



# Alpharetta Presbyterian Church

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## 2017 Annual Report

**Our Mission:** *We are called to be a Christ-centered family of believers committed to growing spiritually, worshipping joyfully, and sharing God's love daily.*

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## **PASTOR'S REPORT**

Dr. Oliver Wagner

I started 2017 on Sunday, January 1, with worship and ended the year on December 31 with an evening wedding in our same sanctuary. In addition to Sunday worship services throughout the year that included the welcome of new members, many joyful baptisms and celebrations of the Lord's Supper, I was privileged to be with you in worship for special church holy days, weddings and memorial services.

Last year I was blessed to travel with Columbia Theological Seminary to India, complete six years of service on the Board of the Drake House, begin serving on the Committee on Ministry of our Presbytery, and be elected chairperson of the Alpharetta YMCA Advisory Board. I joined the Board of Visitors at Agnes Scott College in Decatur and continued to convene the Alpharetta Clergy Association which hosted several community events.

Within APC, we received a major anonymous gift which allowed us to renovate the nursery and surrounding area to better serve the youngest members of our church family. We said a fond farewell to Dr. Jo Anderson who moved to Florida and joyfully welcomed Rev. Beverly Markham to assume the coordination of pastoral care as an Associate Pastor. We also took an important big step to strengthen our ministry to the next generation by electing a Search Committee for the full-time position of Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults. To further strengthen youth ministry, we hired two young adult interns for the fall and received notice of another major and anonymous gift---APC will soon own a 2018 14-passenger mini-bus!

The year had me traveling to Charlotte with our middle school youth for a week-long service trip and to South Georgia with an APC chainsaw crew to help Presbyterian Disaster Assistance with hurricane clean up, playing outfield for our men's softball team, teaching guitar lessons to students of all ages, working with the Counseling and Care Center of Georgia to make APC their north Atlanta site for counselors to see clients, and helping Centro Familiar Cristiano grow and thrive as a Spanish-speaking New Church Development we host.

You are a wonderful congregation to serve and I count it a great blessing to work with such a talented and dedicated staff, session and membership in such a vibrant and growing community.

## **ASSOCIATE PASTOR'S REPORT**

Rev. Caitlin Phillips, Associate Pastor

One tip that yoga instructors give to students is to focus on quality, not quantity. With yoga, you breathe and move much slower than you want to in order to reap the full benefits of relaxation, mindfulness and increased flexibility. In many ways, ministry is the same. As the church of Christ, we are far more concerned about the quality and depth of our worship, our class curriculum, our mission partnerships---not sheer quantity. As followers of Jesus, we seek to do things faithfully and intentionally so that we offer meaningful studies, gatherings and outreach events that touch people's lives and deepen their faith.

This can be tricky to quantify! How do you know if someone's heart became more loving after a worship service? How do you verify that someone's life was changed after serving on a mission trip? How can you be certain that a hospital or home visit brought healing and hope? So much of ministry can't be fully captured by numbers or reporting. Even so, as church leaders we want to be held accountable and give the wider congregation of APC a snapshot of the ministries you are leading and supporting through your monetary gifts and prayer. These aren't just to-do's marked off a checklist. The data and information you see here is our humble attempt to share the love of Christ here at APC and out in the larger community. Take a moment to read these reports, to pray for the leaders and volunteers in each area. If you haven't done so already, pick an area where you would like to get involved and jump in to help us make our 2018 ministry offerings more faithful and more life transforming.

## **ASSOCIATE PASTOR'S REPORT**

Rev. Beverly Markham, Associate Pastor

November 15, 2017, was an exciting day in my life and in the life of my family as I began to work in ministry at APC. Starting to work at the church just before the Advent season began was a busy and wonderful time to jump into the life of the church. I am grateful to be a part of this welcoming and joyful congregation. In my part-time contract call position (20 hours per week), I coordinate the pastoral care of the church. This includes visiting members in the hospital, in rehabilitation and assisted living facilities, and in their homes. I also coordinate with the other pastors who make many visits of their own to ensure we are supporting one another's pastoral care outreach.

I am fortunate to work with the Diaconate in their ministries of care and compassion. Since the Deacons do not hold a meeting in December and therefore do not welcome new deacons until then, my close work with them and their committees will not take shape until January. For more information on the work of the Deacons, see the Diaconate Report.

I also serve as the pastoral liaison with the Open Arms ministry led by Mary Waters. Open Arms serves families in our congregation who have children with special needs as well as helping to make elder care connections. The Open Arms worship service schedule for December 5 was postponed due to winter weather. The new date happened to be the Day of Epiphany (January 6). I led the service for about 25 people, and many commented positively on having an Epiphany service. We may continue to hold this service in January around Epiphany rather than during the Christmas season. Please see the Open Arms report for more information.

Participating in the joyful worship of our Lord each Sunday is an important part of my call at APC. I am grateful to have a role in our regular 9:30 and 11 a.m. Sunday morning services as well as occasional preaching responsibilities. Almost immediately upon my arrival at APC, I assisted in a memorial service, and I led the Longest Night service on the evening of December 17 and found that time to gather together with members of our community to be a time of peace and quiet in the busy season.

Teaching elders also have duties at the Presbytery level. I continue to be a member of the Committee on Representation at the Presbytery, and I attended Presbytery meetings during 2017. I've also continued my support of Shalom Ministries at Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church.

Looking to the future, I anticipate a year full of learning, making relationships and considering new and faithful ways to answer our call at APC to share God's love daily.

## **CLERK OF SESSION**

Elder Beth Bowles

APC's session was privileged to govern the church during a year in which our varied ministries grew in efficiency and maturity while seeking to better serve the needs of our congregants and the community.

Highlights of the year included: eleven stated meetings, four called meetings, and a session planning and social retreat; two congregational meetings and one APC corporation meeting; annual revisions of the Manual of Operations, the Child and Youth Safety Policy, and the Sexual Misconduct Policy; elders serving as commissioners to five meetings of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, one being a called meeting electing new Executive Presbyter Rev. Aisha Brooks-Lytle; undergoing an internal study of all committees; and continuing to employ our Ministry Action Plan.

## DIACONATE REPORT

The Diaconate at APC leads in ministries of sympathy. Compassion, service and witness. The primary concerns are for the sick, the needy and the friendless. In 2017, we had 36 deacons, including 2 youth deacons.

