

**2023 REPORT
OF THE
CONGREGATION-CORPORATION
OF
WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Auburn, New York 13021
JANUARY 28, 2024**

2023 CHURCH OFFICERS

THE SESSION
Rob Schemerhorn, Clerk of Session
Rev. Patrick Heery and Rev. Dr. Stacy Smith, Moderators
Michael Trapani, Treasurer

CLASS OF 2023

Paul Dungey
Crystina Brooks
Jack Hardy
Rich Newman

CLASS OF 2024

Rob Schemerhorn
Ann Wiley
Rina Hernández
Diane Lehner

CLASS OF 2025

Thomas Fessenden
Linda Russell
Vacant

THE DEACONS

Judy Santillo, President

CLASS OF 2023

Jackie Darquea
Noel Cregg
Suzanne LaPrease
Kim Patch

CLASS OF 2024

Beth Salvage
Gary Coon
Ruth Bentley
Vacant

CLASS OF 2025

Ernie DeCaro
Amy Sargent
Christina Thornton

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor s- Rev. Patrick Heery, Rev. Dr. Stacy Smith
Administrative Assistant - Melanie Toole
Housekeeper - Kathleen Hansen
Property Caretaker - D. Shawn Reeves

Children's & Youth Coordinators - Chris Patch, Noel Cregg
Organist/Choir Director - Lori Rhodes Pettit
Worship Center Leader- Noel Cregg
Nursery Care - Andrea Creighton, Liz Dominguez

DOCKET FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING

Welcome
Opening Prayer
Call to the Annual Meeting
Necrology and Prayer
Nomination and Election of Deacons
Financial Report for 2022
Review of Budget for 2023
Boards/Committees/Ministry Team/Staff Reports and Highlights
Acceptance of the Board/Committee/Staff Reports
Other Business
Adjournment
Closing Prayer

2023 Annual Report of Rev. Patrick Heery

January 1, 2023 – June 11, 2023

The grace and peace of Jesus Christ to you, members of Westminster Presbyterian Church, who are precious and beloved in the eyes of the Lord—and in mine, as well.

Before I concluded my time as your pastor, Session asked me to write a report on the first half of the year 2023.

Much of the first half of 2023 was devoted to preparing for my departure and the transitions of leadership and vocation that that entailed. It was a time of celebration, gratitude, love, and looking forward. It was a reminder of what makes Westminster so special: we are really good at loving each other. And I can't begin to tell you just how loved you made my family and me feel.

It was also a time of great energy and determination. The Holy Conversations recommendations continued to unfold. The seasonal ministry team process moved forward. Many leaders arose to maintain and advance the momentum of the changes Westminster was undertaking. We welcomed 10 new members, celebrated baptisms, formed new small groups, hosted many special events and meals, ate A LOT of cake, and shared in the blessing of vow renewals and commitment services. We walked together through one last holy season of Lent and Easter. We deepened our commitment to the Ugandan Family Education Fund and other mission initiatives. We explored spiritual wellness, experienced biblical storytelling, and shared many sermon talk-backs.

Worship

Between January and June 2023, I helped the seasonal ministry teams plan worship. I led their Bible studies and based many of our worship services and my sermons on the discussions, prayers, and themes of the ministry teams. January began with a special abridged reading of Henry van Dyke's *The Other Wise Man*. February began with another wonderful Scout Sunday and also saw the beginning of Lent with a drive-through imposition of ashes followed by our Ash Wednesday Communion service. In March, I got to sing "Won't You Be My Neighbor" as I donned the red cardigan and sneakers of Mr. Rogers. Rev. Larry Bell and I co-led a combined Maundy Thursday meal and service in the social room with a Good Friday Tenebrae service in the sanctuary. Many thanks to Larry who also led the Easter sunrise service. In April, we enjoyed an Easter Festival of Lessons and Carols as well as an Earth Day celebration.

I planned and officiated two funeral services, received 10 new members, and conducted three baptisms. I officiated one wedding, one marriage vow renewal service, and two commitment services.

Mission/Outreach/Evangelism

We continued to help many people during the first half of 2023. For instance, in February, we collaborated with Booker T. Washington Community Center and the Community Action Program to assist a young woman who was homeless and a domestic violence survivor, mother of a two year old and eight months pregnant. We provided temporary shelter, arranged affordable housing, connected her with community resources, and provided various needed items including children's clothing and a prayer shawl.

Nina and Jerry Wickett and Susan Winters met with me to discuss the possible creation of a social justice small group.

Education

I assisted Chris Patch and Ann Wiley in the relaunch of Confirmation, preached a Lenten sermon series on Confirmation class topics, led forums on those topics, and joined the final Confirmation retreat in early June. Throughout March, April, May, and June, I led "Conversations with the Pastor" following Sunday worship as opportunities for members to discuss the sermon and topic of the service, as well as to reflect on any questions, thoughts, and feelings they may be experiencing in either their spiritual life or with regard to my departure. Molly Trapani and Linda MacKay planned a fantastic Lenten soup and study series on spiritual wellness, and I had the joy of leading the conversation about contemplative prayer and the final session in which we discussed the whole series.

Pastoral Care/Fellowship/Spiritual Formation

I provided pastoral care, grief and crisis counseling, spiritual direction, baptism preparation, premarital counseling, and prayer to members of the church and community. I led contemplative hikes and helped Brian Teucke become their new leader. I collaborated with Shelley Pantoliano in the sharing of her Lent/Holy Week devotionals.

Administration

I moderated Session meetings, managed our building and its occupants, served as head of staff, hosted Zoom meetings for committees, and moderated the meeting of the congregation on February 12 to discuss the budget deficit, planned capital projects, and the financial future of the church. Rob Schemerhorn, Beth Salvage, Rich Newman, and Thomas Fessenden did a great job leading that meeting, which I found deeply gracious, creative, loving, and hopeful. I created an inventory of pastoral tasks, information, and materials, which I presented to Session, in order to ensure a smooth transition. I then equipped many individuals to do the tasks identified in that inventory.

Community/Denominational Involvement

In my service to the community, I served on the NAACP Board, participated in the annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Citywide Celebration, presented Paul Dungey's Fred Atkins Community Service Award at the Unity House dinner, kickstarted the planning of the annual Interfaith LGBTQ+ Pride Service, and spoke at an ecumenical prayer service at the Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church on the one-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Denominationally, I attended Presbytery meetings, chaired the Presbytery's Leadership Team, completed a Presbytery restructuring plan, assisted the Nominating process, oversaw the transition from the old structure to the new, and coordinated actions in support of the Young Adult Volunteer Program. I coordinated with Michael Depew, Westminster's Commission on Ministry liaison, regarding my departure.

Communication

I assisted with Westminster's communications by creating our weekly e-newsletter (Westminstergram), contributing to our print newsletter, assisting with some social media, and writing an occasional column for Auburn's newspaper, the *Citizen*. I authored numerous special communications to the church and worked to ensure communication between staff, committees, and volunteers.

Toward the end of February, I wrote and mailed, with Melanie Toole's hard-working assistance, a letter to the congregation announcing my departure as Westminster's pastor; it went in the mail the day after my announcement to Session. A few days later, I emailed the same letter through the Westminstergram. Afterward, I shared a number of communications, providing updates to the congregation on the process.



2023 Report from Clerk of Session

Each time I sit down to write this summary of the past year's activity at our church, I'm reminded of the naive hope that comes over me each year. The report will be one paragraph long and have maybe three sentences. 'Worship each week was meaningful and well-attended. Giving was incredibly generous, all our bills are paid and we are awash in funds for the foreseeable future. Everything that could go right did, and we had a remarkably uneventful and fulfilling year.'

Then life happens, as it did this year. The biggest change, of course, was the departure of our pastor, Rev. Patrick Heery. His leadership over the past seven years was something that we had all taken for granted, perhaps. Rev. Patrick left us in a good place, though, with strong lay leaders and a head start on finding a new installed pastor. In the meantime, we were blessed to have Rev. Dr. Stacy Smith as our interim for 4 months, and now we enter another short period of steady leadership by Rev. Dr. Pam Masten. As I write this, our Pastor Nominating Committee is hard at work interviewing potential candidates for our vacancy. We are most hopeful that their work will culminate sometime this spring, and we can look forward to beginning a new relationship with a permanent installed pastor in the spring or early summer.

