

Reports from Session Divisions and Committees

Administrative Division

The Administrative Division works with the church staff to support church initiatives and routine activities to maintain and improve the daily and long-term functions of Westminster Church and care for our church facilities.

During the past year we have:

- Completed 75th Anniversary Campaign improvements in the church library, including new lighting and overhead sound system, new carpeting, full re-painting and the installation of additional shelving and a work station for our Library committee.
- With the help of the Technology Committee, particularly programming experts Sherry Lake and Jeffrey Pillow, we continued to update the church's website with a more visitor- friendly, easier to navigate, and informative display. Office Administrator, Mickie Elzinga, coordinated the content and enhancements which we hope advances our message and outreach to the community and facilitates a better communication within the congregation.
- Made significant renovations to the Choir room, Comfort room, Music Classroom and the Kitchenette/ Sacristy on the lower level of the sanctuary building. These included a new ceiling with sound insulation and LED lighting, new flooring, new kitchen cabinets and closets for musical instrument and worship supply storage.
- Acquired new headset microphones for each of our ministerial staff to facilitate our worship services.
- Conducted an "environmental audit" of our facilities. As a result, we have installed digital thermostats with programmable timers to better manage our heating and cooling of Fellowship Hall and most other areas of our buildings, and have converted to LED lighting whenever light fixtures or bulbs are replaced.

In the next year, we plan to:

- Renovate the second floor of the Common Grounds building in conjunction with the planned turnover of office tenants by replacing the 50 year-old furnace and adding air-conditioning as well as many cosmetic repairs.
- Continue the exterior painting of the sanctuary windows, third floor windows in the church office building and the exterior trim boards throughout the church buildings.
- Repair/replace telephone and internet wiring outside of the administration building.
- Prepare a plan for the replacement of the wall near the main Rugby Road entrance to the sanctuary and/or a new entrance design for that area as the large ash tree continues to cause cracks and leaning of the brick wall in that key location.
- Remodel the bathrooms adjacent to the choir room as well as the Music Directors' office.
- Install proper storage cabinets to maintain our extensive holdings of sheet music which has been acquired over many years.

- Resolve issues relating to the sound system in the sanctuary especially sound clarity and projection to the choir loft and transept areas and improved hearing assistance devices to aid those with hearing impairments.

Through the Administrative Division we continue to provide assistance to maintain and enhance our church facilities and to support our church programs and Christian missions. We are thankful for our efficient and dedicated church staff including Mickie Elzinga, Church Office Administrator, Tom Mullen and Alonzo Williams our Church Sexton and Assistant Sexton, Steve Brown, Financial Administrator, and Sandy Wilcox, our Church Administrator.

Reuben Cowles

Personnel Committee

In 2015 as in previous years, the Personnel Committee has been blessed to work with excellent staff, both those who have been with us longest (Megan and Jonathan, Sandy, Mickie, Steve, Tom and Alonzo) and our interim staff, hired on an annual basis after Jim Baker's retirement and Laura's resignation to accept the call of a church in Colorado. The Interim Pastor/Head of Staff, Charles Grant, has ably led us in our transition from Jim to whoever comes next. Our Director of University Missions and Outreach, Tracy Howe Wispelwey, and our Director of Christian Education, Lynne Clements, have proven the wisdom of those who chose them, and one continuing refrain the committee has heard from the congregation is "whatever you do, don't lose (Tracy/Lynne)."

The Committee was also charged with recommending a new staffing pattern to the Session. We did our best to divine what we needed to function, and how we could establish a staffing pattern which would provide for our needs and not tie the hands of the new Pastor/Head of Staff the PNC was searching for. Discussions with our General Presbyter Carson Rhyne led us to the possibility of calling Tracy and Lynne as Covenant Pastors, including their ordination and service effectively as ordained associate pastors. We met with the Committee on the Ministry at the Presbytery, and got the go ahead from then to ask Session to call Tracy and Lynn to covenant positions. In that role, they will serve on annual contracts, with the expectation that they will stay with us for at least three years, while the new Pastor/Head of Staff settles in. Session could then reconsider the situation, with the new pastor involved.

