

ANNUAL ECCLESIASTICAL REPORT

June 27, 2016 ~ July 9, 2017



July 9, 2017

Covenant Presbyterian Church (USA)

Butler, Pennsylvania

*Founded in 1813
Our Third Century in Christ*

***Docket for the Annual Ecclesiastical Meeting
of Covenant Presbyterian Church***

**Assembly Room, 11:15 AM
Sunday, July 9, 2017**

1. *Call to Order of the Ecclesiastical Meeting*
The Rev. Dr. James E. Swanson, Presiding as Moderator
Nancy Blewett, Clerk of Session
2. *Opening Prayer*
Including Necrology and Prayer for the Departed
3. *Necrology, Leadership Classes and Statistics.* 2-4
4. *Review of the Minutes* 4-5
of the Annual Ecclesiastical Meeting, June 26, 2016
5. *Report of the Pastor* 6
6. *Annual Reports of Committees and Groups*
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Election of Elders
Election of Nominating Committee Representatives
8. *Other Business; Comments for the Good of the Order*
9. *Adjournment with Prayer*

NECROLOGY 2016 - 2017

*Covenant Members on Active Roll at the time of their death
are Designated by the Symbol +*

Necrology List includes members, relatives and friends:

John Franklin McCormick ~ June 21, 2016

(father of Rev. Betsy McCormick, former Partner in Ministry)

Charlene Rose (Starkey) Loebell ~ July 9, 2016

(mother of Dave Loebell)

Garry "Cowboy Baker" Kemper ~ August 8, 2016

("unofficial" member & good friend of the congregation)

Dr. John H. Vanderzell ~ August 9, 2016

(brother of Betty Anderson)

Judith (Brennen) Roxberry ~ September 6, 2016

(daughter of Norma Brennen)

Rev. Dr. Paul L. Holland ~ September 7, 2016

*(served Calvary Presbyterian Church, Beaver Falls among others;
Chairman of Geneva College psychology department for 30 years)*

+ Gladys M. Strobel ~ November 13, 2016

+ Martha J. (Kellar) Keasey ~ December 29, 2016

Beverly McClaine ~ January 16, 2017

(Inactive Roll at the time of her death)

Jean Basher Lloyd ~ January 30, 2017

(Inactive Roll at the time of her death)

Rev. Dr. John C. Peterson ~ February 9, 2017

*(Presbytery Stated Clerk 1992-1993; Pastor of
Center Presbyterian Church, Slippery Rock, PA 1962-1995)*

Geraldine MacBaird ~ March 19, 2017

*(dedicated volunteer with the Covenant Cupboard;
deacon and member of Faith Presbyterian Church)*

(Necrology continued)

Richard Meloy ~ April 1, 2017

(father of Rev. Merry Hope Meloy, Pastor of Saint Andrews U.P.)

Frances “Georgina” Leighty ~ May 2, 2017

(mother of Linda Peters)

Virginia LeRoy Maust Thompson ~ May 28, 2017

(Inactive Roll at the time of her death)

John R. Zapp, Jr. ~ May 17, 2017

(brother of Carol Zapp Butler, Betty Butler’s daughter-in-law)

Edgar W. Lawson ~ May 28, 2017

(father of Rebecca Lawson, former member & missionary to the Philippines)

Church Staff

Rev. Dr. James E. Swanson. . . . Pastor, *since July 2004*

Beverly Antis Organist/Choir Director, *since Fall 2005*

Thomas G. Davidson Treasurer, *since May 2011*

Elsie Codispot Secretary, *since January 1989*

Lars “Larry” Morrison Sexton, *since January 2000*

Session

Class of 2017:

Nancy Blewett

Tom Butler

Tom Davidson

Ione Mathias

Connie Brown

Class of 2018:

Audrey Carlson

Brian Graff

Dave Loebell

Gina Loebell

Ann Morrison

NOTE: Terms of office are 2-years each, with eligibility for re-election continuing until 6 consecutive years (three 2-year terms) have been served.

