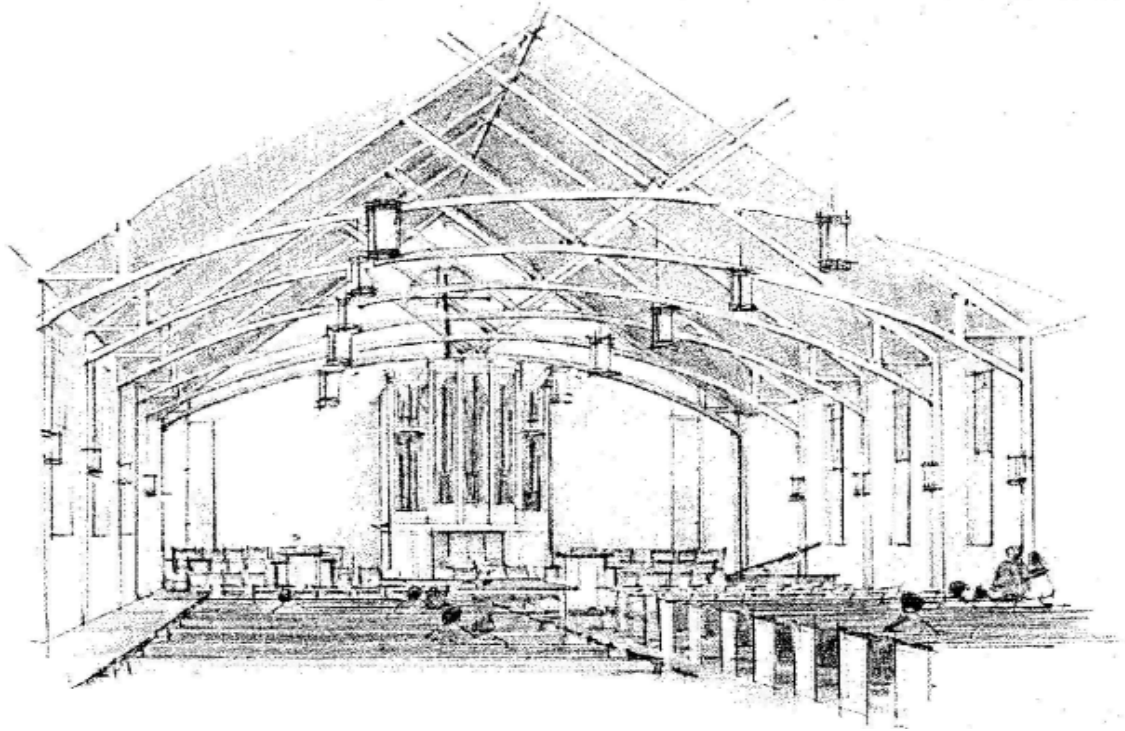


Wilton Presbyterian Church



2020 Annual Report

Presented to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting

February 28, 2021

"We are a welcoming and diverse Christian community living our faith in God and affirming the gifts of all of God's people. We are dedicated to serving those in need, demonstrating our faith in action by following the teachings of Jesus Christ."

Statement Adopted by the Wilton Presbyterian Church Session, May 2018

2020 Annual Report

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** The Finance Report stands alone in a separate document **

WILTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Staff

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Pastor

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Family Ministry Director, Pre-K – 12th Grade

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Music Director

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WEPCO

Staff

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WEPCO Facilities Coordinator

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Max Gil

Facilities Custodian

WILTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Church Officers

SESSION

Class of 2020

John Burgdorfer
Jessica Jones

Class of 2021

Buck Burnaman
Forrest Close
Berta Hull (Clerk)
Jason Rice

Class of 2022

Patty Connor
John Stewart
Jock Wright

Class of 2023

Cathy Ratcliffe
Reshan Richards
Alison Wood

DEACONS

Class of 2020

Margaret Carkner
David Hull
Jennifer Gabrielson
Barbara Martin

Class of 2021

Sonny Kern
Dee King
Tom Schneider
Becky Shroyer
Cathy Thomas

Class of 2022

Liz Archibald
Rachelle Bernabei
Sally Carta
Virgil Roberson

Class of 2023

Patti Dormer
Julie Stein
Ann White
Marianne Wilson

The Session guides the operational and financial life of the congregation.

The Deacons are the congregation's lay pastors caring for each and all.

2020 Annual Meeting of The Congregation

Meeting Enabling Motions

1. That the congregation receive, as information, the narrative reports of the Session, Board of Deacons, and Session committees;
2. That the congregation receive, as information, the 2020 financial reports of the Church Treasurer and the 2021 Operating Budget adopted by Session.

Pastor's Report

It may be difficult for many of us to remember back before March 2020, when the days before the COVID pandemic deeply affected not only our lives but lives across our country/world.

Our first online service was on March 22, and besides four services which were held late summer, early fall in our courtyard, we have worshipped on YouTube ever since. That has been painful for so many of us as we draw our strength from our community worship experience, realizing “where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in their midst.” (Mt:18:20). Still, our Session continued talking throughout the year, discerning that it was important for us to care for our neighbors, to be safe and take the recommendations of the Presbytery and CT state. While some may have agreed and some may have disagreed, we have managed together as a loving community of faith.

All I can say is, Thank God for Zoom! Zoom has allowed some form of connection for regular committee meetings, Bible study, youth group and confirmation, fellowship, and prayer services.

While much of our lives together has shifted, make no mistake, we have been harder at work than ever:

1. **Our Staff:** WPC has always had and continues to have an amazingly talented group of people who have answered the call to work here as staff. This year we saw some changes ~ Carolyn Parker, Office Administrator arrived in January; Nate Taylor, Co-Director of Family Ministries, left us in September after having received his first call to ordained ministry; Julie Fowler took on his responsibilities and now is the Director of Family Ministries Pre-K – 12th; Al Galletly retired after 22 years as Director of Music, and Zachary Wright was hired as our new Director of Music. That's enough for ANY year, much less in the middle of a pandemic! Each staff member has worked exceedingly hard to pivot to our online/work from home model, and their efforts are deeply appreciated. WPC is well served, and I am honored to serve alongside these gifted people.
2. **Session and Deacons:** Our lay leadership also needs recognition. There were many, many things to consider and needs which needed attending over this year. We had important decisions to navigate, and Session stepped up. We had needs, as several beloved members/family members died over this year, and our Deacons were there helping to give comfort and support ~ all in the midst of a pandemic. Additionally, elders and deacons found themselves as our newest YouTube stars as they took on doing the weekly prayers and scripture readings! *A special note, Congrats to Jessica Jones on her ordination in September. We lost her on Session, but gained a new clergyperson!*
3. **Realm:** You may or may not be aware of it, but WPC has been in the process of moving to a new operating system for our financial record keeping as well as our membership records. Countless hours have been spent by members of our Finance team (John

Burgdorfer, Mark Bohrer, Frank Mabley) and our Office Administrator, Carolyn Parker, to do this work. Bob Hoch was leading this effort up until his death in May. We are deeply appreciative of all the work of these faithful stewards. WPC will be much healthier as a result. More to come in early 2021.