Change is never easy. It is, nonetheless, a necessary part of life. As a congregation, we face the same problems this coming year that have plagued us in the past. Our revenue falls far short of expenses. While the critical repairs to our structure have been completed, there is still a long list of things left to do to ensure that the beautiful building we inhabit can continue to serve our needs. The property committee has done a tremendous job this year of guiding us through this crucial first phase, and are to be commended for all their hard work.

As a matter of fact, now would be an appropriate time to thank *all* of the folks who have donated their time, money and effort to serve our church. Whether you served on a committee, or joined a small group, helped on a seasonal ministry team, planted flowers, sang in the choir, led a contemplative hike, or just attended worship in person or online, thank you. While the pastor indeed helps plot the course and lead the way, it is us, the congregation, who sail the ship and do the work of Christ in our community. And we will continue to do so in the coming year.

Take a few moments and read through this report in its' entirety. Wonderful things are happening here. Some are new, some are continuations of the old. When I sit in worship and listen to the music from our refurbished and restored organ, I wonder about both the past and future of Westminster. Did our ancestors envision a future that even remotely resembles what we are living in now? Will our descendants still be here in this place, 25, 50 or 100 years from now? No matter what the answers to these questions are, I know that right here, right now, Westminster Presbyterian Church is an important part of the community and fabric that makes up Auburn.

I, for one, hope that the answer is that there will always be a church on William Street that people can call home. God bless you all and let us move forward in the new year with the love of God and joy of Christ in our hearts.

Rob Schemerhorn
Clerk of Session

2022 CLERK'S STATISTICAL REPORT

Communicant members, December 31, 2022	173	
Additions:		
Profession of Faith/Reaffirmation of Faith	18	
Transfer Letters	4	
Restore to Active Rolls	<u>0</u>	
	22	195
Losses:		
Deceased	3	
Remove from rolls (per request)	2	
Remove from rolls (inactive)	<u>4</u>	
	9	184

Communicant members, December 31, 2022 **184**

In Memoriam (members)

Dean "Bart" Chapman	March 19, 2023
Ray Cornwall	March 29, 2023
Knut Hauge	June 11, 2023

New Members

Donna Riester	Transfer	March 26, 2023
George Fay Jr.	Transfer	March 26, 2023
Barbara Ostrander	Profession of Faith/Reaffirmation	March 26, 2023
Ashley Teuke	Reaffirmation	March 26, 2023
Brian Teuke	Reaffirmation	March 26, 2023
Leo Araujo	Reaffirmation	March 26, 2023
Alice Hoatland	Reaffirmation	March 26, 2023
Michael Pantoliano	Transfer	March 26, 2023
Michele 'Shelley' Pantoliano	Transfer	March 26, 2023
Joseph Parker	Profession of Faith	March 26, 2023
Lilyana Thornton	Communicant/Profession of Faith	June 25, 2023
Macie MacKay	Communicant/Profession of Faith	June 25, 2023
Enrique Hernandez	Communicant/Profession of Faith	June 25, 2023
Mariela Hernandez	Communicant/Profession of Faith	June 25, 2023
Cole Creighton	Communicant/Profession of Faith	June 25, 2023
Ryan Creighton	Communicant/Profession of Faith	June 25, 2023
Ann Runkle	Reaffirmation	December 3, 2023
Joe Runkle	Reaffirmation	December 3, 2023

Weddings (None)

Baptisms

Joseph Parker	March 26, 2023
Nina Wickett	April 30, 2023
Maria Routhouska	May 21, 2023
Cora Margaret Verdi [1/26/21]	October 22, 2023
Daughter of Elizabeth Trapani Verdi and David Anthony Verdi	

Finance Committee Report *For the year ending December 31, 2023*

Major withdrawals in our Vanguard funds in 2023 included the budgeted 4% draws from the General Endowment Fund (\$39,577) and Gilchrist Maintenance Fund (\$8,700). Additionally, \$18,000 for scholarships was withdrawn from the Gilchrist Scholarship Fund. Westminster was fortunate to receive grants from the French/Metcalf Foundations for the bell repairs (\$12,000), the Near Memorial Trust (\$139,093), and the Everett Foundation (\$12,430). In February, Westminster also received the \$200,000 loan at 3.35%/year for 10 years from the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, a division of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Interest paid on the loan in 2023 was more than offset by the gain in value of the \$200,000 invested in the General Endowment account at Vanguard. There was a 24.7% increase in the S&P 500 Index, thus allowing our funds to grow due to increases in the market value of our holdings. This all led to an increase in our total Vanguard accounts from \$1,201,052 (on 1/1/23) to \$1,547,253 (on 12/31/23). We have paid back some of the principle on the loan on schedule and still owe \$185,769 as of 12/31/23.

The Ode to Joy Campaign ended in 2023, wherein Westminster successfully raised over \$175,000 over the three-year period to help fund the \$400,000 renovation of the Skinner Organ. Thank you all.

In the proposed 2024 Budget, extraordinary capital expenses have been separated from the ordinary annual budget in an attempt to clarify our deficit spending trend in ordinary income/expenses. Westminster had been blessed with a surplus each year for several years prior to 2023. We have had to withdraw only \$20,000 from Vanguard from 2020 through 2022 to balance the annual budgets. Even though the 2023 Budget projected a \$57,055 deficit, our church was able to reduce that deficit to \$7,582 through trust funds, hard work in obtaining grants, careful spending, and significant withdrawals from our Vanguard funds. There will be congregational meetings in 2024 to discuss the recent trends and how we might deal with them. The Property Committee will be creating a multi-year plan to address the remaining capital expenses delineated in the Beardsley 2/21/22 Property Condition Assessment. We have enjoyed tremendous support from various trusts and foundations including the Near Memorial Trust, the Everett Trust, the Bradley Foundation (organ restoration), the French/Metcalf Foundations, and Sacred Sites. Special thanks go to Jill Fandrich and her grant-writing crew for their diligent pursuit of outside funding for our beautiful, historic church.

Thank you to the Finance Committee for its efforts in 2022: Suzanne LaPrease, Judi Miladin, George Hiza, Mike Trapani, and Rob Schemerhorn; and to Melanie Toole for all of her continuing financial work. Alice Hoatland will be chairing the Finance Committee in 2024.

The 2024 Budget is also a challenge that we will have to work hard to meet. Thank you all for your support.
Submitted by Rich Newman, Finance Committee Chair

WPC Finance annual report 12-31-23 B.doc

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Comparative Financial Statements for the Years Ended December 31, 2023 and 2022

BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS	2023	2022
Current Assets		
Petty Cash	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Checking—Operating Account	59,275.28	77,749.17
Checking—Korean Partnership *	5,018.27	
Checking—PPNK *	5,218.30	
Savings Account	33,017.12	41,707.33
Accounts Receivable	253.38	
Subtotal Current Assets	102,882.35	119,556.50
Other Assets		
General Endowment Investment Account	858,568.55	534,341.99
Brokerage Account	-	48,410.42
Gilchrist Scholarship Investment Account	488,415.27	437,695.84
Gilchrist Maintenance Investment Account	200,269.02	180,603.31
Subtotal Other Assets	1,547,252.84	1,201,051.56
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 1,650,135.19	\$ 1,320,608.06
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE	2023	2022
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable—Capital Projects	\$ -	\$ 22,339.15
Prepaid Pledges	7,800.00	7,610.00
Loan from Endowment **		200,000.00
Subtotal Current Liabilities	\$ 7,800.00	\$ 229,949.15
Long Term Liabilities		
PILP Loan **	185,768.57	
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 193,568.57	\$ 229,949.15
FUND BALANCE		
Donor Restricted Fund Balance		
Ode to Joy Fund	\$ -	\$ (46,648.83)
Korean Partnership Fund *	5,018.27	
Presbyterian Peace Network for Korea Fund *	5,218.30	
Uganda Fund *	769.30	
Due to Property Fund from Foundations & Pledge	5,075.00	
Due to Pride House	6,467.52	
Gilchrist Scholarship Fund	488,415.27	437,695.84
Gilchrist Maintenance Fund	200,269.02	180,603.31
Total Donor Restricted Fund Balance	\$ 711,232.68	\$ 571,650.32
Unrestricted Fund Balance	\$ 745,333.94	\$ 519,008.59
TOTAL FUND BALANCE	\$ 1,456,566.62	\$ 1,090,658.91
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE	\$ 1,650,135.19	\$ 1,320,608.06

* Finance Committee began tracking these accounts in 2023 and decided to add them to the balance sheet because they are held in accounts under WPC's tax ID number. Two Korea funds are held in dedicated checking accounts, the Uganda Fund is held in the church's operating account.

