

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Presented at the
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2021

LAKWOOD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
An Open and Affirming Congregation

1375 West Clifton Boulevard, Lakewood, OH 44107
Phone 216.221.9555 Fax 216.221.9088
www.lcc-church.org lccstaff@lcc-church.org

Our Mission Statement proclaims our common goal.

*We strive to be a welcoming,
worshipping community of faith,
helping people discover and deepen
their relationship with God, growing as
disciples of Christ, and reaching out in
faith and loving service.*

In keeping with the spirit of our Mission Statement,

*Lakewood Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ,
is an Open and Affirming congregation.
We welcome people of all sexual orientation,
ages, differing abilities, and ethnic, economic,
and racial backgrounds into
the full life and ministry of our church.
We declare this in the name of the Still Speaking God,
whose Son, Jesus Christ, welcomed
all people into God's circle of grace.*

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**ANNUAL MEETING
February 7, 2021
AGENDA**

Jan Young, Moderator

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1) Call to Order | <i>Jan Young</i> |
| 2) Count for Quorum | <i>Jan Young</i> |
| 3) Prayer | <i>Rev. Joanna D'Agostino</i> |
| 4) Motion to take attendance via Zoom | <i>Jan Young</i> |
| 5) Motion to dispense with the reading of minutes of last meeting | <i>Jan Young</i> |
| 6) Motion to dispense with the reading of departmental reports | <i>Jan Young</i> |
| 7) Reports: | |
| a) Video Reports from the Executive Team | <i>Liz Spahr</i> |
| b) Facilities Update | <i>Michael Fleenor</i> |
| 8) Word Cloud Exercise | <i>Rev. Joanna</i> |
| 9) 2020 Stewardship Update | <i>Rev. Joanna</i> |
| 10) Endowment Fund Update | <i>Steve Hotchkiss</i> |
| 11) 2020 & 2021 Budget Reports and Approval | <i>Steve Hotchkiss</i> |
| 12) Nominating Committee | <i>Julie Warren</i> |
| 13) Moment of Recognition | <i>Rev. Joanna</i> |
| 14) Reading of the Church Mission Statement | <i>Jan Young</i> |
| 15) Conversations for the good of the congregation | |
| 16) Benediction | <i>Rev. Joanna</i> |

We will leave the Zoom room open for as long as desired for anyone who would like to stay and share a time of fellowship.

Lakewood Congregational Church

Annual Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2020

Call to Order:

Moderator Michael Komperda called the meeting to order at 11:40 a.m.
Scott Suttell performed the count for quorum and verified one was reached with 125 members.

Prayer: Led by Rev. Joanna D'Agostino

Motion to dispense with the reading of the Minutes/Motion to dispense with the reading of departmental reports:

Michael Komperda called a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes and departmental reports. Jennifer Schwelik seconded both motions.

Constitutional Revisions & Vote:

Michael Komperda noted that he was moving the discussion on this section ahead on the agenda as they were salient to future discussions in this meeting. The reason was that there were so many changes to the full text of the constitution and that the proposed structural changes drove verbiage change throughout. Mr. Komperda noted that the proposed changes would not be a major shift and will better reflect where Lakewood Congregational Church is now as a church.

Proposed constitutional revisions included:

- Establishing a Chair of Buildings and Grounds as a full-time member of the Executive Team and replacing the Vice Chair role with a Chair-Elect position. Each would serve a two-year term. Members in the Buildings and Grounds role would transition into the Chair-Elect role after two years and the Chair-Elect would move to chair. This change is made to reduce the amount of time someone would spend in executive team roles as "eight years a long time to serve on the Executive Team based on previous terms setup."
- Making the chair of the Diaconate team a member of the Executive Team and getting Diaconate involved in more aspects of church beyond communion.
- Reduce the seats on the Administrative board from seven to five.
- Expanding the maximum number of Diaconate members from 12 to 18 to serve in tandem with the Welcoming committee and non-pastoral care committee.
- Incorporating the Creative Arts ministry into the Nurture and Growth committee.
- Eliminating the position of Clerk.

Mr. Komperda made a motion to accept all changes. Vicki Smigelski seconded that motion. The floor opened for discussion and questions. There were none, so it went to vote and passed unanimously, exceeding the $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote required for constitutional amendments.

Mr. Komperda offered special thanks to Vicki and Laruen Smigelski for consulting and brainstorming about these changes.

Reports:

Report from Executive Team

Outgoing Chair, Greg Werek noted that it had been an honor to be involved on the Executive Team for eight years and thanked the congregation for sharing their gifts and being so active in the strength and growth of Lakewood Congregational Church at a time when many other churches are struggling with finances and declining attendance.

Joann Riordan thanked both Michael and Greg for their service and end of terms, which elicited a round of applause for both outgoing Executive Team members.

Facilities Update:

Vice Chair, Liz Spahr announced that she would be moving to the chair position and stressed the importance of LCC in her life. She indicated that the facilities role plays a huge part in Lakewood Congregational Church's mission and ministry and that during her four years in the Vice Chair role, the building's uses have evolved. This has included multiple community meals, AA meetings, Haynes Nursery School, a symbiotic relationship with Trinity Lutheran and co-existing with the neighbors at McKinley place. Ms. Spahr urged members to read her report, which covered everything from small, necessary tasks to larger, splashier ones to keep the building supporting the work that LCC does.

She gave special thanks to Noah Hamrick and John Mullen, the custodian, who worked together to label every electrical box in the building during the summer of 2019 and also thanks all members who had a hand in facilities management and maintenance some way or another.