4. **Worship:** Each week, our Worship Committee made sure that our worship space was ready for our video and rallied when we had outdoor services. Chris Jones, our chair, was instrumental in helping ensure that each service part was covered with ease. I am deeply grateful to him and to Irla Landry for their behind-the-scenes work.
5. **Faith in Action:** From the beginning, our Faith in Action team was assessing the needs of both the Wilton Community and the broader region especially in terms of food insecurity and mental health. You can trust that our mission dollars were utilized to the fullest. Early in 2021, we utilized the final half of the Mental Health Ministry Grant from the PCUSA and will be using that for congregational training (Companioning Program in 2/21 and two mental health videos for use in the Wilton community and beyond). Additionally, even in the midst of this pandemic, our faithful chefs have continued to cook and deliver food to Open Door Shelter! Many thanks. Additionally, our Session voted in the early fall to continue to welcome our AA meetings to meet on campus by opening our sanctuary doors after it was too cold to meet outside. This important act of hospitality shows how we live out our lives of faith.

There are many more people to thank: Nominating Committee, (Patty Connor, Chair), Personnel (Steve Connor, with help from Tom Mann who took the reins after Bob Hoch), Endowment, and even Outreach ~ after Sandy Shifrin's brilliant idea to send out 400 welcome packets to newcomers to town before Advent!

I share all of this because, even though we may be physically apart, God is holding WPC in the palm of God's hand, helping us to continue to do God's work. Our leadership, committee chairs, and staff gathered for a "discerning process" via Zoom in early September. We listened and were guided as we started planning for Advent and Christmas, knowing that it would not be like any other year. As a result, we were able to serve the community in new and exciting ways, including a zoom choir, an ornament giveaway, a new way to do our giving tree and a **new tradition of a live, drive-by nativity**, complete with alpacas! If we had not had everyone on board that early, it never would have happened.

What is God doing? God is doing a lot here at WPC! Stay tuned~

Grace and Peace,

Shannon White, *Pastor*
February 2021

Committee Chairs: 2021 Contacts

Bells	Jan MacEwen
Buildings and Grounds	David Hull Sonny Kern
Church Life	TBD
Endowment	Anna Marley
Faith In Action (Mission)	Debi Forsyth Cathy Ratcliffe Linda Rost
Finance	John Burgdorfer
Financial Secretary	Mark Bohrer
Table Guild	Irla Landry
Director of Family Ministries: Nursery – 12 th Grade	Julie Fowler
Memorial Garden Maintenance	Nancy Gorkin
Memorial Garden Steering Committee	Jennifer Gabrielson
Manna House (Soup Kitchen)	Sherry McReynolds (serving) Rachelle Bernabei (food prep)
Music/Choir	Zachary Wright
Nominating	Patty Connor
Outreach	Judy Grimm
Personnel	Stephen Connor
Stewardship	Bryan Campbell
WEPCO	Stephen Connor Tim Cummins
Worship	Chris Jones

Buildings & Grounds

WPC's Building and Grounds expenses decreased by \$2,703 (14%) in 2020 (\$16,277) versus 2019 (\$18,980). This is primarily attributable to the sanctuary's limited use throughout the year due to Covid.

The largest Buildings and Grounds expense continues to be utilities (oil and electricity) which accounted for \$11,877 or 73% (vs 81% in 2019) of the 2020 budget. Other expenses were \$3,100 for HVAC repairs, \$714 to maintain and tune our organ, and \$586 of miscellaneous costs.

The following items will need to be addressed by WPC on an on-going basis:

1. **Sanctuary painting:** Every 8 to 10 years depending on condition. Completed in 2016.
2. **Window cleaning:** Perform as needed.
3. **Standby emergency battery service:** Check every Spring.
4. **Sanctuary Lighting:** Replace as needed.
5. **Boiler/Air Conditioner:** Service as needed.
6. **Sanctuary Entrance Doors:** Refinishing and hinges.

We are very fortunate that we did not have any major repairs to the sanctuary in 2019 unlike previous years. For example, last year we repaired the sanctuary entrance doors and added kick-plates and we also repaired the glass transom leaks at the front of the sanctuary by resealing and caulking them. Since these were major capital expenses they were paid from the Sanctuary and Building Funds.

Similar to previous years, expenses incurred in 2020 were for basic operating costs to keep the sanctuary open, maintained and comfortable.

We continue to carefully monitor the Building and Grounds expenses. If anyone has ideas for costs savings, they are always welcomed.

I would like to thank Sandy Muschler, the retired WEPCO Facilities Coordinator, for her help in maintaining WPC.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephen Connor, *Leader*
Nancy Smith, *Member*

Children's Ministry

Greetings Congregation! I am honored and pleased to serve the families of WPC. This past year began as usual with Church School in full swing and a fluidity to our Sunday Services. However by mid March, Covid-19 regulations deemed all indoor activities cease for the time being as we entered uncharted territory and tried to navigate our new normal. Sam and Nate were quick to pivot and create an opportunity for children to continue worshiping together Sunday mornings. God would still reach the hearts and minds of our faithful young. We are grateful for the technology which enables connection even from our homes as well as the support received from the families of our children and the Congregation as a whole.

As Easter approached, Nate and I teamed up to create and deliver Eggs filled with goodies and crafts to all families with children of WPC. Shannon, Nate, myself, Peyton White and our High School Volunteers; Maggie Rowe, Maddie Pfeiffer and Eleanor Greene all rallied to safely deliver Easter treats to over 65 WPC families. Those goodies included crafts and reminders of the risen Christ.

Summer Church School proceeded via zoom with consistent attendance. Nate and Sam also put together a strong virtual VBS program which was well received and attended.

As summer came to an end Nate Taylor accepted a position at Salisbury Presbyterian Church in VA as Youth Minister. Although bittersweet, it was a wonderful move for his family and WPC gave a beautiful send off wishing them well. He is still present on facebook and thriving in his new Church home.