** Loan from Endowment was repaid when PILP loan proceeds were received in early 2023.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Comparative Financial Statements for 2023 and 2022 with 2024 Budget

INCOME AND EXPENSES - 01 OPERATING FUND

FUND 01 INCOME	2024 Budget	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	2022 Actual
PLEDGE INCOME	\$ 144,606	\$ 152,022	\$ 144,364	\$ 146,328
LANDSCAPE PLEDGES	2,500	2,500	2,500	0
NON-PLEDGE INCOME	15,000	17,245	11,700	13,086
PER CAPITA INCOME	1,500	1,740	2,000	2,138
GENERAL ENDOWMENT	34,667	39,577	39,577	200,000
GILCHRIST MAINTENANCE	8,270	8,700	8,700	30,370
FOUNDATIONS AND GRANTS	0	0	0	30,000
TRUSTS	146,355	151,523	155,355	177,598
BUILDING USE	4,500	450	1,300	1,900
DEACONS	735	735	0	497
MEMORIAL GIFTS		1,260	0	0
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	150	173	200	48
FUND 01 TOTAL INCOME	\$ 358,283	\$ 375,925	\$ 365,696	\$ 601,965

FUND 01 EXPENSES	2024 Budget	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	2022 Actual
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	\$ 3,100	\$ 9,802	\$ 9,000	\$ 5,405
MEMBERSHIP & EVANGELISM	750	952	2,000	0
MISSION	12,750	11,329	20,515	19,520
WORSHIP	7,100	5,144	8,850	3,789
FINANCE (Includes Per Capita & loan int)	50,381	50,938	46,657	38,153
PROPERTY **	72,000	57,179	67,056	470,887
PERSONNEL	170,196	155,534	153,659	144,657
DEACONS	1,660	531	2,240	1,143
FUND 01 EXPENSES SUBTOTAL	\$ 317,937	\$ 291,409	\$ 309,977	\$ 683,554

PASTOR'S CALL

Salary	\$ 40,000	\$ 52,225	\$ 42,535	\$ 37,548
Housing	40,000	17,135	33,000	33,000
Health and Pension	25,000	17,248	30,239	25,950
SECA Offset	2,000	1,829	2,000	2,000
Auto/Books/Study	2,000	1,177	2,000	1,274
Health and Childcare Reimbursement	3,000	2,484	3,000	3,000
Total Pastor	\$ 112,000	\$ 92,098	\$ 112,774	\$ 102,772

FUND 01 TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 429,937	\$ 383,507	\$ 422,751	\$ 786,326
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FUND 01 SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$ (71,654)	\$ (7,582)	\$ (57,055)	\$ (184,361)
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*** In addition to ordinary property expenses, there are planned capital projects in the amount of \$126,944 not included in the 01 operating budget. Funding for these projects yet to be determined.*

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Comparative Financial Statements for the Years Ended December 31, 2023 and 2022

INCOME AND EXPENSES - 02 IN-OUT FUND

FUND 02 INCOME	2023	2022
Local Mission From Donations *	\$ 20,196	\$ 17,906
One Great Hour of Sharing	601	470
Pentecost Offering	695	790
Peace Offering	735	419
Christmas Joy Offering	1,464	430
Flower Income	673	203
Miscellaneous Income	7,092	3,123
FUND 02 TOTAL INCOME	\$ 31,456	\$ 23,341

FUND 02 EXPENSES	2023	2022
Local Mission from Donations *	\$ 19,562	\$ 17,425
One Great Hour of Sharing	601	470
Pentecost Offering	695	474
Peace Offering	735	419
Christmas Joy Offering	1,464	885
Flower Expense	390	265
Miscellaneous Expense	7,007	4,527
FUND 02 TOTAL EXPENSE	\$ 30,454	\$ 24,465

FUND 02 SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$ 1,002	\$ (1,124)
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UGANDA FUND	
Included in Local Mission from Donations	
Starting Balance	\$ 1,126.44
* Donations Received	7,902.66
* Disbursements	(8,259.80)
Balance 12/31/2023	\$ 769.30

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Comparative Financial Statements for the Years Ended December 31, 2023 and 2022

SUPPORTING SCHEDULES

The schedules below reports activity and ending balances for each fund.

GENERAL ENDOWMENT INVESTMENT ACCOUNT		2023	2022
Beginning Balance		\$ 534,341.99	\$ 1,105,071.45
Transfer from Brokerage Account (including 2023 appreciation)	53,005		
Increase (Decrease) in Market Value	110,798	(170,729.46)	
Transfers to Operating Account per budget	(39,577)	(89,920.00)	
Transfers to Operating Account—Capital Project	-	(110,080.00)	
Loan from Endowment to be repaid by PILP loan	-	(200,000.00)	
Repayment of Loan from Endowment from PILP loan	200,000		
Excess Income/Expense		324,226.56	(570,729.46)
GENERAL ENDOWMENT BALANCE, December 31		\$ 858,568.55	\$ 534,341.99

GILCHRIST SCHOLARSHIP FUND		2023	2022
Beginning Balance		\$ 437,695.84	\$ 530,130.39
Increase (Decrease) in Market Value	68,719.43	(82,434.55)	
Scholarship Awards	(18,000.00)	(10,000.00)	
Excess Income/Expense		50,719.43	(92,434.55)
GILCHRIST SCHOLARSHIP FUND BALANCE, December 31		\$ 488,415.27	\$ 437,695.84

GILCHRIST MAINTENANCE FUND		2023	2022
Beginning Balance		\$ 180,603.31	\$ 249,729.21
Increase (Decrease) in Market Value	28,365.71	(38,755.90)	
Transfers to Operating Account	(8,700.00)	(30,370.00)	
Excess Income/Expense		19,665.71	(69,125.90)
GILCHRIST MAINTENANCE FUND BALANCE, December 31		\$ 200,269.02	\$ 180,603.31

ODE TO JOY FUND		2023	2022
Beginning Balance		\$ (46,648.83)	\$ (34,486.62)
Gifts Received	9,347.50	42,187.50	
Interest Income	2.49	16.28	
Bank Fees	(62.59)	(81.40)	
Restoration Expenditures		(36,784.59)	
Mission gifts from Campaign		(17,500.00)	
Close out to Consolidated Fund Balance	37,361.43		
Excess Income/Expense		46,648.83	(12,162.21)
ODE TO JOY FUND, December 31		\$ -	\$ (46,648.83)

PROPERTY FUND FROM FOUNDATIONS & PLEDGE		2023	2022
Beginning Balance		\$ -	\$ 33,628.10
Receipts - Foundation Grants/Awards	12,000.00		
Landscape Pledge Remainder	775.00		
Expenditures - Capital Projects	(7,700.00)	5,075.00	(33,628.10)
Excess Income/Expense			(33,628.10)
PROPERTY FUND FROM FOUNDATION, December 31		\$ 5,075.00	\$ -

PASTOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE 2023 REPORT

The Pastor Nominating Committee (the PNC) is a committee of the congregation, elected to conduct the search for a new called pastor and to recommend a candidate to the congregation for election and approval of the terms of calls.

