

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

WAYNESBORO, PA

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2016

ANNUAL REPORT

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CHURCH OFFICERS 2015-2016

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 2016-2017

President	Mary Lou Misner
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

Julia Cramer
Mary Lou Misner

Jean High
Martha Smith

TERM EXPIRES

1/1/20
1/1/20

1/1/18
1/1/18

DEACONS

Nevin Monn
Sondra Monn

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
Mary Lou Misner

Robert Benchoff

Robert Benchoff
Bruce Barr
Julia Cramer
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 2016

I recently asked a friend of mine who grew up in a more conservative denomination that attended church several times a week, why he and his wife now attend a large non-denominational church only a few times a month. He said that he came to realize that there was more to faith than just attending church services. He felt that attending church became more of a ritual than a genuine desire to attend a service to worship God. Perhaps that is why church attendance is so low in many of the smaller churches throughout the country. The average Sunday attendance for a small United Church of Christ church is fifty or less. Our attendance for a Sunday morning service last year dropped to as low as 14 people. The average attendance was 31. The good news is that our Christmas Eve candlelight service was one of the highest in years with 76 people attending. That tells me that despite people's lack of interest in attending a Sunday worship service on a regular basis, people are still interested in the church and what it represents and has to offer. Unfortunately irregular attendance has its downfalls.

When people don't attend the Sunday worship service they often do not support the church financially that week with their tithes. As I have said before, people in all churches seem to think of their tithe as their price of admission for the Sunday they decide to attend church. Ideally, everyone who is a member of a church should be sending their tithes to the office or giving them the next time they come to church. Rarely does that happen. Whether you decide to come to church or not, the many expenses of running the church still exist. Salaries and utilities need to be paid, building maintenance, insurances, and everything else it takes to maintain a church and its property need to have continuous incoming funds. How might you feel if you received a letter saying that Church of the Apostles will be closing its doors because it can no longer support itself?

Attending worship services on occasion is also a detriment to church growth. Imagine what a person must think when they visit a church for the first time and find a few more than a dozen people sitting in a sanctuary that holds over a hundred people. *"There must not be much going on here if this is all the people who worship here."* *"Looks to me like a dying church. Maybe I should look elsewhere, find a church where there is more going on."*

Although much of our congregation is over sixty years old, we have had a few more children on Sunday morning than in the past. Unfortunately there has been little interest in teaching a Sunday school class. It was suggested that perhaps we should hire a Sunday school teacher. Nothing says *"we don't have time for our children's Christian education"* than looking for someone outside the church to teach one of our greatest resources, our children. Fortunately, two people have volunteered to teach a children's Sunday school class. Free curriculum from the internet is currently being used until we are more established with more children who consistently come to church on Sunday. The children we do have are a priority for me. It is my goal to always make them feel like they are an important part of this church. I do so by listening to them, including them in the activities of the church and displaying their artwork throughout the church. Their artwork on display lets them know and anyone who visits the church, that we believe children are important to this church and more importantly, to God. They are the only future this church has.

Our efforts to maintain a youth group have not yet resulted in a strong youth group. Although we have had meetings throughout the year, outside activities and obligations of the youth often prevents them from attending a meeting on a Sunday afternoon. We will, however, continue to promote a youth group and encourage young people to attend with the hope that it will become stronger.

We continue to serve people in need here and abroad. We continue to support Nelwin, a boy from the Philippines partly with the tithes from our children. We continue to deliver food to the seniors at Trinity House. We again collected new clothing for people in need, donated gloves, hats and mittens to people in our community, held SERRV sales to support people in other countries, generously supported Our Churches Wider Mission fund, the One Great Hour of Sharing. We helped people in the community with our What Difference fund, offered free community garden plots, offered our building to be a meeting place for ALANON, Weight Watchers, The College Club, the Quilters, the hospital greens sale, and for voting. We continued to support Hoffman Homes for Youth with Christmas presents, with birthday cards and gifts, children's bibles, in collecting coupons. We are a church that serves others, an important aspect of Christianity.

We continue to make improvements to the church property inside and out. A porch was added to the side entrance of the building. The entire inside of the church has been carpeted. The narthex has been redecorated to create a more inviting space to sit and talk. A new copier has been leased for more efficient copying of our bulletins and newsletters. Despite the complexity of even a small church office, we have been able to maintain a smooth running operation thanks to the diligence of our church secretary Linda Ritchey and Randy Cramer who takes care of our computer problems.