Our experience with Jim Baker and Laura Sugg has left us with odd expectations. Most pastors do not spend their entire career with a single church, and most associates move on to a church of their own more quickly than Laura did. I like Lynne and Tracy, and would be glad for them to stay with us a long time. But part of our job is to help them to learn what they will need to know in their own church, to help them be ready to move on, and to celebrate with them when they do.

Carl Matthews, Chair

Christian Education Division

The season of renewal and exploration for Westminster during the past year has been borne out in the activities of the Christian Education Division. Lynne Clements, our Director of Christian Education, completed her first full year of leadership in our congregation. Committees for different age levels worked on their own and in coordination with each other to determine the best ways to meet the needs of participants in the educational life of the church.

During the Mission Study, we heard a particular concern for more opportunities for fellowship and activity among growing families. In response, we hosted a number of events to provide fellowship for adults combined with entertainment for children and youth. Events such as Cider, S'mores and Songs; the CROP Walk; our first summer musical in many years; and Parents' Night Out brought the generations together for communal fun and learning. We changed the name and scope of the Children's Education Committee to include a more holistic view of support for families within our church.

The Mission Study also reaffirmed the desire for strongly intellectual programming, as many of us are educators ourselves. We welcomed the president of Union Theological Seminary to teach and preach; we held a series of discussions on Race, Bias, and Jesus in response to events of concern to our society; we added to our libraries works relevant to our living in a complex world.

With strong support from the congregation, we sent two youth groups and their adult leaders on summer trips to further their commitment to mission work and enhance their spiritual development. Both groups spoke passionately of the transformations they experienced on their journeys, and the bonds they forged continue to be evident as they mature in faith. Our young children have had more opportunities for participation in corporate worship, and we worked studiously in the fall to balance the needs and come up with the right combination of classes for our children.

As we embark on another year of promise and hope, we are ever grateful to the loving volunteers who repeatedly give an evening or a year to the service of guiding our congregation in its growing faith.

Winston Barham, Division Chair
Ellen ThomasClarke and Sherry Lake, Children and Family Ministries
Nancy Paulson, Youth Education
Laura Vik, Adult Education

Fellowship Division

Members of Westminster firmly believe that our lives are greatly enriched when we gather to break bread, to get to know each other better and to have fun, enjoying each other's company.

The Fellowship Division wants to thank all those that have taken their time to volunteer in the many events throughout 2015. The support of many is critical to sustain events that are enjoyed by the congregation throughout the year. Events held during the calendar year 2015 that were coordinated by Fellowship, our subcommittees or in partnership with other church committees included:

- Adult Lunch
- Rally Day
- Enhanced Fellowship time to celebrate Jim Baker's emeritus status and Brian Blount as guest speaker
- Westminster Alternative Christmas Fair
- Thanksgiving Celebration for small families
- Student Thanksgiving Luncheon prepared by the Kitchen Committee
- Lessons and Carols Dinner
- Annual Congregation Meeting Luncheon
- Palm Sunday Hot Cross Bun Social
- Easter Service Brunch
- Worship in the Courtyard

Many thanks!

The Fellowship Committee is grateful for the 12 teams that prepare and serve coffee, tea, lemonade, provide snacks and serve Goldfish crackers throughout the year. Additionally, we extend a hearty thank you to **Jackie Brownfield and the rest of the Kitchen Committee** for the wonderful meals prepared and served in 2015! The Fellowship committee is also thankful for **Joan Bullard** who works hard to restore order in the kitchen after congregational meals. Thank you to **Betty Blackburn** and **Pat Delany** for the beautiful table decorations created for several church events. Thank you also to **Winston Barham** who keeps us supplied with Fair Trade coffee and **Jane Penner** who keeps track of what supplies may be running low. Additionally, we are thankful to **Jane** for organizing the Thanksgiving celebration for small families. Thirteen participants celebrated the day, sharing turkey and all the fixings at Common Grounds. Also new this fall, **David Saunier** organized *Fellowship on Tap*, a monthly opportunity for folks to gather at a local brewery and share in fellowship.