This is where I, Julie Fowler come in! I offered to assist in his absence. I had taught Sunday School many times and felt I could be of service to Samantha and WPC. I enjoy being a part of the foundation for our youth as they enter with open hearts and minds absorbing the word and love of Jesus. Samantha of St. Matts and I together created a new curriculum for Zoom. One that would enable anyone to participate at any time with a linear approach beginning with the fundamentals. We chose to design packets to mail home to those wishing to attend with craft materials included to enhance the lesson taught on Sunday morning. All are welcome on Sundays whether they have a packet or not. As we began in September we started holding a zoom every other Sunday. We began with Creation; each one of us created in God's image exactly how we were meant to be and be celebrated. We will spend the year celebrating who we are.

October brought an opportunity to discuss worshiping together and Church life including ways we celebrate God. As we approached Halloween, safety and trick or treating came into question. WPC together with St. Matts created Halloween bags for our children as an alternative opportunity to trick or treating.

In November we explored prayer and giving thanks. We even learned that the simplest prayer is often, "Thank you." Yes, it's that simple. Give a smile bags were constructed and delivered with

much success. It was so wonderful to be able to continue that annual offering without issue. Advent began in November this year and Advent Bags were a huge success. In a time of uncertainty it was refreshing to offer some normalcy but more importantly offer an opportunity to become closer to God in preparation for the coming of Jesus.

December brought Hope, Love, Joy and Peace. Advent provided a wonderful lesson plan as children made one candle representing the four Sundays of Advent. It was shared that our own Ollie Jones carried his "torch," with him all day. This is exactly the intention we have in mind when creating our lessons- that which will stick with them in a fun, spirited manner. Something they can use as a reminder that God is always with them.

As we prepared for our December special Christmas celebration that would finish out our year, it was our youth who were the inspiration. Something to stimulate all of their senses the way our Christmas Eve Service has always done. I Believe: The Road to Bethlehem was a joint venture which allowed youth to see, (and smell,) live animals as were found in the manger, hear their sounds and the sounds of Christmas and feel as though they had traveled back in time as they experienced a town of Bethlehem backdrop and live Nativity. Shannon greeted and blessed the families as they entered the campus in their cars. The smiles and emotion seen that day reflected joy in their hearts, exactly the way Jesus had intended throughout Advent. Our final offering of 2020 was a reading and video of the Christmas Story. Over 18 children tuned in to listen to the story of Jesus' birth.

Our Church School youth are curious and have questions. They exemplify innocence with which to incorporate the love received into love given. They are amazed how their very own actions at times reflect what is taught and modeled for us in the Bible. They enjoy sharing their stories and volunteer ideas on how we can all be peacemakers. They have missed our time together in our building and the happy chatter within the walls of the sanctuary and Parish Hall. They also know that, "Church," is not the building - but the people within. They know that, "Church," is carried in their hearts and goes where they go and helps guide their actions and relationships with others. The children of Church School are smart, mindful, faith seeking vessels of our Church's foundation. I am proud to be growing with them. Covid -19 hasn't stopped Church but rather has increased opportunity to spread Church beyond building walls.

A glimpse ahead...

By the end of 2020 we had 17 youth attending our Zoom meetings on Sunday mornings. As we are very encouraged and would like to continue momentum, Church School Zoom will move to every Sunday versus every other. In keeping with our linear theme for this unique Church School year, Jesus and his ministry, lent, the crucifixion and Pentecost will serve as our focus as we work our way through the spring!

Sincerest Blessings,
Julie Fowler

Deacons

Class of 2020: Margaret Carkner, David Hull, Jen Gabrielson, Barbara Martin

Class of 2021: Tom Schneider, Dee King, Cathy Thomas, Becky Shroyer

Class of 2022: Liz Archibald, Rachelle Bernabei, Sally Carta, Virgil Roberson

Class of 2023: Sonny Kern, Marianne Wilson, Patti Dormer, Julie Stein, Ann White

Overview

“The office of deacon is set forth in Scripture is one of sympathy, witness and service after the example of Jesus Christ.” The Board of Deacons serves our congregation in this spirit. Each Deacon is assigned a “flock” of approximately 10-12 member and designated non-member individuals and families. The role of the Deacon is to keep in contact with their respective “flocks” through fellowship, visitations of comfort and support as needed, particularly in times of grief, illness, and celebration.

Administration

Meetings of the Deacons were generally planned to be held at the church on a monthly (not in July or August) schedule at the church. Further, Deacons also took turns attending monthly Session meetings and thus reporting important details to the Board. However, this year, due to the pandemic, the majority of our meetings were electronically remote which presented significant challenges to our usual fellowship and collaborative efforts. Importantly, due to the pandemic, one of our major events, our Maundy Thursday gathering, was not held as we individually practiced in our homes. Many other traditional services were also done remotely due to the pandemic restrictions.

Greeting at Worship

Initially, it was planned that the Deacons take turns serving as the Deacon Greeter at Sunday Worship. In fulfilling this role, attendees were welcomed and, if needed, assistance was provided to familiarize folks with the complex and note their visitor status to the Pastor. However, beginning in March, due to the pandemic, the Deacons were successfully participating in the weekly worship service with the Elders by remotely presenting the “Prayers of the People” and Scripture readings.

Events

The pandemic dictated that Deacons had to modify their approach to holding any in-person events for 2020. Maundy Thursday was not held as usual. However, at Christmas, they were able to participate in the live Nativity (Road to Bethlehem) celebration and provide angel ornament gifts to all their flocks. Additionally, each Deacon was provided a “gift pack” to help lift their spirits in this most unusual Advent season.

Flock Assistance

There were numerous home and hospital visits in the first quarter with assistance and meals in times of need. As the restrictions of the pandemic took over in March/April, the Deacons concentrated on those folks that were particularly isolated under pandemic conditions. It was such a challenging year to maintain the continuity and role of the Deacon being that personal interaction was not available.

Plans for 2021

Rachelle Bernabei will be the Moderator for this coming year. She and Cathy Thomas are evaluating how the Deacons can be more effective and more efficiently deploy their talents.

Closing

Thank you all for your participation as our Deacons in a most difficult year. The resilience and involvement as needed was remarkable. We are truly blessed to have such a wonderful loving church community.

Respectively Submitted,

David Hull

Sally Carta

Rachelle Bernabei

Co-moderators

Endowment Committee

12/31/20

Purpose

The Endowment Committee (“Committee”) of the Wilton Presbyterian Church (“WPC”) was originally established in 1986 to promote and encourage perpetual stewardship to enable the Church to expand its ministry and mission beyond the annual stewardship support of its members. The Committee is charged with identifying projects that are needed and important, but which fall outside the annual Church budget.

2020 Donations

Recognized cash donations in 2020 totaled \$25,000. Donations are made in memory or in honor of various WPC members as an estate bequest or as a specifically designated gift. In 2020, Sam Halsey made a \$25,000 contribution specified to fund a “Big Givers” Fund that would disburse an amount each year to the Washington trip for cash gifts to local residents in need. The Committee welcomes designated or undesignated gifts of all sizes to the fund that will further its work of expanding the ministry, mission, and capital-related expenses of the Church.

