change* works to stop gun violence in African American Communities and keep kids in school. Last Year had national high school essay contest which included a winner from Pittsburgh and produced a video showing how support can keep kids out of trouble. Sponsors Week of Non-Violence in the fall. We provided \$400 to their Foundation towards this work.

*Jamal's House of Peace* (Penn Hills) Wynona Harper, woman of strong faith, lost her only son Jamar D Hawkins on Nov. 13, 2013. She works with community and city to provide support those most at risk for becoming involved in violent crime. This group organized distributions of food, backpacks, furniture; provides employment and models positive relationships with young people who lack support. In 1019 we supported them with a donation of \$400.

*Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America*. This group was founded by Lucy McBath who was elected to State House of Representatives in Georgia. Following the Sandy Hook shootings in 2014 she began a grass roots effort to reduce gun violence. She had lost her own son to gun violence just two years earlier. Sixth was an early supporter of Moms hosting meetings and for three years the Wear Orange Event was held in front of the church. Our local group continues to grow and is now receiving monies from the national organization and doing their own fundraising. In 2019 Sixth donated \$200 to their 501c3.

Lori Swenson will be the new chairperson for 2020. Everyone is invited to join our meetings and/or sign up to receive email messages about our meetings, current legislation and local events.

Respectfully submitted,

Myra Kazanjian, chair

## House Committee

The House Committee was busy with all kinds of work this year.

### Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Grant

With a 50% grant approved by PHLF in 2018, a contractor repointed all the stonework along the top of the building (the coping) and in a few other areas.

### Landscaping:

- 17 people of all ages came to help with Spring cleanup last May. They weeded, planted, and mulched. Later on, Frank and Dex Guyette removed a whole row of junipers along the access ramp. Daylilies donated by the Davolis were planted there.
- Information about responsibilities for landscaping, from the original agreement that was signed when the condos were built, was shared with the Condo association along with the drawing. The condo has since instructed its landscape crew to prune the yews along the parking area/driveway which had become overgrown.
- Removal of the dying flowering cherry, and overgrown yews along Murray Avenue
- The following permanent plantings were made: Burr Oak, Sourwood tree, weeping Japanese Maple 'Inabe

Shidare', 4 evergreen azaleas, 1 Azalea 'Cannon's Double', two butterfly bushes, one English Rose.

### **Repairs/Replacements by contractors:**

- Repaired a seriously leaking pipe in the basement
- Replaced the kitchen exhaust fan
- Repaired the disposal at the dishwasher
- Contracted to have the stone struck by lightning replaced (work will occur in 2020)
- Repaired/replaced locks and handles of two outside doors

### **Air Conditioners**

Replaced three air-conditioning units in the office (donated by Laura Sindhi), the nursery, and the main Sunday school room.

### **Hearing Assistance**

Hearing assistance survey and purchase of a hearing assistance system for the Sanctuary. If you would like to use it, the units are to be found in the Narthex and an usher can assist you.

### **Peter Koehler (Thank you VERY MUCH!)**

- Installed two additional overhead lights, two new switches, and two new outlets in the attic above the sanctuary in order to facilitate changing bulbs in the floodlights.
- Reinforced and reattached the outside light fixture on the South column at the top of the steps leading to the Murray Ave. entrance.
- Replaced the rotten wooden board and reattached the rain gutter along the North side of the roof over the Murray Avenue entrance.
- Installed a 160 ft long control and signal cable from the Organ Room to a spot on the outside wall above the back entrance door. (This cable runs up along the rear wall of the closet off the Pastor's study, then through the attic and Jenny's Office, and finally through a conduit mounted on the outside wall.) He arranged with the outside contractor (General Alarm Systems) for the installation of an additional video camera that will monitor that entrance.
- Mapped the circuits in the building – which breaker on which board turns off which outlet/light
- Worked with Jan M.-N. to prepare and mount a 9 ft long board with coat/purse hooks on the wall outside the downstairs kitchen.
- Replaced shut-off valves and supply lines for both hot and cold water for the sink in the 2nd floor bathroom near the Pastor's study.
- Replaced the defective LED ceiling light fixture (the middle one of the three in the 2nd floor hallway) with the spare unit we had on hand. Contacted Home Depot and received a new unit free of charge under the 5-year warranty these lights come with. This new fixture is now in the Organ room and can be used when another one dies.
- With Chris Pistorius, replaced the burnt-out halogen bulb (500 W) in floodlight #6 in the sanctuary ceiling.
- Replaced the battery in the defibrillator (lasts about four years).