Once again in 2015 as in 2014, the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner was postponed due to snow. Although the Farmer's Almanac is not always accurate, we are optimistic that this year this family oriented fellowship event can happen!

Fellowship is far more than being a friendly church or serving drinks and snacks after church. It defines who we are as a church family. It is preparing a meal for a grieving family, providing a reception after a Memorial service, knitting a shawl for a seriously ill church member, opening our doors to the homeless. There are many opportunities to participate in Fellowship efforts at Westminster. These include assisting in set-up and clean up for congregational meals, washing dish and tablecloths and returning those to the church or creating table decorations for special events, flipping pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. Please consider joining the Fellowship Committee in the coming year.

Barb Shephard

Committee members: Barb Shephard (Chair), David Saunier (Session Elder) and Nancy Takahashi (Session Elder)

Mission and Outreach Division

The division administers Westminster's benevolent giving and advocates for God's justice throughout the larger community. During the past year, the Division was organized into several committee activities, whose reports are found below. Tracy Howe Wispelwey is the staff liaison to the division's committees.

Some significant changes have recently been made to the structure. In particular, the former Benevolence Committee and the Mission Endowment Fund Committee have been merged, as recommended by a task force of Session. This single group will now allocate undesignated benevolence funds in the annual budget, as well as income from the Mission Endowment Fund. Committee membership is Jana Campbell, Mark Hadley, Kobby Hoffman, Forrest Kerns, Alyson Manson-Davies, Cyndy Martin, Nancy O'Brien, Rob Smith, and Steve Wilson (chair)

Mission Endowment Fund Committee (Mary Jo Ayers, chair)

The Mission Fund was endowed to support one-time or short-term projects that further the mission and outreach of Westminster Presbyterian Church. Applications for projects to be funded were sought through announcements in the church newsletter and before church services. Preference for funding was given to applications

1. that arise from the Westminster community and/or include Westminster community members in their execution; and
2. that further the stated mission or missions of Westminster Presbyterian Church. Organizations selected for support during 2015 were:

- ANERA (Middle East)
- Building Goodness Foundation
- Family Health Ministries
- Jefferson Area CHIP
- Mediation Center of Charlottesville
- Network for Africa/Aspire (Rwanda)
- The Arbor

Total funds dispersed amounted to \$17,250, from earnings of the Mission Endowment Fund, overseen by the Trustees.

Benevolence Committee (Stephen Wilson, chair)

The Benevolence Committee administers the allocation of 'undesignated benevolences,' that is, Westminster's contributions to benevolences beyond Presbytery of the James (\$76,500), Mission Trip (\$2,500) and University Mission. In 2015, funds allocated to Undesignated Benevolences amounted to \$91,215 and were distributed to about 55 organizations or seminary students. These recipients ranged from local non-profit organizations to national and international social justice causes. Major recipients this past year (above \$5000) were the Alliance for Interfaith Ministry, Habitat for Humanity, IMPACT, and scholarships for Westminster Child Care Center—all local causes. A complete listing of recipients is found here:

African American Teaching Fellows, Alliance for Interfaith Ministries, Bangkok YMCA (Save a Child), Blue Ridge Abortion Assistance Fund, Blue Ridge House, Building Goodness, Camp Holiday Trails, CASA, Center for Restorative Justice, Charlottesville Dental Access, Charlottesville Center for Peace and Justice, Charlottesville Free Clinic, Covenant Network, Creciendo Juntos Health Promoters, CROP Walk, Foothills Child Advocacy, Forman Christian College (Pakistan), Habitat for Humanity (local), Highland Support Project (Guatemala), Hospice of the Piedmont, IMPACT, Innisfree Village, International Rescue Committee (local), Ivy Creek School, JABA, Jefferson Area CHIP, Literacy Volunteers, Meals on Wheels, Charlottesville Mediation Center, MACAA (Hope House), Neve Shalaom/Wahat el Salaam (Palestine), Opening Doors (transportation), PACEM (headquarters), Piedmont Housing Alliance, Play Partners, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, PROSAMI, SARA, seminary student support (1), Shelter for Help in Emergency, That All May Freely Serve,

Virginia Council of Churches, Tuesday's Table, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, Virginia Organizing, Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, Westminster Child Care Center Scholarships, Westhaven Clinic Parish Nurse, Westminster Canterbury (Sunday transportation), and Syrian Refugee Assistance (PCUSA)

Committee membership in 2015 included Wayne Cilimberg, Stan Kaslusky, Caroline Kipps, Forrest Kerns, Cyndy Martin, Mark Ratzlaff, and Stephen with Tracy Howe Wispelwey as staff representative.