The work of the Diaconate is segmented into four care teams, each of which focuses on a specific area of service the deacons deliver to the congregation.

**Companion Care** team consisted of 7 deacons and was led by Diane Conklin. The goal of the Companion Care team is to extend friendship and support to individuals in the church family who are in need. This year our team made visits, took their care partners to church when needed, took care partners Meals to Heal, sent cards, made phone calls, sent emails to care partners who were not feeling up for a visit and delivered flowers. In 2017 the team supported 11 care partners with many visits, phone calls and cards.

**Hospital & Recovery Care** team consisted of 8 deacons and was led by Amy Hewitt. Members of this care team visited APC members and friends of the church who were in the hospital, rehabilitation care or restricted to their homes due to illness or injury. They assisted with flower delivery and greeting before Sunday services.

**Hospitality Care** team consisted of 12 deacons and was co-led by Cissy Moriarty & Margy Culver. This team continues to be responsible for welcoming visitors to APC, and providing them with information about the church. Directions around the facility continues to also be a big focus, especially to the children's Sunday School wing. To accomplish this task the Hospitality Care Team staffs the Welcome Desk, which is located in the Narthex. Volunteers give an APC grocery bag to first time visitors filled with appropriate brochures explaining our church. The volunteer will often escort the visitor to other locations around the building, or ask other APC members for assistance.

Another way our care team connects to our visitors is to send letters of welcome on their third and fifth visits. The letters include information about opportunities available at APC, free breakfast/lunch coupons, and information regarding the next new member class.

The Helping Hands, a service to APC members who need a helping hand with small projects around their home, has continued to become part of the deacons' work. We have a list of approximately 10 men who have volunteered to help these people when needed.

Margy Culver was an active member of the APC membership committee representing the deacons' Hospitality Care Team. Representation on Membership Committee provides a link between the visitors moving into APC membership.

**Sympathy & Celebrations Care** team consisted of 9 deacons and was led by Pat Hagler. The goal of the Sympathy and Celebrations Care Team is to support families of APC who may be mourning a loss or celebrating an important event. Typical celebrations may include births, baptisms, confirmations, graduations and weddings. The team sent out approximately 100+ cards to our members. In 2017, the deacons planned and hosted 4 funeral receptions, serving approximately 300 guests.

The deacons met 9 times in 2017. Our monthly meetings include dinner and a time for fellowship followed by our meeting where we share developments in our areas of ministry.

Rev. Beverly Markham works with the deacons to provide leadership and support.

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Elder Wendy Seeman, Elder Tim Deitrich

**Committee members:** Meg Hardt, Alison Liu, Kari Minnich, Veronica Perri, Sheryl Wentworth.  
Staff support: Kristin Hicks, Director of Children's Ministry.

**Sunday School:** Kick off was held on August 13 and we continue to have strong attendance numbers each week in the Sunday school classes. New Sunday school teacher volunteers were approved by Session, have or will be background screened and will attend our Child/Youth Safety Training. This training is required every 3 years.

**Worship and Sacraments class:** A worship and sacraments class was held for 2nd graders and their parents in January to introduce elements of worship and the sacraments of Baptism and Communion. This class is for 4 weeks with a Parent Child Workshop held on the last Saturday.

**KinderWorship:** KinderWorship is a special education time offered to Preschoolers through 1<sup>st</sup> grade during the 11 am worship service. Attendance varies from 6-15 children.

**Children's Choir:** This group continues to meet from 10:25-10:55 a.m. (between Sunday school & 11 a.m. worship). Attendance varies from 6-12 children a week. A cherub/preschool choir for 3-5 year olds will begin in January, 2018. They will meet during the same time slot.

**Nursery:** The use of an outside agency for staffing continues to be successful. We continue to have 8-12 children in the nursery at the 9:30 a.m. hour. The renovations to the Nursery were completed in August. We held a wonderful, well attended and much anticipated Nursery Dedication on September 24 at 10:30 a.m.

**Youth Auction Fundraiser:** This had a Disney theme this year. The CM committee once again donated a basket for the Youth fundraiser. Our theme was a coffee basket with a Disney twist. The event was well attended by youth and families of the church.

**Vacation Bible School:** Another great year! VBS is often the first exposure to a church experience that an attendee will have, therefore it is so critical that it be a positive experience. We had over 130 participants. It was held in July and the theme was "Passport to Peru." We once again used electronic registration and payments. APC's youth had returned from their international mission trip to Peru weeks before VBS and they brought back great souvenirs, photos and stories that we were able to incorporate into the week of activities.

**Club 45:** This monthly youth group for children in 4th and 5th grades meets during the school year. This has been well attended with a variety of "tween" topics and activities coordinated by Kristin Hicks. Activities included a fall food drive, Kindness Rocks Project, a hiking trip and caroling at an assisted living center.

### Special Events/Family Centered Worship:

**Ash Wednesday Service for Families:** This event begins with a pancake dinner to introduce Shrove Tuesday and then moves into an interactive Worship service that explores 4 interactive stations and ends with the imposition of Ashes.

**Palm Sunday Fair:** Explores Holy Week through crafts and activities. Children receive a Passport to travel through the different stations. This went well however it was low in attendance due to Spring Break.

**Easter Sunday:** The Children's Choir sang at the 11 a.m. service on Palm Sunday. Children led a Palm Processional. An Easter egg hunt with a pizza lunch was held on a Saturday this year and was well attended.

**5th Grade Graduation:** A special breakfast was held in May for 5th graders to celebrate the transition from the Children's Program to the Youth Program.

**Blessing of the Backpacks:** On August 6, children of the church brought their backpacks to the 11 a.m. worship service for a special Children's Moment. This event continues to be a cherished tradition that the kids look forward to in preparation for the start of school. All students (including college and adult students) participated this year!

**Children's Service:** This was held on October 15. Many young children participated in all aspects of the service including call to worship, prayers, offering, as ushers and the presentation of the sermon. The focus was a few of the "I am" statements including I am the Light of the world, I am the Bread of Life.

**Family Gathering on the Farm:** This was held on October 21 and was very well attended. It allowed for some nice fellowship time for families and everyone had a great time.

**Angel Breakfast:** Our 3rd Annual Angel Breakfast was held on a Sunday this year. Once again, children experienced the magic and joy of Christmas and the nativity story. Children of the church (age 2 through Kindergarten) were invited. There were lots of decorations, crafts, stories and a chance to take pictures with wandering angels. There were Angel pancakes and fruit kabobs along with other delicious breakfast items. This beautifully decorated event was seen by more members of the church as it took place at 9 a.m. on a Sunday this year.