Church Officer Nominating Committee

(6 members representing the congregation)

Class of 2017: Nancy Rice, Mary Reefer, Grace Sechler

Class of 2018: Ellie Walchesky, Betty Butler, Helen Ferguson

Statistical Summary 2015 – 2016

Total Active Membership, June 26, 2016	53
Total Active Membership, July 9, 2017	46
Average Attendance at Worship	39
Deaths (Members on Active Roll)	2
Gladys Strobel (11-13-16)	
Martha J. (Kellar) Keasey (12-29-16)	
Baptisms (3 infants / 1 adult) June 2016 - July 2017	4
Aedan Andrew Swanson (10-01-16)	
James Decker Reefer (10-23-16)	
Ava Grace Holland (1-08-17)	
Colby Ellis Nicholas (5-06-17) *adult; baptism officiated at his home	
Weddings ~ June 2016 - July 2017.....	2
Stephen Andrew Rayner & Ruth Romaine Plasterer (10-08-16) [NON-MEMBERS] --At Covenant Presbyterian Church, but officiated by Rev. Derek Bates	
Jeremy Stephen Schrecengost & Cassie Ann Shever (6-10-17) [NON-MEMBERS]	

The Minutes of the ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL (Ecclesiastical) MEETING of Covenant Presbyterian Church

JUNE 26, 2016 at 11:10 AM in the ASSEMBLY ROOM

(Minutes of Annual Ecclesiastical Meeting - June 26, 2016 continued)

The meeting was called to order and opened with prayer by the Reverend Dr. James E. Swanson. A quorum was determined to be present.

The Necrology of 2015-2016, the Leadership Classes, and Statistics were presented and reviewed.

The minutes of the Annual Ecclesiastical Meeting of August 16, 2015 (already approved by Session) were reviewed.

The printed reports submitted by various groups and committees of Session were read by those present. Comments and discussion followed.

The Nominating Committee's Report of the slate of Elders for a two year term and Nominating Committee members for a two year term (Class of 2018) was presented. The nominations were:

- Elders for a two year term: Audrey Carlson, Brian Graff, David Loebell, Gina Loebell, Ann Morrison, and Pam Patterson.
- Members of the Nominating Committee for a two year term: Ellie Walchesky, Betty Butler, and Helen Ferguson.

There were no other nominations from the floor. There was a motion to close the nominations and direct the clerk to cast a unanimous ballot for both the Elders and the Nominating committee. The motion passed.

Leanne Heaton was thanked for her service as active elder, and Lars Morrison was thanked for his service on the Nominating Committee.

There was a proposal from the Session to ordain and install Peggy Cartwright as a new Deacon at Covenant. She has been instructed in the duties of the office and wishes to serve "at large" (not assigned to a term of election). There being no objection, a motion was made and seconded to proceed with plans to ordain Peggy at the same time the newly elected elders are installed. The motion passed.

The Ecclesiastical Meeting was adjourned with prayer at 11:50 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Blewett,
Clerk of Session

Rev. Dr. James E. Swanson,
Moderator

PASTOR'S REPORT
Rev. Dr. James Swanson



As Juliet wraps up her famous balcony conversation with Romeo (in Shakespeare's classic play *Romeo and Juliet*) her speech becomes distracted. Still unsure of her feelings and of Romeo's love, she nervously pleads that if his intentions are merely to toy with her, he should just leave her alone. Then she turns around, pledges to send a message to him on the morrow, and parts with her famous line "A thousand times good night!"

This is just one of what may be "a thousand good-byes" which Karen and I shall speak before I retire officially as your pastor at the end of this year, 2017. It would be impossible in just a few paragraphs to capture what you have meant to me (to us) since our adoption into the Covenant family on July 1, 2004. Certainly it is true (and I have said it before) that Covenant was then, and has continued to be, the most perfect "match" of any of the five congregations I have served in my 32 years since ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Another way of saying this is that "you have given me the ultimate freedom to be myself in ministry," and that theologically and in our mutual commitments to formal worship, social justice and active mission we have found ourselves to be "kindred spirits."

