

Wellness and Spirituality: Moving Forward



2021
Annual Report

Church of the Holy Comforter
543 Beulah Road, NE, Vienna, VA 22180

From the Rector

Phew! 2021 required regular adaptations to pandemic patterns. Just when we thought the vaccines would free us, Delta, then Omicron variants followed. The gift was that we stayed nimble as a congregation, adjusting service times as needed to better suit outdoor services, and creating ways for non-contact worship participation. From preaching on the back of a pickup truck, to outdoor Easter and Pentecost festival celebrations, parish picnics and retreat, connections still took place amid all the isolation.

Thanks to Randy McGuire's continued efforts we were able to substantially improve our capacity to share worship via livestream on Facebook and YouTube platforms. Randy spent many off-time hours threading new cabling into attic and in-between spaces, setting up systems that allow those who couldn't join to be deeply a part of Christ's ministry through Holy Comforter. Also, thanks to your financial contributions, we have strengthened many of our connections.

In spite of Covid, we have had many new members join our congregation this past year who have gotten involved with so many ministries. Some former parishioners have rejoined our congregation, getting involved in our online life even though they now live at a distance. Our "building" now includes virtual meeting rooms along with our physical spaces and we are a hybrid congregation. The incarnation means that God took on human form and the sacrament of presence is particularly important. We learned the depth of a conversation online can be transformative—both support the ministry of Christ at Holy Comforter.

Our welcome and support of two refugee families from Afghanistan has been a ministry of great privilege. After praying over the need, I was surprised to hear from Amy Brown, that her goddaughter had a friend from Kabul whose families were struggling living in the Fort Bliss, TX camp. Through your generosity and many incredible commitments of time, energy, and talent, our families continue to become better rooted here. Two family members currently have employment outside the home and others are actively pursuing employment. Thanks especially to Melanie Gray of Christ Church, Alexandria, whose support was critical in navigating the early days.

Our website received a refresh this year thanks to the support of Lizzy Becker, Elys McLean, Patti Boerger, and Ann Gillespie. It is a beautiful online "front door" for those who are new, and is a support for our continued ministry formation. ECW and Pennywise continue to contribute substantially to our shared ministry thanks to the efforts and love of so many—please consider volunteering for our thrift shop that creates affordable goods and clothing and contributes to many outreach efforts.

This was the beginning to our year of celebration for our 125th Anniversary which had been deferred from 2020. We look forward to further celebrations of Holy Comforter's vitality in the past and looking ahead to a promising future. I give particular thanks for Judie Fister's wonderful guidance of this ministry.

This year has also included much planning, learning and preparing to have a smaller-sized Capital Campaign for our 125th Anniversary. We look forward to retiring the debt of \$800K, reducing our carbon footprint through a substantial solarization project (aided by a major gift), and creating a new space for choir rehearsals as they have outgrown their current space in the undercroft/office area. A "reach" goal will include funds for invited guests to teach/speak in our Ministry Center. We will gain feedback on these goals as we move forward with the listening phase of our campaign.

I am so grateful for having worked closely with our wardens Kari Govan, as our Sr. warden, and Jason Crum, Jr. Warden. Both were positive, faithful and effective leaders who enjoy serving our marvelous congregation.

We continue to have a wonderful staff that is extremely thoughtful and caring towards all, being a resource for our common life in this congregation. I am deeply grateful for our clergy team, each with uniquely different preaching styles and yet each remarkable. Ann+ does so much in strengthening our common life: sharing leadership and pastoral ministry, creating a transformative space for spirituality and wellness, and bringing excellence in preaching and liturgy. Jackie+'s share in pastoral ministry and preaching is a joy. All of us are helped by Peggy Miller, our Parish Administrator, for her intelligence and diligence; for Liz Bleich who ably assists her and pastorally cares for all who call in seeking help. David Kelley's excellence in choral conducting, liturgy, and music regularly energizes our spirits. Denis McMullan's love and concern for our shared youth ministry is a true gift. Tom Gadell's well-executed building management and Victor Hernandez' faithful and humorous style make our spaces shine. Brynn Pacitti's decision to continue developing our teaching teams for children and curriculum is done with such thoughtfulness. And Elys McLean regularly creates communications that are beautiful and reflective of so much good ministry that is taking place here. Patti Boerger returned to her work in communications after excellent support of our nursery.