On June 25, 2023, following Pastor Patrick Heery's departure, the congregation elected the following slate to the Pastor Nominating Committee: Jill Fandrich, Audrey McNally, Brian Teucke, Sarah Trapani, Thomas Fessenden, Elizabeth Dominguez (who later resigned from the PNC due to family and work commitments), Lilyana Thornton, George Fay, Amy Sargent, and Eli Hernandez. The Commission on Ministry (COM) of the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse appointed RE Michael Depew to be the liaison with Westminster.

At the PNC's organizational meeting on July 11, 2023, the following officers were elected: Jill Fandrich and Audrey McNally, Co-chairs; Sarah Trapani, Recording Secretary; Brian Teucke, Corresponding Secretary. The PNC decided to meet weekly on Thursday evenings. Mr Depew confirmed that the Holy Conversations Report had been approved by the COM as the church's mission study, which eliminated a step in the interim process because a mission study had been completed so recently.

The PNC's initial focus was to carefully review the Holy Conversations Report in order to complete the Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) which describes our church, its priorities, and the type of pastor it is seeking. The PNC then spent multiple weeks completing the MDP, and submitted it to Session and the COM for their approvals in October. In October, we uploaded the MDP into the Church Leadership Connection (CLC), thereby entering the system which matches churches looking for pastors and pastors looking for churches.

The PNC immediately began reviewing the matches made by the CLC, inviting promising candidates to apply. Complicating things somewhat was that the CLC recently underwent a complete overhaul, launching a new version in the summer of 2023. This created some challenges in that the pool of pastoral candidates was/is low as pastors enter their new profiles into the new system. The new CLC also has had a number of glitches. We had to learn as we went along, as has everyone else.

The PNC began conducting initial interviews with prospective candidates in December and continues to do so. Also in December, the COM appointed a new liaison to work with us as Mr. Depew rotated off the COM. Our new liaison is the Rev. Michael Hill, pastor of the Skaneateles Presbyterian Church.

The PNC continues to work very hard and its members take their responsibilities very seriously. We are listening for God's call and the Spirit's guidance as we seek a new pastoral leader for Westminster in what is a challenging and changing time for ministry.

Jill Fandrich and Audrey McNally, Co-chairs

SEASONAL MINISTRY TEAM, JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2023

Shavonn Lynch chaired the Jan/Feb seasonal ministry team, which included Annual Members Jill Fandrich, Paul Dungey, Audrey McNally, Susan Marteney, Linda Russell, Linda MacKay, and Seasonal Members George Hiza, Carolyn Hiza, Liz Dominguez, Mike Trapani, Molly Trapani, Rob Schemerhorn, Andrea Creighton, Aaron Creighton.

The theme for Jan/Feb was “Walk in the Light,” based on 1 John 1:7. January Sundays included a celebration of Epiphany, degreening the church, a special MLK Jr service led by Shavonn Lynch asking the question “Why is it so difficult to talk about racism?”, and the church Annual Meeting. In February, we celebrated Scout Sunday, collected the Souper Bowl Offering to benefit Calvary Food Pantry, and observed Ash Wednesday with a drive-through distribution of ashes and a communion service in the sanctuary.

The team organized several special events. In January, Westminster members gathered at the Sleep in Heavenly Peace worksite for a “Build a Bed” day, which was very well attended and enthusiastically enjoyed. Some members also sewed homemade pillow cases to donate to SiHP. We hosted a Biblical Storytelling event with Scott Leonard, a Commissioned Lay Pastor and storyteller from Clinton, NY. The evening also included a potluck chili supper. Two forums were held following Sunday worship—one on the Ministry Team process and how it works and one on Mental Health Awareness.

A special meeting of the congregation was held February 12 to discuss the financial future of the church in greater detail that was possible at the regular called Annual Meeting. Loose offerings were collected for Meals on Wheels in January and scout troops in February.

Members of the Ministry Team embarked on an effort to update membership records, ensuring correct contact information and identifying what information individuals wish to be shared.

SEASONAL MINISTRY TEAM, MARCH AND APRIL 2023

The Westminster March/April ministry team worked closely together and after prayerful consideration, chose the theme of “Love One Another” (John 13:34-35). We were reminded that “God So Loved the World that He Gave His Only Begotten Son.” We decided to emphasize the love and care we show each other all throughout the year.

Ten individuals were welcomed into membership on March 26: Joey Parker (who was baptized that day), Alice Hoatland, Barbara Ostrander, Shelley and Mike Pantoliano, Donna Riester, George Fay Jr, Leo Araujo, and Brian and Ashley Teucke.

On April 30, Pastor Patrick administered the sacrament of baptism for Nina Wickett.

Many activities and ministries were planned including a workshop to make pillowcases for the Sleep in Heavenly Peace organization, collecting socks for the children in the Early Intervention programs, and celebrations of Mr. Rogers day, Children’s outings, and a Lenten calendar with random acts of love for families to follow. We celebrated the preparation of Easter with a Lenten soup and study with guest speakers about wellness and a combined Maundy Thursday/Good Friday Tenebrae service. So many people participated and planned a truly meaningful and touching Easter celebration, including Palm Sunday, a Sunrise service with Rev. Larry Bell and our wonderful Easter Service full of joy and songs of celebration with Rev. Patrick Heery.

But Easter was not the end of the efforts of this team. We also supported an Earth Day celebration and the Ugandan Family Education Fund Meal and Movie at the end of April.

It was due to the dedication and devotion of the Annual Members (Jill Fandrich, Paul Dungey, Audrey McNally, Susan Marteney, Linda Russell, Linda MacKay and Shavonn Lynch), along with the seasonal members (Diane deRoos, Rev. Larry Bell, Tiffinny Chapman, Diane Lehner, Shelley Pantoliano and Ann Wiley) that we were able to plan and develop such meaningful ministries during this Easter season. Thank you all!!

Respectfully Submitted,
Diane deRoos, chair

SEASONAL MINISTRY TEAM, MAY AND JUNE 2023

The theme of the May/June season was “Empowered by the Spirit,” inspired by Romans 15:13 and also by the Pentecost story in Acts 2:1-21. Linda MacKay and Audrey McNally co-chaired the team, and were joined by Annual Members Paul Dungey, Jill Fandrich, Susan Marteney, Linda Russell and Seasonal Members Catherine Fessenden, Shavonn Lynch, George Fay, Donna Riester, Nina Wickett, Jerry Wickett, Chrissie Thornton, and Susan Winters.

May and June were busy months with Patrick’s departure and the beginning of the interim period. A number of special celebrations were scheduled during worship: the baptism on May 21 of Maria Routhouska, daughter of Betty and Kevin Routhouska; commitment and blessing of the relationship of Ruth Bentley and Ken Herrmann on May 7; commitment and blessing of the relationship of Donna Riester and George Fay Jr on June 4; and the renewal of wedding vows by Eli and Rina Hernandez on their 25th anniversary on May 28.

Patrick’s final worship service at Westminster was June 11, followed by a congregational meeting to dissolve the relationship between pastor and congregation. Pulpit supply for the rest of June was filled by the Rev. Larry Bell on June 18 and the Rev. Janet Newman on June 25.

Three “Conversations with the Pastor” were held following worship on May 7, May 21, and June 4. These conversations allowed for sermon talk-backs as well as discussion over Patrick’s departure and what the interim period would involve.

May loose offerings supported the Ugandan Family Education Fund and June loose offerings supported school supplies for kids. The Pentecost Offering was received on May 28; it supports Youth Adult Volunteers, Ministries for Youth, and Children at Risk. The 40% retained by congregations was donated to Camp Gregory, a Christian camp on Cayuga Lake, to use for camperships.

A goodbye dinner was held for Patrick, Jenna, and family in the Great Hall on Friday, June 9.

On June 28, Westminster hosted Auburn’s fifth annual Interfaith LGBTQ+ Pride Service, with the Rev. Ben Fitzgerald-Fye, pastor of the Scipioville Presbyterian Church, as worship leader.

On June 25, the church joyfully welcomed six youth who joined the church through Confirmation—Ryan Creighton, Cole Creighton, Enrique Hernandez, Mariela Hernandez, Macie MacKay, and Lilyana Thornton. Oliver Jirousek also completed the confirmation journey with the Westminster youth, and was confirmed at the Marcellus Presbyterian Church.