IMPACT (Interfaith Movement Promoting Action by Congregations Together)

Now in its 10th year, IMPACT serves as the principal local justice ministry of Westminster. In cooperation with 26 other faith communities, IMPACT helps us live out our call of “working for justice in a complex world” by: identifying through grass roots discussion local injustices that are negatively impact our community; crafting achievable responses; and using the power of Charlottesville’s people of faith to secure change and hold those in power accountable for tangible results.

Our support: As a founding congregation, Westminster plays key roles in this justice work by:

- Actively supporting IMPACT’s clergy caucus;
- Providing key participants in research teams that probe issues and shape solutions;
- Serving as IMPACT leaders by representing the organization at public meetings, our congregation as officers and on the board of directors;
- Attending IMPACT-wide assemblies: the annual Justice Rally and the Nehemiah Action;
- Supporting IMPACT financially through congregational dues and individual investments.

Note: In 2015, Westminster increased its dues to \$7000, hoping to grow this support to \$9000 in coming years (one percent of our benevolences.) Additionally, individuals within the congregation invested over \$5,000 and there was \$3,000 given in Bob Bayer’s memory by friends and family.

2016 Issue: Based upon last fall’s listening process, IMPACT is currently researching the needs of elderly people, in three primary areas: Cost of living (the high costs of C’ville and having to work well past retirement age), Cost and difficulty of care, and Isolation. The research team will narrow its focus and ultimately present an actionable recommendation at the Justice Ministry Rally scheduled for April 12, 2016. We will pursue commitments from decision makers in early May at the 2016 Nehemiah Action.

Progress on Past Issues: IMPACT is also tracking developments on issues raised in previous years. We are finding substantial progress on these community challenges:

- Region 10 Community Services Board Director Robert Johnson reported the hiring of a full time psychiatrist to deal with children’s issues.
- Region 10 is engaged in planning with the city and county for a residential substance abuse facility for women, who now have to travel out of town for these services. The facility will provide services to 8 women (with up to 2 children) at a time, allowing services to approximately 50 women per year, and the facility is to be so-located with other needed social services.
- After three years of discussion around the challenge of securing employment opportunities for our young adults, IMPACT is proud to announce that a subsidized training program for entry level health care professionals is now being offered by UVA. Two classes have already completed the training.

Challenges Ahead: Building upon a prayerful assessment of its strengths and challenges, IMPACT continues under the leadership of Imam Ali Roach of the Islamic Society of Central Virginia and Mr. Chuck McCurdy of Holy Comforter Catholic Church. Having secured a major, three year grant from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, IMPACT is in a place to make the investments needed to achieve financial stability. Westminster will undoubtedly continue to play a major part in meeting these challenges.

Co-Leaders: Chip Sanders, Phil Best, Peter Gates, and Steve Wilson

PACEM

The PACEM Committee is anticipating the 10th anniversary of Westminster's partnership with PACEM to provide shelter to the homeless men in the Charlottesville community, February 13-27, 2016. This ministry involves a commitment not only by WPC's PACEM Committee members, Peter Gates, Gail Hyder Wiley, Lee Catlin, Beth Nissen, Elton Oliver, Cheryl Oliver and Dan Heuchert, but, also the entire Westminster congregation-staff, youth groups and volunteers from our faith community and the day care facility. We are blessed to continue to have the support of these groups. They make it happen.

