ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Submitted for the one hundred fortieth annual meeting

westminster congregational united church of christ
spokane, wa
### Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018 Annual Meeting Minutes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 Budget Meeting Minutes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 Annual Meeting Agenda and Order of Worship</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Memoriam</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk’s Report</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastors’ Report</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderator’s Report</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustees</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer’s Report</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability Team</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Spiritual Growth</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral Relations</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaconate</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WestCAT</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music &amp; Arts</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The 140th Annual Meeting of
Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ
Sunday, February 24, 2019

Call to Order / Call to Worship

Hymn No. 314 *Community of Christ*

Prayer of Gathering / Passing the Peace

Centering Prayer

A Time of Remembrance

Song of Response No. 742 *Gathered Here*

Approval of Minutes

Children’s time

Scripture

Acceptance of Written Reports / Sermon

Anthem

Prayers of the people

Election of Officers and Board Members

   Nominations from the Floor

   Election

Hymn No. 397 *Thank Our God for Sisters, Brothers*

Offering

Hymn No. 286 *Spirit of Gentleness*

Benediction / Adjournment
2018 Annual Meeting Minutes

139th Annual Meeting
February 25, 2018

Worship/annual meeting convened at 10:30 am in the social hall.

Minutes approved by affirmation

Nominations accepted by affirmation

Jenn Marquis was thanked and honored for her service as Moderator and the cross was passed on to Steve Paulson.

Steve adjourned the meeting at 11:50 am.

Respectfully submitted by
Jan Gilber, Clerk ~

2018 Budget Meeting Minutes

Church Budget Vote
December 16, 2018

Steve Paulson called the meeting to order.

MSP to accepting the budget.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by
Jan Gilber, Clerk ~

IN MEMORIAM 2018

Ronald Carl McConnell
January 6

Lila Weis
January 13

Robert Eugene Franklin
March 3

Martha Hibbard
September 28

CLERK'S REPORT

New Members
Megan Schindler
Kent Johnson
Deb Elzinga
Matt & Liz Wood
Amanda CastroLang

Baptisms
Arianna Elizabeth Nash

Marriages
Katie Gilbert and Kendall Parrett August 11

Membership Statistics
Membership as of January 1, 2018 128
New Members 5
Removed (deaths) 3
Removed by request 0
Transferred 0
Membership as of December 31, 2018 130

Jan Gilbert, Clerk ~
Pastor's Report

We are beginning the year-long celebration of Westminster’s 140 years of witness and service.

I’ve been walking around this building, and through this neighborhood, for well-nigh 16 years now. There are stories on these streets! There are stories these walls could tell! There are stories behind the stained-glass windows, the Cushing Eells bell in the east tower, the chimes in the west tower. There are stories in the basement, the parlor, the back stairs. There are stories in the little books written about Westminster at its 50-year anniversary, its 75-year anniversary, at its 100-year anniversary.

We have HISTORY here! And I love history.

But it’s time to move on from the history of Westminster, and this city growing up together; the stories of its past activities, whether infamous or glorious.

I want to celebrate who we are NOW. I want you to think, with urgency and with excitement, about who we are called to BECOME!

We all can agree that the churches in America are in a time of radical change, shaking things up, letting things go, imagining new ways of living out the message of Jesus our Christ in a vastly troubled world of brokenness and need.

Westminster is in the middle of that shake up, change, and letting go. It is a time of asking hard questions.

In every age and time, the followers of Jesus have to discern what is crucial, what is “the heart of the faith”, what we cannot continue without.

- Is it the promise of God’s love known through Jesus, and the call to share it with others in witness and service and activism?
- Is it the nature of our preaching and dialogue and education; which includes our questions, our ponderings, our science, our philosophy, our Bible, our daily struggles, and our concern for our beautiful yet endangered world?
- Is it our many groups and interests, our engagement in many ways of serving, our ecumenical and interfaith connections?
- Do we see ourselves growing as the Body of Christ?

Let me assure all of you that every day that I have been at work as your pastor in this place, I have sought to serve you and the city, while pondering these questions right alongside you.