### **Capital Campaign Projects**

The house committee solicited, selected and supervised the contractors for the first capital projects funded by the Capital Campaign. All contracts were presented to and approved by Session.

Here is a rundown of progress for 2019:

- Upstairs accessibility:
  - Gregory Winner renovated the upstairs bathroom to be more accessible

for children. This included the installation of grab bars, a new toilet, lowering fixtures, removal of partitions, painting and an electric door control.

- Approved a stair climbing chair for the back staircase to the second floor. Unit has been ordered.
- Kitchen renovation is complete. This work included:
  - Slides for drawers
  - New floors
  - Tiled surfaces near the sink
  - Repair and painting of all surfaces
  - Cleaning of all stainless steel surfaces
  - Powder coating (permanent paint) of the bottoms of both stainless steel tables
  - New, rebuilt shelves on both sides of the sink
- Repair and re-plastering of the ceiling beams in the Ridinger Room
- Sanding and Painting of all the exterior iron work.
- Completed all the Concrete work
  - Replaced the existing stepping stones in the back that were in poor shape with a concrete patio
  - Replacing the front left quadrant of the steps on Murray Avenue
  - Portions of the retaining wall at the corner of Murray and Forbes
- Stained glass: Window one is complete including the painting of outside wood and new glass covering. Window two, a 4-lancet window, is underway. We expect completion in the late summer/early fall.
- Electrical evaluation. Mendelson Electric examined our electrical system and made some repairs to one breaker panel.

**Total spent for Capital Projects in 2019:** \$ 178,535.94, which includes \$2500 in consulting services and \$10,059.72 for our March 2018-Feb 2019 Mission contribution to Wilkinsburg community Ministry, Clean Air Council, the Judah Fellowship, and Pittsburgh United (\$2,514.93 each)

2020 Capital Projects to look forward to:

- Chapel Improvements:
  - Acoustic panels
  - Permanently mounted screen
  - Additional large bulletin board?
  - New folding chairs to replace all but 15-20 existing
  - New AC / HVAC units
  - White board
  - Display rail installation
  - Painting
- Fire Safety System
- Ramp repair: Under contract with Mariani and Richards. Expect job start this spring.
- New metal kitchen door
- Third stained glass window

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Kaplan, chair

## More Light Committee

Due to joyful changes in Marcus Robinson's career, the former Chair of the More Light Committee left Pittsburgh part way through the year and the committee elected Kate Davoli to the position of Chair *pro tem* until a new chair is assigned from the Elders active on Session in 2020. In May the Committee led worship on our observance of More Light Sunday with Kate Davoli preaching, Mary Radcliffe as liturgist, Marcus Robinson giving the moment for mission encouraging attendance at the Pride Parade, Rev. Myra Kazanjian leading the prayer litany, and Maggie Ritchie and Louise Craft providing the celebration cake during fellowship. The Committee did the event planning for and led Sixth's participation in the Delta Pride event in June, with a stalwart contingent marching in the parade with our banner, and an overwhelmingly effective apparition at our booth of Flat Jesus. Plans for 2020 include a More Light Sunday led by guest preacher Rev. Alex McNeill, Director of the national organization of More Light Presbyterians, and some adult educational activities on the intersections of trans and Christian identities later in the year, as well as participation in at least one Pride celebration.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Davoli, chair *pro tem*

## Personnel

We are very pleased to declare that the employed personnel of Sixth Church is a marvelous five-some of hardworking, dedicated, creative, and faithful individuals. It is a privilege, and a very easy personnel task, to work with our Pastor Vincent Kolb, Director of Christian Education Jenny Newman, Music Director Gail Luley, Office Manager Amy Whipple, and jack-of-all trades, Building Administrator Harry Kirk.