We are anticipating 35 to 45 guests per night for this hosting season. We will serve a nourishing evening meal to our guest for 14 nights. In addition we will provide an evening snack and organize evening activities. We will also provide volunteers who spend the night and will set out a modest breakfast snack of coffee, Juice and breakfast bars in the morning before the bus arrives to transport our guest. We utilize approximately 11 volunteers per night. Those who are not able volunteer in person have the opportunity to participate by giving cash donations which enables us to buy prizes for Bingo Night and McDonald meal cards which we give to all the men at the end of their stay.

For the upcoming hosting weeks, all of our youth groups are involved. We have asked the younger youth groups to make drawing which can be laminated and used for place mats during the evening meal. The men really enjoy these mats.

We have been fortunate in the past to have partnered with Meadows Presbyterian Church and Buck Mountain. Both congregations have contributed an evening meal for a number of years: Meadows usually contributes 2 meals and Buck Mountain 1. They will continue to do so in 2016. Due to an aging congregation and perhaps PACEM fatigue, we have solicited other partner congregations for 2016. Crozet Baptist Church and Charlottesville Vineyard will join us as partners. Each has promised to be responsible for 2 evening meals, supply volunteers to conduct evening activities and, to supply at least 1 overnight volunteer. (We still need an overnight volunteer representing WPC on site). PACEM encourages this sort of "partnering." We look forward to working with our new partners and the PACEM staff.

Frances Sargent—PACEM at WPC, Chair

Green Team

One goal of the Green Team is to help keep the wonder of God's creation in the forefront of the congregation. The plan for 2015, in addition to applying for recertification, was to broaden our participation from only helping the various committees. We wanted to organize several activities for the congregation and to reach as many people as possible.

Here are the highlights of some of these activities:

- During the spring we worked with committees to complete the application for recertification as an EarthCare Congregation for another year. We were certified.
- The week following Easter, we chose books on the environment from WPC library to go into a display on the round table in the Commons for people to explore during the Fellowship Hour.
- In April we worked with Charles Grant to plan a worship service centering on Earth Day. Members of the Green Team gave a Minute for Mission during the service.
- In May we invited Dr. Hank Shugart, author of Foundations of the Earth, to speak at a gathering following the worship service. About 30 people attended, and the discussion was lively.
- In September we collaborated with UKirk to sponsor a concert by Kristin Graves at Common Grounds. Her music centers on environmental issues.
- Later in September we participated in the Mission and Outreach Fair during the Fellowship Hour. Our display brought the opportunity for much conversation.

- In the fall, a small group of WPC members participated in a wonderful day at a state park near Front Royal. Another group along with several students and members did some trail work at Darden Towe park.
- In October several Green Team members led a Church School class to be centered on the church's stewardship of the environment. They presented a history of environmental concern at WPC over the last forty years.
- The continued renovation of several sections of the church offered more opportunities to make our facilities more environmentally friendly.

During the year we began making connections with other EarthCare Congregations in our presbytery. We had discussions with Glenda Hollingshead, the pastor of Colonial Heights Presbyterian Church. Rev. Hollingshead wrote an article for the presbytery newsletter on EarthCare Congregations and included some of our activities. We also hosted Colleen Earp at our August meeting. She is Director of Youth, Environmental and Service Ministries at Camp Hanover.

Our goals for next year include applying for recertification, including articles on God's creation in the church newsletter, and gathering information on the possibility of installing solar panels on the roof of the kitchen.
Polly Cushman, Chair of Green Team

Inclusion Task Force

The Task Force this past year broadened its discussions of inclusion to the pressing issue of racial discrimination, including our own hidden prejudices. Ways were discussed as to how best Westminster could address these issues within our own congregation and by speaking out with other churches to the community at large -- and on UVa Grounds.

The Task Force met with representatives of the Westminster Mission Study Committee to express our strong recommendation that Westminster's historic and current stand on being an all-inclusive and open congregation be clearly stated in materials and discussions with possible candidates for pastor by the Pastor Nominating Committee.