On Baccalaureate Sunday, June 18, we recognized two Westminster members who completed their degrees this past year—Kate Brundage (Dartmouth College) and Paul Dungey (Empire State University). Also on June 18, we recognized three recipients of the Douglas J. Gilchrist Memorial Scholarships for the 2023-2024 academic year—Claire Brundage (Bucknell University), Lydia Marteney (University of Copenhagen), and Leo Araujo (Cayuga Community College).

SEASONAL MINISTRY TEAM, JULY AND AUGUST 2023

Annual Members: Jill Fandrich, Paul Dungey, Audrey McNally, Susan Marteney, Linda MacKay, Shavonn Lynch, Linda Russell

Seasonal Members: Sue Ahner, Coylynn Cator, Charlie Cator, Dan Kuhn, Sue Kuhn, Tina Barry

Advisors: Ann Wiley, Diane Lehner

Staff: Noel Cregg, Chris Patch, Lori Pettit, Melanie Toole (on call)

This seasonal team was the first one to organize and serve without pastoral involvement since Pastor Patrick's last Sunday with us was June 11. Linda MacKay and Linda Russell volunteered to serve as co-chairs and the team met once in May and twice in early June for planning sessions. Recognizing that the liturgical season was "ordinary time" or "growing time," the team explored New Testament readings from the Gospel of Matthew, focused on the Parable of the Sower/Seeds (Matthew 13:1-9 and 18-23, sometimes known as the Parable of the Soils), and chose "Nourish and Flourish" as its theme for the season. With further discernment the team strengthened its focus and chose Luke 8:15 as the guiding scripture for the summer, "But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance." The team pondered the question, what does it take to maintain fertile ground at Westminster?

Highlights of this season include:

- Arranged pulpit supply for summer worship services (Revs. Larry Bell, Janet Newman, James Moore, Steve Bell, Lorrie Cooney and Sue Wonderland, and Elder Shavonn Lynch).
- Held worship indoors this summer to accommodate guest preachers.
- Used name tags displaying the seasonal theme in worship.
- Hosted simple refreshments for fellowship following worship.
- Hosted an outing to the Doubledays baseball game July 8.
- Held Contemplative Hikes with Brian Teucke, our new trail guide following in Pastor Patrick's footsteps, on July 22 (Green Lake State Park) and August 26 (Robert H. Treman Park in Ithaca).
- Shared messages on "nourishing and flourishing" in Children's Worship Center.
- Sponsored a children's/intergenerational visit to a sunflower field led by Noel Cregg.
- Held four Adult Forum listening sessions to gather feedback on the Holy Conversations approach to ministry.
- Welcomed the Rev. Dr. Stacy Smith as temporary pastor beginning August 1 (through November 30).
- Supported missions of Matthew House, SS. Peter & John Soup Kitchen, Sleep in Heavenly Peace, Boy Scout Troop 43 (with two scholarships), and Personal Care Pantry.
- Supported the Korea Peace Appeal signature campaign advocating for replacing the current armistice agreement with a peace agreement. Collected 71 signatures.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Russell, Co-chair

SEASONAL MINISTRY TEAM, SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2023

Seasonal Ministry Team Members included: Ted O'Hara, Bronwyn O'Connor, Catherine Fessenden, Valerie Trubilla, Suzanne LaPrease, Gary Coon; Annual Members: Jill Fandrich, Paul Dungey, Audrey McNally, Susan Marteney, Linda Russell, Linda MacKay & Shavonn Lynch; Advisor: Ann Wiley; and Staff: Rev. Stacy Smith, Chris Patch, Lori Pettit, Melanie Toole, & Noel Cregg.

The theme for the September-October season was Teaching, Fellowship, Communion & Prayer, and the season's Scripture Passage, was Acts 2: 42-43 (*The Fellowship of the Believers*): "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles."

The Hymn of the Month Selections were these:

September: We Are Marching in the Light of God (Siyahamba)

October: My Life Flows On (How Can I Keep from Singing)

September-October Highlights

- The Westminster Choir, after its summertime recess, resumed singing anthems on September 17 during worship.
- The Sacrament of Communion was celebrated Sept 3rd and Rev. Stacy Smith and representatives from the Deacons made home visits to celebrate Communion with house-bound members of our congregation.
- During the September 3rd worship service, as students were about to embark on the new school year, a "*Blessing of the Backpacks*" was incorporated into the Children's Sermon portion of the service, and a scripture verse bookmark was presented to each child.
- The Minute for Mission during worship on September 3rd was given by Gary Coon about the work and ministry of the Calvary Food Pantry and Thanksgiving Baskets Project.
- Westminster celebrated its Rally Sunday/Church Family Reunion on Sunday, September 10th. A Praise Music Prelude started the worship service and Ted O'Hara & Bronwyn O'Connor coordinated the food & fellowship activities following worship. All participants gathered for the annual church family photo. Families were provided the opportunity to *register for CE* programs and small group activities.
- Linda Russell led the Adult Forum on Sunday, September 17th focusing upon the Korea Peace Agreement Appeal.
- World Communion Sunday was celebrated on October 1st and the Peace & Global Witness Offering was received.
- Susan Marteney led the Church Family Pie Making Event on Saturday, October 7th in the WPC kitchen and wonderful pieces of apple pie were enjoyed by all during the coffee hour the next day.
- Mr. Jason Meyers spoke during our October 8th Adult Forum, addressing the problems of illicit drug use, drug overdosing, illicit opioid drug addiction and its relationship to mental illness. Mr. Meyers trained the Adult Forum participants on how to administer Narcan to a person suspected of having a drug overdose. Narcan works to interrupt the effects of fentanyl which is often added to illicit street-drugs. Note: the church has since installed Narcan Kit dispenser boxes in the church's bathroom facilities. Mr. Meyers collaborated with us to acquire and install the Narcan Kit dispenser boxes which were provided at no-charge through Cayuga County's 'Healing Communities' program.
- Jerry and Nina Wickett provided a Minute for Mission and led the Adult Forum on October 22nd, as we focused on Social Justice ministries and efforts to form a *social justice small group ministry team*.
- Reformation Sunday was our worship theme on Sunday, October 29th, using the liturgy of Lessons & Carols prepared by Rev. Stacy Smith.

Paul Dungey, for the September-October Seasonal Ministry Team

SEASONAL MINISTRY TEAM, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2023

Annual Members: Linda Russell, Paul Dungey, Jill Fandrich, Linda MacKay, Audrey McNally

Seasonal Members: Kim Amidon, Larry Bell, Anne Malvaso, Janet Newman

Staff: Noel Cregg, Lori Pettit, Stacy Smith

This team was called together and chaired by Pastor Stacy Smith in an effort to complete as much planning for this season as possible before her departure November 30. Stacy was particularly helpful in assisting pulpit supply pastors Larry Bell, Janet Newman, and Ben Fitzgerald-Fye, and church elders who volunteered to lead special services, with pre-planning for December. The team chose the traditional themes of “Hope, Peace, Joy and Love” to anchor this season as they prepared for Advent and Christmas.

Worship

November 5: All Saints’ Day

November 12: Veterans’ Remembrance with communion

November 19: Stewardship Sunday

November 26: Thanksgiving Sunday; Westminster warmly welcomed Joe and Annie Runkle into membership in the church.

December 3 at 9:30am: First Sunday of Advent and Communion with Rev. Larry Bell, followed by Deacons Brunch

December 10 at 9:30am: Second Sunday of Advent with Rev. Janet Newman, including special music by the Westminster Handbell Choir

December 17 at 9:30am: Third Sunday of Advent with Christmas Cantata "Season of Praise" by the Westminster Choir and mini-pageant featuring children, youth, and adults

December 17 at 1:30pm: Caroling at Westminster Manor

December 21 at 7pm: Longest Night Service with Rev. Ben Fitzgerald-Fye

December 24 at 5pm: Christmas Eve Worship with Rev. Larry Bell

December 31 at 9:30am: Nine Lessons and Carols with leadership from Audrey McNally, Lori Pettit and Paul Dungey. Readers included Paul Dungey, Amy & Tara Sargent, Rob Schemerhorn, Haleigh Jones, Michael Pantoliano, Tony Gero, Leo Araujo, and Beverly Miller.