As an expression of Sixth Church's understanding and commitment to social and individual justice, we have sought a tangible means to take better care of that part of God's flock under our own roof. In response, we have determined to provide to our staff members some enhanced employment benefit options, which are now available through the Presbyterian Board of Pensions. These benefits include a choice of 1) a contribution toward health care coverage, 2) a contribution to an employee savings plan, or 3) personal time off. Each staff member has selected the option which best meets the individual's needs and, through our congregation's generosity, Session has committed to extending and financially supporting these benefits.

While we are available to staff throughout the year, at year end a Personnel Committee member met, together with the Pastor, with each of the staff to review the work year, hear any concerns and discuss plans and needs for the coming year.

We are indeed fortunate to have such a stable, accomplished, responsive and congenial staff at Sixth Church.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Emerson, Barb Parees, and Phyllis Rupert, Personnel Committee

## Stewardship (Annual Campaign)

Thanks to all who contributed to the 2020 Annual Stewardship Campaign. The following figures indicate that we continue to have a healthy, supportive community:

Pledging units for 2020: 102  
Total amount pledged: \$ 340,282.00

This year, Session committed to providing a healthcare stipend for all staff at Sixth. Our goal of \$380,000 was ambitious, and we didn't achieve it, possibly because we have church donors who are making contributions to both the Annual Campaign and Capital Campaigns. Thank you for your leadership!

Nonetheless, due to the financial generosity of its members and friends, Sixth has a surplus that can be used in the next year to cover the additional costs associated with staff healthcare stipends.

To those of you who haven't made a pledge for the Annual Campaign this year but would like to do so, there's still time. Please send the office an update at [office@sixthchurch.org](mailto:office@sixthchurch.org), and Amy will note your pledge.

Respectfully submitted,

The Stewardship Committee (Carol Emerson, Patty Halverson, Peter Kaplan and Lauren Ward)

## 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." (Book of Common Worship)

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 Eucharist and the Baptisms of infants, children, and adults. 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, Christmas Eve, and at the Women's Weekend and Family Retreat at Crestfield.

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, 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, 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