Ms. Spahr also reiterated the constitutional changes to install a dedicated chair of Buildings and Grounds to the Executive Team. The new role will spearhead a five-year plan recommended by Rev. Joanna D'Agostino and assist with budgeting and preparation for those efforts. As part of this change, LCC now also will have a buildings and grounds committee. The committee is available to do tours to allow members to better understand the large building, the growth of use and how to support the vision of how to use the facility to support the LCC Mission.

She also thanked Greg Werek and Michael Komperda for serving alongside her on the Executive Team.

Stewardship:

With an eye on hiring a full-time children's and youth ministry position, Stewardship Chair Missy Toms indicated it was determined the budget needed \$85,000 added to it. The Stewardship team set a goal of \$285, 000. At the time of the annual meeting, LCC was up to almost \$310,000 in pledges, a 52% increase from the previous years. The number of pledges also was up from 34 to 116.

Rev. Joanna thanked Ms. Toms and the Stewardship Committee for their leadership in making this happen. Referring to the previous year's Annual Meeting minutes, she indicated, "we were able to check off so many things as a testament that we listened and responded." She also reminded the congregation that it wasn't too late to turn in a pledge. Ms. Toms echoed the

sentiment, adding that the Stewardship effort is a perfect example of how Congregational churches work. There's a need, it's recognized, a committee forms and they make it happen.

Endowment Fund:

Steve Hotchkiss noted that the endowment report should make LCC members feel comfortable. It reflected an end of 2018 balance of \$ 1,771,600 and a 2019 ending statement of \$2,130,173. Withdrawals were less than originally planned for in 2019.

2019 & 2020 Budget Reports and Approval:

Outgoing treasurer Dave Mechenbier indicated that 2019 was a great year, noting that congregational support for 2019 and 2020 was amazing. The church has a surplus, and that has allowed LCC to get things done both spiritually and out in the community.

Mr. Hotchkiss made a proposal to review the 2020 budget. Frank Schwelick inquired if the issues with the telephones had been rectified. Mr. Hotchkiss indicated that a \$5,000 expenditure, which included heavy discounting from the vendor, provided LCC with a modernized telephone system.

Mr. Mechenbier indicated the report shows that \$260,000 of the total budget will go to salaries with modest increases in other areas. The budget also shows a modest surplus of \$930, a 13% increase over 2019.

Liz Spahr indicated there were questions about the salaries. Mr. Hotchkiss noted that Children and Youth Ministries Director, Rachel Burns' salary was compounded into Rev. Joanna's salary. The budget was designed to show the salaries of employees in their capacities, he added. Michael Komperda noted that when the budget was originally developed, it was unclear if the church would hire an associate pastor or director, so the initial budget estimate was higher than actual.

Kim Katzenberg inquired if the facilities budget was flexible for unforeseen needs during the year. Mr. Hotchkiss indicated that spending will be able to be better tracked now that the new position was filled and that there is also a pending five-year plan in the works. Liz Spahr also indicated that the church received some monetary gifts that offset the needs. Rev. Joanna noted that the church does not have a capital expense account for needs that arise, but possibly down the road it will be possible to use a portion of the endowment to create a capital expense account. Mr. Hotchkiss indicated that depreciation for non-profit entities has no tax value but that doesn't mean LCC shouldn't set aside a reserve for maintaining and protecting equipment. The Building & Grounds committee will guide this effort by determining where needs are the highest.

Mr. Komperda made a motion to approve the 2020 budget. Laura Hampton seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Rev. Joanna ended the budget report by thanking Mr. Hotchkiss and Mr. Mechenbier for temporarily taking over the treasurer role during a gap in the position.

Nominating Committee:

Nominating Committee Chair, Brad Humphries took a quick moment to thank the congregation for supporting 2020 HASO for another successful year of fundraising before he introduced the slate of nominees for the 2020-2022 positions. He noted that the large growth in the Diaconate committee shows that at LCC, if you ask, people will show up and help.

Mr. Humphries made a motion to accept the slate of nominees. Jim Gibbs seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous.

Introduction of New Executive Members

Michael Komperda welcomed newly elected members.

Rev. Joanna thanked outgoing Welcoming Chair, Scott Suttell for years of stellar committee leadership, great doughnuts, and hot coffee on Sundays.

Reading of the Church Mission Statement:

Michael Komperda led the congregation in reading the statement.

Conversations for the Good of the Congregation:

Kate Daily introduced the topic of participating in Greater Cleveland Congregations. She discussed why her family came to LCC and all of the causes the church supports, asking the membership to consider supporting this important cause made up of 36 member churches, including Beth Israel West, Westshore Unitarian Universalist and Pilgrim Congregational Church. She asked the congregation for moral support to develop this partnership that will require ongoing energy and interest. It also will require a small financial membership contribution, something that will be addressed by the Executive Team. She invited all to attend a Collective Action event on February 27, 2020. Liz Maugans added that the event would meet at Olivet Baptist Church and will be addressing the issue of gun violence, among other critical issues.

Ms. Dailey added that other actions include dealing with the academic advancement of young people in juvenile detentions systems. Currently, Cleveland Public Schools runs this initiative in the juvie system. There is a disconnect between what students were doing while detained and moving credit back to their home schools. Ms. Dailey noted that, for so many reasons, it can be destructive for these young people to move forward into life. GCC is now involved to bridge that gap. The other action focuses on the numbers of incarcerated individuals with mental illness who should be in treatment facilities instead of a jail. GCC is hoping to work with police departments to decipher mental health needs and decide where these inmates need to go.

Karen Lee indicated that GCC is available to come to LCC to provide education and guide structured congregational support into action through training sessions.

Michael Komperda asked those who have been involved to date to stand up. This included Karen Lee, Missy Toms, Andy Barlow, Kristen Humphries, Liz Maugans, Kate Dailey, and Rev. Joanna.

Steve Hotchkiss asked to reflect upon whether or not participating is appropriate for the congregation. Vicki Smigelski asked what GCC does and what we would be asked to do if we engaged with it. Dale Spooner inquired about membership costs.

