



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH



2020 Annual Report

Letter from the Pastor | 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

Do you have that feeling of déjà vu at the start of the new year? Some have said it's a consequence of growing older (I know many of us feel like time speeds up). Maybe the past year has heightened the effect, condensing anxiety and an incredible amount of news into a normal calendar year, the speed of the world oddly incongruent with the lived reality of slow, daily routine.

I'm thinking about this feeling writing this particular letter. I remember sitting at my desk—where I am now—last year, wondering about the projects and tasks and activities accomplished. I wondered what I could say. We had continued to grow as a church—numerically, of course, but also through the increasing efforts to find mission opportunities in the community, and in regular fellowship (remember Presbyterians at the Pub?), and in our Sunday school offerings for people of all ages.

Our trajectory seemed good, such that the challenge of writing this letter had become: how to report good news? What was remarkable about our church in the past year when it seemed to fit so well with a year over year trend of growth and excitement?

Obviously, this is not our problem this year. Some ten months have passed since we restricted physical gathering for worship on Sunday morning. For those of us who are at church on Sunday, the presence of the community appears in a static, red light on our camera.

Bible Study looks different over Zoom, as does every single meeting you have been to since March. The flow of conversation is harder and halting. You didn't realize how much you depended on the physical presence of another person to actually be able to talk to them.

This has been especially challenging as we have been unable to comfort grieving friends by holding hands or visiting them in hospitals. While our daily lives have been interrupted, they have not slowed down. We still grapple with illness and death and all the questions about life and purpose that push us into church when we have nowhere else to go. What do you do when the door to that church is closed?

I've heard it said by many this year—the building is closed but the church is open. The work of the church continues thanks to the grace of God and your efforts. You have continued to call and write and share with friends and neighbors. You continue to study and pray and worship (some of you have even grown accustomed to worshipping in your pajamas. Enjoy it while you can!). Your church has contributed a record amount to missions in this past year, disbursing over sixty thousand dollars to disaster relief, healthcare, education, and more. Our digital presence has grown such that our worship is regularly seen by hundreds of people from all over the country. Thanks be to God, there is abundance even in seasons of fasting.

What you hold in your hands (or, more likely, see on your screen) is a record of this abundance. Enjoy it at your leisure, and think about how God may be calling you to join in our ministry in a new way in the coming year. There is more yet to do as we commit to Love First and Love All in our community.

Letter from the Pastor | 2020

I'll conclude with what I think is most appropriate: good news. This year will be different. This year we will worship together in person, holding hands as we sing "God Be With You 'Til We Meet Again." We will share meals in Hollis Hall and study scripture together in the library. Our children will light candles in worship and learn the story of Jesus. We will have lunch together again, visit each other's homes, and share something of God's love with our community through reading with children in schools and sharing food with afterschool programs. We'll carry tartans into worship behind a bagpipe and light candles on Christmas Eve, singing "Silent Night" together.

I look forward to being with you soon. God be with you 'til we meet again.

Peace,

Will

Will



Church Operations

	2020 Budget	2020 Actual	2021 Budget
Income:			
Tithes & Offering	\$ 362,500	\$ 372,800	\$ 346,500
Investments & Other Income	<u>\$ 33,000</u>	<u>\$ 37,800</u>	<u>\$ 39,500</u>
Total Income	\$ 395,500	\$ 410,600	\$ 386,000
Expenses:			
Missions & Benevolences	\$ 79,325	\$ 110,600	\$ 77,975
Pastoral Ministry	\$ 111,800	\$ 109,800	\$ 116,200
Sessional Committees	\$ 47,500	\$ 42,200	\$ 34,250
Music Ministry	\$ 54,300	\$ 55,900	\$ 60,000
Admin & Operations	<u>\$ 102,200</u>	<u>\$ 91,700</u>	<u>\$ 97,575</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 395,125	\$ 410,200	\$ 386,000
Net	\$ 375	\$ 400	\$

2020 was certainly a year of unanticipated challenges and difficulty, but thanks to the Lord's blessings and your continued generosity giving exceeded the budget by about \$10,000. Since we were not meeting in person for much of the year expenses were lower than budgeted. Lower expenses and higher giving allowed us to allocate an additional \$30,000 to missions at a time it is most needed.

While 2021 pledges are down slightly from 2020, there will be adequate income to meet the needs of the church.

The church has no outstanding loans or long-term debt.

Operating Reserves

Within the church's operating accounts, the Finance Committee has set a policy of maintaining a 3-month to 6-month operating reserve. Currently the church has approximately a 6-month reserve. The reserve is kept in a money market fund and CD's.