2020 Endowment Grants

The fund’s bylaws call for annual grant distributions to be up to 5% of the average of the prior year’s quarter-end values of the liquid investment portfolio. There are several designated grants within the Fund with a significant amount targeted to annual maintenance of the Memorial Garden.

The Committee recommended, and the Session agreed to distribute up to \$37,916 for 2020 consisting of (1) new 2020 Grants of up to \$26,115 based upon 5% of the average 2019 quarterly portfolio balances of \$522,294 and (2) a carryover of undisbursed 2019 Approved Grants of \$11,801.

Grants approved by Session in 2019 and carried over to 2020 totaled \$7,305:

- \$ 7,000: 2019 Memorial Garden Maintenance
- \$ 350: Church Windows & QuickBooks

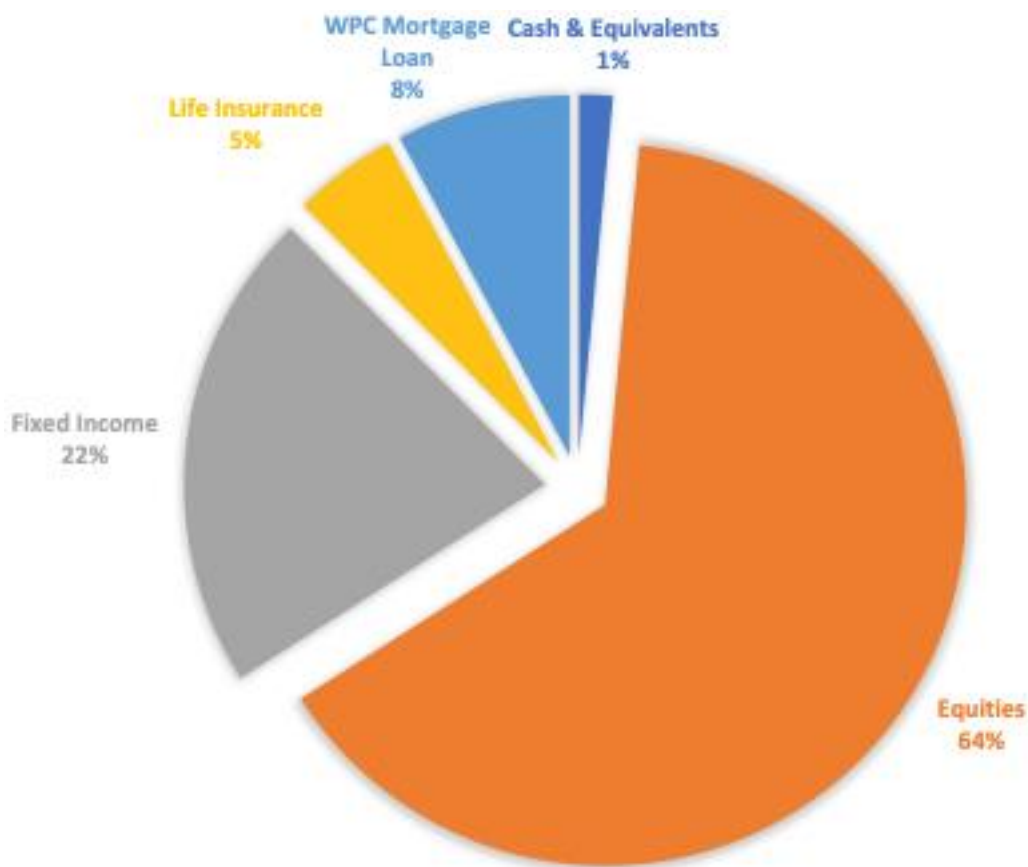
Grants requested and recommended to Session for approval in 2020 totaled \$28,341:

- \$ 10,000: REALM Software Implementation
- \$ 1,250: “Big Giver” Distribution for 2019 Wash DC Trip
- \$ 6,500: Fire Panel Upgrade (WPC portion)
- \$ 6,883: 2020 Memorial Garden Maintenance
- \$ 3,500: Pastor’s Fund
- \$ 208: Church Windows & QuickBooks

Asset Allocation & Investment Performance

The total fund value of the Endowment Fund was \$690,692 on December 31, 2020. Of this amount, \$604,658 represents the securities investment portfolio held by Charles Schwab Investment Management. In addition to the securities investment portfolio, there are two large holdings in the endowment: WPC mortgage (roof repair loan) and a life insurance policy, which totaled \$86,034 on 12/31/20 and are illiquid investments. These illiquid assets are not used when calculating the Grant Pool 5% target amount for grants. The Endowment Fund loaned WPC \$107,690 in 2010 to pay for a new flat roof. WPC is repaying this loan, without interest, in the amount of \$5,385 per year, over 20 years. At 2020 year-end, \$53,843 was outstanding on the WPC Mortgage Loan.

The present asset allocation (Dec 31, 2020) of the WPC Endowment Fund is consistent with our long-term investment strategy:



All securities investments are made through Schwab mutual funds and ETFs. To understand the following performance figures, it must be noted that 2020 was an unusual year as the first

quarter saw a substantial decline caused by the COVID-related market crash of March-April, followed by a rapid recovery over the remaining year.

The overall WPC Endowment Fund -- *including all donations received (\$25,000) and cash disbursed (\$35,883) in 2020* -- increased by \$51,025 (8.0%) for the year to \$690,692. When 2020 cash donations and grant disbursements are removed from overall Endowment Fund cash flow, the value of the investment funds alone *increased* by \$61,980 (9.7%) despite the early COVID-related setbacks. Once again, we thank Kit Smith for his diligence, insights, and leadership in managing our endowment investments in the volatile 2020 financial markets.

Beginning Portfolio Value (12-31-19)	\$ 639,667
Add: Cash Donations	25,000
Add: Investment Performance	61,908
Less: Grant Disbursements	(35,883)
Ending Portfolio Value (12-31-20)	\$ 690,692

2021 Endowment Committee Members

Class of 2021:	Stephen Connor, Chris Kelley
Class of 2022:	Anna Marley (Chair)
Class of 2023:	Ralph Burnabei, Tim Cummings, Nancy Gorkin

Chairman's Comments

This year has been a challenge due to COVID impacts on our investments and our ability to source grants from members of the church and clergy. As a result, our grant requests in 2020 were generally ones that improved our church operations and its infrastructure for the future. The three large grants were for Memorial Garden maintenance, REALM web-based software implementation, replacing older stand-alone software, and replacing a fire panel that improves safety within the WEPCO complex. But there were grants like the Pastor Fund that brought critical emergency funding for congregation members and others that needed help due to crises caused by COVID.