Rev. Joanna indicated that the financial support is 1% of the operating budget, or \$4,500. GCC offered an arrangement for LCC to pay what it can with a recommended amount of \$2,000. 2020 is trial year to see if it works for our congregation.

Vicki Smigelski thanked the congregation for supporting the Community of Hope, calling out trained volunteers besides her, including Scott Suttell, Valerie Mechenbier, Sandie King, John Bando, and Charlie Lyons for making an important impact on a young adult's life.

Karen Lee asked members to check their directory listings on the way out the door to make sure they are correct. She also advised them to review other notices on the back table and also pick up their printed copies of The Columns.

Rev. Joanna provided an update on Haynes Nursery School, noting that Director, Alison Yonkers is resigning as she is moving to Southern California. She is remaining until the end of the school year in May. It will be necessary to hire a replacement for 28 hours a week for 10 months a year. The congregation is encouraged to provide referrals if they know anyone.

John Bando asked if the Building and Grounds Committee has an agenda or objectives in place yet? Michel Komperda indicated no plans have been set, and Liz Spar said the committee made a long list of items from building tours they did. It took three hours to go over the entire building.

Muriel Campbell stressed that not everyone can do things on a computer and stressed the need for communication that isn't always digital, citing HASO donations as an example. Rev. Joanna encouraged members to reach out to Karen Lee for technology help. She also said that there are printed versions of the directory and reminded members they can make donations for things like HASO and other needs via the offering plate.

Lifelong member Michael Komperda stressed that he and Liz Spahr grew up in the church and that for both of them, it's a positive weekly decision to keep attending. They both have a weekly affirmation that this is the place where they want to be, and he hopes new members are feeling the same way.

He then asked the LCC staff to stand up for recognition by the congregation.

Rev. Joanna closed the meeting with a benediction.

STAFF REPORTS

SENIOR MINISTER

As always, I can only start with gratitude. Nothing could have ever prepared me (or any of us) for what we have experienced this year, but I know that I have weathered it better because of this faithful, courageous, and gracious Body of Christ. It is a blessing that I'm not in ministry "to" LCC, but I am in ministry "with" LCC. Your partnership, cooperation, and participation in ministry are exemplary.

I am convinced that God prepared us for "such a time as this." We have been developing tools and relationships that are allowing us to thrive even in the face of great adversity, and we've surely been able to use them this year.

Of course, I wish we were together every Sunday morning, crowded into the parlor drinking coffee and eating quartered donuts. **But we cannot dismiss God's Grace in this season.** I have seen the growth of true community, authentic faith, and genuine discipleship even in our physical separation. You will see in this annual report that God has been truly present in and among us.

Last Epiphany, I chose a Star Word for our church for the year before I knew there would be a pandemic. A Star Word is an idea that we can follow through the year to bring us closer to Christ, like the Epiphany star brought travelers to meet baby Jesus. I chose "Refuge." I hoped our church could be a place where every person felt safe and loved, sheltered from the storms of the world, but still challenged towards faithful discipleship. Little did I know we would close our doors before the end of March. We still created refuge through our virtual church (Named "Virtch" thanks to Audrey Warren), letter writing, phone calls, Facebook Live, one-on-one outdoor visits, Zoom gatherings, and drive-thru Communion. God gave us the tools we needed to create refuge in our homes if our hearts were open to receive and recognize it. There is no place we can go where God's Grace does not abide.

This year, the Star Word I chose for our church is "Unlock." I expect it will be a literal word, that we will unlock our doors this year and regather again. But it's deeper than that: how can we unlock the discernment we've done over the past several years and live deeply into our mission and vision?

On that note, I want to share three specific ways we might unlock our visioning in the coming year.

1. **Defining and organizing our Outreach Ministry.** With the addition of our Global Ministry efforts two years ago and Greater Cleveland Congregations/Faith-Based Community Organizing last year, we are developing a more robust and balanced understanding of our faith in action. I'd like to develop and explore the "hows" and "whys" of outreach. What does faithful service look like for LCC today? How do we make God's dream come true in our community?

2. **Growing our culture of congregational care.** This year, we have learned more than ever how important it is to support our church family. LCC finds itself at the brink of a congregational size transition. We are shifting from a “Pastoral Model” church to a “Programmatic Model” church. This type of transition requires a strong Diaconate and the development of other support and care ministries, so that we are equipped to care for each other rather than relying fully on one pastor. We appointed the chair of Diaconate to serve on the Executive Team at the beginning of 2020, and we will continue to work to develop webs of support and tools to live into our covenant. I hope to provide education opportunities to help us all learn to minister to each other in faith through grief, divorce, mental illness, empty-nesting, and other difficult life transitions, and continue to organize strategies for congregational care.
3. **Dreaming and scheming about our Social Hall and Kitchen.** LCC’s visioning continues to point us towards stewardship of our physical space. The church is not just a building, but our building is a tool for our ministry. At my very first interview at LCC over three years ago, the search team expressed interest in updating the social hall and kitchen to more effectively support the many gatherings and events that take place in that space. I shared the process of the capital campaign and sanctuary renovation I led at my previous church. It is not a simple undertaking but a deeply collaborative adventure. I had said that we could not begin the conversation about a capital campaign until we decreased our annual reliance on our endowment. I can confidently say we are right on track and even exceeding our goals, even in the midst of Covid-19. This year, I am hopeful that we can begin the discussion as a congregation, with surveys, listening sessions, and the first steps to understanding the scope of work and financial implications of a large project like this one. None of this will happen overnight; I ask for your trust and patience as we embark on this adventure together.