All of the ministries you support make our congregation a vital place to meet the risen Christ day after day. Thanks be to God for the privilege of serving and leading among you for the one who loved us first.

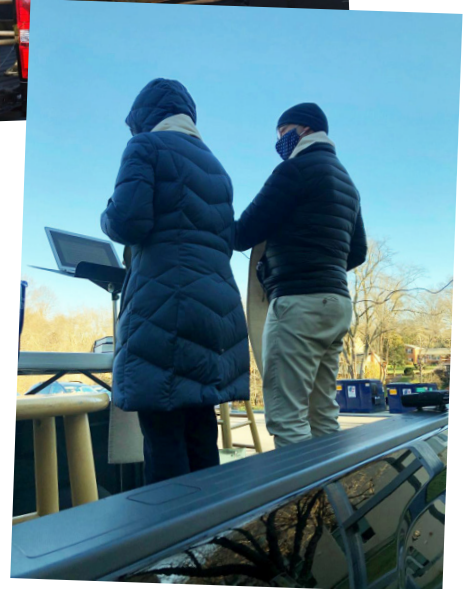
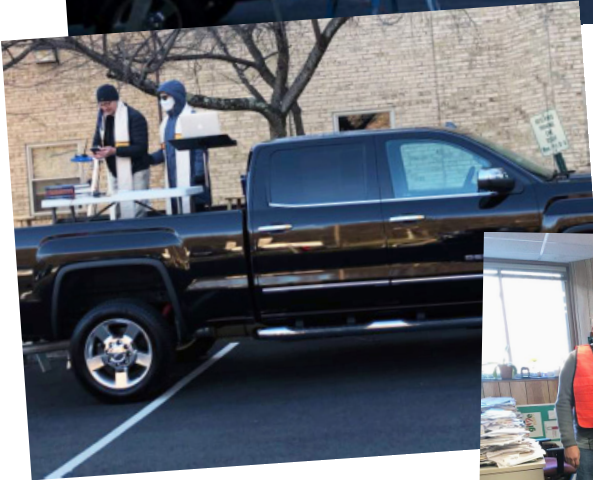
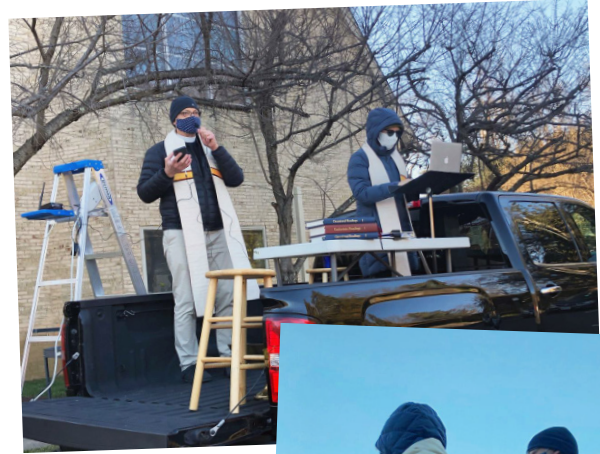
With love in Christ,

The Rev. Jon Strand
Rector



January

On January 9 we tried Drive-In Church with our new FM radio transmitter! Parishioners sat in the parking lot in the safety of their vehicle—watching the service and listening on their radio.



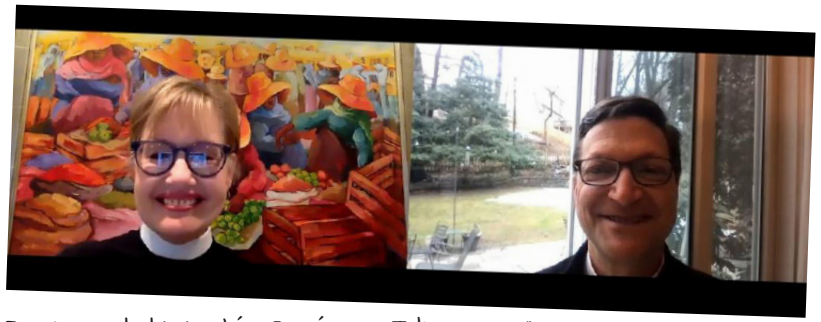
The Choir recorded a new setting of the Gloria to be used January 10 through the season after Epiphany. The setting, by Carl Haywood, was first published in the Episcopal Church's African-American hymnal *Lift Every Voice and Sing II*, and was subsequently included in *Wonder, Love, and Praise* (our green hymnal).