Investment Account

The church maintains an investment account separate from the operating account and operating reserves. At the end of 2020 this investment account had a value of \$1,379,700 and will provide \$32,500 of income toward the 2021 church budget. The account is managed by the church's Finance and Investment Committees.

1. **Clerk Description:** To take and preserve minutes of session meetings, congregational meetings, and communications with the congregation; to perform an annual review/approval of documents by Presbytery; to keep the membership rolls; to report the Annual Statistics of the church to PCUSA; maintain by-laws and policies of the church (our *Trellis*); and provide for communications within and outside the church

2. **Clerk of Session:** Hilliard Jolly

3. **Contact Info:** (Cell) 706.260.7089 Email: houdie518@gmail.com

4. **Membership, end of 2020:**

- Active Members: 135 We welcomed 2 new members during the year
- Baptized Children & Youth: 22
- Births: 1
- Baptisms: 0
- Affiliate Members* 9
- Deaths 4

* those who actively participate in our church but have their membership elsewhere

5. **Session Members:**

- Our session consisted of 5 female and 4 male Elders.

6. **The *Trellis*:**

- Legal records, and copies of session minutes and reports for recent past years are maintained in the church office.

7. **Preserving our history:**

- Many of our records are preserved in volumes on the library shelves in the Martin House. An ongoing project is to maintain and preserve the history of our church. As we go through our older records, some will be taken to the regional archive depository at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur. Most historical records are maintained in files in our building and in the display cabinet in the Commons.



1. **Team Description:** To enhance the environment and opportunities for our congregation to grow in personal knowledge of Jesus Christ through prayer, Sunday School, and fellowship.
2. **Team Chair:** Jo Beth Thompson
3. **Contact Info:** (Cell) 706.260.5621 Email: jobeth1982@gmail.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - January 9, 2020
 - June 4, 2020
 - October 1, 2020
5. **Projects Accomplished:**
 - Preparing for Confirmation class in 2021
 - New “Team Up” youth model put in place
 - Adults continue ongoing Sunday school class lead by multiple teachers
6. **Ongoing Projects:**
 - Continue to invest in “Godly Play” materials, used during the “Worship and Play” time of Sunday’s worship service, and train volunteers in the use of this resource.
 - Continue to implement revisions to the Christmas Pageant in order to accommodate our growing and developing cast members and blend the pageant with the worship service.
 - Continue to explore times and settings which would allow those interested to participate in opportunities for growth in their personal knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Christian Education Team | 2020



Congregational Life Team | 2020

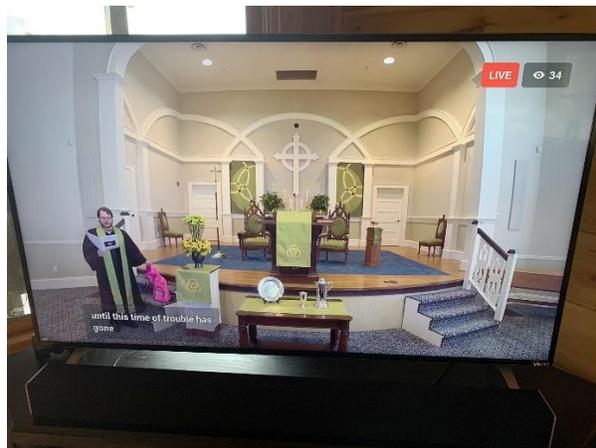
1. **Team Description:** A team made up of any member of the congregation who wants to participate in any or all the activities of the Congregational Life Team. This team's goal is to maintain, nurture and increase the spirit of fellowship within the community of faith.
2. **Team Chair:** Betty Steinmetz
3. **Contact Info:** (Home) 423.605.1833 Email: metzjd@catt.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - January 16, 2020 • October 16, 2020
 - March 20, 2020 • November 20, 2020
5. **Projects Accomplished:**
 - Purchased silver vase for Trent Whisenant for his departure gift.
 - Provided book of prayers and handmade quilt and a meal for two families with new babies.
 - Purchased tapestry for Commons.
 - Organized a "drive by" birthday party for San Dover.
6. **Ongoing Projects:**
 - Second Sunday lunches held in January, February, and March with an average attendance of 35.
 - Congregational Care Captain selected each month to correspond/visit shut-ins and persons who are ill and to co-ordinate meals if needed: 5 recipients of meals.
 - Ladies book club met January, February and March at the Farm for lunch and book discussion. Average attendance of 10.
 - Snacks provided in the Commons on the 4th Sunday of each month.
 - Outdoor planters watered weekly during summer months.
 - Birthday cards send to members,
 - "Trees and Wreaths" decoration after service on Sunday preceding Advent.