God has been so good to me! He has blessed me with a lifetime of wonderfully loving partners... not least of all, the one I married forty-four years ago whose name is Karen! I thank you, friends, for the support you have shown to her and to our entire family... especially to Danny, who cannot grasp deep theological truth (who can?) but easily comprehends love when he is showered with it. That's what Covenant has been for me, I think: the best example yet of a church behaving like a true church, a "family of Christ and in Christ, doing the work of Christ." May God continue to guide Covenant in the years ahead to remain true to the unique and special character which sets you apart from those other churches which claim to welcome "all" but fall short. You *do* welcome and love everyone, and it has been my delight to lead and encourage you in that commitment.

In John, chapter 2, we read of the first miracle Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He turned water into wine, following which the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now." I rejoice that in all my years of ministry, the best has been last! I mean that sincerely. And in reviewing the time we've been engaged in this partnership of ministry, I stand in awe of what we have been able to do together, with God's help and the incredible talents of all who have given so generously of their own personal gifts – for teaching and learning, for music (wow!), for mission (Covenant Cupboard, community dinners, and countless other projects and causes), for prayer and visitation, for celebrating Covenant's history, for stewardship of property and protection of our environment... for seeking peace, and pursuing it!

There will be other opportunities in the months remaining for me to speak again of "what Covenant has meant to me," but one little four-letter word does it best: L-O-V-E.

ADMINISTRATION AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

“The Lord Loves a Cheerful Giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:7

The Administration and Stewardship Committee oversees personnel, finances and other assets of the church.

Stewardship Sunday was held November 6, 2016, and Pledge Dedication Sunday, on which members come forward with their pledges, was held on November 13, 2016.

The 2017 Budget was approved by the Session at its December 14, 2016 meeting and presented to the congregation at the Annual Corporation meeting on February 5, 2017.

The Apportionment Pot Luck Lunch was held on Pentecost Sunday, June 4. The per capita amount is \$44 per member.

Peter Schlicht, of Ameriprise Financial, continues to serve as our financial advisor. He oversees approximately \$246,000 in investments. He often presents our financial information to Session and the A&S committee.

The “Cushion Fund,” established in 2010, contains approximately \$55,000, available for emergency and unexpected expenses. We also have \$20,000 available in the Clearview Federal Credit Union. A large portion of the above described assets were received from the estates of Bert and Esther Shaffer and of Romaine MacDonald.

In personnel matters, Lars Morrison, continues to serve as sexton on a half time basis, and Bev Antis serves as organist/choir director. Elsie Codispot has served as church secretary for almost thirty years. Tom Davidson serves as volunteer treasurer, and Mary Reefer serves as volunteer auditor. All personnel have been interviewed and are to be commended.

God has blessed us with Pastor Jim Swanson, who has been our pastor since 2004. He will retire January 1, 2018. It will break our hearts.

We thank the congregation for providing us with the opportunity to serve our church and our God on this committee.

The following people are serving on the committee at the present time: Tom Davidson, Nancy Blewett, Mary Reefer, Dave Loebell, Pastor Jim Swanson.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Blewett, Chairperson

MUSIC

The loyalty and dedication of our long-time choir members continue to sustain the music program at Covenant Presbyterian Church. Although still few in number, the choir does an outstanding job preparing the anthems and leading the congregation with several pieces of service music every Sunday. Visitors often comment on the quality of the music they hear during worship. We are all grateful for the congregation's ongoing appreciation of our musical offerings.

Filling the ranks of the choir sections continues to be dependent on students from Slippery Rock University (indicated with an asterisk). Their voices added a beautiful richness and depth to the choral sound this year. Choir membership for 2016-17 is listed below:

SOPRANOS:

Jennie Benson*
Amy Cannard
Jess Oliver

ALTOS:

Leanne Heaton
Pam Patterson
Darla Peterson
Mary Reefer

TENORS:

Ian Steward*
Chas Tanner
Gideon Zoeller*

BASSES:

Frank Paden*
Nathan Turley*

Two long-standing worship traditions continued at Covenant this year: Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve and the use of Dale Wood's *Service of Darkness* at Tenebrae on Maundy Thursday. For the former, as is the custom, the choir sang several anthems and led the congregation in familiar carols. Singing a verse of Silent Night in German is a treasured part of the service. This year it was accompanied by Rick Cartwright on guitar. Baritone Don Rasely joined the choir for these special services.