Choir members Lolly Mixter, Brian Batsel, and David Kelley participated in a recording of "We Shall Overcome," along with members of Vienna Presbyterian Church, First Baptist Church of Vienna, Emmanuel Lutheran Church of Vienna, and the Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation of Reston.



February



Pre-Recorded Worship Service on February 14



On Shrove Tuesday, February 16, parishioners could pick up a Chili Dinner and Ashes To-Go! The chili and cornbread was prepared by Holy Comforter parishioners and a small container of ashes was included, to use during the Zoom Ash Wednesday Service on February 17.



"Made in the Image of God" began on February 18 on Zoom. This four-part journey examined how God's people are called to instill a sense of belonging in the Church for all LGBTQI persons.



"Writing Through Troubled Times" on February 20, explored writing techniques to help move through stress. The four-part workshop, "Sacred Scribe: Writing Spiritual Memoir" beginning on February 27, examined the evolution of the spiritual and sacred in our lives.



February 21-27, we prepared and delivered hot meals for the Hypothermia Shelter located at 8508 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA.

Our February 27 Outdoor Pop-Up Church was a chance to meet and worship in-person again—of course, including all COVID safety protocols.



March

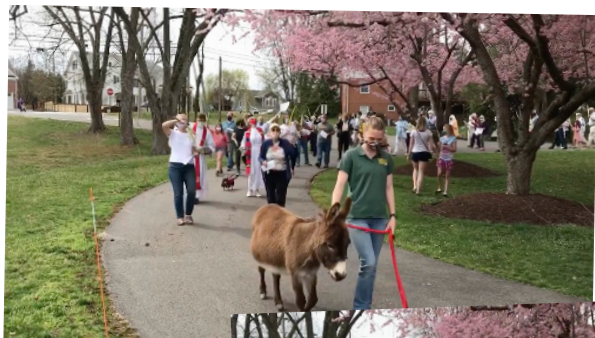
March 17 Noonday Prayer
for St. Patrick's Day



On March 7 we worshipped on
Zoom then stayed for the Zoom
Annual Meeting!



March 27 Zoom Yoga
(Finding God in Your Body)



March 27 Outdoor Palm Saturday
worship and procession with the donkey
symbolizing Jesus entering Jerusalem





April

Parishioners were invited to record and share their 5-10 second "branch waving" as well as "bell ringing" videos!



Outdoor Stations of the Cross on April 2



Easter Egg Hunt on April 3



Easter Day

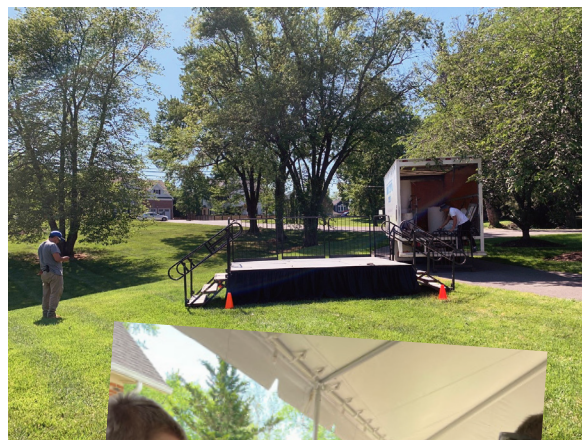


Faith in Action Sunday School (5th and 6th Grade) learned how to see creation in a new way through digital photography.



May

We had fun with occasional Outdoor Pop-up Church from a pickup truck, but on May 19 we got a stage!



Pennywise Thrift Shop sponsored and donated a doghouse in the Town of Vienna auction to raise money for lights at the dog park.

Faith in Action Sunday School (5th and 6th Grade) Market Day, selling handmade goods to support Five Talents



Pennywise Fashion Show, "Oh, the Places You'll Go" on May 25



On May 23 Middle School Sunday School painted their symbol on the old library wall.



On Pentecost Sunday, May 23, there were 21 kids confirmed, 3 adults confirmed, 2 adults received, and 2 adults baptized—with our guest, Bishop Ted Gulick.



June

We congratulated our high school graduates on June 13!



On June 14 we gathered together to thank all who give their time, love, and energy to Pennywise Thrift Shop!