I hope you’ll discern the ways you can participate in these goals and any other goals you feel called to for our church. We are in covenant; we belong to each other, to support and lift one another up and walk the road of Discipleship together.

Personal Ministry Updates

I continue to meet regularly with the Lakewood Ministerial Association and a “Communities of Practice” group consisting of four other UCC Pastors in the Living Water Association. I also have many ongoing conversations with area pastors including Rev. Sara Cogsil of Trinity Lutheran Church. I never feel alone in ministry.

The relationships I’ve grown through Greater Cleveland Congregations have been a highlight this year. I’ve had the opportunity to work closely on the development of the Cuyahoga County Crisis Diversion Center. At the start of 2021, I was asked to serve on the GCC Strategy Team (i.e.: Board of Directors) alongside six other Jewish and Christian faith leaders on the East and West sides of Cleveland.

Continuing education events are very important to my ministry, and I had to look at a different approach this year. I became involved in an online doctoral program at Eden Seminary in St. Louis (with church member Rev. George Graham). Last semester, we completed a theological reflection course and this semester, George and I are both taking a class called “Black Theology

as a Resource for Transformative Leadership.” I am discerning whether I’d like to continue taking classes in pursuit of a Doctor of Ministry degree over the next few years.

As I share these commitments with you, I realize it sounds like “a lot.” But my own theological and spiritual journey is foundational to my ability to serve LCC. These opportunities are life-giving, and I am so excited to partake in them.

I’ll start and end with gratitude. Thank you for your grace. Nothing could have prepared my husband and I to facilitate remote learning for three children while working full time. My response time is never what I want it to be and I am often sidetracked and forgetful. And yet LCC has been so full of grace and understanding. All five of us continue to be at home working/playing full time, and some days are better than others. Please know that what matters to you matters to me, and I am grateful for the ways we can serve God together. If ever it seems as if I haven’t responded in a reasonable amount of time, please do not hesitate to follow up with a phone call, email, or text.

I can never overstate how grateful I am that LCC is not only the church for me; it is the church for my family. We love watching Virtch together every Sunday morning, and cherish the Refuge that has been created in our home by the Grace of God. My children adore Family Faith Formation, Kid’s Zoom Nights, and peeking in on my church Zoom meetings to see who they know. My husband feels the support of the church especially through his Dad’s terminal cancer diagnosis and treatment and knows that support will continue. It is clear that you care about each of us. You have given all five of us a place to belong and build our faith, and we feel deeply blessed.

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Joanna

¹ If this is of interest to you, you can read a book called “The In-Between Church: Navigating Size Transitions in Congregations” by Alice Mann.

² <https://www.ideastream.org/news/new-mental-health-and-addiction-center-announced-for-clevelands-east-side>

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRIES

Dear Church Family,

I've found that the best way that I can make sense of my thoughts, feelings, and experiences and then to share them with others is to illustrate them through either rhymes, song lyrics, movie, tv, or book references, or of course, scripture. Last year, when I reflected on 2019 in my Annual Report, I shared lyrics from one of my favorite songs, *Turn, Turn, Turn* by The Byrds and Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. "To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven." In this report of 2020, I admit that I've struggled to figure out how to make sense of the year, let alone figure out the best way to share it with you. It's just not a year that wants to be packed up neatly and tied with a pretty bow.

One thing that I am certain of is that 2020 has taught us to focus on what is truly important in our lives and to hold on to hope. It seems like there have been new challenges every week or maybe even every day, but we've taken on those challenges and grown stronger together. I'm so grateful that nothing, not even a pandemic, can take away the love and support of our church family and nothing can take away the love of Christ.

I just came across a song that feels very relevant to me and I want to share a bit of it with you. I encourage you to read about the artist, Thad Cockrell, because his recent life story is incredible. But for now, here are some lyrics from his song *Swingin'*.

*Heaven waits for nothing less than giving in to faithfulness.
I'll give you time. I'll let it rest. But I'm not down to give up yet.
I don't know what I would do if all is lost, if I've lost you.
If I'm gonna go down, I wanna go down swinging.
I wanna go down hard with all of my heart.
If I'm gonna go down, I wanna go down swinging
with all of my heart straight into the dark.*

The words and music of the song are so powerful. It's about going strong and giving it all you've got, even when it feels like so much has been lost. This is what I've been driven to do throughout the past year and I know that it's what our church has been driven to do, as well. We have not lost our church family because we are tied together by the bond of God's love and we continuously choose to step out of our comfort zones and do new things and difficult things. We don't give up. We hold hope for the day when we will unlock the doors of our church home and be together. But, in the meantime, we are proving to be a strong and united church family.

2020 had an exciting start with the Homeless Awareness Sleep Out and the kickoff of rehearsals for the youth musical, *Seussical*. Our team of dedicated Faith Formation leaders and helpers continued to guide our children and youth in their journeys of faith each Sunday. In addition, our youth led worship for the residents of Eliza Jennings, the Next Generation Band held rehearsals, we wrapped up mission trip registration, began a new mission trip fundraiser, and started set building for the musical.

Haynes Nursery School classes continued to be a joy in my life as I was able to enjoy the sound of the children's giggles from my office. The process of finding a new director for Haynes was underway.

The events of March were unexpected for all of us. The leadership of our church and the Haynes staff worked together to consider the best way to move forward as we received news of Covid-19 spreading in the United States. This led to cancelling all in-person events. Worship and Faith Formation were moved to YouTube and meetings and gatherings were moved to Zoom and Facebook Live. A very different way of being the church was upon us.

When all felt lost in March, you, our church family, worked together to pick up the pieces. Through tears, we found new ways to put the pieces together and we didn't give up hope. We focused on what mattered most: supporting each other, keeping each other safe, and trusting God. We are still living in this space of uncertainty, but we are here together, and we are not giving up. I'm here. You're here. God is here.

