

**CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

WAYNESBORO, PA

WEBSITE: www.apostlesucc.com
E-MAIL: ApostlesUCC@gmail.com

2015

ANNUAL REPORT

PASTOR: REV. MICHAEL CROMER

Home Telephone: 717-776-7612

Cell Phone: 717-816-2940

E-mail: mcromerm@aol.com

CHURCH OFFICERS 2014-2015

President	Randy Cramer
Vice-President	Jean High
Secretary to Consistory	Donna Levick
Treasurer	Linda Ritchey
Assistant Treasurer	Robert Benchoff
Financial Secretary	Judy Fitz
Assistant Financial Secretary	Ernie Fitz

CHURCH OFFICERS 2014-2015

President	Randy Cramer
Vice-President	Jean High
Secretary to Consistory	Donna Levick
Treasurer	Linda Ritchey
Assistant Treasurer	Robert Benchoff
Financial Secretary	Judy Fitz
Assistant Financial Secretary	Ernie Fitz

CONSISTORY MEMBERS

ELDERS

Randy Cramer
Dave Patterson

Jean High
Martha Smith

TERM EXPIRES

9/1/16
9/1/16

9/1/17
9/1/17

DEACONS

Trudy Stum
Nancy Dinterman

Brian Jacobs
Donna Levick

CHURCH COMMITTEES

Archive
Christian Education
Christian Outreach
Church Growth Committee
Lay Life and Work
Outdoor Ministry
Property
Spiritual Council

Stewardship and Finance
Alter Guild

CHAIRPERSONS

Linda Ritchey

Robert Benchoff
Linda Hovis
Robert Benchoff
Bruce Barr
Randy Cramer /
Dave Patterson
Donna Haugh / Jean High
Danny & Laurie Deavers

Mission Statement: We are called together to worship God, united by the Holy Spirit, and chosen as instruments of God's purpose to teach, support and serve all people. We witness to the church, the community and the world by showing joy in the faith and using our talents to praise God.

Pastor's Annual Report for the Year 2015

The past year has not shown any sign that people are any more interested in church and especially a traditional church than they have been for the past two or three decades. Few people, except perhaps seniors, long to hear the old hymns of their parents or grandparents day, liturgy from the past, or are interested in having someone preach to them. Few find any value in the sacrament of baptism, in marriage, confirmation or church membership. Few are interested in committing themselves to any particular denomination or church family or even attending a worship service every Sunday morning. Even fewer people seem to be interested in being reminded that they need to repent, that God has expectations of them, and that a relationship with Christ could be the answer to their problems.

When it comes to getting married, those who want to marry are more likely to search for the words for their marriage ceremony on the internet and have a friend conduct the service. No need for a minister to do that. But one thing that has not changed much is that people still want a minister to bury them. Perhaps because they think a funeral is a task too depressing for the average person to perform.

Despite that gloomy, unoptimistic description of the traditional church of today, churches, even small churches, continue to survive. Church of the Apostles, an average size small church by today's standards, continues to grow and thrive despite how it might appear to some. Church growth and vitality are measured not by the number of people sitting in the pews on Sunday morning, how big and beautiful the building is, or how much money has been collected on Sunday morning in tithes. The success of a church is measured by the activity of its people, by the continuing faith of its people and their continuous hope for the future. A church's value is measured by its importance to the community in which it resides, as well as to the world community. A church thrives by its faithful commitment to serving Christ by serving others. The value and success of a church is not measured by how many members it has but in how it continues to change lives through the commitment of its people to live Christ-like lives.

We continue to share the love of Christ to the community and to the world through the many charitable organizations we support; the Silver Express senior food bank, New Garments Always, sponsorship of a child in the Philippines, donations to Waynesboro Human Services, the What Difference Do It Make fund, SERRV and craft sales from Guatemala, our community gardens, and offering the use of our building.

This year we were blessed with a very generous financial gift from the Peggy Cluck estate that allowed us the privilege of supporting more charities. Over \$20, 000 of our gift was donated to Save the Children, Hoffman Homes for Youth, St. Jude's Children's Hospital, The Way Station, New Hope Shelter, and The Lunch Place. Endless lives have been blessed by our church sharing its blessings with others. *"A generous person will be enriched, and one who gives water will get water."*- Proverbs 11:25

Like our members, members of most small traditional churches today are middle age to seniors. Like most churches, our attendance has dropped partly through the death or the decline in health of some of our members. Our average Sunday worship attendance has remained the same, 31. Attendance for Easter last year was a low 47. Christmas Eve attendance was 74. Sadly even the number of those who once attended church services only on Easter and Christmas has declined as well. Easter attendance in 2014 was 69. Sunday attendance is also greatly affected by secular activities. A Sunday worship service no longer takes priority in people's lives as it once did, individually or as a nation. Many activities are scheduled on Sunday mornings with no thought that they might interfere with church attendance.