On June 10 Holy Comforter Preschool and Kindergarten graduated our 10th Kindergarten class!



We celebrated Liberty Amendments Month on June 27 with a free concert on the front lawn featuring Classical Artists Directed by HALO, Inc., with music that speaks to the truth and history of the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 19th amendments.

Hogwarts VBS
June 21-25





July

On July 8, children gathered for stories and fun as we celebrated Liberty Amendments Month.



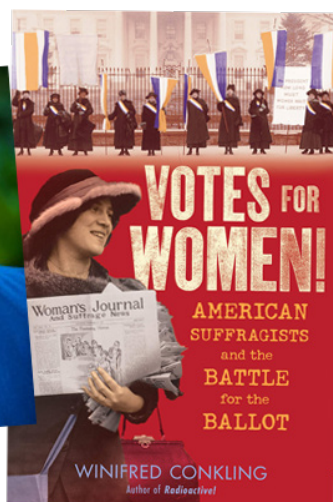
Becoming Beloved Community has a new logo created by African American Graphic Designers (AAGD). The symbolism embodied in our BBC logo reflects Holy Comforter's intention in Becoming Beloved Community. The doves, representing the most complete peace—the Holy Spirit—are cradled by hands from different races, symbolizing community and communion. An olive branch signifies the desire for peace and friendship. The labyrinth in the background recognizes the winding road ahead and our long-term commitment to Becoming Beloved Community, connecting our logo and journey to that of the Episcopal Church.



Becoming Beloved Community ministry launched a monthly Book and Movie Club focused on social justice and racial reconciliation. The first meeting was on July 12 on Zoom—a discussion about the novel, "An American Marriage" by Tayari Jones.



Outdoor Pop-Up Church



Liberty Amendments Month celebrations continued on July 15 when Winifred Conkling, parishioner and award winning author of "Votes for Women" led a presentation about the history of women's suffrage from 1848 to the ratification of the 19th Amendment.



Parishioners shared video testimonials telling why they love the Shrine Mont All-Parish Retreat.

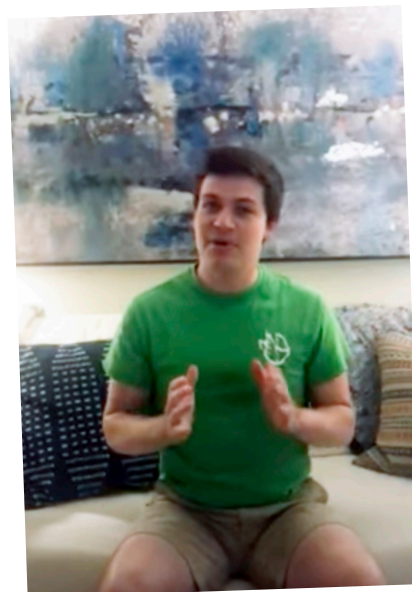
August

Noonday Prayer returns after a month hiatus.

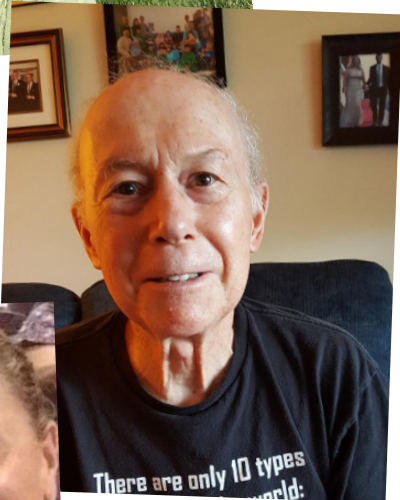


Over 4 Mondays, we featured "Reflections on Sacred Ground," reflections from 4 parishioners who participated in our previous Sacred Ground dialogue series, a film- and readings-based dialogue series on race and faith.

Reflections on Sacred Ground



Parishioners shared video testimonials telling why they love the Shrine Mont All-Parish Retreat.



On August 21, Becoming Beloved Community ministry Book and Movie Club offered a screening and discussion about the film, "Traces of the Trade." While in seminary, film maker Kartrina Browne made the troubling discovery that her ancestors were the largest slave-trading family in US history. This film is the story of the journey she and other family members took as they retraced the Triangle Trade from Rhode Island to Ghana to Cuba, and back home again.