Virtual Church, or Virtch, has been meaningful each week and Family Faith Formation has gone from the parlor to my house to the Faith Formation Playhouse, to virtual mountains, and beyond. The addition of Harold and Harmony, my Faith Formation feline friends, has been a delight and they've developed quite a fan base. Along with virtual church, or Virtch, and Family Faith Formation, we've found all kinds of creative ways to stay connected.

Our young people have had zoom youth group and kid's game nights, played Flag Tag all over the city and beyond, been interviewed for "In The Spotlight" videos, had outdoor youth group at Kauffman Park, raked leaves, and participated in an outdoor service project with Building Hope in the City. We've been able to do projects for Mother's Day and Father's Day thanks to our Faith Formation Team and even had a Back-to-School Blessing and Bible Presentation thanks to our Blessings at Beck. Our Puzzle Exchange has been a lot of fun for all ages. We've also been able to have Parent Chat Zoom meetings where parents have come together to share stories and find support.

A highlight of the summer was our virtual Vacation Bible School, Compassion Camp. We had 21 children participate in Compassion Camp which included a video lesson from me, music from Noah Hamrick and Audrey Warren, an activity or craft instructional video from myself or our nursery worker, Jacqueline Reasor, and a Zoom call each week for 5 weeks. Our middle school and high school youth helped with Compassion Camp by completing coloring sheets and creating videos which illustrated the weekly Bible stories. I didn't know that virtual VBS could be so much fun and so meaningful, but it really was!

In mid-September, we began a Family Faith Formation series on The Beatitudes which lasted 11 weeks. The Beatitudes series had us virtually climbing a mountain each week to meet Jesus and learn about the Kingdom of God. In our videos, we saw and heard from many of our LCC families who shared with us about their lives.

Following The Beatitudes series came the start of Advent with the theme "Do Not Be Afraid." Our families received pizza boxes filled with supplies so they could have Advent Faith Formation at home. Harold, Harmony, and I created a video each week to share the lesson and craft. We had a youth Zoom Christmas party and we had a kid's Zoom with Santa!

I hope that you were able to see our virtual Christmas pageant, "Do Not Be Afraid," on YouTube. Lindy Warren helped me direct and produce this pageant and the children worked very hard.

The pageant was silly and also brought us the Spirit of Christmas. Through movie magic, we were able to bring the children together on screen, even though we couldn't be together in real life. A blessing of having a virtual pageant is that people near and far could see it and it can be re-watched any time.

After a break for a couple of months, Confirmation has continued. Due to some setbacks, our Ketchup Class is continuing classes through this school year. We also began the next Confirmation Class which has named themselves the French Fry Class. We hope that both classes will be confirmed in Spring/Summer of 2021. Following these classes, we plan to take one year off and hold the next Confirmation Class for 7th-8th graders during the 2022-2023 school year.

Unfortunately, we were unable to perform our musical, *Seussical*, in the Spring of 2020 and we were unable to have a summer mission trip. We hope to present *Seussical* in the future and we are considering how to offer mission experiences and youth theatre in 2021.

Haynes Nursery School had quite a year and has come through stronger than ever. In the spring, we hired a new director, Shannon Lubas. Shannon has been an incredible leader and is exactly who we needed at this time. Haynes was able to have some small outdoor classes in the fall and have continued having class remotely through Zoom. I'm so proud of them for the work they have done to be sure our littlest ones can continue to grow and learn together.

In 2021, I'm looking forward to continuing our ministry together in creative ways. Whether we are in-person, virtual, or some kind of mix of the two, I know we will find ways to connect and grow together in faith. Some specific things I'm looking forward to are developing a summer mission experience for our middle and high school youth, continuing to support Haynes Nursery School through their transitions and adaptations, and building on the relationships that we have.

Church family, the past year hasn't been easy and we have all had weak moments, but together we have been strong. You continue to show up for each other and for our church, in creative virtual ways. We've learned a lot of new technology together, stepped out of our comfort zones, and stayed committed to this church family that we love.

I believe that we are on the journey back to unlocking the LCC doors and being together in our church home. But for now, I invite you to continue your commitment to showing up for each other. By participating in church events, connecting with each other, and holding each other in prayer, we are living out our covenant with one another. I promise to be committed to our church family while we are in our own homes and when we are back together in our church home.

Many blessings,
Rachel Burns, Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministries

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES

While the future is inherently troublesome to predict, 2020 was exceptionally challenging, as most of all our plans and routines were thrown into flux by COVID-19's spread. In such a time of variables, we are in great need of constants: family, friends, community, and faith. In the case of Lakewood Congregational's worship, I am thankful to say, music was a constant source of joy, comfort, and inspiration throughout the year.

In March, when we were no longer able to worship safely in person, LCC's music program adapted with willingness, patience, and ingenuity. We held rehearsals online and members of our choir started learning the process of recording their parts individually, which requires time and dedication. While the experience of doing so pales compared to singing together in person, at length, we have been able to record a hymn nearly every Sunday since mid-March, a testament to our resilience. I have spent many hours in audio and video editing software, learning new skills, and lovingly mixing and editing together hymn, anthems, preludes, and postludes. I'm especially proud of everyone's contributions to our "Rainbow Connection" service, our children's songs, and our Christmas Eve service, which featured a choir of almost twenty and a brass trio, all making beautiful sounds in separate spaces. I have also taken this opportunity to compose and arrange several songs for LCC, specifically designed to fit current circumstances and constraints.

LCC music is not just about making a joyful noise...it is about community. Bereft of some of our usual avenues for spending time together, we have had frequent Thursday night Zoom meetings, where the conversation has been lively on a wide variety of topics, musical and otherwise; this has been a source of great strength, comfort, and exuberance to us. We also had special offerings, sing-a-longs led by myself, Julie Warren, and Chris Burns. And our Hamilton trivia contest was a huge hit among congregants young and old. In the fall, we had several wonderful musicians share their musical gifts with us as part of our Blessings at Beck services.