As I said recently in one of my From the Pastor's Study writings, the church that Christ sanctified will never disappear. It may dwindle in size, there may be fewer churches in existence in the future, interest in the church may decline to almost none existence, but the church will never die. It has survived over 2,000 years despite many setbacks, controversy, destruction, corruption and lack of support or interest by God's people. The church will continue to be a place of refuge for those who choose to enter its doors. It will continue to be a place where people's lives are changed, where children first learn about God and whose lives are molded by what they have learned from the church. Many people who are in desperate need still look to the church for help. Unfortunately those same people seldom consider that perhaps if they became part of a church family their lives might improve. Despite my many invitations to the people who have asked the church for help, no one has ever come to one worship service. Yet we continue to give of ourselves to those who call for assistance.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of being an active member of your church. Being a member of any church does not mean you attend a worship service on occasion, drop a tithe in the offering plate, and go home. Every member of this church, of any church, should be volunteering, looking for ways to grow the church. A box for suggestions for church growth has not received a single suggestion from anyone. It is hard to believe that no one has a single idea on how to grow the church. It is important to be mindful that a church's desire to see growth should not be to increase its income. We should want to see more people in our pews on Sunday morning because that would mean that people who are seeking to have their lives changed for the better have discovered that Church of the Apostles is the place to find that change. It is my hope that all of us will continue to find new and creative ways to convince people that this church has much to offer and that by becoming an active member of this church they will find the life changing power of Christ within this community of believers.

JANUARY

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

Donations of mittens, gloves, scarves, and hats have been hung on the Mitten Tree were given to Waynesboro Human Services to be distributed to people in need of winter wear in our community.

Church of the Apostles hosted Social Seniors.

The Book Study began, meeting weekly at 11 AM.

FEBRUARY

The Season of Lent began with our Ash Wednesday service on Feb. 10.

Lay, Life and Work Committee hosted our first community potluck of the year with a Valentine's Day theme. Rock, Candy and Slim returned for a concert, with Rock and Candy clog dancing and Slim singing and playing a variety of musical instruments. This has traditionally been one of our most fun and popular events and is especially fun for children who participate by playing a variety of homemade musical instruments.

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

MARCH

A Christian/Jewish Seder meal was held on Palm Sunday, March 20 at 3:00 pm. A community potluck was held after the symbolic meal.

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 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.

APRIL

Church of the Apostles hosted Social Seniors.

Eight people from the church took CPR training, two of them members of our youth group. Our instructor, Patsy Burns, was an excellent teacher and made the class an enjoyable experience. Everyone received a certificate certifying they are qualified to administer CPR.

On April 17 three of the youth from our youth group along with Donna Levick and Pastor Michael attended the Jewish food festival at Congregation B'nai Abraham synagogue in Hagerstown. The food was delicious and everyone ate foods they had never eaten before. Afterwards the group visited the sanctuary where the rabbi answered questions about the synagogue and Judaism.

MAY

The "Adopt a Tree or Planter" program continued, 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. New additions this year are the Peace Pole Garden, new flower beds on both sides of the north entrance sidewalk canopy, new plantings along the north side of the building and the sidewalks were professionally power washed. Many thanks to all who helped with this important ministry !

This is the 7th year for our Community Garden, which is located behind the fellowship hall. Franklin County Master Gardener Trey Gelbach is our volunteer Community Garden Coordinator this year.

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 12.

An outdoor prayer request box was made by Randy Cramer. The box is located along the driveway leading up to the church building. Paper and pencil are inside for requests.

Thank you to everyone who adopted trees and mulch areas, it all looks awesome ! Special thanks to:

Donna Levick & Nevin & Sondra Monn for doing soooooo much weeding & soooooo much mulching, especially along the building.

Donna Levick for selecting the flowers and Beverly Fitz for helping her to plant the planters and the Outdoor Ministry Center, and Donna for maintaining the biblical garden & flowers under the cross & the Amsterdam Road sign bed.

Pastor Michael for selecting, planting all & donating half the flowers for the north entrance planter, the new canopy beds and the hanging ferns.

Shelley Benchoff for designing the peace garden and selecting the plants for it, Jake Jacobs for removing the sod, Nevin & Bob Benchoff for helping Shelley plant the plants, & Shelley & Bob for mulching.

JULY

Our second outdoor worship service of the summer was held on July 10.

On July 17 the contemporary Christian group "Soul's Fire" performed during the 10:00 worship service.

AUGUST

On August 1 Pastor Michael had surgery for a total hip replacement.

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 11 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.*"

SEPTEMBER *(continued)*

The wedding of Randy Cramer and Julia Taylor was held outside on the church grounds on September 17 at 6:00 PM, officiated by Pastor Michael.