The past year has been a classic roller-coaster year with a plunge in the equity markets in March due to COVID and a rapid recovery to achieve a level higher than pre-COVID downturn. By patiently waiting for recovery and also moving out of the underperforming energy sector, the endowment portfolio performed well and is at its highest level ever. Again, we are indebted to Kit Smith for his insights and market sense in these turbulent investment times. Thank you, Kit – job well done!

As I depart the committee and turn over the Chair to Anna Marley, it is with the comfort that the Endowment Committee is in great hands with strong membership and a solid and growing investment portfolio that will serve WPC well in the years ahead.

Respectfully,
Jeffrey Rutishauser, *Chair*

2020 Endowment Committee Members

John McReynolds,
Jeffrey Rutishauser,
Stephen Connor
Chris Kelley
Anna Marley
Reshan Richards

Additional Non-voting Members

Buck Burnaman, *Session Representative*
Kit Smith, *Treasurer*
Shannon White, *Ex Officio*

Faith In Action

Members at Large

Kerianne Fannelli

Cathy Ratcliffe

Madison Ratcliffe (youth representative)

Lynn Sapphire

Mary Wright

Co-chairs: Linda Rost and Debi Forsyth

Staff: Shannon White

Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? James 2:15-16

This year was very different, the unique challenges of a global pandemic that is still raging through our world, directed the focus of the FIA toward food insecurity needs and mental health assistance, especially for youth.

Instead of the traditional Thanksgiving baskets for Wilton Social Services, we purchased \$1000 of Stop & Shop gift cards in manageable increments so that they could be distributed safely. We "adopted" a family through Open Door for Christmas gifts. Our congregation donated generously to this single mother and her three young children. The contributions we made to the food pantry and to support families of cystic fibrosis patients who had tremendous food insecurities reminded us that our congregations support can make a clear impact in our community. Although the Midnight Run trip was cancelled for our community due to COVID-19, we contributed to the organization to assist in their efforts.

This year was a difficult year for those who serve as first responders and in the field of mental health. We supported the efforts of Fairfield County Trauma Response Team, donated funds toward those who were fighting the devastating wildfires in California last spring, as well as donations to purchase food for hospital workers, working tirelessly in the early months of this pandemic. Our donations to Triangle Center, Trakside and Wilton Youth Council were in the support of assisting those who work for our youth's well-being.

We want to take this opportunity to send out a huge thanks to our committee members. Our members, including our pastor, took the time and the associated risks to purchase appropriate gift cards, collect and deliver needed items and meet via zoom or through email with enthusiasm and a sense of purpose as well as humor. We are indeed grateful for their work.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Forsyth and Linda Rost

Memorial Garden

Since our Sanctuary and campus were closed most of the year due to the pandemic, the Memorial Garden saw an uptick in visitation throughout 2020. Our pastor held meetings with individuals in the garden and the gathering circle was used by members for socially distanced visits. The garden proved to be a tranquil setting for so many during an exceedingly difficult year.

Sadly, during a summer storm, a pine tree from the SNEW property fell onto the interment circle damaging one of the markers and disturbing a few others. SNEW was not able to remove the tree in a timely manner so three of our members and friends came to the rescue. Thank you to Karen and Paul Lourd and Andy Driver for your heroic efforts in removing the tree. The damaged marker has been repaired and the other markers reset.

Please visit the garden regularly this Spring as it will be a source of renewal and hope during the season of Lent.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Kline Gorkin

Music

It has been such a joy making music at WPC these past few months! Since my arrival at the church in October, I have been so grateful for the warm welcome extended to me from all who worship at WPC.

Due to COVID restrictions, our Thursday night choir rehearsals have moved to zoom, and all of our anthems have been put together virtually. Because of the time it takes to put each anthem together, the choir spent October and November preparing for Advent and Christmas. We plan to continue our virtual offerings until we are able to sing together in person.

We have had many people singing in the choir both before the COVID shutdown and during our virtual offerings:

Sopranos: Elizabeth Campbell, Meg Campbell, Nicole Carta, Sherry McReynolds, Amy Bender, Alison Wood and Marian Wulffleff

Altos: Lisa Bettke, Jane Celentano, Jan Galletly, Jessica Jones, Jan MacEwen, Soojung Sharp and CathyThomas

Tenors: Bill Caswell, John Celentano, Jim Dougman, and Stephen Strauss

Basses: Max Gabrielson, Andrew Jones, Joel Jones, Frank Mabley, Chip Mason, Steve White and Doug Wulffleff

And of course, our equally wonderful bell choir -- with a special thanks to Jan MacEwen for her help as I transitioned into my first few months at WPC:

Lisa Bettke, Lisa Caswell, Jane Celentano, Carol Kern, Nancy Smith, Ed MacEwen, Jan MacEwen, Alison Wood

Singing in the choir and ringing bells is a wonderful way to be a part of the worship service and we would love to have a few more people join us. Please let me know if you are interested!

Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not mention the retirement of Al Galletly after many years of service to WPC. It was evident even throughout my interview process that Al is a beloved presence at WPC. I was lucky to meet Al prior to my first Sunday -- he was so kind, helpful and encouraging and for that I am so grateful.

Looking forward to another wonderful year of music making at WPC!

Sincerely,
Zachary Wright
Director of Music

Nominating Committee

At the end of 2020, the WPC Nominating Committee was given the task of filling 15 leadership positions; 14 positions became vacant after their terms expired, and one position became vacant because a committee member left one year prior to their term expiration.

After a unanimous vote at the Annual Congregational Meeting for the election of Officers, held via Zoom on January 10, 2021, the Nominating Committee is pleased to announce the following new slate of officers:

Ruling Elders:

- Cathy Ratcliffe
- Reshan Richards
- Alison Wood

Board of Deacons:

- Patti Dormer
- Sonny Kern (1 Year Term to start)
- Julie Stein
- Ann White
- Marianne Wilson

Endowment Committee:

- Ralph Bernabei
- Tim Cummins
- Nancy Gorkin

Nominating Committee Members-At-Large:

- Jennifer Butler
- Cindy Ely
- Angela Rice
- Nicole Volavka

I am grateful for the past, present, and future leaders of our church community and I look forward to seeing what direction our church leaders take us during these uncertain times.

Respectfully submitted,
Patty Connor, *Chair*

2020 Nominating Committee Members:

Tobin Bassani
Jennifer Butler

Forest Close
Kerianne Fanelli

Margret Greene

Personnel

There's no doubt that 2020 was a challenging and disruptive year for everybody including churches across the country. The Covid-19 pandemic led to lockdowns of our religious institutions and created logistical problems in how to continue the Sunday services that we took for granted. The Personnel committee would like to commend and thank the WPC staff for their efforts to adapt and innovate so that we still feel connected to WPC.