We have been fortunate to have more children at our Sunday services. That increase is due to members bringing grandchildren, sometimes children from their neighborhood, or children from extended families. Since traditional Sunday school classes have not been successful the children who do come to church Sunday morning are being included in the worship service. Children's church is now part of the adult church service with children receiving a message from the pastor and then being sent to their own corner of the sanctuary to do a project. By being in the sanctuary during worship they can't help but absorb what is going on and hopefully it will keep them interested in church as they grow older. A youth group for ages 12-18 now meets twice a month.

Plans for the year 2016 include continuing to use the assets of the church property for the church's ministry. That includes creating a community garden around the Peace Pole that was installed last fall. We will invite people from the community to participate by helping to plant and donate plants from their own garden for the Peace Pole garden. We will continue to promote the community garden although currently all 15 plots are reserved. Consideration is being made for a new playground area for the children in the community. We will continue to serve the community wherever we see a need is not being met.

One of the concerns I hear expressed at ministerial meetings is over the closing of churches. It is a reality of the times we live in. Many churches have closed because they are no longer able to support themselves or attendance has declined to only a handful of people. Some churches have closed and joined other churches in their community of the same denomination because it just makes financial sense. As much as people hate the idea of their church closing its doors, it is a reality of the times we are living in. Despite that being seen as a terrible thing, it can be a blessing. Why are there so many churches in a community of the same denomination? It is usually because of personality conflicts within the churches.

Church of the Apostles has not reached that point in its history. Despite our small congregation I believe we have much to offer and are an asset to the community in which we exist and the world beyond. That value, however, can only continue if all of its members who are able play a role in the life and mission of the church. There is no room for anyone who is able to not participate in some way even if it seems insignificant. An important role all of us must play is that of ambassador of our church and for Christ. When people see who you are and who you serve (Christ), then the church will continue to survive despite these uncertain times the church finds itself. This broken world needs the Church despite what it may think and the Church will continue to exist as long as there are people of faith who believe it still has a purpose in this world.

In Christian Love,
Pastor Michael

JANUARY

Lay, Life, and Work Committee took down the Christmas Greens.

Our newly formed Church Growth Committee held it's first Sunday 9:15-10:15 meeting on January 30.

FEBRUARY

The Book Study began, meeting weekly to discuss the book "Killing Jesus" by Bill O'Reilly.

New seamless gutters were installed, finishing our roof project.

Lay, Life and Work Committee hosted our first community potluck of the year with a Valentine's Day theme, where Tom Jolin and his troupe of clog dancers returned for a concert.

The Season of Lent began with our Ash Wednesday service.

"Spare change" and dollars were collected for the Souper Bowl of Caring on Super Bowl Sunday to support the child sponsorship program.

MARCH

Social Seniors (jointly with Trinity Waynesboro and Trinity State Line) led by Shirley Zeigler was held at Church of the Apostles.

The Christian acting troupe, Covenant Players, presented an hour of thought provoking theater in the sanctuary on March 15 during our worship Service, followed by a potluck luncheon hosted by Lay, Life, and Work Committee.

Pastor Michael conducted George Vanden's graveside service at Little Rose Cemetery in Clear Spring, MD on March 27.

APRIL

On Maundy Thursday the church remembered Jesus' last meal with his disciples in the upper room prior to his arrest and crucifixion. The service included communion by intinction and foot washing.

On Good Friday the church marks the death of Jesus. This somber service included a dramatic reading of the gospel account of Jesus' *passion (the suffering of Christ after the Last Supper including his crucifixion.)*

Easter Sunday is the day we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Our service was a service of joy, celebration, renewal. The children again decorated a bare wooden cross with flowers.

The number of gardeners increased in this 5th year of our Community Garden and 6 new plots were prepared to accommodate a total of 15 gardens.

Randy Cramer installed new smoke alarms throughout the church and new emergency lights in the restrooms.

MAY

The "Adopt a Tree" program began, enhancing the church grounds with new mulch. Flowers were planted in the 7 outdoor planters and the outdoor beds located under the cross, at the Activity Center, and under the Amsterdam Road sign. Many thanks to all who helped with this important ministry !

Randy Cramer completed the assembly and installation of a new heat panel in the electrical room and new locks on the office doors.

The church hosted Social Seniors, with a guest speaker who talked about the Titanic, had a replica of the ship and dressed in a uniform that would have been worn by the ship's captain.

Work began in preparing a place for the Peace Pole in front of the church lawn near the biblical garden. A large cedar shrub was removed from the area for the pole to be installed.

Trey Gelbach created a landscaped "Gardener's Shade & Rest Area" under the large blue spruce between the gardens and the children's playground.

JUNE

The Lay, Life and Work Committee held the annual Ladies Social at the Keystone Family Restaurant.