All November services were led by Pastor Stacy Smith. All Sunday services in December included the procession of Advent banners and the lighting of Advent wreath candles. Thank you to Audrey McNally for arranging for liturgists and poinsettias; and to Anne Malvaso for arranging ushers and greeters. During December the Confessional Banners in the narthex were replaced with banners proclaiming “Prepare, Watch, Behold and Rejoice.”

Christian Education

Adult Forums were not held in December. Forums in November included presentations on the RAWTools ministry (transforming weapons into garden tools) led by Mark Stadley from Buffalo; the Iona Community led by Pastor Stacy as she prepares for volunteer service there; and the “State of the Church” led by the Finance and Property Committees in conjunction with Stewardship Sunday. Adult Bible study led twice a month by Pastor Stacy at Westminster Manor continued through November. These have been well-received, and the church is challenged to see if leadership can be arranged to continue them in 2025.

Youth ministry took a bit of a break following the resignation of Chris Patch, Coordinator of Children’s and Youth Ministry in October. This position was posted and in November Noel Cregg, Children’s Worship Center leader, was hired for this role. Chris’ service was recognized and celebrated during worship on October 15.

The new “Worship and Wonder” class for kids in grades 3-6 which began in September continued to flourish with an enthusiastic group of students and a dedicated group of rotating teachers including Linda MacKay, Molly Trapanni, Elizabeth Verdi, Sarah Trapani, Jill Fandrich, Audrey McNally, and Linda Russell who always teach in teams of two in accordance with the church’s Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.

Old Testament lessons from the *Echo* curriculum continued in Nov. along with the use of Jesse Tree lessons provided by Audrey McNally. Dec. lessons focused on Mary and Joseph saying “Yes” to God, the birth of Jesus, and the significance of the Magi.

The Children’s Worship Center, for children aged 3 through grade 2, continued to be led by staff person Noel Cregg as Storyteller assisted by a second adult (with appropriate background check and clearance) as the Greeter. Old Testament stories in Nov. and Advent stories in Dec. aligned with the stories in Worship and Wonder. The CWC continues to be one of the strongest ministries of Westminster.

All children and youth were invited to participate in the Christmas pageant at the opening of worship on Dec. 17. Under Noel Cregg’s guidance the students used money they raised in their summer lemonade stand to purchase gifts for young children whose Christmas wishes were submitted to the church’s Christmas Giving Tree.

Nursery Care continued this season in Room #108 in the Education wing with staff persons Andrea Creighton and Liz Dominguez who lovingly provided care while attempting to incorporate music, Bible stories, and crafts, as well as playtime and quiet time, to foster faith formation in our youngest members.

Fellowship and Small Groups

Highlights this season include:

- A “Lovers of the Trail” contemplative hike on Nov. 18 (Fort Hill Cemetery) and Dec. 16 (Community College Nature Trail) led by Brian Teucke.
- REFRESH small group Bible study for Christian women on Nov. 11 and Dec. 9.
- Greening of the church on Dec. 1, followed by fellowship and a “See You Later” send off for Pastor Stacy, with food and beverages arranged by the generous Gero’s.
- Deacon’s Advent brunch following worship Dec. 3.
- Intergenerational Christmas Caroling at Westminster Manor on Dec. 17.
- Coffee hours following worship provided with help from the Deacons.
- The Social Justice small group continued under the leadership of Nina and Jerry Wickett.

Mission

Highlights include:

- The “Christmas Giving Tree,” a mission project supporting families identified to us through the Cayuga County Early Intervention Program. Thanks to the generosity of church members and friends, Westminster provided over 160 gifts to 28 individuals in 9 families, plus grocery gift cards to an additional 7 families.
- Supported Pride House as it transitions from a church-sponsored mission to a 501C-3 not-for-profit organization in its own right, celebrating their expansion, and affirming the church’s role as a champion and partner in this incredible ministry.
- Church volunteers continued to support Sleep in Heavenly Peace, which builds beds for local families in need, during build days on Nov. 18 and Dec. 16.
- Showcased the mission of RAWtools, a movement of Christian blacksmiths who transform guns into gardening tools, at a hands-on event hosted by the new Social Justice small group on Nov. 5.
- Set up the Coat Tree in the Education Building to provide coats, hats, gloves, and scarves to walk-ins in need of warm winter clothing.
- Dedicated the Loose Change Offering in November to the local Veterans’ Clinic.
- Re-directed the October Loose Change to Nick’s Rides.
- Established monthly recipients for the Loose Change Offerings in 2024: Meals on Wheels, Local Scouting, Westminster Manor, ARISE, Ugandan Family Fund, Pride House, Matthew House, Sleep in Heavenly Peace, Calvary Food Pantry and Veterans’ Clinic.

Stewardship

- Distributed a Stewardship campaign letter from the Clerk of Session and collected pledges Nov. 19.
- Promoted and collected contributions to the Christmas Joy Offering.
- NOTE: Westminster is a “Four for Four” congregation, collecting all four of the Special Offerings each year: One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Peace & Global Witness, and Christmas Joy.

Respectfully submitted, Linda Russell, Annual Member

2023 PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT

2023 was a busy year. The site drainage project was completed and paid for. The company that completed this project, Rich and Gardner, came back and repaired and reseeded the lawn where their work had done some damage.

The youth hallway and two rooms in the education building (201 and 202) received new carpeting.

Arrangements were made with the McShane Bell Company to repair the bell cradle in the bell tower. This was something that the Beardsley report recommended be done. Funds for this project came mostly from a grant secured by Jill Fandrich from the Emerson Foundation. The actual work will be completed in the first or the second quarter of 2024.

A Memorandum of Understanding was completed with the YMCA for their childcare group's use of our playground.

All exterior locks have been re-keyed so that they function properly.

The buckling floor in the youth wing has been repaired.

Three additional security cameras have been installed in the education building.

Progress is being made on the wainscoting in the sanctuary. The buckling of some of the boards has been repaired and the wood has been sanded and prepared for painting and staining. The committee has engaged an artisan (Sarah Morabito) to prime, paint and stain the area to match the existing look.

Three dozen additional folding chairs have been purchased.

CO and security alarms have been repaired/replaced.

The kitchen in the education building received a much needed cleaning and reorganizing thanks to Linda Mackay. It's an ongoing challenge to keep the kitchen clean, and all users are asked to follow the guidelines for its use and subsequent cleaning.

The boiler system has needed a lot of attention this past year. Repairs and upkeep have been costly. The Beardsley report found that much of the system was beyond its normal life and they recommended that it be replaced in the near future.

Other future projects will need to be tackled. The Beardsley report cited code repairs, basement shoring, and masonry repointing as priorities to be done.

The sanctuary is in need of new heaters. A quote of \$20,000 has been obtained for their purchase and installation, and the committee is in the process of researching the details of this project.

The parking lot will need to be sealed and re-stripped this summer.

The church has long had visitations from bats. They seemed especially active and numerous this past summer. The committee has received suggestions and a quote as to how to manage the bat population from the Erlich Pest Control company. This is being considered for 2024.

Another ongoing challenge is the public's use of our parking lot and drive-through. This creates safety hazards for pedestrians and motorists alike. A temporary solution was to have a car parked under the archway to block people from driving through but this is only partially effective. A better solution needs to be found and is being researched.

Members of the committee are Jim Burlingame, Thomas Fessenden, Joe Runkle, Robyn Warn, Mike Pantoliano, George Fay and Beth Salvage. Caretaker Shawn Reeves serves as an ad hoc member. Much thanks to them for their hard work and expertise.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Salvage, chair

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE 2023 REPORT

Personnel Committee had a busy year with Rev. Patrick Heery leaving in June 2023 and the arrival of Rev. Stacy Smith in August 2023 and Rev. Pam Masten joining us in January 2024. A special committee appointed by Session brought each of these temporary pastors onboard during this time of transition. Many thanks to the Temporary Pastor Search committee comprised of Linda Russell, Paul Dungey, Jack Hardy, Jill Fandrich & George Hiza.