The wording about being an open and welcoming congregation on the website and the introduction booklet to Westminster was reworded to use the broader idea of inclusion beyond being just a welcoming and open congregation. Efforts have and continue to be made to get Westminster's name listed on various sites listing "open" churches. Also, we support UKirk in its efforts with students at UVa. For a second year Westminster had a table at the PRIDE Festival in Lee Park in September joining other local churches to show support and welcoming to the LGBTQ community here in Charlottesville. Many students from other Virginia colleges stopped by our table along with a large number of local members of the community asking questions about Westminster and our openness.

The long history of Westminster's stands and history on openness is being put together in a brief booklet to be used as a handout to church officers and members.

Stephen Pfleiderer and Zanne Macdonald, co-chairs.

Stewardship and Budget Division

Stewardship and Budget efforts continued throughout the year. In April, our chair attended a Presbytery of the James workshop on improving annual stewardship campaigns, focusing on best practices of stewardship planning. In May, our committee met to begin consideration of the 2015 Stewardship Campaign. In July, we decided to recommend to Session our plans the Stewardship Campaign.

In August, Session approved our stewardship theme ("A Season of Renewal"), planning time-line (including newsletter articles and Minutes for Mission presentations), and plans for neighborhood/ demographic meetings.

In September, our committee met with the Division Heads to develop a 2016 "Needs Budget" that was approved by Session. We announced the individuals/ families that had agreed to host our neighborhood meetings. Printed invitations to the Neighborhood/Demographic meetings and the stewardship brochure were prepared and mailed with the assistance of the office staff. Sandy Wilcox helped us identify where members lived so that they could be invited to specific meetings.

In October, nine Neighborhood/Demographic stewardship meetings were held. They were well appreciated (with over 150 persons participating). Church members got to meet with representatives of the Pastor Nominating Committee and to learn about their work and progress at these meetings.

Our original goal for pledge revenue for 2016 was \$938,000. However, the pledges received fell short. Earlier this month, this anticipated pledge figure was revised to \$898,000. A final 2016 budget was adopted at the January meeting of Session. The budget allows the church to maintain its operations with few changes from last year and to support the work of the Pastor Nominating Committee.

Committee members are available to answer questions at this meeting, as time permits, and to respond to you personally after the meeting if additional information is needed.

Taylor Beard, Chair

Members: Taylor Beard (chair), Tim Peck, Mark Outlaw, Jim Wolfe, Jean Minehart, Joyce Kerns, Stan Kaslusky (treasurer), Charles Grant (pastor), and Sandy Wilcox (staff).

University Mission Committee

Outreach to the University of Virginia community remains one of the core foundational ministries of our congregation. In 2015, we made great progress in sharing the Good News with members of that community through a revitalized undergraduate fellowship (UKirk), increased use of Common Grounds for U.Va. community events, and continuing collaboration with other University-related groups.

Tracy Howe Wispelwey, our Director for University Ministry, moved her office to Common Grounds by early 2015, allowing her to be more present to University students. On average, about 30 students use Common Grounds as a safe study space each week. We hired Will Marsh as our part-time University Outreach Coordinator in the fall and his work with us has extended our use of Common Grounds to include late night study times and student-organized activities on Thursday and Saturday nights.

Tracy and Will maintain a Common Grounds email list of more than 225 addresses for regular contact. They report very high rates of recipients opening emails and clicking through for information about upcoming UKirk, Westminster, and University community events.

Tracy attended the early 2016 PC(USA) College Conference at Montreat with four U.Va. UKirk members. There were 14 U.Va. students at the conference, many attending with their home church groups. We hope the presence of Tracy and “our” UKirk students at that annual conference will serve to remind other Presbyterian students at the University about UKirk.

In addition to providing light Sunday brunches for undergraduates, graduate students, and young adults and Tuesday evening meals for UKirk, Westminster provided very popular hospitality at Common Grounds during the Spring and Fall semester exam periods. With the support of our University Mission Committee and other members of the congregation, we kept Common Grounds open and provided simple meals and drinks (especially coffee and tea!) for students as they studied. We averaged 20 or more students at practically all times through the exam periods. The outpouring of appreciation from the students has been particularly gratifying.