**Children's Christmas Pageant:** After taking a year off from this event, we reinvented the much-loved service this year with a new script that was written by Rev. Caitlin Phillips. This new format allowed for a more participatory service and the cast was multi-generational. The play had a bit of humor while sharing the joy of the story of the birth of Jesus.

**Children's Christmas Service (12/24-3:30 pm):** Child friendly service with children's choir performing followed by a birthday party for Baby Jesus in Fellowship Hall with a birthday cake.

## COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Elder Susan Manthey, Elder Cara Doll

**Committee Members:** Paul McChesney (Chair), Ann Cooley, Tyler Jones

**Staff Support:** Director of Communications Katie VanBrackle

Thanks to a tremendous amount of teamwork, the church now has a completely redesigned website. This project involved the input of many individual church members and committees in the design and implementation process. After the renovation of the nursery, there was a need to re-number rooms and replace indoor signage. A Signage Task Force was created, comprised of members from Property, Communications, and APC Interior Design who worked to create a new room numbering system, then design and install new campus maps and hallway signage. The task force also oversaw the design and installation of three new exterior directional signs in December—a much-needed addition to our church property. Additional exterior building signage and interior hallway directional signage projects are planned for 2018. The skills/talent and hard work of Katie VanBrackle, Director of Communications, on both the website and the signs was a huge factor in our success.

Many thanks as well to Paul McChesney for his leadership in managing a strong group of volunteers throughout the year to staff the sound booth for church services, weddings, and funerals. In late 2017, Paul was hired as APC's first part-time Audio/Visual Specialist, a position which will continue to improve coordination, inventory, staffing, and upgrades to the church's growing array of A/V equipment.

## DAYSCHOOL

Elder Ashley Shepardson

### Dayschool Board Members:

Nancy Fain (Dayschool Director), Nicole Turner (co-chair), Allison Brown (co-chair), Molly Hathy, Ashley Lea, Amy Hewitt.

### Achievements for the Year:

APC Dayschool has enjoyed another successful year. Although the community demographics are changing, APC Dayschool continues to maintain its standing as a major resource for Christian preschool education in the area. Parent involvement continues to be strong and parent satisfaction is high as indicated by extremely positive responses to parent surveys.

Tuition rates and registration fees remained the same for the 16-17 school year to be competitive with other schools in the area. Class offerings and class sizes were adjusted to reflect changing demand at the various age levels. An additional 5 day 4 year old class was added to the program for the 2018-2019 school year.

The new Dayschool website and our Facebook page have been expanded and updated to make them effective communication tools for the school community. APC Dayschool purchased two domain names on 9/27/17, apcdayschool.com and apcdayschool.org. Web forwarding for each of those domain names, linking to the APC website, were also purchased. Remind 101 (a free text messaging system) continues to be a great parent/administration communication tool.

The Dayschool continues to have an active Parent Organization providing support to staff and parents. Afterschool enrichment programs are enthusiastically received by parents and enjoyed by the children on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The school's "give back" to the community included a "Toys for Tots" drive in December.

### Current Status:

Staff loyalty is one of our major strengths; the majority of last year's staff returned for the 2016-2017 year. More than half of them have seven or more years of tenure with our school. In spite of the increase in competition, APC Dayschool has maintained healthy enrollment numbers and financial stability.

## FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Elder Laura Barnett, Elder Rich Vandever

**Members:** Ashley Bampfield, Carol Bowlus, Carolyn Dillon, Jan Hughey, Diane King, Jess Mizenko, Shannon Pickerel, Patricia Rosenberger, Ashley Shepherdson, Dot Van Dyke, Greg Helfrich

**Staff Support:** Rev. Caitlin Phillips

### ACT1 Theatre – Bob Cookson

- ACT1 completed the Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Alpharetta. ACT1 and the city will collaborate to provide acting classes, theater in the park, madrigal singers, additional marketing, and storage facilities. The immediate impact will be for ACT1 to move out of the Alpha trailer in the coming months.
- ACT1 sold out its first ever Cabaret music show on January 19.
- ACT1 is currently in rehearsals for The Boys Next Door. This show is being developed as a complement to APC's Adult Education March series theme and will run from March 2 to 18.

Bob Cookson forwarded the following e-mail from Morgan Rodgers, Director of Alpharetta Parks and Recreation. His wife, Janet Rodgers, is the Executive Director of the Alpharetta Convention and Visitors Bureau. Toby Smallwood is ACT1 Theater's direct contact with the City of Alpharetta and manages all of the arts programs.

Good morning,

*On behalf of Janet, Toby and myself, I would like to thank both of you, and the entire Act 1 staff, for a great evening of entertainment. We certainly enjoyed the cabaret format and cannot wait to see it performed at Brooke Street Park.*

*As Rick said in Casablanca, "Louis, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship."*

Morgan

### **STARS – George Myers**

In 2017, STARS hosted the following field trips and monthly potluck lunches with speakers/activities:

Active shooter training with local police, slideshow presentation on Cuba by local author Bob Myers, slideshow presentation on hiking the Appalachian Trail by Ray Appen, a visit to Chick Fil-A Headquarters, a picnic at Wills Park, a slideshow presentation by Ollie on his trip to India, a visit to the Antiquities Center in La Grange, an information session by North Fulton and Forsyth Senior Services, and a Christmas party in Fellowship Hall.

### **Fourth Sunday Lunch – Barbara Jones**

In January - April 2017 we hosted monthly fourth Sunday Lunches and had steady attendance between 60-80 people each month. In May, we hosted the Picnic on Youth Sunday with fried chicken and pot-luck sides. Fellowship Hall was overflowing with people!

Beginning in August 2017, we set a theme for each 4th Sunday Lunch to make them more festive. September: Apple Fest (BBQ and apple sides), October: October Fest (German food), November: Spanish Fiesta (taco salad bar).