Our piano and organ remain in great working order, thanks to our dedicated technician partners. Our handbells and chimes have been refurbished and await ringing out in joy and the praise of God again soon. We have obtained several microphones, which our section leaders and soloists have been using to create high-quality content for us. I've continued the process of augmenting our library of choral, handbell, organ, and piano music which will enrich our services moving forward.

While we will still likely be making music together apart for at least the first half of 2021, let us rejoice and be glad. Even if it is emanating from home speakers rather than wafting through the Sanctuary, music still provides us with a strong connection to our faith. It still nourishes our spirits. It still lifts our hopes, joys, concerns, and prayers upwards to God. It is truly a tie that binds.

Submitted with deep gratitude,
Ben Malkevitch, Director of Music

In Gratitude

As each of us sat down to write our letters, we realized just how many people we had to thank for supporting the mission and ministry of LCC this year. Rather than thanking them in each of our individual reports, we decided to create a Gratitude Page, and lift up a few individuals as well as groups of people.

- ❖ **Our staff: Karen, Rachel, Ben, John, and Patti Dobro** have each been consistent, flexible, and reliable.
- ❖ **Our Exec Team: Jan, Liz, Bill, Steve, Vicki, Sue, Laura, Lauren, and Mike**, have been a phenomenal team and we have felt their support every day.
- ❖ **LCC and Trinity's joint Covid-19 Advisory Team** has spent hours upon hours researching and interpreting information. They have never wavered from keeping the Gospel at the heart of their advice, even when we don't want to hear it. Thank you for your courage: **Laura Hampton, Amy Daso, and Steve Fesko, as well as Pastor Sara Cogsil and Rev. Joanna.**
- ❖ All who have been involved in creating a meaningful and engaging remote and outdoor Preschool program for **Haynes Nursery School: Shannon Lubas** and our six Haynes teachers, Jennifer Schwelik and the Haynes Board.
- ❖ **LCC's Committees and Teams** which have met new challenges with wisdom and grace.
- ❖ **Darren Toms**, who has filmed and edited Virtch nearly every week since March.
- ❖ **Audrey Warren and Chris Burns** for their consistent dedication to Family Faith Formation.
- ❖ **Gloria Van Peeren**, who continues to assist with our weekly offering and financials.
- ❖ **Mike and Peggi Mizen**, who have organized and facilitated our Community Meal each month of this pandemic (with the help of several faithful volunteers).
- ❖ **Karen Wagner**, who has been a gift to our church in the form of weekly reflections and our Holy Week and Advent devotionals.
- ❖ **Lindy Warren** for partnering with Rachel to host "In The Spotlight" and for joining Rachel in directing and producing our Christmas pageant.
- ❖ **Jacqueline Reasor, Lee Mechenbier, and our youth** who worked in the church nursery.
- ❖ **All the musicians** who have contributed their talent, skill, hearts, and faith to worship services
- ❖ **Everyone who has offered ideas and suggestions** for our worship services, and all who have participated.
- ❖ **Our many Faith Formation leaders** who taught and led classes for our children, youth, and adults.
- ❖ **Our members and friends** who have given their time, energy, and love to countless LCC events throughout the year both virtually and in person.

YEAR IN REVIEW

LAKWOOD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH HISTORIAN/ARCHIVES

Twenty-twenty (2020) began like most years with plans in place for youth and adults. Little did we, or anyone in the world, know what was ahead for all of us. New words entered everyone's vocabulary; Covid-19, asymptomatic, eco-anxiety, quarantine, sanitize, fomites, frontline, PPE, social distancing, and the list goes on. However, the number one word for 2020 was PANDEMIC! The following report includes the many wonderful things that were accomplished during our church's 115th anniversary year and the shutdown of all in-person services.

Lakewood Congregational Church closed its doors to services and activities in mid-March due to the spread of the virus, Covid-19. The first pandemic in over 100 years shocked everyone and the isolation and need for spiritual reassurance was necessary. Our minister, Reverend Joanna D'Agostino, began her third year and grandly rose to the occasion. She and the church staff diligently worked to bring everyone together in various ways. A brand-new kind of service was born, which became known as, "Virtch" or virtual church. Sermons were pre-recorded and edited by church member Darren Toms with input from Music Director, Ben Malkevitch, Rachel Burns (Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries) and office manager, Karen Lee. Several communions were provided at the Beck Center Parking lot across the street and to the east of the church. As members stayed in their cars, each person was able to receive a small packet containing juice and a wafer accompanied by a prayer (Pastor Joanna) and hellos from several church members. Two new initiatives included writing postcards to all members and making personal telephone calls.

Through the internet, the staff would meet on a new app., known as "Zoom". Through this application, many people can see each other and converse for long periods of time. Live "coffee hour" and "prayer group" meetings were held on Zoom at 11:00 am several times per month giving members a chance to see each other and have limited conversations. (As of the first of January 2021, these methods were still being practiced.)

Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries, Rachel Burns, completed her first year. She continued to add creativity in all her activities. Rachel and her husband, Chris, have worked together for the continuity of some programs. Such challenging times did not stand in their way. Rachel created online events, a puzzle swap, Faith Formation videos each Sunday and activities to go along with many of them, and online Vacation Bible School. Activities that were canceled included the annual Youth musical, "*Seussical, the Musical*", the Mission Trip to Toledo, Ohio and W. Lafayette, Indiana, the National Youth Event, and leading services at the Eliza Jennings Home after the shutdown.