Regular Sunday services were often enriched with instrumental music offered by Lars Morrison on flute or recorder. Additionally, Gideon Zoeller played his clarinet for a prelude and for an anthem obligato one Sunday, as well as playing a piece, "Serenity", written and accompanied by Don Rasely, for an offertory on Pentecost.

The annual Choir Appreciation Sunday and Reception was held on April 30, 2017. The choir season concluded the following Sunday, May 7, 2017.

Covenant Presbyterian participated with other Butler area Presbyterian churches in a Celebration of Music, held at Trinity Presbyterian Church at 7:00 pm on May 21. Covenant Choir sang an individual anthem and were part of two joint anthems. Beverly Antis played a solo piano piece, accompanied Deanna and Kyle Golden in a voice and trumpet duet, and accompanied one of the hymns on organ. The Prelude and Postlude featured Lars Morrison on bagpipes. Lars also played Celtic kirk music on recorder for the Offertory.

(Music Report Continued)

The organ continues to have its occasional challenges, either weather or age-related. Thankfully, Tim Hemry, organ builder and technician, has been able to keep it playable. Todd Scott, piano technician, keeps the Yamaha piano in the sanctuary in good tune.

The choir season will resume on Welcome Back Sunday, September 10, 2017. The first rehearsal in the fall will be Thursday, September 7, 2017. Beverly Antis will continue to serve as choir director and organist for the 2017–2018 season.

More singers are always welcome! Members and friends who like to sing and can attend the Thursday evening rehearsals as well as Sunday mornings are encouraged to join the choir.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Antis

Choir Director/Organist

WORSHIP AND MUSIC COMMITTEE

The Worship and Music Committee has the privilege of preparing the elements and scheduling Elders to serve the Lord's Supper.

Holy Communion is celebrated each month, either on the first Sunday of the month, or at special services. These include the First Sunday of Advent, Christmas Eve, the First Sunday of Lent, Maundy Thursday, Pentecost Sunday, and World Communion Sunday. Members of the committee bake the bread and provide juice for Communion.

The committee also arranges for and schedules greeters, ushers, liturgists, acolytes, readers for Christmas Eve, and Advent candlelighters.

Music continues to be a powerful ministry at Covenant Church. We are grateful that Beverly Antis continues as our organist and choir director. We thank Beverly and the choir for their dedication and inspirational music. Our choir participated in the Joint Ash Wednesday Service at Hill Presbyterian Church and *A Celebration of Music* at Trinity Presbyterian Church.

A special Mother's Day Service was organized and led by Brian Graff. Our committee sponsored a movie night in March and a Hymn Sing in June of 2017. Committee members Leanne Heaton and Darla Peterson led the congregation in singing and Brian Graff led the service. Choir Appreciation Sunday was celebrated on April 30th.

(Worship & Music Committee Report continued)

The Worship and Music Committee thanks the members of the congregation who have assisted in worship services.

The following people currently serve on the Committee: Nancy Blewett; Betty Butler; Brian Graff; Leanne Heaton; Darla Peterson; Nancy Rice; Beverly Antis, organist and choir director; and Reverend Dr. Swanson, pastor.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Pam Patterson (Chairperson)

FELLOWSHIP & OUTREACH COMMITTEE REPORT

This committee continues to plan for the weekly fellowship following morning worship services.

We sponsored the Pancake Dinner/Auction on Shrove Tuesday. We also sponsored "Souper" Bowl Sunday. This year we sponsored another rummage sale.

With the help of all members and additional hardworking talented people, we have decorated at both Christmas and Easter.

Thanks to all!