Congregational Life Team | 2020



1. **Team Description:** To build community within the church by anticipating the informational needs of the congregation and guests and extending gracious hospitality to all.
2. **Team Chair:** Pam Partain
3. **Contact Info:** (Cell) 706-217-8117 Email: pampartain@gmail.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - January 14, 2020 • July 13, 2020
 - April 20, 2020 • October 12, 2020
5. **Projects Accomplished:**
 - Trained Will Scott on livestream worship technology; as a result, we have maintained continuity and not missed a single worship service since Covid quarantine began March 15, 2020
 - Identified Hetty White as technology assistant to operate Sunday livestream and other expanded functions when live worship resumes
 - Worked with Christian Education Team to promote and publicize Lenten Sunday School series and children's Halloween costume parade
 - Created Presbyterians at the Virtual Pub as a monthly fellowship activity to replace weekly Presbyterians at the Pub gatherings during quarantine
 - Worked with Julie Tharpe to create tartan face masks for congregation to wear for Kirkin' of the Tartans service on Reformation Sunday (live service on the grounds)
 - Worked with videographer Jonathan Marks to create stewardship video
 - Maintained social media presence on Facebook
 - Created and maintained database of livestream service activity during Covid quarantine
6. **Ongoing Projects:**
 - Develop strategies to engage members and repeat visitors more fully into the life of the church, especially during time we are physically apart from each other
 - Monitor livestream data to identify visitors who could be candidates for future Inquirers' Luncheon

Connection Team | 2020



1. **Team Description:** To maintain all church facilities and property in good order and repair, to provide for the safety and security of buildings and church activities conducted on or within church property, to provide for aesthetic additions, and to assist in making church facilities available to outside groups upon request.
2. **Team Chair:** Robert Smalley
3. **Contact Info:** (cell) 706-260-5579 Email: hsmalley3@gmail.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - August 26, 2020
5. **Projects Accomplished:**
 - Rehabilitated aged masonry on front of Martin House
 - Cleaned, repaired and sealed the porch floor bricks
 - Cleaned, repaired and sealed the parapet walls
 - Installed new push bars on main floor exterior doors, including sanctuary
 - Inspections of essential systems coordinated (fire suppression, sprinkler system, elevator, security and HVAC)
 - Sealed several roof leaks
6. **Projects under contract or in the planning stages:**
 - Sanctuary: sound/video to commons and Hollis hall; hearing assist technology
 - Various repairs to walkways
 - Sign for front walk
 - Art and other items to complete interior décor and furniture need
7. **Ongoing Projects:**
 - Repair/replace rotting wood on second story porch
 - Reseal asphalt driveway and alley
 - Providing for routine maintenance
8. **Facilities Volunteers/Paid**
 - Open/Close Schedule - paid position
 - Audio/Visual Equipment, Sound board - Contact: Jeff Granillo, Jim Burran, Jack Partain, Roger Rollins, Kathryn Sellers



1. **Team Description:** To administer all financial matters of the church.
2. **Team Chair:** Julie Tharpe
3. **Contact Info:** (Cell) 706.280.7795 Email: jltharpe52@gmail.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - September 8, 2020
 - December 15, 2020
 - Other business was conducted by email vote as need arose due the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. **Projects Accomplished:**
 - 2021 Budget has been reviewed and approved by the team and has been presented to the Session with the recommendation that it be approved.
 - The Investment Team has met by email and reviewed the TD Ameritrade account and reviewed its performance during the pandemic. The Committee decided to remain with TD Ameritrade based on its performance and investment fees. The Committee also recommended that investment distribution percentages remain the same and that the investment percentages be rebalanced when benevolences are invested.
 - The 12-month CD at Bank of the Ozarks has been renewed.
6. **Ongoing Projects:**
 - The team continues to meet as needed to review and discuss church financial information to ensure that funds are being spent and managed properly. The church treasurer provides regular reports to the team. The team's review includes:
 - Review of income
 - Review of expenses
 - Consideration of future expenses
 - Monitoring of any special giving opportunities (i.e. organ fund, hymnals, etc.)
 - Discussion of insurance
 - Efforts are on-going to obtain information concerning the advantages and disadvantages of establishing an endowment.
 - The team oversees the yearly stewardship campaign, the results of which are used to determine future budgeting. The video used with this year's campaign was very informative and well received and helped connect people during this difficult time.
 - The team reviews and considers on an ongoing basis the financial benchmarks for the church and makes recommendations for any changes to session.
 - Managing the weekly deposit and maintaining procedures for that deposit.
 - Review and consideration of the yearly budget. (December of each year).