### **Fellowship Committee Group Chairs**

ACT1 – Bob Cookson

APC Book Club – Judi McPherson

Men's Softball – Ollie Wagner

Men's Basketball – Dave McKemey

Presbyterian Women – Jean Williams

STARS – George and Susie Myers, Richard and Barbara Gibson, Joyce Komala and Marianna Raffensperger

Young Adults – Caitlin Phillips

Parents of Young Children – Deanna Womack, Veronica Perry

Sunday Breakfast – Ted Lynam, Dick Bean

4th Sunday Lunch – Phil and Barbara Jones, Pat and Wes Connelly

## **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

Elder Dennis Barger

**Committee members:** Margy Culver, Kelly Kittle, Sherry Krnasky, Art Adams, Sabine Genet.

**Staff support:** Rev. Caitlin Phillips

In 2017, the APC Membership Committee focused on three areas: 1) Increase volunteer engagement of new and existing members, 2) Successfully onboard new members and 3) Socially connect with our community. We increased new members by 41 adults and 21 baptized children. As of December 14, 2017, our member count was 862 adults and 221 baptized children representing a total of 1,083 members.

In an effort to increase member engagement through volunteer opportunities, the committee designed and implemented a program called "How Can I Make a Difference?" A portal bulletin board with short volunteer tasks was



displayed in the church's narthex. The tasks targeted opportunities for members to help with 1 to 2 hours volunteer tasks. The objective was to introduce members to opportunities where they could engage with other church members. We were hoping to attract members that are reluctant to join groups within church and offer opportunities to meet people. We also coordinated the APC Ministry Fair on August 27.

During the year we conducted three New Member classes (March 25, July 22, October 21) that were scheduled in coordination with "Joining Sunday." The response from new and existing members that attended the class was extremely positive. In fact, the committee discussed opportunities to offer the class during Sunday School for existing members.

As usual, the committee participated in community events. Due to weather conditions, APC was unable to participate in the Taste of Alpharetta (May 4). No cost was incurred as result. Weather during the Alpharetta Christmas Tree Lighting (December 2) was much better. Even though temperatures were higher than average, the committee gave out over 200 cups of free, hot cider to our Alpharetta neighbors. The event allows APC to publicize Christmas events at the church and introduce residents to the church.

## MISSION COMMITTEE

Elder: Tim Chisholm

**Committee Members:** Tim Chisholm (chair), Karen Moore (contact with NFCC), Eva Wardrup, Marianna Raffensperger, Walter Dean, Sydney Schneider, Judy Donnahoo, Yvonne Chrimes, Kelly Vandever

**Staff Support:** Dr. Ollie Wagner

### Responsibilities:

- Communicate service opportunities regularly with the congregation via the mission bulletin board, worship bulletins, and electronic messages (website, Good News, emails).
- Offer diverse outreach programs that provide everyone a chance to participate in mission work.
- Annually assess mission partnerships and make changes as needed.
- Offer additional regular volunteer days with our mission partners.
- Expand our mission calendar to possibly include community service opportunities such as mission day of service, back to school drive, coat drive, food drive, and angel trees.
- Engage the youth and other groups within the church in local outreach efforts.
- Promote special offerings and recommend to session how special giving requests will be conducted.

**APC Mission partners include:** Centro Familiar Cristiano (Spanish-speaking congregation), Christmas Angel Tree, The Drake House, Family Promise of North Fulton, FOCUS (for special needs children), Foster Care Support, General Assembly of the PC(USA), Habitat Aid Initiative (Kenya), Haiti's La Gonave Partnership, Heifer Project International, North Fulton Community Charities, LifeSouth (Blood Drive), Atlanta Mission, The Place at Forsyth, Presbyterian Disaster Relief, Presbyterian peacemaking ministries, The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, Whiz Kids tutoring program.

Below are some updates from the Mission Committee members who drive some these programs. These updates are intended to expand upon the information provided above.

**North Fulton Community Charities:** Since 1946, The National School Lunch Program has been providing low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. When school is out, children lose these meals. This year, APC helped stop summer hunger by organizing a summer food drive that benefited NFCC, TPF, and the Drake House. An insert was placed in the

Sunday bulletin with a list of requested items. A link to the insert was included in the Good News. And, a copy of the insert was displayed on the monitors in the lobby. We collected donations for 4 weeks and took items to the food pantries on a weekly basis. We also held our annual Thanksgiving Food Drive to benefit NFCC and TPF. Rotary Club, APC Day School, and Boy Scouts also participated. Paper bags, with a list of requested items stapled to it, were handed out after November Sunday Services. Our drive lasted five weeks. Carloads of donations were taken to the pantries on a weekly basis. Each Sunday, the donations bins in the Fellowship Hall were overflowing. Mel Fortin, the director of the NFCC pantry, as well as pantry volunteers helped unloaded our cars. They were overwhelmed at the generosity of our members. As with the summer food drive, a link to requested items was included in the Good News and the list was also displayed on the monitors in the lobby. NFCC and TPF also benefited from a Winter Coat Drive hosted by the Rotary. The coat drive was mentioned in Sunday Bulletins and The Good News. Rotary, as they usually do, took charge of this drive and drove donated items to NFCC.

**Family Promise:** Our new case manager, Nailah Obijiofor, started last week and so far, everything is going great! She is part-time but is working for us 5 days a week. We will be doing our best to have her physically go to each congregation during their host week. Coordinators have said they can really see a difference when the case manager shows she's there for our guests at all times, not just during the work day. She will be receiving the on-call Case Manager phone today as a new family comes into the program.

**Habitat Aid Initiative:** Habitat Aid Initiative completed several major development projects in Khwisero, Kenya in 2017. Following our mission trip in June, 2017, funding was secured for the construction of two Dormitories for Women, one at Khwisero Girl's Secondary School and one at Eshiongo Secondary School. Both dormitories will be complete and ready for use in February 2018. In addition, a renovation project of 5 classrooms was begun at Ekambuli Secondary School to replace roofing and flooring in order to achieve a better learning environment for the students. Three Bore Hole well water projects are in the process of being constructed in primary schools in the region. One of these water projects was funded by the Mulia family from APC! Projects for 2018 will include the completion of a science laboratory at Ekambuli Secondary School as well as a construction of a fish farm within the school compound. The Munyanza Health Center continues to provide primary medical care to all in the community – now in its 11<sup>th</sup> year of operation. In 2018 we will return to Kenya on June 2-June 14 for another mission trip to the region to continue our work. Please contact Walter Dean for further details. (770) 598 6553 Cell – wwdean@bellsouth.net.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

**Committee members:** Elder Stu Moring (chairperson), Elder Ashley Shepardson (vice-chair), Ed Rea, Daniel Jones, Virginia Mann, Valerie Fulkerson, Chuck Ghent (Deacon representative) and Ollie Wagner.

