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January/February 2022

Steve's Slant

As long-time readers of the Extended Family will know, I use this space in the Jan/Feb issue to provide a kind of “State of our Union” address—my take, as pastor, on the status and health of our congregation.

This year it is an easy story to tell; easy, bordering on the remarkable. Let’s start with the numbers.

This year we took in five new members: Janice Collins and Jim Storey, Rachel Sparling, Allee Williams and Mary Craig. That is not an unusual number for us in a normal year. But to welcome five new members in year two of this ongoing pandemic is, well, remarkable, I think.

Of course, we also suffered our share of losses this year, some of them unexpected or unusually difficult. Bill Fore, Margaret Nelson, Kathë Mosher, William Hamilton, John Craven and Chuck Stephenson all joined the company of the saints in light in 2021. In all cases, our congregation wrapped our collective arms around these grieving families and held them tightly in a loving embrace.

On the financial front, we finished the year with a substantial budget surplus of more than \$24,000. (We’ll hear more specifics about this from our Clerk of Session at our congregational meeting on Sunday.) This was due to several factors. One, we received an unusually large year-end gift. Per our own internal guidelines, I do not know the identity of the giver, but I am very grateful nevertheless. Our expenses were also unusually low, mainly because, once again, in 2021 we did not employ any nursery workers.

But to finish the year so strongly also means that all of you (or nearly all of you) who made financial commitments to support the church in 2021 fulfilled those commitments (or nearly so). So, again, I am very grateful for your ongoing faithfulness and generosity in support of our shared life and ministries.

It also bears mentioning here that, as a congregation, we gave nearly \$17,000 in support of a variety of special offerings. This includes both regular offerings like One Great Hour of Sharing, and special offerings, such as for emergency relief in places hard hit by natural and human-made disasters. Again, this is a remarkable expression of generosity, above and beyond our regular financial commitments.

But wait! There is still more good news on the financial front. We came within *one percent* of reaching our challenge goal for our 2022 commitment budget. Again, this was not just a regular budget but a *challenge* budget, which, among other things, contained a sufficient increase to give our staff a well-deserve raise. So, thank you!

Also, thanks to all of this ongoing generosity we are able to achieve our other main goal for this year. Rev. Sarah Grace Montgomery accepted our offer to join our staff as our Associate in Ministry, bringing a wealth of creativity, talent and experience to this vitally important position –

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Please call 828-298-9092 to speak with us or leave a message for us at the church. Thank you!

JANUARY/FEBRUARY Birthdays!

Jan. 5	Sarah Anne Eller	Jan. 7	Sandee Butterworth
Jan. 12	Jamie Dale	Jan. 15	Carolyne Cowal
Jan. 15	Robyn Castellani	Jan. 16	Mary Kells
Jan. 24	Corise Gambrell	Jan. 30	Cadence Cowal
Feb. 1	Diana Sanderson	Feb. 9	Jack Ballard
Feb. 11	Clotilde Guisasola	Feb. 12	Karen Crusier
Feb. 13	Georgena Millar	Feb. 16	Brownie Newman
Feb. 19	Edythe Wiener	Feb. 22	Milt Butterworth
Feb. 24	Burnace Roberts		



The Warren Wilson Book Group will meet using Zoom at noon on February 10. We will eat lunch from 12-12:30 then discuss The Thursday Murder Club from 12:30-1:30, with Carolyn leading the discussion. Contact Judi Repman at jrepman@georgiasouthern.edu for the Zoom link. New members are always welcome!!

Welcome our new Associate in ministry, Sarah Grace Montgomery!

The search team tasked with filling this position -- Kristin Williams (chair), Sandy Brauer and Susan Daughtery from our Session, and the wise and wonderful Pat Levi -- were very enthusiastic about Sarah Grace's candidacy, and after meeting with her myself, I understand why: she is smart, warm, funny, and personable. In terms of her background and her general theological orientation, she is an ideal fit for our congregation and for this position. Most recently, Sarah Grace served as the Associate Pastor at Brevard-Davidson River Presbyterian Church. She has extensive experience working with children and families, and currently serves as the Chair of our Presbytery's Youth Committee.





OUR HEALING PRAYERS GO OUT TO: Shane Reece, Nancy Garrison's son; Carolyn Cole; Gina Marvin; Salyna Morgan; Blake Joslin; Erika Lytle; Jackie Ligon Cole; Rick Garrison; Doug Bradley; Fran Roberts' sister-in-law, Linda Briggs; Flo Bishop; Jon Hettrick and his family; Jon's mother, Marjorie Hettrick; Mark Laabs, friend of the Griswolds; Kim Reece, daughter of Nancy and Rick Garrison, and Pat Crumpler.

WE PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING HEALTH CARE WORKERS, AND PEOPLE WORKING AT MEDICAL FACILITIES: Carolyn Cole; Richard Riddle; Laura Bethany Riddle; Kristin Williams; Lisa Mallory; Stacy Balzano, Toby & Sally's niece, and all those working to provide medical care to others in this time when both need and risk are great.