With only minor adjustments to position job descriptions and Westminster Employee Handbook over the past few years, under Rev. Stacy's tutelage the Personnel Committee tackled the task of complete review and revisal of these. The updated handbook and job descriptions were presented to staff in October/November 2023.

We also rolled out a new, more comprehensive employee appraisal form. With input from committee chairs, moderators and interested others, Rev. Stacy prepared the annual appraisal and she and the personnel liaison sat with each staff member for the annual performance review in November 2023.

Chris Patch left his position as Children & Youth Ministry Coordinator in October 2023. We thank Chris for his many years of service and we as a church will continue to build upon the foundation Chris started. We are fortunate as we still see Chris, as he continues to serve as the Director of Pride House, housed in our Education Building. We thank Chris for his commitment and love as he serves in this capacity for area youth.

Noel Cregg accepted the Children and Youth Ministry Coordinator position and has jumped into this new position with lots of enthusiasm and vision for this area of ministry.

With Noel accepting her new role, we are currently seeking candidates to fill the Children Worship Center Leader position.

Liz Dominguez left her position as Nursery Care Provider at the end of 2023. Thank you to Liz for her many years of loving care to our little ones. We are also seeking to fill this position.

During the time of transition with Patrick leaving, Rev. Stacy and Rev. Pam serving as temporary pastors, and times when we were "on our own," we would be remiss not to recognize our incredible staff who keep the church moving forward each & every day.

Special thanks to:

Melanie Toole, our church administrator- our go-to for just about everything.

Shawn Reeves, caretaker and Kathleen Hansen, housekeeper- keeping our church safe, clean and presentable.

Andrea Creighton, nursery care provider- caring and loving our little ones every Sunday.

Lori Rhodes Pettit, organist & choir director - continues to provide the most beautiful music for all of us to enjoy each week.

We also thank the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC), for their tireless work and energy in calling a new pastor. They have met weekly since July 2023 and we appreciate all their time & efforts as we seek a new pastor.

Respectfully submitted by Personnel Committee - Christina Thornton, Moderator, Susan Ahner, George Hiza, Paul Dungey and Molly Trapani

2023 ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

Westminster has hard working, dedicated and talented singers, handbell choir members, various soloists and musicians who consistently offer beautiful anthems at every service.

The Westminster Adult Choir has many faithful members. 2023 saw the addition of four new members in Samantha Hockey, Marilyn Ottosen (who then moved away in June), Donna Riester and Lilyanna Thornton. Current members are Gary Coon, Diane deRoos, Paul Dungey, Linda Gero, George Hiza, Samantha Hockey, Jody Longeill, Audrey McNally, Daniel Merritt, Rich Newman, Shelley Pantoliano, Donna Riester, Beth Salvage and Lilyanna Thornton.

Handbell choir participants were Paul Dungey, Linda and Tony Gero, Janet Newman and Donna Riester.

Music highlights of the year included:

January: Larry Lehner on saxophone. Enrique and Mariela Hernandez duet.

March: Donna Riester began blessing Westminster by sharing her incredible musical talent and playing the piano so beautifully on Sunday mornings before services. Enrique and Mariela Hernandez duet.

May: Enrique and Mariela Hernandez duet.

June: Patrick Heery's Farewell Party featuring Perform4Purpose and the Westminster Adult Choir.

June-August: Summer soloists were Gary Coon, Diane deRoos, Paul Dungey, Linda Gero, Audrey McNally, Rich Newman, Shelley Pantoliano and Beth Salvage.

September: Rally Sunday soloists were Enrique and Mariela Hernandez and Larry Lehner on saxophone.

October: Perform4Purpose

November: Stacy Smith's Farewell Sunday when Enrique and Mariela Hernandez joined the Westminster Adult Choir for a rousing Postlude sendoff.

December: The Handbell Choir performed "Away In A Manger." The Westminster Adult Choir performed the Martin Christmas Cantata Celebration "Season Of Praise." The Longest Night soloists were Diane deRoos, Paul Dungey, Audrey McNally and Rich Newman.

I wish to truly thank all our musical participants and express my deepest gratitude for their love and support this past year. Music plays an essential role during worship services and our accomplished musicians help make positively spiritual experiences.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Rhodes Pettit

NOMINATING COMMITTEE 2023 REPORT

The 2023 Nominating Committee met three times in September and October and contacted twenty individuals to determine a list of nominees for new elders and deacons (to complete a roster of nine (9) members each for both the session and board of deacons in accordance with a change in the church's bylaws reducing the size of each from 12 to 9), as well as four (4) at-large congregation members for the 2024 Nominating Committee. The following slate was presented and elected at a Congregational Meeting on October 22, 2023: Elders Class of 2026: Alice Hoatland, Ted O'Hara, and Michael Pantoliano; Deacons: Linda MacKay (class of 2025 to fill a vacancy) and Donna Riester (class of 2026). Due to an inadvertent oversight by the committee chair, the names of Noel Cregg and Jackie Darquea (both class of 2023 who were eligible for reelection and had agreed to serve through 2026) were left off the ballot presented at the meeting and they were not reelected at that time. They will be presented for election at the next congregational meeting in January 2024. Nominees for the four at-large members of the 2024 Nominating Committee presented and elected on October 22, 2023 included Carolyn Hiza, Karyn Mazzeo, Bronwyn O'Connor and Mike Trapani.

Many thanks to the 2023 Nominating Committee: Tina Barry, Roger Dilmore, Karyn Mazzeo, Bronwyn O'Connor (at-large members); and Jackie Darquea (Deacon representative).

Linda Russell, Session representative/chairperson

TEMPORARY PASTOR SEARCH TEAM 2023 REPORT

The first Temporary Pastor Search Team (TPST) appointed by Session included session members Paul Dungey, Jack Hardy and Linda Russell along with Jill Fandrich, church communicator. The team met multiple times in person and by Zoom beginning in March. At its meeting on April 17, session charged the team with creating a position description for a Temporary Pastor, researching and determining terms for a temporary pastor contract, advertising the position, reviewing/interviewing applicants, and making a recommendation to session. All this was done in conjunction with Michael DePew, Westminster's liaison from the presbytery's Commission on Ministry. In a truly Holy Spirit moment, Jill Fandrich discovered the Rev. Dr. Stacy Smith in a social media post. Contact was made, the team met Stacy via Zoom, references were checked, and a four-month contract was negotiated for August through November 2023. (Stacy was scheduled to travel to Iona in December.) Stacy offered her gifts with a loving heart and an open, exuberant spirit, and was well received by the congregation.

The second TPST included Paul, Jack, Linda and George Hiza (replacing Jill Fandrich), and they followed the process established by the first team. In another Holy Spirit moment, the team received word from our COM liaison that a pastor in Florida was possibly open to a short-term ministry in Auburn which would allow her to spend a few months assisting her parents who live nearby while she pursued a new installed position in Florida. Contact was made and rapport established. The team met several times with the Rev. Dr. Pamela Masten via Zoom and a four-month contract was negotiated for January through April 2024. Westminster is blessed to have Pam join us and we look forward to our time of shared ministry.

Linda Russell, Session liaison

2023 DEACONS REPORT

The Deacons for 2023 were Noel Cregg, Suzanne LaPrease, Beth Salvage, Jackie Darquea, Ruth Bentley, Gary Coon, Christina Thornton, and Amy Sargent. They resumed delivery of home communion in August. Everyone in the congregation has been assigned a Deacon who personally reached out to them via postcard in the fall. Healing Services were led by the Deacons in the chapel in October and November where prayers were offered. Deacons also arranged several meal trains during the year, as well as provided for Social Hour. The Deacon's Brunch hosted nearly 80 people for a time of food, fellowship, and fun, with entertainment provided by Enrique and Mariella Hernandez. Before Christmas poinsettias were delivered by Deacons to 10 church members who are unable to get to church or purchase them.