Connie Brown Committee Chair

PROPERTY REPORT

2016-2017 Annual Report: Property Committee

Continuing work of the Property Committee includes:

- Sponsoring monthly Clean-up Covenant Day each month.
- Installing laminate on ground-accessible windows to deter break-ins.
- Installing hooks & eyes on Assembly Room windows and other ground-level windows to deter break-ins.
- Repairing wall and post at bottom of stairs to Fellowship Hall
- In conjunction with Congregational Work Day:
 - Weeding of hemlock hedge along E. Jefferson St.
 - Repainting of safety-yellow along steps and curb on New Castle St.
 - Removal of rust and repainting downspout troughs in New Castle St. sidewalk.
- Establish contract with Association of Retarded Citizens for once/month basic cleaning services in Sanctuary
- Contract with Mr. Squeaky to wash windows.

In Process:

- Contacting contractors for bids to install lightning protection on Steeple.
- Researching installing security cameras at key locations due to break-ins.

General maintenance problems with electric, heating, plumbing and other issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Leanne Heaton, Committee Chair

Serving on the Property Committee:

Ione Mathias
Dave Loebell
Tom Butler

Ex-officio members:

Bob Mathias
Gina Loebell

COVENANT FOOD CUPBOARD report ~ 2017

After nearly four decades of service to the Butler community, Covenant Food Cupboard ceased operation and closed its doors on June 1, 2017. It was a bittersweet occasion, with many expressions of gratitude from the patrons for whom the Cupboard volunteers had become family over the years.

There were many factors which weighed in the final decision to “retire” the mission project which began on December 19, 1977 during the pastorate of Don Campbell – especially the falling census of people being served over the last few years. During the period October 2005 to March 2006 an average per month of 156 families (419 individuals) were served. For the period October 2015 to March 2016 an average per month of 84 families (175 individuals) were served. During the first three months of 2017, the average had fallen to 62 families (118 individuals) per month. On some distribution days (already reduced from four times per month to three), it was not uncommon for there to be more volunteers present than patrons served.

Many of our volunteers have been showing their age and some of the groups were having difficulty assembling a six-member team. In November 2016, David Blewett retired as Cupboard Manager and Pastor Swanson assumed his duties. It is remarkable that over the forty years of its operation, every manager has been a Covenant member who served faithfully and dutifully for many consecutive years. The list of Managers includes: Jesse Hoffmeister, Charlie Thompson, Orville Nicholas, Les Dunmire, Sam Peters, David Blewett and Pastor Jim Swanson.

The Butler congregations who have provided volunteer teams for distribution days include: Christ Community Methodist Church, First United Methodist Church, Grace at Calvary Lutheran Church, The Hill Presbyterian Church, St. Peter’s Anglican Church (formerly St. Peter’s Episcopal), Faith United Presbyterian Church, East Butler Presbyterian Church, and the “Loyal Team” (volunteers from Trinity Presbyterian Church), in addition to Covenant.

Many local congregations and schools have given financial support and/or donated food and other products generously over the years, most recently: Trinity Lutheran Church, Grace at Calvary Lutheran Church, Christ Community Methodist Church, First English Lutheran Church, Meridian Presbyterian Church, Saint Andrews Presbyterian, Hill Presbyterian Church, St. Peters Parish Family, Emily Brittain Elementary School, McQuiston Elementary School, Butler Middle School / Jr. High School, Armstrong, Butler 4-H Clubs, and many more.

Pam Patterson has served faithfully as the Cupboard Treasurer. She reported for the year ending December 31, 2016 a total income of \$24,500 with expenses of \$19,082 (of which more than \$16,000 was paid to Aldi’s Foods and \$3,000 was given to support Community Dinners served by Covenant).

Covenant Cupboard Report, Continued

Cupboard financial investments are managed through Ameriprise, an account which shall remain open for future expenditure as authorized by Session. At the conclusion of Cupboard operation, it was decided to send \$5,000 to the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, where most of the Cupboard patrons have been encouraged to go now for monthly food distribution. Another alternative is for them to receive food at the Salvation Army downtown.