I know we are all seeking to live out our faith values as we see them discerned in our midst in prayer and conversation, study and dialogue and debate.

So, let us be clear about what we value; what our treasure in earthen vessels is, what we recognize as our pearl of great price!

And then, let us celebrate it and honor it and share it with our city! Let’s bring the light of God’s love into every dark corner, bring welcome and rejoicing to others, bring justice and mercy into our homes, our hearts and our world!

We know some of the stories of where we have come from. We are called to live the story of Westminster NOW and into the years AHEAD.

Together, we can claim this unique and wonderful faith community, and we can embrace the challenges and excitement that lie ahead of us.

2018 was a busy year and one of hard work and hope. 2019 is here now. The future is before us, unknown but exciting and calling to us.

Let us go together, always in the power of God’s love and care, always at the urging of our Teacher and our Lord, Jesus. Always with the Ruah: the Breath, the Spirit, of God breathed into us, and breathed out of us for others.

Yours in ongoing, joyful service,
Pastor Andy ~
Well here it is, that time when we look back at 2018 and forward to 2019. A lot of things happened at Westminster, last year. A lot of it started with the Sustainability Work Team under the excellent leadership of Karen Nielson. We developed a plan to move forward during the next two years under the guidance and training of Deb Elzinga. The plan included, among other things, getting some grant money for some capital improvements, some remodeling of our existing facilities, and preparing to celebrate our one hundred and fortieth year as a congregation.

Among the list of remodeling jobs, were the upgrades to the Social Hall restrooms. As the work began it became clear that the job was going to be more complicated than was originally anticipated. In the midst of the remodeling, the City of Spokane came to us with a request to use our Social Hall as an emergency warming center. Your Church Council thought that to say no would be to deny our calling to work toward social justice and to be good neighbor in our community. It created an enormous amount of pressure on our remodeling team: Randy Crowe, Jane Baker, Maxie DeLaney, Linda Crowe, Allan Bonney, Todd Meredith and Jerry Hilton. Under the tireless leadership of Randy, they got the bathrooms finished before Christmas and we opened the shelter before the weather really turned harsh.

The shelter opened and slowly it began to fill to where we are nearly to capacity, now. The shelter is for 18 to 25 year olds and is staffed by The Guardians who are hired by the city. There have been a few minor bumps along the way, but nothing that isn’t solvable.

We have been awarded a grant from the Spokane Preservation Society that will get us about halfway to the cost of repairing the roof in the West Tower. Thanks to Andy and Deb for that work.

Now we look to the future. 2019 marks our 140th year as a congregation. We have a multitude of activities planned for the entire year. The theme of the celebration is Westminster, Past, Present and Future. Our kickoff event was held on January 27th. Our Conference Minister graciously came as guest preacher and gave us an inspiring sermon in which he told us that there may have been times in our history where we had many more members than we do now, but right now we are doing more to live out our values, then ever in our history. He finished with the idea that we have practiced for 140 years to live out social justice, right now! He was truly motivating.

We have commissioned a musical piece in commemoration of our 140th year. It is being composed by our musician Janet Hubbard. Janet is writing it in three parts to match the theme of Past, Present and Future. At our kickoff service the choir, direct by Vern Windham, performed the first movement accompanied by Jasmin Meredith on flute and Judy Lungren on viola and Janet Hubbard on piano and organ. Then Walt and Delia Thurber gave us a beautiful dance sequence. The whole performance was stunning! We are so lucky to have such amazing musical talent in our midst.

There are many other events during the coming year, but one stands out. It is our anniversary worship service to be held on Sunday May 26 at 2:00 pm. We are holding it in the afternoon so that people from other congregations can come and celebrate with us. Invite your friends and family. Let’s make 2019 an unforgettable year.

Our church is so blessed by our wonderful volunteers. Where would we be without them?

Steve Paulson ~
Every month Trustees meet to review church expenses, deal with building issues and work to ensure the budget reflects the mission of the church. Westminster Trustees are Karen Nielsen: Chair, Margaret Ennis, Ondrej DeZarn and Judy Lungren. Randy Crowe and Judy Lungren are Co-Treasurers.