Shannon worked tirelessly to keep WPC on a steady course delivering to us outstanding, on-line Sunday services and pastoring to those in need all while dealing with significant personnel changes. I know this has been one of the more difficult years in Shannon's career so a BIG thank you to her.

Our Music Director, Al Galletly, retired after many faithful years of dazzling us with music and his organ playing. The music program will be in good hands going forward with our new Music Director, Zachary Wright, who showcased his musical talents and creative flair during the on-line services especially Big Music Sunday.

We lost one of our Co-Directors of Family Ministries (Nursery-7th Grade), Nate Taylor, who relocated to Virginia for another job. Julie Fowler has ambitiously stepped up and will take over Nate's responsibilities along with existing her responsibilities of Youth Ministries (8th-12thGrade). Our 2020 Personnel budget is largely unchanged from 2019. We continue to accrue for the Pastor's Sabbatical.

Although she is not a WPC staff member, the Personnel committee would like to express our gratitude and wish the best to Sandy Muschler, WEPCO Facilities Coordinator, who retired and moved to Vermont at the end of 2019. She was instrumental in maintaining our beautiful campus and helped ensure the churches and all the related activities ran smoothly.

Submitted by the WPC Personnel committee:

Stephen Connor

Max Gabrielson

Janet Johnson

Susan Mathews

Buck Burnaman, *Session Rep*

Session

The Session of Wilton Presbyterian Church held eleven monthly Stated Meetings in 2020 in addition to the Annual Congregational meeting on February 2, 2020. Below are statistical highlights from the year showing little change from 2019:

The Lord's Supper: 12 Celebrations

Baptisms: 1

Deaths: 2

Received into Membership: 0

Transfers to Inactive Rolls: 0

Deletions from Church Rolls: 2

Total members: 278

Continuing with tradition, the Moderator opened each of our meetings with a devotional. The devotional centers, teaches us and reminds us that we are the spiritual leaders of our church.

The Session, Personnel and Finance Committees worked in conjunction with WEPCO to adopt a balanced budget for 2020. John Burgdorfer, Finance Chair, presented the budget to the congregation at the Congregational Meeting on February 2, 2020.

The COVID pandemic changed not only our daily lives but also the way we worship. Rev. White began recording our services. Scripture readings and prayers of the people were recorded by the Deacons and Elders and were edited together with other components of the service by Peyton White. At each monthly meeting, Session reviewed the ever-changing COVID guidelines from the CDC and State and thoughtfully discussed if and when we could worship in person. The video services have been received positively with wide viewership, so Session decided to continue with this format. Two services were held outdoors in the early fall.

Chris Jones, Chair of the Worship team, presented to Session a position description for a music director to replace the retiring Al Galletly. With Session's approval, their search team posted the position and began interviews and then at the September meeting, Forrest Close presented their choice of Zachary Wright as WPC Director of Music.

Session continued to offer guidance and support for our Seminarian Interns, Jessica Jones and Nate Taylor. We celebrated Jessica's ordination by Zoom on September 13, 2020. Nate passed all of his ordination exams in early 2020 while continuing to lead our youth as Co-Director of Family Ministry, Nursery-7th Grade. He received a call as Associate Pastor for Youth and Family at Salisbury Presbyterian Church in Richmond, VA and departed Wilton in October. We celebrated Nate's ordination by Zoom on November 22, 2020.

Throughout the year, Session liaisons kept Session information of the activities of our committees: Berta Hull - WEPCO and Worship, Buck Burnaman – Endowment and Personnel,

Jessica Jones - JCCEC. Committee meetings were all held by Zoom and were less frequent than in other years.

The WPC staff submitted reports to Session in April to keep us abreast of ways they were adapting to their responsibilities during the COVID pandemic. They learned new technology and different ways to do their jobs and to stay connected with our children and youth with video services and Zoom gatherings.

John Burgdorfer updated Session monthly on the WPC finances, the filing and updates regarding the WPC application to the Payroll Protection Program (part of the CARES Act), and the progress of the REALM conversion project. Patty Connor served as liaison and chair of the nominating committee that presented the new slate of officers for the Class of 2023.

Jock Wright worked with a team from WEPCO and St. Matthews to update the WiFi system throughout the campus. This will allow both churches to live stream their services once members begin to meet again in person. Proposals were received from three companies; however, to date no decision has been made. Reshan Richards joined Jock in December to help determine the most practical and most cost-effective solutions. This project is ongoing.

As Clerk of Session I want to say “thank you” to Bryan Campbell and Jason Rice for leading our 2021 Stewardship campaign and applaud their innovation in bringing the giving messages to the congregation via video. These videos will be seen both in Rev. White’s weekly email blasts and also during Sunday services.

Respectfully submitted,
Berta Hull
Clerk of Session

WEPCO

WEPCO (Wilton Episcopal Presbyterian Corporation) works on behalf of both Wilton Presbyterian Church and St. Matthews Episcopal Church. WEPCO is responsible for maintaining the shared spaces at our church complex which includes the outdoor areas and all indoor spaces except for the two sanctuaries. The upper core, the lounge, parish hall and all church school spaces are good examples of the 15,000 square foot complex that WEPCO maintains. WEPCO functions via operating and capital budgets approved each year by both churches.

2020 was a challenging year for WEPCO as the building was shut down in mid-March due to Covid-19. The campus was closed to all tenants and renters from mid-March to mid-July. Following CDC Covid-19 guidelines Abilis returned in July followed by MOTH (Music On The Hill). As a result of the closing, rental income was \$12,300 under budget. This income deficit was offset by underruns in expenses due to electrical and oil usage because the facility was closed. Additionally, other favorable expense variances resulted in an overall net revenue of \$10,214. Working in conjunction with WPC, a PPP loan was obtained. WEPCO's portion of the loan was \$23,500. After meeting the terms of the loan, it was forgiven and will not need to be paid back. As a result of the favorable operating results (\$10,214) and the PPP loan (\$23,500), each church received a refund of \$16,886.

During 2020 the board was able to tackle several capital improvement tasks. In January we had the old in-ground oil tank removed. In the summer, the fire alarm panel was replaced and a new monitoring company, Convergint, was hired. This was necessary because the old fire alarm panel was obsolete. The fire exit signs have also been updated throughout the building to meet code and now have LED lights. The walkway behind WPC has been replaced and is no longer a trip hazard for tenants who use that entrance. We also added a ramp to the downstairs door for Abilis. Many of the lights in the parking lot have also been repaired and updated with LED light bulbs. This will offer long-term electrical savings and has improved the overall lighting and safety in the parking lot.