Collaborations with the Canterbury (Episcopal) student fellowship group, Theological Horizons, and the U.Va. Project on Lived Theology, as well as United Ministries at the University, continue to enrich and enlarge our ministry in important ways. Just one example is the Thursday morning Bible study group that meets at Common Grounds, facilitated by Theological Horizons. Canterbury students will join with UKirk students on the Westminster mission trip to the Mexico border area this Spring. We also make Common Grounds available to the Inter-Sorority Council for a warm, restful place for hundreds of young women involved in sorority rush in January.

While our “numbers” are improving, we also remind the congregation that our mission to the University community is an outreach mission of our church. We are called to reach out to that community regardless of whether community members become active in our congregation or even with UKirk. Ours is a ministry of active service without expectation of “reward.”

Ron Wiley, Chair

Worship and Music Division

The year 2015 was a time of both transition and growth for the worship and music division. The worship committee made strides towards including children in all areas of worship: serving communion on Youth Sunday and Worship in the Courtyard, participating in music, ushering, and lighting candles during Advent. Special Lenten services held at Common Grounds and other locations enriched corporate worship, and a special prayer service focusing on refugees and WPC's response to the worldwide crisis heightened the congregation's awareness. A refugee "tree" in Fellowship Hall provided substantive funds for the International Rescue Committee and was a tangible response from the Westminster community. All members of the division read portions of Anthony B. Robinson's book "Transforming Congregational Culture" and discussed how the rituals of worship and music contribute to our understanding of God's word and its impact on our lives. Periodic children's time during worship sought to incorporate our youngest participants, and a new format for Advent candle lighting included a more hands-on experience for children. Two new sub-committees were established: membership (this committee's report is included in a separate document) and the pew rack maintenance committee (individuals assume a month-long responsibility for organizing and maintaining the pew rack materials). The division also hosted a fellowship hour in the fall.

Numbers increased in both the adult choir and the Singers this year. Six new robes were purchased for the Singers. Declining numbers in the Chorister choir reflect the small number of children in K-4, and the division continues to seek new ways for this group to grow. The adult choir commissioned an anthem by composer Bob Chilcott two years ago, and today we heard the fruits of that endeavor. In addition, the first church musical in recent history was performed in July. *Jonah and the Whale* included over 50 people of all ages, from set makers, to meal preparers, to actors. This coordinated event enabled the worship, music and Christian education committees to work collaboratively to create a fun and meaningful production. On World Communion Sunday the services were enlivened by music from all over the globe. In March the adult choir presented *Charity and Love*, a cantata by Alice Parker on the theme of community. On each Sunday in Advent, guest instrumentalists performed during worship, contributing meaningfully to the worship experience.

The capital funds campaign has benefitted the music areas, providing new flooring, ceiling and lights, as well as improved acoustics. New cabinets and flooring in the kitchenette, as well as cabinets for instruments and worship materials, also enhance the area. The comfort room has also enjoyed improvements. Additional work will continue in 2016. The music committee would like to thank the substitute organists and musicians who have assisted in Jonathan's absence. Jonathan is currently halfway through coursework for a doctoral degree at Cornell University. The division would like to thank Jonathan and Megan for 10 years of dedicated service to Westminster. We are enriched by their energy, talent, and passion every day.

Patty Vandever, Co Chair (Worship)

Steve Patek, Co Chair (Music)

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee was formed in June of 2015 to seek ways to be more welcoming to first-time visitors as well as our own membership. With the pastor, it is responsible for maintaining current membership rolls.

We now have Greeters at each door to the Sanctuary for both worship services. They are the first welcoming face to both visitors and members alike. Greeters seek out and present first-time visitors with a “welcome bag” which includes a loaf of homemade bread and up-to-date information about Westminster. They are also available to direct visitors to classrooms or the nursery and accompany them to the Gathering Place after the 11 o’clock worship service.

The Committee has worked with Pastor Grant to organize “Coffee with the Pastor” this fall, a way of getting to know visitors considering membership. Pastor Grant also has reinstated the New Member class, a four-week refresher on church history and the Presbyterian faith, held during the Sunday School hour. Both the Pastor and the Committee write notes to first-time visitors.