Music Director, Ben Malkevitch, began his third full year as choral director, organist, pianist, composer, handbell director and soloist. His many talents have been used a great deal this year. Beginning in mid-March all soloists, duets and choral pieces were virtual. Ben was busy coordinating all the music for the virtual services. Through the Festival Arts series, and before

the lockdown, we had a performance from Les Delices. The Greater Cleveland Flute Society was able to perform for an online service. The Annual Talent show, "Royalty," was held in February and raised \$6,000.00 for the Festival Arts.

Director of Youth Music, Noah Hamrick, completed his fifth year. Due to the pandemic, these groups were unable to meet after mid-March but hope resume sometime in 2021. Noah resigned his position in the summer to focus on his full-time employment.

Church Office Manager, Karen Lee, began her third year. She worked full-time to keep the church business running smoothly until the shut-down mid-March. The office hours were cut to four days a week, 9-noon. Patti Dobro continued to work on a part-time basis as the Financial Secretary.

Local and Global Outreach projects continued to be important to the church members. They included: Blessings at Beck, work with Building Hope in the City, Community Meals, Family Promise, Haynes Nursery School (in its 54th year), Undies Sundays, Hunger Ministry, LakewoodAlive, Lakewood Community Service Center, Supplies4Success, Project Angel Tree, storage for Kiwanis book giveaway program, and supporting a water project in Mozambique.

The Youth Ministry continued to be as active as possible. The 16th annual Homeless Awareness Sleep Out was held in January, raising over \$7,500.00. These funds were distributed to homeless shelters and other organizations in the greater Cleveland area.

During the first few months of 2020, the children of the church, birth through 12th grade, were provided for through the following church offerings. The nursery continued to provide care for children birth to age four. Faith Formation comprised children from pre-school through the 12th grade. Church members and several high school students were volunteers. Children met for the beginning of the worship service (three times per month) and then were dismissed to go to their classes. Once a month, children were invited to participate in the regular church service. Activity bags were provided each week with meaningful religious activities.

Focus groups at the church met in person for several months and some eventually continued through Zoom. Groups included: LCC Prayer Chain, CARES team, Second Saturday, Adventures in Reading, Friends' Circle, a men's group, Prayer Shawl Ministry, Martha's Table, and *We Make the Road by Walking* Study group.

Other interest groups also met at LCC for as long as possible. They included: Tai Chi, AA, Lakewood Caregivers, the Lakewood Ranger Education Foundation, and the Lakewood Area Collaborative.

The Centennial Garden, located next to the West Clifton entrance, continued to grow as members continued to purchase engraved pavers. This garden was part of the Centennial projects in 2005.

Haynes Nursery School marked its 54th year. Alison Yonkers began the year as its director and resigned in April (relocation). The new director, Shannon Lubas, has taught for 15 years and has lived in Lakewood for the last 10 years.

Archives: History of the church files, photos, reports, and memorabilia are located on the third floor off the east balcony. In 2021, the archives will be relocated to the church library (located on the sanctuary level). Members are urged to donate any photos or newsworthy items to Claire Stair through the church office.

Respectfully submitted,
Claire Stair, Historian/Archives

CLERK'S REPORT

New Members Received: *No Members received due to Covid-19*

Baptisms: *No Baptisms received due to Covid-19*

In Memoriam:

Former member, Phillip A. Ranney, died on December 25, 2019
(Everett) Joe Raabe, May 29, 2020
Keith Rasey, June 20, 2020
Pat Bresien, October 19, 2020
Donald Gottlieb, November 20, 2020

Average Worship Attendance 2020: unknown due to Covid-19

Membership of the church family as of December 31, 2020: 256

EXECUTIVE TEAM REPORTS

CHAIR OF EXECUTIVE TEAM

Dear Church Family,

I have to admit, when I accepted the role as Chair of the Executive Team last year at the Annual Meeting, I did not know what I was signing up for!! This past year has been unlike anything we have ever experienced and I'm not sure there was any way that we could truly be prepared for it. We, as a church family, have experienced such a rollercoaster of emotions, or joys and sorrows, and we have been guided gracefully under Pastor Joanna to make space for everything this year has thrown our way.

In March of 2020, the newly appointed Executive Team met for our first real planning session as a board. It was a six-hour retreat on a Saturday afternoon designed to deepen our relationships, clarify our roles, and define our vision and goals as a board. It was a really great session and we left feeling energized and motivated for the work ahead of us. We established a covenant

together and we were ready to get to work! That was on March 7th. We only met for in-person worship one time after that retreat...the following day.

Our first official Executive Meeting occurred on Zoom a few weeks later, and we have continued to meet monthly (sometimes more) throughout the past 10 months. I cannot state enough how proud I am of this group of people and how grateful I am for the work they have done. We faced many challenging conversations and decisions, and we did so with trust, faith, and respect. We supported each other and we navigated the needs of the church and congregation through the strains of isolation, the new worlds of remote learning and working from home, and the many health crises we and our families endured.

Sometimes, we came together with a formal agenda and reports of the previous month. Other times, we just needed to talk it out, and we lived in the “conversations for the good of the group” portion of our meeting. But throughout it all, church family, your Executive Team showed up for you. The following reports will describe many of the events and efforts we put forth in 2020, so I will allow the team to speak on those specifics.

As I reflect on the past year at Lakewood Congregational Church, I am struck time and time again by the many ways that God prepared us to not only endure, but thrive, during this unique time in our church and our world. Prior to 2020...we called Joanna, who called us to right-size our budget and recommit ourselves to the work of the church through Stewardship. We hired Rachel. We decided to include the Diaconate Chair as an Executive Team position. We committed to Global Ministries and Greater Cleveland Congregations. We (and the world) were blessed with a yet-untapped world of technology such as Zoom, iMovie and Facebook Live.