Several current projects the WEPCO board is working on include upgrading the Wi-Fi for the whole complex and repointing and painting the exterior brick façade around Parish Hall to ensure no water will enter the building. Since March both churches have been doing virtual services and the Wi-Fi for the complex has been stretched to its limits. By updating the system to include both churches this will help with live streaming of Sunday services and will bring overall savings by using a campus wide integrated infrastructure. A more robust Wi-Fi system will also allow renters and parishioners who hold events in the Parish Hall with greater ability to live stream along with greater access to the Internet.

The spring 2020 clean-up day was limited due to COVID, but we had a productive fall Clean-up day. These days rely heavily on the participation of our Boy Scout troop and parishioners from both churches. These Clean-up days help maintain our beautiful campus and avoid additional costs. We strongly encourage all parishioners to participate.

Thank you to everyone on the WEPCO Board, the Clergy, Staff, WPC Session, St. Matthew's Vestry and parishioners of both churches for their efforts to make our complex the exceptional place that it is for our missions of faith and the way it serves the broader community. A BIG thanks to Sandy Muschler who retired after 22 years of service as the Facility Coordinator for WEPCO. Sandy was instrumental in all of these initiatives. The WEPCO board would also like to thank Chip Fuller who stepped down after 12 years on the board.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Jeanes

Stephen Connor

Timothy Cummins

Officers and members in 2020:

Co-Presidents:	Chris Jeanes, Stephen Connor, and Timothy Cummins
Facilities Coordinator:	Sandy Muschler
Secretary:	Chip Newton
Treasurer:	Bill Brautigum
Sexton:	Max Gil
Other board members:	Bill Abrams, Chip Fuller, Bill Matthews, Andy Driver, Berta Hull, and Thomas Carlson

Worship and Music

The Worship and Music Committee serves as the support group for our staff members in planning and carrying out worship services offered by WPC. Our objectives are as follows:

- Assist staff and Session in providing welcoming, meaningful worship services.
- Facilitate encourage lay participation in worship services.
- Serve as a sounding board for staff; provide feedback and input on worship activities.

This past year has been action packed. As per guidelines from the State of Connecticut and our own Presbytery, our congregation stopped holding services in the sanctuary on account of the pandemic caused by COVID-19. We immediately moved our services to an online format. These services include a sermon, music, soloists, and congregational participation. The online services received “hits” in equal and sometimes greater number than average attendance to live services. We look forward to holding services in the Sanctuary in the fall of 2021. Our committee is also planning some outdoor services for the spring and summer of 2021.

We meet quarterly to review recent worship activities, as well as those planned for the next three to six months. Committee membership during the year 2020 included Nicole Carta, Irla Landry, Alison Wood, Berta Hull, Carol Kern, Shannon White and Zachary White, Al Galletly and Chris Jones.

Committee member Irla Landry has continued to organize the Table Guild. The Table Guild ensures that the sanctuary is in order before each service.

Our long time Music director, Al Galletly, retired in September of 2020. Al served as Music Director from 2000 until 2020. During those twenty years Al created and maintained an excellent all volunteer choir and played the piano and organ masterfully. He produced many memorable moments of music in our sanctuary. We will all remember fondly his creative ad libs in transition from Anthems and Hymns to the Doxology.

Our current Music Director as of October 2020 is Zachary Wright. The Search Committee for this position consisted of Tom Mann, Lisa Bettke, Alison Wood, Forrest Close, Shannon White and Chris Jones.

Our committee chose Zack from a field of highly qualified applicants. Zack has experience with adult and youth choirs. He is an accomplished pianist and organist. Zack also has the technical skills required to produce music online. From the start Zack produced superb music for our online services, including Big Music Sunday and Christmas Eve in the last three months of 2020.

Also, a special thanks to Nancy Gorkin for her contribution of flowers, our custodian, Max Gil, for his creativity and thoughtfulness, and Peyton White for her superb editing skills.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Jones, *Chair*

Staff

Shannon White
Zachary White

At-large members

Nicole Carta
Irla Landry
Alison Wood.

Liaison from Session

Alison Wood

Youth Ministries

6-12th Grade

I am both thrilled and honored to work with our Joint Youth of WPC and St. Matthew's as Co-director of Family Ministry here at WPC. It gives me pleasure to work with the Middle School and High School Youth sharing their experiences as they come willingly to have fun and process their spirituality through life's adventures. I have continued building relationships with our youth and learning about each individual noting all have unique strengths with which they bring to Youth Group. Furthermore, I am both honored and humbled to be a part of a truly inspiring Confirmation program as I had been partnered with Nate Taylor and currently Pastor Shannon. Together it is our hope to nourish the minds and souls of impressionable Confirmands as they begin their journey toward their spiritual individuality and future members of WPC.

The year 2020 kicked off with our 8th grade confirmands visiting OLF and Temple B'Nai Chiam. The visits to these houses of worship offer a glimpse into how our friends in faith worship. Our high school youth prepared physically, mentally, and spiritually for our annual Mission trip to Washington, DC. Early March brought forth a new global pandemic, Covid-19 which halted all in person gatherings both indoors and out. As we continued to learn more and more about this pandemic, the focus of youth ministry was to be available to all youth who were presenting with a wide variation of emotion. Staying connected proved effective in helping to "calm the storm," waging for so many of our youth. Sports and recreation outlets were shut down, schools went remote, fear of family members becoming ill, fear of the unknown, inability to spend time with friends and family members, confusion and anger were all on the spectrum of emotions evoked. It was a time to listen. A time to come together and rest at God's feet. To pivot. To reset. To work together on how to begin again. We immediately moved our meetings to Zoom to stay connected. To be there for one another. To be ready to support and listen. We were now serving each other versus others outside of our groups.

Middle School

At the start of Covid 19 mid March of 2020 we moved to zoom. This age group found increased screen time more challenging and the high numbers we were met with in person had decreased dramatically while on zoom. Those who continued to participate were engaged and present. The beginning of our time on Zoom in spring of 2020 was spent with scripture on perseverance, turning to the Bible and to God during our difficult times and becoming aware as God's stewards for others during difficult times.

As with High School, each session of youth group may have different participants and that reflects there is something for everyone. The start of this year was strong with participation for Zoom youth group. It waxed and waned over the next month depending on the day and one day in the fall allowed for an outdoor opportunity in person. It was well attended and provided a sense of normalcy and community in a way that had been absent for 7 months.

We began something new this year that has yielded positive feedback. Samantha Trolice, my colleague at St. Matthews and I have incorporated Church School lessons into our youth group sessions for the 6/7th graders. We felt the age difference on zoom during Sunday mornings was

too vast to have them together and coupled with double the amount of screen time between Church School and youth group, it was decided to combine the two. It has been successful and we look forward to continuing this new set up.