Fifteen gardeners attended this year's community garden outdoor dinner. It was a beautiful but hot early evening dinner that consisted of mostly vegetable dishes; tomato pie, zucchini casserole, pepper casserole, crusty bread, sage butter, ham and beans, baked beans, squash casserole, salad, vegetable dip, Jasmine and Earl Grey ice teas, and ice cream for desert. Everyone agreed it was a delicious meal unlike anything you could get in a restaurant.

OCTOBER

On Tuesday October 4, 18 ladies representing 8 churches and a Y - Gradale Sorority gathered at the Church of the Apostles sorting nearly 6,000 new items to be distributed to South Mountain Restoration Center, Pregnancy Ministries, Faith Community Outreach Ministries, Waynesboro Community and Human Services and Franklin County Headstart Programs.

This was the 40th annual ingathering of the Waynesboro Branch of NGA Inc.

Lay, Life and Work Committee hosted the meal for Helen Bryson's funeral on October 10.

Church of the Apostles hosted Social Seniors on October 12.

NOVEMBER

On November 13, Daniel McCarthy provided special music during and after our worship service.

Lay, Life and Work Committee hosted the meal for the Annual Meeting on November 20.

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

Bob Benchoff & Pastor Michael went for the Christmas tree on November 28 and Bob, Randy and Pastor Michael set it up in sanctuary.

DECEMBER

Our SERRV sale continued through the first few weeks of December. SERRV items are made by people in other countries who sell their crafts, and food items to support themselves. Many of the people whose items we sell live in impoverished countries. Your purchase gives them hope for the future and helps them to support not only themselves but their children.

Christmas cards with pictures of the church at Christmas taken by Linda Ritchey were available for purchase with profits going to the church Building Maintenance fund. This is an excellent way for you to share with pride the beauty of your church with others. Many people are first drawn to a church building before they attend a service. You may also want to use these cards to invite someone to our Christmas Eve candlelight service.

Brian Jacobs put the lights on the Christmas tree and completed the decorating after the Chrismons were added.

The congregation hung the Christmas greens in the sanctuary on December 4.

Tom Jolin and his hammered dulcimer provided special music for us during our 10:45 worship service on Dec. 11.

Church of the Apostles hosted Social Seniors on December 12.

The Mitten Tree will again stand in the narthex for you to attach your donations. We collect gloves and mittens of all sizes for those in need in our community. In previous years we have collected close to 100 pairs of gloves and mittens as well as scarves and knit hats.

Members of the congregation went Christmas Caroling on December 18, traveling to the homes of some of our members who are no longer able to attend church.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE COMPLETED IN 2016

March

LR Wilson installed gutters & downspouts on the North entrance canopy.

May

Keith Tolbert Const. power washed the exterior sidewalks and outdoor activity center.

July

New carpet was installed in the Narthex, front hall, back hall, Fellowship Hall, offices, lounge, kindergarten and nursery, and northeast and southeast classrooms.

August

Randy Cramer built and installed a new shelf for the microwave in the kitchen; completed work on outdoor lighting; and replaced ceiling tiles and the water filter.

Bob Benchoff and Randy Cramer relocated the storage cupboards used by Weight Watchers to a closet in the Fellowship Hall.

Bob Benchoff completed a personal property inventory and appraisal with photos as recommended by our insurance company.

September

Randy Cramer and Bob Benchoff replaced and stained the outside cross horizontal member, and stained the north entrance canopy posts.

October

Randy Cramer replaced batteries in all of the smoke detectors and one of the automatic door openers.

December

Bob Benchoff replaced the playground sign and hung thermal curtains on the hallway to Sunday School wing.

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

All of the CDs that had been at Edward Jones for the benefit of the Church of the Apostles have been cashed in. We are currently showing steady growth with our finances.

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

SPIRITUAL COUNCIL

The Spiritual Council met in November for the purpose of preparing the 2017 budget and evaluating the Pastor, Secretary and Organist. Other meetings are held on an as-needed basis to address specific concerns of our congregation.

Council members are the Elders of Consistory with Randy Cramer as outgoing Chairperson and Julia Cramer serving as Chairperson for the upcoming year.

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.

Linda Ritchey, Chairperson

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Altar Guild

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 Sunday School 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, and Mary Lou Misner

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

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY: Bob Benchoff, Church Contact Person

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

OUTDOOR MINISTRY: Bruce Barr, and Bob Benchoff, Chairperson

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

SPIRITUAL COUNCIL: Mary Lou Misner, Jean High, Martha Smith, and Julia 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

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