Mission and Service Team | 2020

1. **Team Description:** The team is to have as members an active elder and not fewer than six members at large. Its responsibilities are to communicate foreign and domestic mission opportunities to the congregation, to sponsor specific mission projects directly involving the congregation, to encourage the congregation to respond to the needs of the greater church and outside our community, and to try to involve members of the congregation in mission projects “so as to make known the good news of Jesus throughout the world.” On behalf of the congregation of the Church, the team disbursed more than \$60,000 for mission and service projects. Numbers have been rounded.

2. **Team Chair:** Margaret Venable

3. **Contact Info:** (Cell) 404-216-3852 Email: mhvchemistry@gmail.com

4. **Meeting Dates:**

- January 6, 2020
- March 4, 2020
- April 16, 2020
- May 27, 2020
- September 2, 2020
- November 11, 2020

5. **Projects Accomplished:**

Due to COVID-19, our efforts were very different this year but we continued to serve those in need through grants to many of the same organizations we usually support. Although many of these organizations operated differently this year, the needs of the people they serve were not diminished. Using a simple grant application form, we were able to better understand the needs of organizations and fund specific projects rather than sending general donations without a clear understanding of the purpose. We had intended to support City of Refuge meals but they obtained a grant to fund their meals and we were able to support them in other ways. Although other funds were expended, the primary use of our budget was for these grants. We funded projects for the following organizations:

• DOCUP	5,000.00
• Deo Clinic	5,000.00
• Providence Ministries	5,000.00
• Salvation Army (Murray County tornado assistance)	5,000.00
• City of Refuge	5,000.00
• Presbyterian Mission (Presbyterian Disaster Assistance fund)	8,000.00
• Family Support Council (Camp AIM)	2,800.00
• Mental Health Court	2,500.00
• Drug Court	2,500.00
• Veterans Court	1,000.00
• NW GA Family Crisis Center	4,000.00
• Jonathan's House	1,000.00
• Domestic Violence Court	2,500.00
• Dalton Public Schools	5,000.00
• Kroger Gift cards for needy families	2,500.00
• Brookwood Elem PTO (masks)	500.00
• Sharing is Caring	1,200.00
• TOTAL GIFTS	\$58,500.00

7. Ongoing Projects (on hold at this time):

- Blue Ridge Schools Book club and food bags
- Seasonal book and food project for JoAnn Lewis Park neighborhood
- Dalton Senior Housing (Easter and summer socials)
- Hygiene kits for disaster relief (with Royal Oaks)
- Camp AIM
- City of Refuge support for activities including meals
- Snacks for hospital waiting room
- Rice & Beans (formerly “Soup and Sandwiches”) for 5th Avenue area residents



Staff & Administration Team | 2020

1. **Team Description:** To provide the Session an organized approach in fulfilling its responsibilities to all the staff employed by the church.
2. **Team Chair:** Tate O’Gwin
3. **Contact Info:** (Cell) 770.402.8006 Email: tateogwin@gmail.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - October 15, 2020
5. **Projects Accomplished:**
 - Accomplished annual church staff feedback and made pay recommendations
 - Assisted child protection policy review sessions
 - Hired interim and later permanent Director of Music
6. **Ongoing Projects:**
 - Continuation of FPC Staff feedback process
 - Hiring of new nursery worker
 - Hiring Sunday morning tech and logistical support



1. **Team Description:** To relate our worship life to the total work and witness of our congregation.
2. **Team Chair:** Wesley Sanders
3. **Contact Info:** (Cell) 470-209-1490 Email: wessanders@gmail.com
4. **Meeting Dates:**
 - January 15, 2020
 - March 11, 2020
 - May 28, 2020
 - August 31, 2020
 - November 16, 2020
5. **Projects Accomplished:**
 - Added handbell choir to worship before transition to virtual worship
 - Assisted Pastor and musicians in making transition to virtual worship
 - Provided feedback and ideas for ways to engage congregation in virtual worship
 - Provided new banners and paraments to enhance visual experience during worship
6. **Ongoing Projects:**
 - Providing ushers/greeters, liturgists, communion preparers, and communion servers
 - Maintaining all candles with liquid wax
 - Maintaining all objects used in worship
 - Maintaining hymnal racks with pens, pencils, cards, fellowship pads
 - Welcoming, introducing and assisting visiting pastors and organists
 - Meeting four or five times a year to plan new tasks and to evaluate worship



Worship Team | 2020



Worship Team | 2020