The first Outdoor Worship service of the summer was held on June 7.

Children's books were donated for the Mission Project at the Annual Meeting of the Penn Central Conference.

JULY

Our second outdoor worship service of the summer was held on July 5.

Last year the church received a grant from the York Council of the Arts. The money we received was to pay for a concert by the group Simple Gifts. Simple Gifts is described as two women playing twelve instruments performing Romanian, Klezmer, Greek, Irish, Scottish, Appalachian music and more. The women from the State College area have played all over the East coast in places like the Smithsonian Institute, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC. Simple Gifts played at our 10:00 AM service on July 12. A potluck hosted by Lay, Life and Work Committee followed at noon with a free concert at 1:30. On July 13 they performed at Hoffman Homes for Youth and later that day they performed for the folks at Trinity House in Waynesboro. All three concerts were covered under the grant.

Panels that read "May Peace Prevail on Earth" in 8 different languages arrived for the Peace Pole to be installed in front of the church. A cedar post was special ordered for the pole.

Thanks so much to everyone who adopted trees and areas to mulch. A special thanks to Nevin & Sondra Monn, who adopted trees and also did the large beds along both sides of the church; and a special thanks to Donna Levick, who weeded, planted, edged and mulched the biblical garden, the bed under the cross, the Amsterdam road sign bed, and did the same with Bev Fitz & Mary Lou Misner for the Outdoor Activity Center beds. Thanks also to Donna, Nevin, Bev, Mary Lou & Pastor Michael for planting the sidewalk planters so attractively !

AUGUST

Our third outdoor worship service of the summer was held on August 2.

The cedar pole for the Peace Pole arrived.

Thanks to everyone who donated school supplies to Waynesboro Human Services for children of the Waynesboro community.

SEPTEMBER

Lay, Life and Work Committee hosted the annual church picnic on September 13 following our last outdoor worship service of the season. There were games, drawings and as the old expression goes “*a good time was had by all.*”

A Community Gardner’s Dinner was held on September 16 on the church lawn.

A new church banner was purchased with memorial money received in memory of Del Dingle. The banner depicts Jesus with children.

The day was picture perfect for our Peace Pole Dedication and Installation; sunny, blue skies and a warm wind. People conversed with one another as they shopped for Fair Trade items, local pottery and crafts. The sound of a guitar and the voice of our guest musician Daniel McCarthy flowed clear down Barnett Avenue. The Antietam Humane society was there with a dog named Shadow with the hope someone might give him a home. Kids and adults learned how to make origami peace cranes. Kids decorated their own peace pole for the church sanctuary in their unique way. It was a glorious day of fun and friendship, a day to celebrate peace. People gathered around the peace pole for the dedication. Children helped fill in the hole in which the 10 foot cedar pole was placed. Inspiring words about peace were heard and spoken by those in attendance. The children released white pigeons symbolic of peace doves as everyone sang “Blowin’ in the Wind.” It was a memorable day that will be repeated next year when our peace garden is dedicated. Thanks to everyone who helped make the day a success.

OCTOBER

On October 4 a new Youth Group began meeting at the church every other Sunday afternoon, from 2 - 4 PM, led by Pastor Michael and Randy Cramer.

On October 6, seven local churches and a Sorority sorted 5,522 articles that were donated to South Mountain Restoration Center, Faith Community Outreach Ministries, Franklin County Head Start Programs, PMI Pregnancy Resource Center and Waynesboro Community and Human Services. Thanks the congregation for supporting this effort to help those less fortunate.

Church of the Apostles hosted Social Seniors on October 12.

Our youth group began a project called "Pennies for Peace", a service learning program of Central Asia Institute. The purpose of the program is to promote peace, nurture hope, and change the world one child at a time by raising money to help children, especially girls, receive an education in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan. By providing an education for children in these regions the cycle of extreme poverty, violence and war is ended.

The Youth Group also began a list of Prayer Concerns.

NOVEMBER

Pastor Michael officiated Nancy Luick's funeral service on November 12 at the church. Lay, Life and Work Committee hosted a reception following the service,

Lay, Life and Work Committee hosted the meal for the Annual Meeting on November 15. The fifth anniversary of Pastor Michael's ordination was also celebrated.

The church delivered gifts for the gift giving program at Hoffman Homes, visiting the home on November 21.

Nevin and Sondra Monn were welcomed into the church universal, the body of Christ, through the sacrament of baptism.

Tracey, Wally, Sondra and Nevin took vows of membership before the congregation making them official members of the congregation of the Church of the Apostles.

DECEMBER

Bob Benchoff & Pastor Michael went for the Christmas tree and set it up in sanctuary on December 5.

The congregation hung the Christmas greens in the sanctuary on December 6.

Lay, Life and Work Committee hosted a Ministerial breakfast meeting of the Mercersburg Association on December 14.