**Nominations:** The Committee met throughout the year and in preparation for the November 5, 2017 congregational meeting recommended for election:

- A. A new class of church officers.
- B. Four at-large members of the 2018 Nominating Committee.
- C. Seven members to serve as an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (for the position of Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults.)

The Nominating Committee also nominated a search committee for the Associate Pastor position.

## OPEN ARMS COMMITTEE

Elder Kris Moehring

**Committee members:** Kris Moehring, Beverly Markham, Martha Frutchey, Kari Minnich, Marian Cunningham, Polly Hyatt, Trish Kent

**Staff Support:** Director Mary Waters; Dr. Jo Anderson/ Rev. Beverly Markham (pastoral liason)

**Eldercare Support:** OAM seeks to encourage those caring for elderly family members by sponsoring a support group and educational programs. The Elder Care Support Group continued this year and is facilitated by Martha Frutchey. It meets the second Monday of the month. Monthly programs are presented for those facing issues of aging, whether caregiver or care seeker. Ellen Adolf, in coordination with Martha, has maintained a blog linked to the church website's Open Arms page.

**Promise Class:** Alpharetta Presbyterian's first experience with a special needs program began in 1998. A committee formed to introduce a Sunday morning program designed to provide Christian Education for children and young adults with special needs and respite during worship for their families. The Promise Class ministry has since grown to offer Vacation Bible School classes, worship opportunities, and partnerships with area organizations. Mary Waters, Director of Open Arms Ministry, coordinates and oversees these activities. In June we had an ice cream social with Alpharetta United Methodist Church's special needs group. The committee has been working with Envision Alpharetta to create a coffee shop in the APC Cottage. The coffee shop would train and employ persons with special needs.

**Facility:** Open Arms Ministry extends beyond ministry to individuals with special needs and elder care support. A key component of this ministry is making worship and the life of the church accessible to all, regardless of ability. OAM works with Worship and Property to assure that the church is physically accessible to those with mobility and sensory impairments.

**Worship:** Each September, OAM plans and supports an Open Arms Sunday day of worship. This was held on September 17. The committee helps to shine the light of God on the ministry and those we serve. This year Mary Water's friend Gavin Cloy was the guest speaker. Gavin shared his inspiring story of how his life has changed after an accident where he lost both legs. This year on Saturday, March 25th an Easter worship service was held for the special needs community in the outside chapel. The Christmas worship service scheduled for December 9 was cancelled due to a snow event. (Instead, an Epiphany worship service was held on January 6, 2018.)

**Respite Care:** OAM supports a quarterly "Parents Night Out" on a Saturday from 5 – 8 p.m. Volunteers entertain children and young adults with special needs and their siblings, allowing the parents three hours of free time. We held PNO on February 11 and April 29. The November 4 date was cancelled due to volunteer issues.

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Elder Jennifer Owens, Elder Alan Crowell

**Committee members:** Ted Lynam, Rob Vacko, Nancy Hill, Christina Appen, Stu Laubenstein. Staff support: Ollie Wagner.

**General:** The committee dealt with the general administrative issues of our corporate-size church such as performance reviews, salary and bonus recommendations and hiring recommendations.

**Staffing:** The Committee also worked to staff numerous positions at the church. Lisa Gould continues to serve on an interim PT basis as the Youth Minister with assistance from 2 interns who have been approved by the Session. After having no success finding a permanent PT Youth Minister it was decided to form a Search Committee to find a FT Youth Minister with a hopeful completion date of mid-2018. Beverly Markham was hired in November as PT Associate Pastor to replace Jo Anderson. Paul McChesney was hired as the PT Audio/visual specialist. A search by Promise Class continues for an hourly assistant. Discussions have begun on hiring a PT Property Manager Assistant. Also under discussion are salary adjustments for the FT pastoral staff in order to assure we are competitive with the current market salary levels. Discussions are also ongoing as to how to better handle annual bonuses.

**Visioning:** The Committee also participated in our Ministry Action Plan (MAP) Process to lay out a vision for staffing growth and leadership in the coming years.

**Policy:** We have received changes as to who and what kind of health benefits we can offer pastoral staff at this time. These health benefits are also available to our full time employees. Once again a very busy year, but we are blessed to have so many highly qualified individuals to assist us in our important ministries and a congregation that continues to support this ever changing staff.

## PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Elder Dick Bean

**Committee Members:** Dick Bean, Charles Moriarty, Ted Lynam, Jim Hecathorn, Greg Helfrich, Diane King Helfrich, John McPherson, David Neal, George Bancroft, Hudy Mulia, Sharon Bean, Ken Bogle.

**Staff support:** Gene Casey

**Community Events:** APC opens its doors to the community. Our facilities are in constant use by the congregation and other groups such as Family Promise, ACT 1, Alpharetta Rotary Club, Centro Familiar, Windward Men's Bible Study, Windward Retired Men's Group, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, numerous musical groups who enjoy the excellent acoustics in the sanctuary, AA, NA, and AL-ANON. We continue to receive an ever-growing number of requests for weddings, funerals, and memorial services. The Property Committee and, in particular, Gene Casey are constantly challenged with coordinating room requests with available space in order to accommodate everyone. It is truly a good problem to have.

### Activities:

We had many routine activities in 2017 maintaining building and ground cleanliness and appearance, repairing roof leaks, repairing water leaks although the biggest problem with leaks has been eliminated, patching the driveway, changing light bulbs, planting new plants and removing ones, and working to improve building security. The Property Committee is constantly monitoring energy use and examining ways to reduce the costs of operating APC facilities. We also continuously monitor contracts for effectiveness and to insure we are receiving the best value for the money we are spending. We are proud that we completed 2017 under budget.