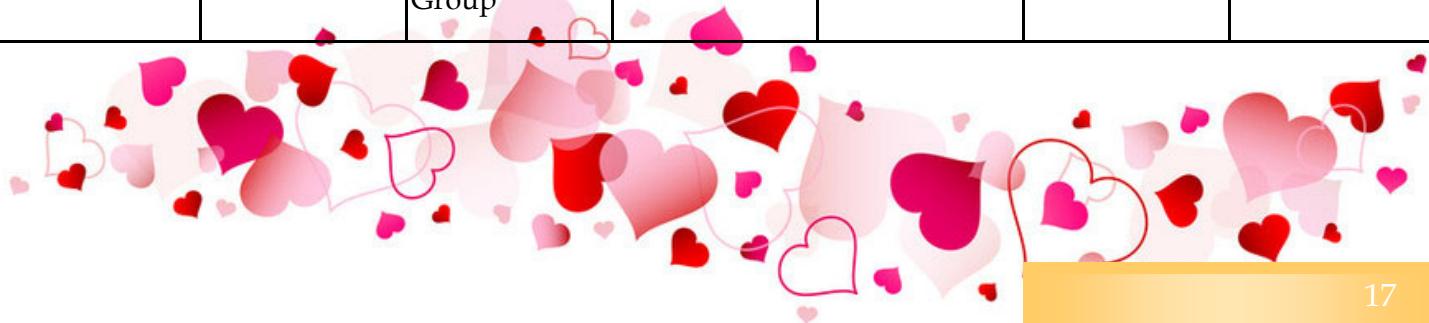
## February 2020 – Events and Birthdays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 2:00 pm, Jim Funderburgh's Memorial 7:00 pm, NA
2 <b>Chris Berg</b> 10:00 am, Justice Team Meeting (Parlor)  10:00 am, Sunday School  11:00 am, Worship  8:00 pm, NA	3 <b>Doris Bell</b> 7:00 pm, 14th Ward Democrats  7:00 pm, NA	4 7:00 pm, OCD Support Group	5 11:00 am, Bible Study	6 3:00 pm, Fiberarts Guild  6:00 pm, Youth Group (Crazy Mocha)  7:30 pm, Choir Rehearsal	7	8 7:00 pm, NA
9 <b>Kit Ayars</b> 10:00 am, Sunday School  11:00 am, Worship  8:00 pm, NA	10 7:00 pm, NA	11 7:00 pm, OCD Support Group	12 11:00 am, Bible Study	13 12:00 pm, Pittsburgh Calligraphy  6:00 pm, Youth Group (Crazy Mocha)  7:30 pm, Choir Rehearsal	14 <b>Peter Kaplan</b> <b>Glenna Van Dyke</b> <b>Aldora Watt</b>	15 <b>Kathleen Myers</b> 7:00 pm, NA



# February 2020 – Events and Birthdays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>16</b> <b>Maria Guyette</b> 10:00 am, Evacuation Drill 10:00 am, Penn Forest Natural Burial Park presentation (Parlor) 10:00 am, Sunday School 11:00 am, Worship 8:00 pm, NA	<b>17</b> 7:00 pm, NA	<b>18</b> <b>Cyril Fox</b> <b>John McCall</b> 7:00 pm, OCD Support Group	<b>19</b> <b>Greg Cooper</b> 11:00 am, Bible Study 7:00 pm, Deacons	<b>20</b> <b>GG Loyd</b> 12:00 pm, Pittsburgh Calligraphy 6:00 pm, Youth Group (Crazy Mocha) 7:30 pm, Choir Rehearsal	<b>21</b> <b>Linda May</b>	<b>22</b> <b>Louise Ford</b> 7:00 pm, NA
<b>23</b> 10:00 am, Sunday School 11:00 am, Worship 8:00 pm, NA	<b>24</b> 7:00 pm, NA	<b>25</b> 5:30 pm, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 6:30 pm, Futurecast!: Goal Setting Session Children and Youth Ministry 7:00 pm, OCD Support Group	<b>26</b> <b>Jan Myers-Newbury</b> <b>Amy Whipple</b> 11:00 am, Bible Study 7:00 pm, Session	<b>27</b> <b>Janet Kanaskie</b> 12:00 pm, Pittsburgh Calligraphy 6:00 pm, Youth Group (Crazy Mocha) 7:30 pm, Choir Rehearsal	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 7:00 pm, NA



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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 Feb. 15th. Please email articles and announcements to Amy in the church office ([office@sixthchurch.org](mailto:office@sixthchurch.org)).

You can also put printed copies on her desk.

Thank you!

## Food for Thought...

“Our grand gestures and our small acts are not so far apart. We remember our friends for the insignificant and silly things we did together, and for the greatness that they were too.” —Jeanette Winterson

“We live our lives, do whatever we do, and then we sleep. It is as simple and ordinary as that...There is just this for consolation: an hour here or there when our lives seem, against all odds and expectations, to burst open and give us everything we have ever imagined, though everyone but children (and perhaps even they) know these hours will inevitably be followed by others, far darker and more difficult. Still, we cherish the city, the morning, we hope, more than anything for more. Heaven only knows why we love it so.” —Michael Cunningham

“You have the sun in you, and the softness, and the clarity.” —Anaïs Nin