OUR PRAYERS FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS GO OUT TO: Carla Presnell-Smith, and all those helping to keep essential services open for all of us.

"Never forget the three powerful resources you always have available to you:
Love, Prayer, and forgiveness."

H. Jackson Brown Jr.

Drive-Thru Event for Souper Bowl of Caring

Sunday, February 13

1:00-2:00 PM

In Front of the Chapel



Next Sunday an estimated 111 million people will watch the Super Bowl football game. While the “cheap seats” at the football game sell for \$7,000.00 each, an estimated 48 million Americans will be facing the challenge of hunger.

Please join in doing our part to address this issue in our community. All Souper Bowl of Caring food and monetary donations will remain locally. Our youth have recommended to Session that this year’s collections be given to MANNA Food Bank.

Next Sunday, February 13th, from 1:00-2:00 PM our youth will be collecting both monetary and food donations for this event in front of the Chapel. They will be masked and wearing the traditional chef’s hats. You simply have to drive around the circle in front of the Chapel, remain in your vehicle, and the youth will pick up your donations. Please support our youth in this effort to aid those in our community facing the challenge of food insecurity.

(Submitted by John Laney and Sarah Grace Montgomery)

Swannanoa Valley Christian Ministry needs Winter children's clothing. Drop off Monday - Friday from 9:00 - 3:00. Need: Baby wipes, blankets new or gently used, winter coats, sheets and towels and washcloths, laundry detergent, cat and dog food. Thank you for anything you can give to our neighbors in need!



Black History Month, 2022 Focuses on “Health and Wellness”

“For too long, African American communities have endured the burden of health disparities, as evidenced by the current pandemic,” said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. “This year’s National Black History Month highlights

the importance of black health and wellness and is a reminder that we can only be a more prepared and resilient nation when all communities are healthy and strong.”

This year’s “Black Health and Wellness” theme is especially timely as our nation continues to struggle with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This month serves as an opportunity to reflect on not only physical, but also mental and emotional health, how many communities have remained resilient in the face of healthcare inequities, and how cultural and ancestral traditions have informed our understanding of wellness.

“The 2022 Black History Month theme of Black Health and Wellness pays tribute to the many contributions of African American health care professionals serving our communities,” said FEMA Deputy Administrator Erik Hooks. “This timely focus highlights the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on African Americans, and other wellness and mental health issues which continue challenging our nation. As we celebrate the achievements of African Americans this February, I encourage us to take action to protect our families and loved ones now and in the future.”

Image from the Office of Diversity and Community Engagement at Arkansas State University

May we hold in prayer our siblings in God's family that have been impacted by violence and threats of violence at and around HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities). May we respond in love and support as those communities respond to the bomb threats that have been received.

Outdoor beautification Team

Are you interested in having some outdoor fellowship?
Working with plants? Maintaining the outdoor spaces around the church
buildings with church friends?

We are looking for **Worker Bee's** to join our Outdoor
Beautification Team!

If there is enough interest, we will meet once a month for 2
hours of work with time following for refreshment on the
fellowship Patio. Contact Bob Gambrell, gambrell4@charter.net,
or
Donna Eagle Joslin, deagle@warren-wilson.edu.



If you have interest in helping with any indoor projects, please contact Bob.

CLERK'S REPORT

At its stated meeting on November 16, 2021, the Session

1. Approved the recommendation of the of in-person gatherings team for the resumption of coffee hour, cookies and carols and Wassail.
2. Accepted with regret the resignation of Nancy Garrison from active service on the Session.
3. Expressed its gratitude for the gracious offer of Beverly Thompson to assist in our ministry and encouraged the pastor to explore with her ways she can contribute to our work and worship in the future.
4. Approved the recommendation of the Community Engagement Ministry Team that it be authorized to explore the possibility of assisting another organization sponsoring an Afghan refugee or refugees and to invite members to express interest in supporting the effort.
5. Called a congregational meeting on December 5, 2021 to receive the report of the Congregational Nominating Committee.



At its stated meeting on December 14, 2021, the Session

1. Adopted the 2022 Proposed Budget recommended by the Administration Ministry Team.
2. Approved the recommendation of the search team for the Associate in Ministry that the Session extend an offer to Sarah Grace Montgomery.
3. Set January 30 as the date for the annual meeting of the congregation.
4. Expressed its gratitude to the college cleaning crew for their work in making worship in the chapel possible following the recent vandalism incident.
5. Authorized inviting members to give to support relief from the tornadoes in Kentucky with any moneys received to be distributed to the Presbyterian Disaster Agency.
6. Approved two recommendations of the Worship and Music Committee: two recommendations from the team: that the costs of the material for the Advent banners and any shortfall in reimbursement for poinsettias should be paid from available earnings in the Worship and Music Endowment.
7. Approved the following recommendations of the Administration Ministry Team:

That the second invoice for repairs to the sound system in the amount of \$556.40 should be paid from available earnings in the general endowment.

That the \$1500 Bell Choir Supplement for the Music Director should be paid from the Steven Williams Designated Fund.

That the members of the staff receive raises of 3% and that the bookkeeper's hourly rate be raised to \$23.