Rev. Swanson met in June with representatives from the various supporting churches to plan a "Celebration Event" to be held in Fellowship Hall beginning at 6 pm on Tuesday, August 29, 2017. That evening a catered meal will be served and persons from every church and organization that has supported the Cupboard in the past will be invited to attend. It will be an evening of fellowship, story-sharing and prayers of thanksgiving for the faithful hunger ministry now concluded and for all who have made it such a blessing through the years.

Jim Swanson , Former Manager

COMMUNITY DINNERS

Each month on the last Wednesday, Covenant provides a meal for hungry folks served at Saint Andrews Presbyterian Church. The number gradually has increased from 70 or so ten years ago to a minimum of 150.

This is done with help from Faith Presbyterian and Prospect Presbyterian as well as Muddy Creek and Unionville Evangelical Presbyterian churches.

All of these folks work very hard with our members and for that...thanks so much.

Connie Brown Coordinator

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE REPORT

July 9, 2017

The Evangelism committee is a “committee of the whole” with input from all members of our congregation. While Evangelism is essentially the spreading of God’s Word to the world; we find that in our setting it also relates to marketing. *How we can market ourselves to find people to share the Good News with* was the main question to the congregation. After a “Blue Sky” meeting in January and a more focused meeting in February, we have identified three areas we can act on:

Message Design: Social Media, Website, Smartphone App, Mobile Giving, Advertising, etc.

Attractional Activities: Hosting concerts and art programs, ice cream social open house

Missional Activities: Drop-in coffeehouse, welcome wagon, participate in community events such as the Fall Festival

These are just a few of the ideas presented by our members to consider.

To aid in our efforts, the Evangelism chair has worked with the Session to purchase a new 4 wireless microphone system for the sanctuary; and purchase a new website to give us new tools, a modern look, and provide the ability to be accessible from smartphones. Covenant on the go! The new website & app should be complete and go live in time for Welcome Back Sunday.

Evangelism will be working with the Worship & Music Committee in August to combine our Ice Cream Social Open House with the next Covenant Movie Night.

“We are not in decline; we have room to grow!”

Respectfully submitted,

Brian F. Graff

Elder/Chair- Evangelism Committee

MISSION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Mission Committee presented a mission topic every second and fourth Sunday of the month. Both home mission projects and overseas missions were presented.

This has been a year (2016-2017) when we again have had mission co-worker change. In January 2017 Rebecca and Eric Hinderliter retired from their ministry with the LCC International University in Klaipeda, Lithuania, to the USA. It was also necessary for Martha Sommers to leave the Christian Medical Institute in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for Madagascar due to escalating conflict and danger. In Madagascar she continued studying French and assisting at a mission hospital there. At the present time, Covenant Church is supporting Martha Sommers with \$500 and the Chang-Lopez family in the Philippines with \$1500 per year.

Operation Christmas Child was again done in 2016, and 20 shoeboxes were prepared and delivered to St. John's Reformed Church, the Butler collection center. Fish banks were given to the church members for helping Refreshing Springs Ministry and approximately \$550 was donated. The 2016 summer mission project was backpacks and school supplies for Child and Youth Services in Butler. A very large supply of school supplies and many backpacks were donated and greatly appreciated by CYS.

Mr. Mike Ambuske, Area Director for Young Life, North Butler County, spoke in February 2017 and shared both in the church service and in the Fellowship Hour about the program Young Life is carrying out in Butler High School. The Presbyterian Women's mission project for 2017 was also presented in February, which was assisting the Little School in Nicaragua. A video of the school was shown. Fish banks were again given for the Lenten offering, and the money was equally divided between the Little School in Nicaragua and the Butler area Young Life program.

The following topics are just some of those presented during Minute for Mission: Peacemaking Offering, Joy Offering, and One Great Hour of Sharing Offering; Boko Harem, Chang-Lopez update; Sudan conflict; literacy in Lahore, Pakistan; and the 2017 summer mission project of diapers and wipes for the Pregnancy and Parenting Service in Butler.

We continue to encourage the congregation to check the Mission bulletin board for items of interest related to missions.