**Pledges / Giving**
The total pledge amount collected for 2018 was $100,935 from 66 individuals and families. Total giving for 2018 was $125,749. It is good news that promised pledges for 2019 are up nearly $17,000 from 2018! Currently 52 individuals and families are pledging in 2019. If you’d like to pledge for 2019, please contact Andréa in the office. Thanks to all who made a pledge commitment to the mission of Westminster!

**Building/Security**
A camera and keypad system were installed at the Washington Street entrance so office staff can, from the office, see who is at the door and open the door. Codes can be given to groups and individuals to open the door reducing the need to hand out keys.

In November, Spokane Preservation Advocates awarded a $5,000 Heritage Grant to Westminster. This grant will help finance repairs to the west tower roof which is leaking and creating water damage. We are thrilled and grateful to receive this grant in matching funds to get this much needed work accomplished in 2019.

The Social Hall bathrooms were completely remodeled – new paint, flooring, toilets, sinks, etc. Thanks to Randy Crowe and all the volunteers who took their time to make these old, dingy bathrooms modern, clean and bright.

Westminster became a winter Warming Center for homeless young adults aged 18-24, at the request of the City of Spokane. The City provided $20,000 in funds to increase security and make repairs.

Sanctuary doors were replaced with locked doors, and locks were added to additional doors. A camera was installed at the east door on 4th St so volunteers who monitor the door can open it for adults and children meeting and rehearsing at Westminster. The rest of the funds will be spent as needed for restoration and repair.

**Renting**
Rental income in 2018 was up 20% from 2017. Trustees believe an increase in rental income is key to solving the ongoing budget deficit. Efforts to rent the kitchen have been delayed due to navigating all the permits needed from the City to use our space as a commercial kitchen.

Please help spread the word that Westminster has great spaces to rent for concerts, rehearsals, receptions, weddings and meetings.

Trustees strive for good stewardship of church funds. We appreciate your support and invite input as we plan for a sustainable future.

**Finances**
The church continues to run a deficit although the church is not in debt. The deficit has been covered every year by our Washington Trust Bank church investment account. This investment account may be depleted by the end of 2019 which would require the need to access the 2nd Century Fund in 2020. As required by the Fund, Church Members will be called on to vote on any 2nd Century Fund expenditures.

Trustees continue to work with church leadership to address the deficit through increasing rental income and budget oversight, stewardship and growth of membership.

Karen Nielsen ~
The 2018 Church year ended with mixed financial results for your church. While our income was higher than budgeted, by a bit over $19,000, our expenses were also over budget which left our loss for the year at just less than $89,000. I want to add that the deficit includes $6,243 for the remodel of the downstairs bathrooms and $7,341 which was spent making our building usable for a warming center and which will be reimbursed by the city. There is also a deposit for an exhaust fan that is included in the amount of $6,000 which has been returned.

As of December 31, 2017, cash and investments available to pay operating expenses totaled approximately $120,014, down $74,000 from last year's report. In addition, the balance in the Stevenson Fund, which was given to the church to help the needy was approximately $92,600 at the end of the year.

Another cash reserve of the church is the Second Century Fund, which was placed in trust in 1978 to serve as a permanent trust fund, and to be used for church expenses “only on occasion of extreme financial need.” The balance of the trust fund as of the end of the year was $728,000, down from $742,230 a year ago, the earnings from this trust come to the church on a quarterly basis.

Your trustees and treasurer have used the past years’ figures to estimate what we can look forward to for 2019 and hope that lacking a crystal ball, we have come up with a budget that is realistic and achievable.

As of January 30, 2019, we have received 52 pledges totaling $117,250.56 which is up from 60 pledges at this time last year for $94,510, which is encouraging. If you haven’t made a pledge yet we hope that you will give it some prayerful consideration. And if you have made your pledge we would encourage you to give prayerful consideration to making an increase.