That the purchase of a new payroll accounting service be approved with costs for 2021 to be charged to the data management software line item.

That payment for the recent repairs to the organ be paid from the earnings of the Williams Endowment.

At its stated meeting on January 18, 2022

1. Accepted the financial reports for December 2021 with thanks to Leslie Sayyar, Brent Roberts, John Laney, and Barbara Escalante for their prompt preparation of accurate reports.

2. Welcomed Sarah Grace Montgomery as the congregation's new Associate in Ministry.

3. Approved the final 2022 Budget as recommended by the Administration Ministry Team.

4. Elected Bob Gambrell as clerk of the Session for 2022.

5. Postponed the congregational meeting scheduled for January 30 because of the suspension of in-person worship and authorized the moderator and clerk to establish a new date for the meeting, either in-person or via Zoom.

6. Approved following special offerings be approved for 2022: 5 Cents a Meal, Souper Bowl, One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Habitat for Humanity, Peacemaking and Global Witness, and Christmas Joy.

7. Elected Ken Murchison commissioner to the January meeting of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina.

8. Approved the proposed budget of the Community Engagement Ministry Team.

9. Authorized the Community Engagement Ministry Team to establish an action team to assist with the relocation of Afghan evacuees and refugees from Afghanistan and other countries.

10. Authorized that the Worship and Music Team to spend up to \$300 from the available earnings of the Worship and Music Endowment for material for paraments for lent and Easter.

Ken Murchison, Clerk

“Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope.”

Maya Angelou

“Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer. And let faith be the bridge you build to overcome evil and welcome good.”

Maya Angelou

Steve's Slant continued...

-vital because it is focused on sustaining and even building on the growth we have seen over the last several years in the number of young families with children who have found a home in our congregation.

Finally, in late breaking news from this current year, and as most of you know, we entered a formal agreement with Lutheran Services Carolinas to become a "Circle of Welcome" for a refugee family from Afghanistan.

This Sunday at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom we will introduce Farkhunda and Elham, a sister and brother team, to the congregation as a whole. They're bright, delightful young people and I can't wait for you to meet them.

Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church has welcomed refugee families in the past, so this is not new to us. We certainly don't know what lies ahead in this ongoing relationship, except to say that entering it feels like the start of a compelling new chapter in our church's ongoing story.

I believe this commitment will not only help these vulnerable young people get established and settled into their new lives here in the United States, I believe it will also stretch us, as God's calls always do. Indeed, that's how you know a particular calling is from God: when it stretches you and makes more of you.

So, just to review: we finished 2021 in a strong position financially, I think the strongest in quite some time. Our church is now fully staffed with creative, experienced people in all the positions we offer. And we are entering a new venture in shared ministry that promises to enliven and unite our congregation in a common purpose.

For all of those reasons, I believe it is fair to say that when this pandemic finally does come to an end, we very well may leave it in a stronger position than when it started.

Perhaps, like me, this strikes you as not just remarkable but, with great thanks to God, and with heartfelt thanks to all of you, genuinely miraculous.

Logos for PWNC

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina is planning to adopt a new logo. The two designs under consideration are below. If you would like to express a preference, email Byron Wade (bwade@presbyterywnc.org) or Tonya Williams (twilliams@presbyterywnc.org) and say whether you prefer Logo 1 (navy/teal) or Logo 2 (burgundy/black/gray).

Logo 1



Logo 2



Volunteers Needed!

Donated winter clothing that's already located in downtown Asheville needs to be sorted. Refugees and those assisting them will each then be offered an opportunity to choose a few immediately needed items during the week of 2/7/2022. We need your sorting and organizational skills to get ready!



When: Saturday February 5, 2022

Time: 9am-12 noon, 1 pm-4 pm. REGISTRATION REQUIRED-see below

Where: St. Mark's Lutheran church

Address: 135 Merrimon, Asheville. Park in the lot near Chestnut Street.

Enter: From the parking lot, locate the double green doors closest to the Chestnut Street end of the church building. A volunteer will be there to admit you. Please be prompt.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED:

A maximum of 10-12 volunteers needed for each shift (9 am-12 noon and 1 pm-4 pm). The work won't be difficult but cannot be done from a seated position-standing and walking required.

Please reserve your volunteer shift spot by emailing Carol Freeman at:

caroltaylorfreeman@gmail.com

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING VIA ZOOM We will hold a congregational meeting, via Zoom, at noon, on Sunday, February 6th, for the purpose of approving Steve's terms of call. We will also receive recommendations from our current nominating committee for next year's committee, along with a recommendation for a youth elder. And we will hear brief reports from our clerk of session and our pastor about the state of our church. Again, that will be next Sunday at noon, via Zoom. That link will be sent out via email.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY



At Warren Wilson
Presbyterian Church we are
mothers and fathers, single
and married, gay and
straight, young and old,
black and white,
prosperous and poor,
uncertain and sure, broken
and whole - and everything
in between. Together we
are the many faces of
humanity, yet as a joyful,
caring and loving
community of faith, we are
committed in our diversity
to be one in Christ!

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The Extended Family