Serving on the Mission Committee:

Audrey Carlson
Gina Loebell
Karen Swanson

Audrey Carlson Committee Chair

PEOPLE FOR PEACE

August, 2016 - June, 2017

Report to the Congregation:

The People for Peace have had another busy and productive year. At the annual pizza get-together on August 25th, we chose our fall study book: *Outlive Your Life* by Max Lucado. Our spring study was based on excerpts from *Rediscovering Values* by Jim Wallis, and we incorporated current event discussions and Bible passages as well.

To help our church, we hosted four fellowship hours and two birthday luncheons. We went to Serventi's in the fall and La Casa in the spring to celebrate everyone's special day. Flowers were placed on the altar on May 28th to honor former class members Romaine MacDonald and Jeanne Schlicht.

We continued to help our community by bringing items to each meeting for local children going into foster care. Many tote bags full of these items were delivered to CYS in December and May. A meal was prepared for our local warming center on February 3rd.

In a small effort to make the world a better place, we sent a donation to the Ananias Mission, a Cranberry-based operation that helps Syrian refugees.

Because we enjoy one another's company, we took a field trip to see the Spring Flower Show at Phipps Conservatory on April 12th. Trinity Lutheran Church graciously allowed us to borrow their van, and Pastor Jim was our able and willing chauffeur. On June 22nd, we carpoled to Johnstown for a pleasant visit and lunch with Betty Anderson and her son, Michael, who made the reservations and brought Betty to the restaurant.

We are looking forward to hosting another Fellowship Hour on July 16th and re-organizing for fall at a pizza lunch on August 16th.

As always, I would like to thank Elsie, Lars and Pastor Jim who help me in so many ways. And, of course, thanks to my faithful members who continue to support class with their attendance and participation.

Submitted by *Nancy Rice*

DEACON'S REPORT

Here is my summary of my first year as Deacon:

My ministry was defined as primarily that of outreach to the community around us, particularly the marginalized.

Accomplishments have included: church members created over 70 Christmas cards for clients in the food bank, which included invitations to Christmas services, providing pins and awareness of "The Safety Pin Project" in support of marginalized people, with a donation of \$35.00 to the Childrens' Defense Fund, facilitation of two prayer workshops, facilitation of four lessons for the Seekers adult Sunday School class, and providing a special welcome to visitors at our Services and special events.

An ongoing project is the establishment of a "Math Mondays" program for middle school students, set to start in September. A room has been readied on the second floor of the Sarver Building with space for students to play math games in order to improve skills. Five people have volunteered. Donors have provided gift cards for prizes, a rug, a bookcase, money, and calculators. This project will address the achievement gap which exists between students who attend lower and higher income schools.

Improvement of math skills will be a step towards developing a competency that will assist a student in pursuing higher education and higher income jobs.

Work continues on a way to enhance and streamline Prayers of the People shared at worship.

It is a joy and an honor to serve in this ministry at Covenant Church. The members of this small but mighty community of faith inspire me with their faith and dedication to the way of the Lord.

Margaret "Peggy" Cartwright,

Deacon of Covenant Presbyterian (Ordained August 7, 2016)

Slate of Nominees for Election
July 9, 2017

Elder for 2-year term, five to the Class of 2019

(* continuing for another term)

- * Connie Brown
- Rick Cartwright
- * Tom Davidson
- * Ione Mathias
- Nancy Rice

Nominating Committee (two-year term), three to the Class of 2019

Pam Patterson
Lars Morrison
Grace Sechler

Thanks to the Graduating Class !

It is with heartfelt gratitude that we acknowledge those who have discharged their elected offices with energy, intelligence, imagination and love.

Thank-you to **Nancy Blewett***, **Tom Butler**, and **Pam Patterson** for their time of service as active elders.

Thanks also to **Nancy Rice**, **Mary Reefer**, and **Grace Sechler** who completed terms of service on the Nominating Committee.

Well done, good and faithful servants!

*Nancy Blewett has agreed to continue as Clerk of Session (non-voting status).



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