Randy Crowe, Treasurer ~

Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ 2018 Income and Expenses Compared to Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017 Actual</th>
<th>2018 Actual</th>
<th>2018 Budget</th>
<th>Budget-Actual Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2017 Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Rentals</td>
<td>20,135.97</td>
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<td>Pledge and non-Pledge income</td>
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<td>125,749.42</td>
<td>127,000.00</td>
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<td>FUNraiser income</td>
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<td>7,132.20</td>
<td>7,000.00</td>
<td>+132.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investment income</td>
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<td>15,839.20</td>
<td>25,000.00</td>
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<td>Designated funds</td>
<td>21,622.93*</td>
<td>25,909.78*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL INCOME</strong></td>
<td>214,567.88</td>
<td>200,621.11</td>
<td>181,600.00</td>
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<td><strong>2017 Expenses</strong></td>
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<td>Building and Operations</td>
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<td>Congregational Support</td>
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<td>Diaconate</td>
<td>633.35</td>
<td>840.75</td>
<td>2,450.00</td>
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<td>Education and Spiritual Growth</td>
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<td>544.70</td>
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<td>FUNraiser Expense</td>
<td>1,009.78*</td>
<td>455.00*</td>
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<td>Investment Expense</td>
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<td>658.58</td>
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<td>Music and Arts</td>
<td>9,357.80</td>
<td>952.50</td>
<td>2,345.00</td>
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<td>Office Expense</td>
<td>17,882.64</td>
<td>13,160.51</td>
<td>15,550.00</td>
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<td>Pastoral Ministries</td>
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<td>2,917.75</td>
<td>2,960.00</td>
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<td>Payroll expense</td>
<td>172,413.84</td>
<td>167,735.16</td>
<td>175,380.87</td>
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<td>Designated Funds Expense</td>
<td>22,149.09</td>
<td>20,240.66*</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSE</strong></td>
<td>290,813.86</td>
<td>289,551.03</td>
<td>256,835.87</td>
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<td><strong>NET LOSS</strong></td>
<td><strong>-76,244.98</strong></td>
<td><strong>-88,929.92</strong></td>
<td><strong>-75,235.87</strong></td>
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*These are offerings or donations for direct pass through, so we don’t budget for them
The Sustainability Team has been meeting this year to continue the work of planning for Westminster’s future. The Team this year is Pastor Andy, Karen Nielsen, Chair, Steve Paulson, Doris Holdaway, Jane Baker and new members Mary Rupert, Randy Crowe and Deb Elzinga.

In 2016, the first Sustainability Team identified three areas of focus: creating opportunities to deepen our connection with each other through worship and fellowship, invest in building improvements to be more energy efficient or comfortable or rentable, and create rental opportunities to bring in much needed income. Since then, the church has established Small Group Ministries, a Befriender Ministry, revitalized the FUNraiser, remodeled first floor and social hall bathrooms, made security upgrades and increased rental income by 25%.

After getting input from church leadership at the annual luncheon in February of 2018, the new Sustainability Team has identified an additional focus area: Increasing the visibility and awareness in the Spokane community of our history, mission, service and activism. The Team identified new sustainability goals and divided up the group to address five ‘Faith Challenges.’ These Challenges were presented to the congregation in September and are outlined below.

**Westminster – Our Faith Challenge**

Westminster UCC is a congregation of progressive, hopeful, and faithful people. We embrace a commitment to social justice and human rights because we believe our faith calls us to do so. Now, in its second century of life, our congregation is beginning to reimagine itself as it seeks to grow, flourish and move decisively on the path to sustainability.

Over the next 24 months, Westminster UCC will:

- Enrich our faith experience by engaging the congregation in new programs, activities and events.
- Increase the visibility and awareness in the Spokane community of our history, mission, service and activism.
- Strengthen the financial health of our church by engaging in strategic, entrepreneurial activities that result in additional income to better serve our members, mission, and improve and protect our church building asset.

**Specific Goals:**

1. **FAITH:** By January of 2021, at least 75% of our active members and friends will be engaged in existing and/or new faith engagement activities and/or involvement in community ministry activities on a regular basis, resulting in enhanced relationships and increased spiritual growth and Christian service.
   