Submitted by Noel Cregg

CHILDREN'S WORSHIP CENTER 2023 REPORT

The Children's Worship Center saw a total of 23 children this year, who were in the classroom for stories. They also enjoyed many fellowship outings and mission work. In January children met for a time of play at Play Space. In February they went to the high school for their third annual sledding trip. During the summer children led their third annual lemonade stand, raising \$170. The money was later used by children to purchase seven gifts for kids in need from the Giving Tree. They also visited Bailiwick Sunflower Patch. Before returning to school there was a "blessing of the backpacks" during the Children's Message. Also in September, Haleigh Jones and Mia Verdi were given their "moving up" Bibles; they left the Worship Center and joined Worship and Wonder. Throughout the year many of the children helped in roles such as acolyte, liturgist, greeter, and even helped prepare communion. In December they visited Westminster Manor and blessed the residents with Christmas Caroling, donuts, and coloring. Many were also in our Christmas Pageant this year.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION WORKING GROUP 2023 REPORT

At its meeting on July 17, 2023 Session approved the motion that Session authorize the September/October Seasonal Ministry Team to form a Christian Education Working Group (CEWG) including members of that and future ministry teams as well as members at large to serve from July 2023 through June 2024; and to authorize the CEWG, in collaboration with CE staff persons, to prepare a program and select curriculum for children and youth (birth through high school), and assist seasonal ministry teams with adult education options. This action was in response to the need, first articulated by concerned parents and elders, to provide a means to address long-term faith formation ministries such as Sunday school classes or confirmation which require a more holistic, cohesive approach than could be handled by seasonal teams alone with their fluctuating participants. This working group has become extremely dedicated and beneficial to Westminster.

The CEWG began in July with Catherine Fessenden, Audrey McNally, Jill Fandrich, Linda MacKay, and Linda Russell (session liaison), working closely with Noel Cregg and Chris Patch (CE staff), Andrea Creighton and Liz Dominguez (nursery staff), and Pastor Stacy Smith. Chris resigned his position in October and Pastor Stacy concluded her ministry at Westminster November 30. The team met regularly, sometimes 2 or 3 times in a month, for much discussion and discernment on how best to serve the church's youth in a way that fosters relationships with God and with one another. Highlights include:

- Launched the "Worship and Wonder" class for students in grades 3-6 to be held in Room 102 in the Education wing on Sunday mornings following the Children's Message in worship beginning on September 10. It was agreed that releasing the children from worship was not ideal, although it has advantages for some families, and that this schedule would be reevaluated for the 2024-2025 program year. This class has proven to be very successful and a joy to those who are privileged to teach it.
- Established a pool of volunteer teachers including CEWG members listed above plus Elizabeth Verdi, Molly Trapani and Sarah Trapani to teach in teams of two on a rotating basis.
- Selected the PC(USA) curriculum "Echo: the Story," coordinating Old Testament bible story lessons with the Children's Worship Center beginning with Creation and concluding with Advent and Christmas lessons in December. Each lesson included music.
- Presented third grade bibles to Haleigh Jones, and Mia Verdi.
- Scheduled periodic conversations with youth on Sunday mornings and launched a new youth group for students grade 7-12 to meet evenings the third Sunday of the month.
- Collaborated with Session on updating the church's "Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policies and Procedures" (approved by Session November 20, 2023).
- Collaborated with the seasonal ministry teams in planning and scheduling Adult Forums.

Linda Russell, Session liaison

HOLY CONVERSATIONS ASSESMENT TEAM 2023 REPORT

Session appointed Linda Russell and Diane Lehner to begin the process of evaluating the original Holy Conversations (HC) design for ministry at Westminster which the church has been following in a trial period since February 2022. Feedback on the HC design was solicited from Ministry Team participants, Small Group leaders, staff members, congregation members through an Adult Forum in December 2022 and four listening sessions in summer 2023, and written comments from the PNC. After meeting with Pastor Stacy Smith in October, they invited Catherine Fessenden, Linda MacKay and Susan Marteney (members of the original HC team) and Jill Fandrich (church communicator and PNC co-chair), to join the Holy Conversations Assessment Team. The team met December 6 to review and assess the original HC design and noted the areas in church ministry and organization that needed to be adjusted. Areas that need particular attention are administration, communications, personnel, and financial procedures and oversight. The decision was made to write a new, more concise, document reflecting the team's recommendations for better practices and procedures where needed. The goal is to present the new Holy Conversations design to the congregation for approval at the Annual Meeting.

Linda Russell, Session liaison

WESTMINSTER'S EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN DOCUMENT

Preplanning is essential for successfully minimizing the adverse effects of an emergency or a disaster. Agencies like Homeland Security and the American Red Cross advise members of a household or entities where people gather together, to create a plan of how to prepare and respond to the types of emergencies that are most likely to happen where they live, learn, work, play and worship.

Westminster Presbyterian Church's Emergency Action Plan (EAP) was approved by Session in 2019 and is updated when there are changes in personnel or other pertinent information needs to be altered in the document. The EAP provides critical information for staff members, church officers, and volunteers. The EAP codifies the emergency response procedures that should be followed when a medical situation, safety emergency, or any other crisis arises on Westminster's campus.

The EAP contains:

- Emergency telephone numbers for local emergency services & first responders (fire, police, etc.).
- Contact information for service contractors (plumbing, heating, roofing, and electrical contractors).
- Weather related emergency actions (i.e., blizzards, floods, lightning, tornados)
- Communications plans should there be program cancellations or building closures.
- Action steps and protocols to follow should there be a harassing or obscene telephone call; a menacing person or weapons threat; an active shooter situation; a domestic violence situation (including a kidnapping/hostage checklist); or a bomb threat.

The Pastor/Head of Staff and all staff members are required to review the EAP document annually. The Session is responsible for ensuring that the congregation conducts a semi-annual drill to practice emergency evacuation procedures.

All members and friends of Westminster Presbyterian Church have a role to play in keeping our place of worship and fellowship safe. If you see something, say something! That is especially true if you become aware of an unsafe condition or a suspicious situation.

SMALL GROUPS

Encouraging Small Group ministries was a recommendation of the Holy Conversations Report. Several small groups formed during 2023, adding to several which were already in existence. A brochure was created in the fall which summarized the small group opportunities at Westminster in 2023, including Contemplative Hikes, Refresh women's spirituality group, Praise and Play Pickleball, Ugandan Family Education Fund, Personal Care Pantry, Christmas Giving Tree, Social Justice and Community Advocacy, Fully Alive Prison Ministry, Sleep in Heavenly Peace, Christian Parenting, Westminster Manor Bible Study, SS. Peter and John Soup Kitchen, Pride House, Little Free Library, Handbell and Vocal Choirs, and Paint and Palette.

2023 DOUGLAS J GILCHRIST MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

The Gilchrist Memorial Scholarship Fund established in 1991 by a bequest of Douglas J. Gilchrist provided scholarships to 3 members of Westminster Presbyterian Church in 2023. In awarding the scholarships the committee considers the applicant's service to the church and the community, financial need, character and scholastic standing. The total amount of scholarships awarded was \$18,000. The members who received the awards and the colleges they are attending are listed below.

Claire Brundage	Bucknell University
Lydia Marteney	University of Copenhagen, Denmark
Leo Araujo	Cayuga Community College

The Session appointed a committee to research what modifications needed to be made to both the Scholarship application and the Scholarship Guide Lines. Over the years state laws have changed as have policies that colleges use to determine how student aid and scholarship awards are determined. The necessary changes were made to keep the documents in harmony as deemed applicable. The Gilchrist will was read to insure that any changes made followed the intentions of the benefactor. The Session approved the changes recommended and both documents are on the web site of this church.

Respectfully submitted,

Monta Faye Tuxill, Moderator
Committee Members:
Penny Adams
George Daniels
Anthony Gero
Marilyn Durbin Lavin

WESTMINSTER WOMEN 2023 PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Due to the kindness, commitment and generosity of our Westminster women who use their talents to create beautiful prayer shawls and lap robes we have continued the Prayer Shawl Ministry. This is one way we extend our love to our members in times of sadness and challenges of recovering from surgery or illness. It is also a way we give our blessings at a time of celebration such as marriage or the arrival of a baby. This past year we shared our prayers through a garment/shawl with 13 members of our church family.