When new members join, they are introduced during the worship service and welcomed at a reception held in the Gathering Place, where each is presented with a Westminster mug. Photos of new members are on the wall in the Gathering Place so that the congregation can welcome and get to know them.

As soon as possible, each new member is matched with someone from the congregation to be a First Friend. The Friend helps to ease the transition into our congregation by a variety of ways which may include sitting together in worship, introductions to others, an invitation to join at a congregational lunch, etc. The hope is that the new member will soon feel “at home” and become involved in the activities of the church.

The Committee has also made suggestions to improve our website to provide easy access to information vital to first-time visitors.

In all these ways, under the leadership of Interim Pastor Grant, increasing our church membership has become a priority in a way it has not been for some time.

Carolyn Kelly

Pastor Nominating Committee Report

Members: Sarah Bedford, Anne Hedelt, Will Hochstetler, Nancy Paulson, Jane Edmister Penner, David Strider, with co-chairs Dick Redding and Gail Hyder Wiley

Where we've been: The committee began its orientation in mid-August. We first developed Westminster's Ministry Information Form (<http://westminsterva.org/about/pastoral-search>), which describes our church and the attributes we're looking for in a head of staff pastor, drawing heavily from the recently completed Mission Study. After receiving Session's approval of the MIF, the committee purchased online and print advertising; the bulk of our advertising is taking place in January and February in *Presbyterian Outlook* and *Christian Century* magazines and their online presence. Also in the late fall, the committee embarked on a vigorous networking campaign—within the congregation, with Presbyterian seminaries, among clergy and other UKirk missions, and among members of the progressive PC(USA) affiliate Next Church and visionary Christian bloggers—to get promising candidates referred to us. We've received much interest and are working through evaluations. The PNC is very grateful for the technological capabilities recently installed in the Upper Lounge; being able to conduct preliminary video interviews via Skype will save greatly on travel costs.

Where we're going: The PNC has switched to weekly meetings. Three members of the PNC will be attending the national Next Church gathering in Atlanta, hoping to encourage even more candidates to apply and to glean new insights into the future of the PC(USA). We will continue getting to know promising candidates and will be prayerfully discerning which one God has already chosen to lead this congregation faithfully into its best future. The congregation's continued prayers are much appreciated.

Board of Pastoral Deacons

The Board of Pastoral Deacons is responsible for providing spiritual, emotional, and physical support to all members of Westminster Presbyterian Church.

The work of the Deacons is evident in many areas of church life, and may include: home, hospital, and residential home visits; preparation of meals for families experiencing illness, loss, or the birth of a child; transportation to and from church, medical appointments, or other needed errands. In addition, Deacons assist with baptisms and memorial services, and provide a time after church for those who prefer to share joys and concerns privately. Flowers from church services are delivered to members of our congregation who are unable to attend church on a regular basis and who may be experiencing an illness or loss, or to those who are celebrating life changes. The Deacons work in teams to share communion with church members who are unable to attend our service regularly. We provide a regular communion service at Westminster Canterbury of the Blue Ridge. New initiatives for 2016 include expanding our communication with our church members and a congregational survey to discern our current needs.

The Prayer shawl ministry meets on the third Monday of each month, and after prayerful consideration, shawls are given to members of our congregation and to others in the community. Since the program was started in November of 2011, over 100 shawls have been delivered. The shawls provide a tangible expression of care and concern and have been gratefully received.

The Board of Pastoral Deacons truly appreciates the support of the many volunteers within our congregation who participate in and enrich these many forms of ministry. We welcome additional hands to do our work!

Deacons: Camilo Bearman, Lucy Burnette, Beth Hochstetler, Rozanne Oliver, Dan Nissen, Dave Spence, David Strider, Kathy Stacy, Claire Thompson, Judy Rassi, Shann Whited, Lacy Whitmore.

To share a concern, offer your time and talents, or request help, please contact one of the Deacons or email us at: deacons@westminsterva.org.

Lucy Burnette, Chair of the Deacons

Nominating Committee

Report submitted at the annual meeting. Not available at the time of this printing.