   Team: Jane Baker, Mary Rupert, Pastor Andy, YOU

2. **CELEBRATION:** By January of 2019, we will have developed and begun implementing an awareness/outreach/social media campaign & celebratory events related to the church’s 140th Anniversary, resulting in at least 3 -5 significant articles and/or stories in the local media, radio, or TV.
   
   Team: Steve Paulson, Jane Baker, Randy Crowe, Doris Holdaway, YOU

3. **LEGACY:** By December of 2019, we will have established a policy, developed educational resources and the mechanism to encourage members to include the church in their estate planning considerations.
   
   Team: Randy Crowe, Mary Rupert, Doris Holdaway, YOU

4. **PARTNERSHIP:** By January of 2021, we will establish a minimum of 3 – 5 new, strong local partnerships with businesses, arts organizations, or nonprofits, resulting in $15,000 - $20,000 in annual income from rents, events and performances to support our ongoing operations.
   
   Team:, Karen Nielsen, Deb Elzinga, Pastor Andy, YOU

5. **STewardship:** By January of 2021, we will have raised or secured at least $50,000 in grants and outside donations to support critical building improvement projects.
   
   Team: Deb Elzinga, Karen Nielsen, Pastor Andy, YOU

Respectfully submitted by Karen Nielsen ~
Committee: Pastor Andy, Rob Sauders, Patty Ferguson, Matt Wood, Megan Schindler, and Amy Meredith

Lorna Kropp is a valuable ex-officio member, who keeps our church school organized and running.

**Church School**
February 2018 - June 2018

The multi-age church school class operated as one class for all children in grades 1 - 6 for several years. We had four teams of two Teachers (8), who each take one Sunday a month. During the 2017-18 school year, the curriculum used was *The Joyful Path – Year 1*, by the Center for Progressive Christianity. The primary enrollment was children in grades 2-6.

September 2018 - January 2019

For the new school year 2018-2019, we have been blessed with a bumper crop of Westminster families with Kindergarten-aged children – six potential children for our Church School. It was decided to try to have two classes – one for children in grades K-2 and a second for children in grades 3-6. During the annual planning day, the ESG committee agreed to recruit additional teachers to make it possible. Presently we have 13 adults and three teens taking one Sunday a month so that there can be two age-related classes for our Church School. The Curriculum is *Year 2 of The Joyful Path*. The K-2 group meets in Room 204; and the 3-6 group meets in Room 207. With the help of John, a closet in 207 was cleared out and folding tables and supplies put together. Teachers and students set up the room each Sunday and take it down so that the room can be used during the weekdays.

While attendance varies, we are pleased with the start to growing our Church School. During the 1st Sunday of the month, children start in the classroom and join the congregation for Communion. For the other 3 Sundays, the children and teachers leave after Children’s Time with Pastor Andy. All teachers go through the Safe Church Policy procedure. We welcome interest from new congregation members.

Lorna Kropp, 3rd Sunday Teacher /Teacher Coordinator

**Middle School**

Randy and Linda Crowe have offered to step up to create a middle school program.

**Senior High**

Our senior high kids are going in a hundred directions, so we grab their talents when we can. Maya Marquis is assisting with the young children in the Activity Room. Tevita is helping with the kids in Sunday school. Jasmine and Alisher Meredith step in for special music, on occasion. If you are interested in helping us create more for our high school youth, let any of our committee members know.

**Adult Forum**

Megan Schindler, Rob Sauders, Matt Wood, Patty Ferguson, and Amy Meredith have created and moderated several thought-provoking series, including how to be an Ally for marginalized populations (e.g., GLBTQA+, homeless, mentally ill, and people with disabilities), taking care of yourself so that you can better care for others, and scripture according to *First Light*, with Dominic Crossan and Marcus Borg.

Our team also prepared the itinerary for another fun Church Camp at N-Sid-Sen, in September of 2018. We are grateful to all those involved who helped it be a success!