The fall began with our Scarecrow build for the town center. The theme was “Be the light so others may see.” Each student wrote an inspirational statement for anyone looking at the scarecrow in town. In addition they added a piece of their own individuality.

Rise Against Hunger, Rake and Roll and caroling at Wilton Commons were missed this fall due to Covid-19 as they are favorites among the middle schoolers. At caroling time, we received word that Wilton Commons residents were feeling down and knew Joint Youth would be unable to come sing in December. Many students voluntarily recorded a message, a song or an instrumental piece. A video was put together and sent to the residents of Wilton Commons. WPC also sent it to the congregation.

We ended the year with a Zoom Christmas party complete with games and the Christmas Story.

Confirmation

Confirmation 2020 has agreed to join the Confirmation class of 2021 in an effort to properly celebrate and recognize their statements of faith.

This year’s confirmation group has begun their journey with a strong sense of God the Father and how that looked to each of them. As we really explore Jesus and Christianity it is truly an experience watching the realizations of how Jesus calls each one of them to do His work. The Confirmation year centers around one’s own spirituality and the beginnings of how that will continue to evolve over time and what it looks like at various stages. Working with Shannon to provide the Confirmands the tools to keep growing spiritually is by far one of the most reaffirming aspects within my own faith co leading this group. Every year I learn more through their introspection and questioning throughout their journey. In conjunction with Confirmation, 8th grade youth group serves as a complementary piece for Confirmation class. It is designed to further enhance what is learned or processed in class. Using their hands to do God’s work provides the framework of service and is a very significant piece in helping them understand their own spirituality. Learning about and experiencing other faiths and how they worship provides an understanding as to different traditions and beliefs both similar and in contrast to the Presbyterian Worship and Faith. I feel so strongly that WPC’s Confirmation program provides each Confirmand with the support and nurturance they need to make a very important decision for themselves. The congregation serves as a unified family to help them beyond the classroom into adulthood. The Congregation as a whole, exemplifies God’s love and constant open arms. Thank you all for being such pillars for our youth.

This year’s group of Confirmands have remained open minded as we become more creative in our approach to service. As they reach 8th grade, they have had two years of consistent introduction and participation in service opportunities including, Rise Against Hunger, Rake and Roll and caroling at Wilton Commons. These were unavailable this fall however they have had the opportunity and it will come again. This year a few have participated in outdoor WEPCO work day. Time with mentors has included hikes, time in the memorial garden, walks, and facetime

conversations. As gathering proves difficult during these times it should be noted that our fabulous mentors are invested in the evolving faith of their confirmands and assume their responsibility with dedication. With our smaller group we have been fortunate to meet in person for Confirmation Class within Parish Hall. It has remained easy to socially distance safely while being together as we journey on this path. It is a unique year and a big faith lesson they continue to learn is everything in God's time. They are preparing for when they are called and they will be ready.

High School

As 2020 initially began it reflected a joyous, faith based sentiment as the High School Youth Group hosted its first ever joint coffee hour with St. Matthews across the courtyard. This event fell during our Epiphany Service and was well attended. Following the coffee hour suggestions for another were requested by many.

February continued with our annual trip to Washington DC. WPC high school students are steadfast in their willingness and desire to travel with one another to serve the homeless population of Washington DC. Serving as veteran leader, Ralph Bernabei, dubbed, "the homeless whisperer," continued to model and exemplify how we use our hands to do God's work. We are grateful for his leadership.

As the pandemic took root in early March our meetings were moved to Zoom. Many of our youth were trying to reorganize their academic lives, social maintenance and were looking for reassurance that all would be okay. It was through our work within the Bible we sought refuge. We read scripture together. We played games. Many showing up to see familiar faces.

Conversations revolved around support, the pandemic, the world and an unfolding series of events involving racism in America. Our youth wanted to make sense of it all. They wanted to talk. They weren't in a position to help because they were in need of help themselves. Help to start the conversation. Help in making sense of their own feelings. They needed to make sense of the space they were in. We created a space for them to ponder and organize. Remaining connected during this time allowed them a sense of normalcy while turning to scripture to validate their confusion and feel supported by God. WPC prides ourselves on our commitment to our youth. Youth who are quick to mobilize and serve. This was our opportunity to serve them.

The end of the year brought celebration. WPC Youth Ministry partnered with Deacons to congratulate our graduating high school students as many school celebrations were cancelled. Signage was placed in the yards of all seniors acknowledging the support of WPC. They also received bags filled with goodies. Our college graduates were acknowledged this past year as well. Given their celebrations were also cancelled, WPC wanted to support their achievements as they began their new chapter.

As we returned in the fall, participation was consistent. It was clear remaining connected through faith was at the forefront of thoughts. Youth groups meetings for High School youth were higher than in person participation had been in 2019. Zoom drain is real and respected and it has affected some but for others, connection is very important. We were fortunate to offer a few in person gatherings around the fire pit while the weather was cooperative. There were over 15

people who attended each of those meetings. We hope to return to, in person, outdoor meetings when the weather becomes warm again in the spring. We will continue to offer our bi weekly zoom meetings and any individual time sought by our youth.

I am thankful for Samantha Trolice who has been a great example of leadership for our youth and Ralph Bernabei who is a regular participant in our group games and discussions. I am appreciative to have worked alongside Nate Taylor who brought so much energy and formalized Bible instruction to our youth program! It is a pleasure to co lead Confirmation class this year with Pastor Shannon and the students are fortunate for her guidance on this journey. I am also thankful to the parents of our youth who support and encourage their participation, my vision and the Church's mission for their spiritual growth.

A glimpse ahead...

This year I will also continue to be an active, visual support within the community as a face of WPC and continued support for and committed to our youth. As Covid- 19 and regulations continue to dictate some of our programming, Samantha and I continue to co lead with a vision of, "One size does not fit all." We have been exercising ways we can add diversity to our curriculums in an effort to have a little something for everyone whether it be through games, music or news articles. Currently, during this unique time we will continue to put our youth first and create a space which is helpful to them for their continued spiritual growth and needs. It continues to be my mission to create a space which is inclusive to all, to offer opportunities for all and most importantly to send the message that all are supported wherever life has them.

As well as all the fun experiences we share I have been moved by the individual attention and outreach made possible by encouraging staff. I feel blessed to be a vessel of such support offered to our youth during this time in their lives. As my role continues, our relationships will strengthen. I hope to reach those where they are even if youth group is not a constant occurrence. I will continue to offer support and encouragement for our youth. I look forward to continuing relationship building and meaningful fellowship under a guise of fun and community.

Sincerest Blessings,

Julie Fowler



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