### Key 2017 Accomplishments:

- Property committee was proud to be a part of the nursery renovation project. We provided oversight and assistance to the project and did the painting of the interior. We also painted the Sunrise, Fountain and Garden rooms as well as the hallway in the nursery corridor, Room 210 and bathrooms in the nursery hallway as well as the bathroom between the Fountain and Garden rooms. Property also oversaw the installation of carpeting in the Fountain and Garden rooms. Not being content with painting walls, we also painted all the wooden doors in the nursery area including the above-mentioned rooms.
- Interior Design Committee has worked to improve interior appearance with the addition of new upholstered benches outside the theater as well as other improvements and updates to furnishings.
- We replaced burned out light bulbs in the sanctuary in time for the Advent season. We plan to evaluate bids for lighting upgrades for the sanctuary in 2018.
- We also continued our relationship with Boy Scouts and the Eagle Scout candidates. They completed several service projects, which enhance the APC Campus. Our thanks to the scouts for these projects.
- We improved APC access and security by adding card access control to the elevator and we added an additional card access entry point to the west side day school entrance.
- Beautified the APC grounds and interior to keep APC attractive and inviting. This involved not only on-going efforts but also two very successful property workdays. One notable improvement was to clear the brush on the west side of the cottage.
- We installed new TV's – 5 for Children's Ministry in Dayschool classrooms, Room 210 and swapped a TV in room 211 to a larger TV.
- We installed new room identification signs throughout the building.

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH COMMITTEE

Elder Beth Bowles

**Committee:** Jodie Barger, Dale Carter, Gerald Jenkins, Ted Lynam, Charles Moriarty, Mike Wasson, Susan McBreairty.  
**Staff support:** Caitlin Phillips.

APC's Spiritual Growth Ministry offered several regular and special opportunities for participants to sustain their Christian growth through knowledge and understanding of the Bible and on issues of faith and practice.

### Adult Education, Sunday School

- **Crossroads Class** offers a relaxed atmosphere in which individuals can enter into thoughtful conversations on a variety of topics in history, theology, and faith. This class is focused on seniors, but all ages are welcome. In the spring of 2017 we utilized a variety of studies, one by Adam Hamilton titled *Half Truths* and another by Rob Fuqay, *The God We Can Know*. In fall of 2017 we read and discussed *Study on the Life and Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* and *Creed: What Christians Believe* by Adam Hamilton and an Advent study titled *The Redemption of Scrooge* by Matt Rawles. The class is designed so folks can drop in and participate. Class coordinator: Dale Carter
- **Faith and Families Class** is informal and welcoming, targeting adults with young children, older children, and no children! We discuss how to live out our faith amid the busyness of daily life using a variety of materials. In spring of 2017 we used a variety of book and DVD studies: *Present over Perfect* and *Following Jesus in a Selfie-Centered World*. We had guest speaker Loren Collins who taught for 2 weeks on the books of the Apocrypha. We also used the lectionary-based curriculum *Faith Lens* to read and discuss the Sunday lectionary readings. In the fall of 2017 we did a 6-week class on Christian Practices by *Animate Faith*. Watched and discussed *Ted Talks* related to faith and led an Advent study *The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem* by Adam Hamilton. No outside participation is required, and drop-in participation is encouraged. Class coordinator: Jodie Barger
- **Courageous Conversations for Contemporary Christians (4 C's)** is in its 4<sup>th</sup> year and continues to grow, offering a supportive environment in which individuals have the opportunity to engage difficult questions about life and faith. This class encourages honest and open discussions organized around a series of topics from *The Thoughtful Christian*. Class coordinators: Charles Moriarty, Judi McPherson.

### Other Programs

- **Disciple**---In the spring of 2017 we offered two Disciple I "Fast Track" classes, a Disciple IV class, Invitation to John and Invitation to Psalms. In the fall of 2017 we had two Disciple II "Fast Track" classes on *Genesis-Exodus & Luke-Acts* along with several advanced Disciple classes such as *Jesus in the Gospels* and the *Christian Believer* series.
- **Men's Monday Morning Bible Study** meets weekly at 7 a.m. in the pastor's office. It averages 4-6 attendees.
- **Faith and Modern Life** meets Friday mornings at 10 a.m. to read and discuss newly released books on Christian faith.
- **Thursday Morning Bible Study** is diving into church history with various topics from Great Courses including *Luther: Gospel, Law, and Reformation*; *The Lives of Great Christians*; and *From Jesus to Constantine: A History of Early Christianity*.
- **Small Groups** are studying a variety of books including *Half Truths* by Adam Hamilton and *An Altar in the World* by Barbara Brown Taylor, and *The Right Order of Things* by James R. McCormick.
- We offered special "Lunch and Learn" studies including a 4-week study of the Book of Genesis, then during Advent, a 4-week study centering on how angels are depicted in the Bible and how we understand them in our world today.
- During Lent and Advent, we held special studies including *Creed: What Christians Believe* by Adam Hamilton and *Faithful: Christmas through the Eyes of Joseph* by Adam Hamilton.
- In January 2017, we held a 4-week series centered on the book of Exodus, led by guest speaker Dr. Brent Strawn.

## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Elder Patrick Liu, Elder Lisa McKemey

**Committee members:** Patrick Liu (chairperson), Lisa McKemey (vice-chair), Rob Vacko (Treasurer), Jan Hughey, Doug Cruickshank, Tara Hayes, Dale Carter, Carolyn Dillon, Scott Doll, Jim Gray, Wendy Cory, Greg Raabe, Ted Lynam, Susan Smith, Dot Van Dyke with Dr. Ollie Wagner (ex officio).

This new committee essentially combined the Finance and Commitment committees into one. The committee met throughout the year to receive the monthly Treasurer's Report and manage and oversee all church finances. Monthly financial reports were provided to session.

The committee wrote and presented to session an "Operating Cash Policy" which was approved. The policy identifies four distinctive funds for our cash reserves: operating expense reserve (four months of operating expenses), petty cash (up to \$1,000), capital improvement reserve (initially set at \$100,000) and a ministry growth fund.

The committee worked with the finance office to include "thank you" enclosures with all financial statements that share some of the impact of giving. Special thanks to Laura Moore, Office/Finance Manager and Katie VanBrackle, Director of Communications for their outstanding work with us.

All ministries and committees of the church participated in the Ministry Action Plan through the summer/fall. This year's pledge drive began with a Ministry Leaders lunch which culminated in Dedication Sunday. The theme was "I Give because..."

In support of our 2018 Ministry Action Plan, we received:

239 pledges totaling \$1,003,772

(2017=\$963,744 with 248 pledges and 2016=\$905,000 with 234 pledges)

87 – pledges increased above amount pledged last year

24 - new pledges

In response to our Ministry Action Plan, we also received a major gift allowing us to purchase a mini-bus in 2018 that will greatly benefit youth and all ministries of the church!