September



The Shrine Mont
All-Parish Retreat
September 10-12



vestry meeting on September 9



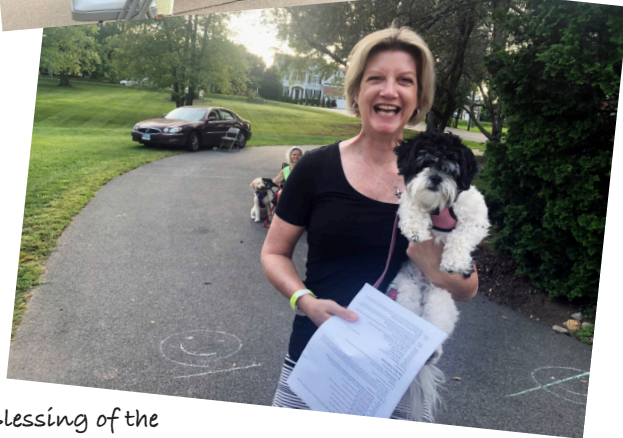
The September 26 Parish Picnic,
plus sheep grazing our non-native
species of plants near our pond



Faith in Action
Sunday School
(5th and 6th
Grade) learned the
importance of native
plants.



October



Blessing of the Animals on October 2

On October 10, musician, author, and conflict navigator, Daryl Davis played his renowned blues and jazz music at the 9:30 a.m. service. At 10:45, he shared the extraordinary journey of his friendships with Ku Klux Klan members and the inspiring reconciliation that resulted.



On October 3 our new friends from Afghanistan arrived after a long trip from Fort Bliss, Texas, where they lived in tents for 34 days.



On October 3 our CROP walk team participated in the Vienna Crop Hunger walk to raise funds to address hunger locally and globally.



Faith in Action Sunday School (5th and 6th Grade) learned forms of active prayer.



Godly Play Sunday School (1st-4th Grade)

November

On November 6 a group of Holy Comforter men (and youth) gathered to labor over a much-needed project—moving football-size (and larger) stones from the parking lot to a storm water drainage ditch on the edge of the church property.



Holy Comforter Preschool and Kindergarten "Donuts for Dads"

On November 19 our Confirmation Class visited Rodef Shalom Temple, received an informative tour, then joined the congregation for their weekly Friday worship service.



Holy Comforter youth went out to provide hard boiled eggs and bottled water to our Fairfax county neighbors in need. They joined the adult FACETS team who provided over 100 meals.



Making Advent Wreaths
on November 28



Taizé Choir

December

Faith in Action Sunday School (5th and 6th Grade) learned to use yoga to manage stress during holidays and other stressful times.



The arrival of a healthy baby Hania to one of our Afghan families is a great Christmas gift.



Grieving families celebrating the life of loved ones



Children's Chapel

Holy Comforter Preschool and Kindergarten class enjoy Smores



Christmas Day Drive-Thru Communion



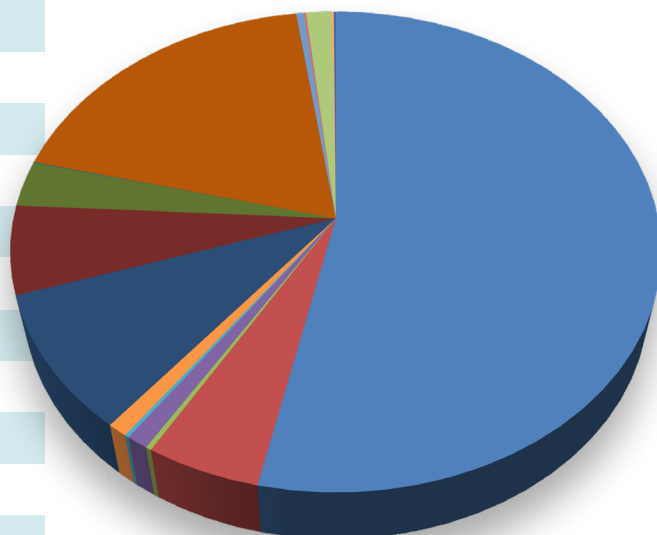
Christmas Eve

Resources and Sharing

The following charts were prepared by consolidating ministry reports to give an overall picture of Holy Comforter's income resources and expenses.