Amy Meredith ~
Pastoral Relations

The Pastoral Relations Committee was formed a few years ago, to act as a liaison between the Pastor and the staff, and the Pastor and the congregation. Following are excerpts from an article written by the original committee to explain the purpose and workings of the committee:

“What is a Pastoral Relations Committee? It is a resource that could be helpful in resolving disputes which involve the Pastor.

“If a dispute arises between the Pastor and members or friends of the church, or between the Pastor and a member of the church staff, the Pastor Relations Committee will work with those individuals to try to find a solution that is acceptable to all involved.

“We on the Committee believe it is the responsibility of all of the church family to develop, maintain, or if need be, to restore healthy relationships here at Westminster”

During 2018, the Pastoral Relations Committee was involved with the dispute between, then, Pastor Jan Shannon and the church. Doris Holdaway, a member of the Committee, met with other church leaders, the Conference Committee on Ministry, and Conference Minister Mike Denton to seek resolution of the issues involved. As most members and friends of the church know, Jan decided to become a member of a Methodist church and seek ordination through them.

Members of the Pastoral Relations Committee in 2018 were Steve Paulson, Allan Bonney, and Doris Holdaway. Allan resigned at the end of 2018. Thank you to Allan for his invaluable input. Megan Schindler has agreed to be on the Committee. The Committee encourages any members or friends of the church to contact any member for further information about the workings of the Committee, or to seek the assistance of the Committee.

Doris Holdaway,
Member, Pastoral Relations Committee ~

Diaconate

The deacons do some of the routine duties of the church: preparing the sanctuary for each week’s service, greeting members and visitors, preparing and serving communion, distributing and collecting prayer requests, counting the offering, and serving as the pastor’s hands and eyes when needed.

We have been shorthanded for much of the year, with many current deacons also serving in other areas of the church. The Diaconate could especially use more younger deacons – young adults, or even a youth or two. If interested, please talk to Steve Paulsen, or one of the current deacons.

Serving as deacons during the past year have been Maxi DeLaney, Doris Holdaway, Wes Johnson, Hazel Kotlan, Teresa Kruger, Francie Light, Jim McPherson, Karen Mobley, Mary Seaton, Annamarie Walsh, and Sara Weaver.

Jim McPherson ~

WestCAT

Such a peculiar title: WestCAT = Westminster Christian Action Team.

We get to know each other in the church better, while listening for pains and pressures in our lives and in our community. Other Spokane Alliance groups do the same with their members. When there are common correctable issues, we act together. We meet with the decision-makers and work for equitable solutions.

There are currently Research Action Teams working on: Jobs, Healthcare, West Central Development, and Tax Reform. Find out more at Spring Leadership class March 1 & 15, it is free.

More info: contact Cathy Gunderson or spokanealliance.org
Westminster’s music department continues to provide imaginative and expressive music as an integral part of worship, here. Members of the choir meet with Andy regularly to plan the worship services, with close attention paid to the meaning and the beauty which music can bring.

Our small choir has been happy to welcome Mark Safranek back, and welcomes occasional visits from other musicians in town. We are pleased with the talents of some of our younger church members who provide instrumental music to enhance the services, especially Jasmine and Alisher Meredith. The bell choir, with the assistance of two visitors, rehearses faithfully each week, enhancing our worship services several times a year. This year they added a set of chimes, thanks to the estate of Karen Wilson Bell’s mother. That added another range of beautiful sounds to their efforts.

2018/19 found the Music and Arts team doing our regular activities to support the church’s programs. This included two concerts, with group participation events in the social hall on June 17th with a protest song theme, and for a December 9th Christmas party. The choir had great participation for the holiday and 140th celebration services, including performing Janet’s own composition dedicated to Westminster. We supported the efforts of the choir and bell choir, welcomed Bekah to our committee to provide beautiful and innovative decoration of our worship space, and Verne continued to schedule the regular tuning of the organ and pianos.

We followed up on auctioning some parlor furniture, and discussed redecorating the parlor; but the latter was tabled for now. Our biggest effort of the year was decorating for Christmas, including a tree for the Social Hall to provide some Christmas cheer for our homeless guests, and the purchase of a new tree for next year.

Jane Baker and Verne Windham ~