The strong giving of the congregation coupled with the wise management of our finances allowed APC to finish fiscal years 2017 with a budget surplus of \$88,313. A full financial report of 2017 appears below. Glory be to God!

<b>ALPHARETTA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</b>		
<b>January to December 2017</b>		
<b>Account</b>	<b>Total Actual 2017</b>	<b>Annual Budget 2017</b>
Revenues		
Receipts		
Pledges and Offerings	\$1,081,584.56	\$1,050,111.00
Total Receipts	\$1,081,584.56	\$1,050,111.00
Other Income	\$79,965.53	\$81,775.00
Special Offerings	\$15,066.63	\$20,782.00
Total Revenues	\$1,176,616.72	\$1,152,668.00

Expenses		
Administration		
Personnel Costs		
Salaries	\$495,742.58	\$505,704.89
Insurance/Annuity	\$79,237.56	\$81,227.11
FICA	\$3,446.59	\$16,608.00
Professional Expenses	\$17,361.83	\$19,600.00
Total Personnel Costs	\$595,788.56	\$623,140.00
General Admin. Expenses	\$131,199.22	\$130,061.00
Total Administration	\$726,987.78	\$753,201.00
Deacons	\$269.87	\$1,200.00
Session	\$393.90	\$1,101.00
Property		
Maintenance	\$90,708.47	\$105,000.00
Supplies	\$6,623.48	\$8,500.00
Utilities	\$89,722.85	\$96,000.00
Total Property	\$187,054.80	\$209,500.00
Education		
Childrens Ministry	\$13,238.34	\$13,150.00
Youth Ministry	\$12,422.08	\$13,700.00
Spiritual Growth	\$2,790.59	\$3,000.00
Total Education	\$28,451.01	\$29,850.00
Fellowship		
Fellowship Events	\$3,021.75	\$4,000.00
Kitchen	\$30,296.63	\$32,200.00
Total Fellowship	\$33,318.38	\$36,200.00
Membership	\$1,175.94	\$1,275.00
Missions		
Presbytery	\$40,460.00	\$40,460.00
Special Offerings	\$13,993.54	\$20,782.00
Other Mission	\$35,897.07	\$36,000.00
Total Missions	\$90,350.61	\$97,242.00
Commitment	\$438.54	\$750.00
Worship		
Worship/Supplies	\$2,129.67	\$4,250.00
Music	\$11,642.60	\$14,100.00
Total Worship	\$13,772.27	\$18,350.00
Open Arms Ministry	\$471.29	\$1,250.00
Communications	\$5,709.77	\$2,500.00
Strategic Planning	\$0.00	\$250.00
Total Expenses	\$1,088,394.16	\$1,152,669.00
Net Total	\$88,222.56	-\$1.00

## STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Elder Jerry Hopkins

Committee Members: Christina Appen, Dick Bean, Melody Cookson, Carolyn Dillon, Alan Frutchey, Charles Heyen, Jan Hughey, Craig Molnar, Elizabeth Shevlin, and Ollie Wagner, Ex-Officio.

Our committee met 4 times in 2017. Our initial goal for 2017 was to update the 2014 Strategic Committee Plan. Although this is not yet completed we are in the final stages of that goal and expect to be able to present that to the Session within the next couple months. As part of this study we pursued an analysis of the demographics of the Alpharetta area to determine who to reach in our community. The Presbytery provided a link to a website "Missioninsite" whereby we accessed information giving us valuable information on our surrounding population and who we need to outreach to, especially with the downtown growth of Alpharetta. We also gathered information from the City of Alpharetta that showed their plans for growth and their interpretation of the demographics of the city.

Discussion of further expansion of the church property, to include moving church offices upstairs to the front, building and expanding the gym, building more classrooms, completion of the original plans and payoff of the existing debt were covered. It was determined that we would probably initiate a fundraising plan in the next year to accomplish this goal.

We had discussion regarding the Alpha trailer and worked with Property Committee to try to accomplish the dismantling of that trailer prior to yearend but due to budget constraints it could not be accomplished. Our committee will continue to work with Property to accomplish this in the coming year.

The cottage at the front of the church is currently being used as a meeting space by The Lionheart School. Conversations about renovations and perhaps offering a "café" out of that space are ongoing.

Centro Familiar Cristiano has requested additional space for worship. They have outgrown the Omega trailer and the church is trying to determine what we can do for them. We are looking to see if we can provide them with additional space in the gym, theatre or even the sanctuary. It would all depend on when then can use it. Discussions with Centro regarding their space needs continue.

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Elder Larry Carver, Elder Elizabeth Hughey

**Committee Members:** Ministerial: Ollie Wagner; Liturgists: Kelly Vandever; Ushering: Ken Bogle; Music: Drew Bowers and Sam DeCarlo; Weddings/Sanctuary Prep: Dawn Bray; Strategic Planning: Melody Cookson; Flower Guild: Lynn Hecathorn; Sound/lighting function: Paul McChesney; Acolytes: Jerri Temple; Memorial Garden: Mary Dantzler; Communion: Mary Dantzler; Special Worship (Christmas/Easter) Sanctuary prep: Elizabeth Hughey.

The Worship Committee of the Alpharetta Presbyterian Church oversees all worship related activities and functions of the church, including planning and implementation of these activities, and assisting the pastoral and music leadership staff in these processes. These include core weekly worship services with scripture-based pastoral messages, participation in sacred music, communal prayer, as well as scheduled communion, and baptisms. Special worship activities such as weddings, funerals and memorial services are also overseen by the committee, as well as the planning and implementation of special seasons and times of worship, such as Lenten/Easter services and Advent/Christmas services. The committee also oversees other traditional elements of worship, such as liturgy, sanctuary preparation, acolyte functions, ushering, sound and lighting, flowers, and sanctuary garden planning and maintenance.



All aspects of worship, as described above have proceeded very well over the past year, and committee membership has been involved in the following special activities carried out by committee members in concert with other church members and leadership.