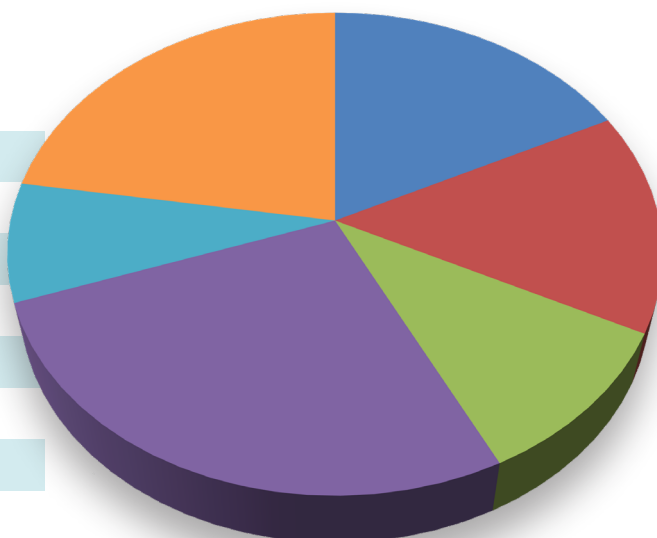
2021 Income

Pledges	53%	\$1,104,809
Loose Checks	5%	\$104,615
Loose Cash	0%	\$5,259
ECW Pledge	1%	\$20,125
Interest & Fees	0%	\$3,948
Rent	1%	\$18,559
Other Income	9%	\$190,587
Outreach Offerings	6%	\$123,128
Pennywise Thrift Shop	3%	\$63,000
Coffee Hour	0%	\$0
Special Events	0%	\$1,140
Tuition	19%	\$388,708
Registration Fees	0%	\$8,945
Fundraising	0%	\$2,815
Auction Proceeds	1%	\$29,617
Afternoon Adventures Program	0%	\$0
Early Risers Program	0%	\$0
Preschool Supply Fee	0%	\$2,713
Kindergarten Book Fee	0%	\$2,382
Total		\$2,070,350



2021 Expenses

Worship	18%	\$332,591
Formation	15%	\$280,205
Welcome & Pastoral Care	10%	\$194,513
Outreach	27%	\$509,345
Willing Generosity	8%	\$150,176
Our Church Home	22%	\$424,637
Total		\$1,891,467



Note: Compensation and benefits expenses for all paid staff were allocated to the various categories according to the percentages of each employee's time spent engaged with that category.

Ministry Contact List (as of 2-14-22)

Acolytes and Vergers

Andrew Eastman (andrew.eastman@cox.net)

Addiction & Recovery Care

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Altar Guild

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Audio/Visual

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Children's Ministries

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Education for Ministry (EfM)

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Endowment Board

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Episcopal Church Women (ECW)

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Food4Thought

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Hypothermia Shelter

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Holy Comforter Episcopal Preschool & Kindergarten

Linda Meyers (lmeyers@holycorforter.com)

Lectors & Intercessors

Sherryl Dorch (sherryldorch@gmail.com)

Listening Hearts

Frances Sullinger (fsullinger@verizon.net)

Manna Makers

Lolly Mixer (lollymix@gmail.com)

Marathon Bridge

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Memorial Gifts

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Men's Fellowship Group

Randy McGuire (rlmav8r@gmail.com)

Music Ministry

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Newcomers Ministry

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Open Circles - Church Office

Outreach Team

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Pennywise Thrift Shop

Judy Boott (judithboott@gmail.com)

Prayer List (Sunday Bulletin)

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Prayer Shawl Ministry

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Relationship Recovery Group

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Remembrance Reception Chair

Wesley Harrison (wesleyharrison@cox.net)

Samaritan Ministry

Chris Jones (rcjones@gmu.edu)

Saturday Evening First Saturday Social

Chris & Jeanna Spielmann (chris@spielmannstudio.com)

Senior Saints

Richard & Barbara Fitzsimmons (rfitzs@gmail.com)

Linda Gamboa (lindamgamboa@gmail.com)

Stephen Ministry

Linda Murray (linmurray@cox.net)

Winifred Conkling (winifred.conkling@verizon.net)

Stewardship of Creation

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Ushers

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Vacation Bible School

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Vestry Senior Warden

Jason Crum (jasoncrum@yahoo.com)

Vestry Junior Warden

Suzie Garrod (suze@kinggarrod.org)

Youth Ministries

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