Around 89 pair of gloves, mittens, hats, and scarves were hung on the mitten tree this year. All items were donated to Waynesboro Human Services. Thanks to the youth for counting the donations and bagging them up for delivery.

Members of the congregation went Christmas Caroling on December 13, traveling to Providence Place and to the homes of some of our members who are no longer able to attend church.

Our children have once again made Christmas cards and filled a box with candy for Nelwin Adling, the boy we sponsor in the Philippines.

The church sent checks to those charities that were chosen by the congregation to receive a portion of the gift the church received from Peggy Cluck's estate. The charities selected are St. Jude's Children's Hospital, Hoffman Homes for Youth, The Way Station, The Lunch Place, New Hope Shelter, and Save the Children. It is interesting to note that half of the charities the congregation chose to tithe to specifically serve the needs of children. What a wonderful way to celebrate Christmas by being a blessing to others. We will never know how many lives will be changed in this tithing of a portion of our abundance with other organizations and charities. Many seeds have been sown.

Seventy-four people attended the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Investments at Edward Jones have maturity dates “laddered” over the next ten years.

We have several CD's/investments with maturity dates into 2022.

Respectfully Submitted,
Donna Haugh, Co-Chair
Jean High, Co-Chair

SPIRITUAL COUNCIL

In 2015 there was no activity for the Spiritual Council.

Randy Cramer, 2015 Chair

ARCHIVE COMMITTEE

The Archive Committee maintains our archives and artifacts, and assists people in the community who request information from our St. Paul and Harbaugh church record books.

Don and Alice McCleaf donated these items to the Archives in 2015: Service of Placing of the Cornerstone bulletin, Uniting Service bulletin, Dedication Sunday bulletin, The Lord's Day Service booklet, two Sacraments and Rites booklets, Historical Background of Church of the Apostles, and a newspaper clipping.

Linda Ritchey, Chairperson

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Altar Guild: prepares the Sacraments for Holy Communion, purchases supplies for services, changes and launders the altar cloths and linens, maintains the oil for the candles, coordinates and prepares the lists for ushers, acolytes, communion assistants, and readers, receives orders and arranges delivery of the Easter and Christmas flowers, and purchases altar flowers, as necessary.

Christian Outreach Committee: Garden Produce Table proceeds were used to provide donation to our “Silver Express” Senior Food Program. Thanks to Bruce and Maude Barr.

Pastor Michael visits many members and sends cards regularly, as needed.

The “Silver Express” food bank continues to collect and deliver food to the residents of Trinity House, including Christmas greetings and gifts.

Christian Education Committee: Pastor Michael has a special Children’s Message each Sunday, and mostly provides the props and treats.

Children’s Church is a time for the children to take a break during the worship service to be in fellowship with each other, reflect on the Pastor’s Children’s message, color, play, read a story or see a video.

The children’ offerings are designated to support a child in the Phillippines, Nelwin Adling, through the Global Ministries of the U.C.C.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ALTAR GUILD: Pastor Michael, Tony Haugh, Donna Haugh, Bev Fitz, Debbie & Conner Jacobs, Nancy Dinterman, and Chairpersons Danny & Laurie Deavers.

ARCHIVE COMMITTEE: Linda Ritchey, Chairperson

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: Bob Benchoff, Mary Lou Misner

CHRISTIAN OUTREACH COMMITTEE: Linda Hovis, Shirley Zeigler, Jean High, Judy Fitz, Donna Haugh, Laurie and Danny Deavers, Donna Levick, Nancy Luick and Mary Lou Misner

CHURCH GROWTH COMMITTEE: Pastor Michael, Randy Cramer, Danny Deavers, Nancy Dinterman, Donna Levick, Reg Rice, and Bob Benchoff, Chairperson

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY: Bob Benchoff, Church Contact Person

LAY, LIFE, AND WORK COMMITTEE:
Katie Fitz, Bev Fitz, Nancy Dinterman, Debbie Jacobs, Trudy Stum, and Linda Hovis, Chairperson.

OUTDOOR MINISTRY: Bruce Barr, and Bob Benchoff, Chairperson

PROPERTY COMMITTEE:
Robert Benchoff, Randy Cramer, Nancy Dinterman, Robert Stum, Brian Jacobs, Robert (Pap) Lynerd, and Bruce Barr, Chairperson

SPIRITUAL COUNCIL: Dave Patterson, Jean High, Martha Smith, and Randy Cramer, Chairperson

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE COMMITTEE:
Bob Benchoff, Linda Ritchey, Judy Fitz, Mary Lou Misner, Donna Haugh and Jean High, Co-Chairs.

**THE CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES
336 BARNETT AVENUE
WAYNESBORO, PA 17268-0288**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Please forward an address change to the Church office.

**CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES
2015
ANNUAL REPORT**