1. Participation in the recruitment and hiring of new Associate Pastor Beverly Markham, to replace Associate Pastor Jo Anderson after her move to Florida.
2. Development of a worship survey, as initiated by member Sam DeCarlo, to be implemented in early 2018.
3. Development and implementation of a training program for AED/CPR use, as initiated by Co-chair Elizabeth Hughey, to improve safety within worship activities.
4. Provided assistance to Associate Pastor Caitlin Phillips in obtaining a \$5,000 grant from the Presbytery to develop programs for young adults within the church.
5. Upgrading of sound equipment, including microphones, increased sound board staffing, and assistance in application for funding, recruitment, and final recommendation of Paul McChesney as part time audiovisual staff member and coordinator.
6. Coordination with Boy Scouts for a project to install an irrigation system in the memorial garden.
7. Review of the liturgist manual to assure current relevance and usefulness to liturgists.
8. Institution of a new international format for the annual church Songfest.
9. Increased integration between the committee and ACT 1 activities, through committee leadership review and recommendations regarding proposed upcoming plays and committee leadership attendance and participation at the ACT 1 annual board meeting.
10. Successful recruitment of a new Acolyte subcommittee chairperson, to replace the member stepping down from that role.
11. Successful recruitment of new Flower Guild subcommittee chairperson to replace the previous chairperson who is moving away.

There have been 7 baptisms and 5 weddings performed this year.

## YOUTH MINISTRIES

Elder Tom Gould, Elder Mary Margaret Baxley

**Committee members, advisors, and teachers:** Jason Tweedy, Lisa Gould, Charlene Baxley, Rob and Laura Vacko, Lieben Bogle, Katie Mull, David Neal, Tami Drotleff, Scott Doll, Dianne Berry, Phil Busman, Holly Zulauf, John Hicks, Elizabeth Shevlin, Mike Womack, Tom Scarborough, Daniel McKemey and Shannon Pickerel.

**Staff support:** Lisa Gould - Youth Director, Kari Minnich, Assistant to Youth and Children Ministries, and Taylor Wozniacki and Aubrey Meadows – Youth Interns.

### Youth Group:

- Youth Sunday, with mini-Sermons from Cara Doll, Sarah Gould, Caroline Tweedy and Bobby VanBrackle, was well-regarded and meaningful.
- Fundraising: The generous support of the congregation was manifested in many ways. The Youth Auction (Disney themed) was again a success, raising \$7,800 for current and future programs and mission. Additionally, the Youth-led Souper Bowl of Caring raised over \$1,300 for NFCC and The Place in Forsyth.
- Members of the congregation again welcomed youth into their homes for FISH (Fellowship In Someone's House), the Super Bowl (Heydinger's), and a summer picnic (Wagner's)
- Small group discussions on topical issues and themes continue to be incorporated into Sunday evening programs.
- Other Youth Group activities through the year included the ever-popular college care packages, movie nights (with discussion) a church-ground-wide Easter egg hunt, Tubing in Helen, the Amazing Race, Creative Worship, Pet Day, overnight Lock-in, Uncle Shucks Corn Maze, Trunk or Treat, and De-stress Night.
- High School retreat to Kris Moehring's house on Lake Burton enjoyed and successful.
- The Christmas party was again a success with its Jingle Jammies theme, with youth celebrating Christmas and participating in a white elephant gift exchange. Youth donated gift cards to NFCC's Santa Shop.

**Sunday School:** Curriculum in 2017 was *Animate: Faith, The Bible Project, Faith Questions and other Thematic Lessons from PCUSA Store and The Thoughtful Christian* for High School and *Reform and Collaborate* for Middle School.

### 2016 Mission/Summer Trips:

- **CROSS Missions:** June 25 – June 30. 13 youth, 4 Advisors spent the week in Charlotte with long-time partners Myers Park Presbyterian, as middle school youth engaged in local mission.
- **Fuller Center for Global Builders - Peru:** June 3 – June 10. 22 youth and adults. High school youth participated with the Fuller Center for Global Housing in their program in Peru. They worked on building two homes from scratch and laid bricks alongside the future home owners. The Peru program received very high marks from the participants in terms of overall experience, accommodations, culture, etc. We would consider returning to Peru for future international mission trips.

**Confirmation Class:** Fourteen youth completed the spring confirmation class and became members of the church in May. The minister/youth director-led program will again be used in 2018. A January retreat to North Georgia was successful engaging the confirmands and building relationships.

**Meals:** The approach of sourcing youth group meals from local restaurants continued, with tweaks. Balancing supply vs. demand is a challenge but Youth ministry continued to monitor cost vs. receipts to ensure the approach remains cost-effective and 2017 saw better management of cost. The youth requested some home cooked meals, so the program began interspersing those every few weeks to cut cost and to provide variety.

**Budget:** Through December, actual spend is \$12,422 against a YTD budget of \$13,700.

**Attendance:**

- Sunday School: High School ranges from about 4-6 on any given Sunday. Middle School is stronger, often with attendance in the teens.
- Youth Group: Kickoff of 40-45. Normal attendance of 15-30, with special event attendance of ~25-35.
- The program reaches 45-60 of the youth in one forum or another in any given month, between the above and other specific areas, such as confirmation, mission trips, choir, and other related ministries.

**Communications:** The Youth Newsletter that had been converted to a mailed version in 2015 was continued in that form through part of 2017. As more people are comfortable with electronic media, the newsletter was re-created in Constant Contact starting Fall 2017 to better fit the needs of the program. It is similar to the Good News and allows the youth program to highlight more kids and more areas, and has been well received. Additionally, significantly increased and regular communication via social media – GroupMe, in particular – was initiated in Fall with excellent results, by providing information in real time, allowing youth to sign up and see others signed up for activities, and to create c

**Program Leadership:** Lisa Gould stepped in to lead Youth Ministry in an interim capacity as the search for a Youth Director commenced. Mid-Summer, the Session approved changing the position to a full time Associate Pastor. The search commenced in Fall 2017 and Lisa agreed to stay on as Youth Director during the search process. In August, two youth interns – Aubrey Meadows and Taylor Wozniacki – were hired for the semester; Aubrey left with our thanks at the end of the semester.

**Future Direction:** Many of the ideas and activities instituted as outcomes from the Youth Vision evening and planning sessions with youth before the program year are reflected above. An extension of the youth committee also considered and investigated alternate approaches to Youth Ministry, including how to best define and staff the Director role and what changes might be required to best engage youth. With a search now active for a new Director/Minister, those discussions and ideas will be rolled into that process.

**Final Thoughts:** Many organizations in transition, with interim leadership, face challenges of declining participation and engagement. Through the church's additional support in 2017, strong leadership from Lisa, and strong commitment from both new and returning advisors, the program has not only stabilized from some challenges it faced, but has renewed energy. We look forward to 2018 and continuing to serve the youth and God.