Fast-forward to 2020 and we found ourselves with all of the tools and resources we needed to reimagine our worship services, outreach, in-reach, welcoming, nurture and growth, building needs, music, faith formation and so much more. From there, it was really people who carried out that mission and vision. I am eternally grateful to serve alongside this board, staff, and congregation. It’s been a challenge but an absolute privilege to watch this team in action, and I know that God also placed me in this role in this time for a purpose. I am looking forward to the future, and although at times it felt just out of reach, hope finally feels more tangible for me. As we discern how to unlock our faith, ministry, and purpose in 2021, I take comfort in knowing that our staff, lay leaders, members, and friends are blessed gifts from God, with whom all things are possible, and that we will navigate this year together in grace, faith, and loving service.

Faithfully submitted,
Liz Spahr, Executive Team Chair

MODERATOR / PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

In preparation for writing this, I reread the 2019 Moderator’s Report by Michael Komperda. He stated, “In the last four years, we have turned over every staff position in the church, and the church is doing well.” I am happy to report that, in 2020, our staff was not only stable, but hard-working, adaptable, and creative as we faced uncharted territory caused by a worldwide pandemic. In the summer, however, of Director of Youth Music, Noah Hamrick, resigned to focus

on his primary employment. We are pleased that the Hamricks will remain as active members of the church.

In March, we ceased in-person church services and meetings and moved to online technologies. Our staff had to re-think every aspect of their jobs. How do you minister to our membership when you can't be with them? How do you create choral and instrumental music when singing together is one of the most dangerous activities you can do? How do you maintain exciting and meaningful youth activities when everyone is sheltering in place? And how do you support outreach to vulnerable populations like AA and Community Meal when we aren't allowing groups to congregate in the building?

I am pleased to report that our staff met these challenges with enthusiasm and creativity. With tremendous support from Darren Toms, Reverend Joanna D'Agostino moved our weekly services online as "Virtch". Director of Music Ben Malkevitch mastered computer software that allowed him to meld individually recorded voices and instruments into beautiful music for the services. Rachel Burns, our Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries, developed a wide variety of activities to keep our younger members engaged while physically separate. Office Manager, Karen Lee and Financial Secretary, Patti Dobro and volunteer, Gloria Van Peeran kept the church functioning without missing a beat, and our custodian John Mullen was able to complete many projects that enhance the appearance and function of our building.

Our Executive Team met virtually through Zoom, and many of our other groups were able to continue their important activities even though they couldn't be together. In total, the staff and membership of LCC pulled together to ensure that our spirituality, fellowship, and outreach continued during a very challenging year.

As I write this, we are still in the throes of the pandemic, but there is hope on the horizon that we will be able to meet again later in 2021. In the meantime, I thank everyone for their patience and support. You have truly shown what it means to be a community of faith.

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Young, Moderator

WELCOMING MINISTRY

The Welcoming Ministry faced many challenges in 2020 as just over one month into my new term, Lakewood Congregational Church made the difficult decision to stop meeting in person for worship. Gone was the need to schedule greeters and ushers for Sunday morning and to pick up donuts for coffee hour. There were no more in person weddings and funerals to host and no new members to welcome in person.

Despite all of the things we did not do in 2020, we were busy finding new ways to connect with our members and friends at LCC. Instead of celebrating with a birthday cake in the parlor on the first Sunday of each month, our members were able to pick up a cupcake at KB Confections as a gift from the church. Many of our members have taken us up on the offer!

We started out doing our coffee hours via Facebook Live and have since switched to a Zoom coffee hour on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. Many of our members sign on for this time of fellowship and checking in on each other. Our Prayer Team holds a Zoom meeting on the alternate first and third Sundays. All are welcome!

Our Marketing Team transitioned our communications to Constant Contact in 2020. This includes our weekly LCC Member News and Worship Resources as well as the monthly The Columns newsletter. This platform allows the team to gather data about who is accessing the information as well as providing an easier format for those people that access this information through their smart phones. The team also formalized the social media communications, pushing more content to Facebook, in an effort to keep our congregation informed about what was happening through the church. If you're not already following LCC on Facebook, do so! It's a great way to stay informed.

I participated in some meetings about updating our West Clifton lobby to make it a more welcoming and useful space. This is often the first area that our members and guests see when they enter our building, and the updates will provide a warm place to greet and gather all who enter LCC in the UCC custom of an extravagant welcome.

It was also my great privilege to plan with Rev. Joanna decorations for the Communion Table for several occasions throughout the year including Easter, Rally Sunday, All Saints Day, Thanksgiving and decorating the Sanctuary for Christmas. Thanks to my daughters, Lauren and Paige, for their help with several of these efforts.

I know we all look forward to when we can provide hospitality in person once again in our building, but until then, I pray you are finding ways to keep your LCC family close.

Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Smigelski, Welcoming Ministry

NURTURE & GROWTH MINISTRIES

The Nurture and Growth Ministries here at LCC are initiated and led by many different people. Nurture and Growth is an umbrella for Adult Faith Formation and the Children and Youth Ministries. The people on those teams plan and develop various opportunities and activities to support our faith journey as individuals and as a community.

This year, Adult Faith Formation was able to host Ash Wednesday and a Lenten Taizé and Labyrinth service prior to the pandemic. After March we shifted to remote opportunities:

- **LCC/Trinity's combined Bible Study:** *We Make the Road by Walking* by Brian McLaren continued to meet on Zoom. A second "cohort" of the same study began in September and continues now.
- Second Saturday continues to meet the second Saturday morning of each month from 9:00 am to 10:00 am on Zoom. Women of all ages spend time together in conversation, reflection,

and prayer. Group members get to know each other and support one another in their faith journeys.

- LCC Prayer Chain began to meet on Zoom periodically and then shifted to a regular 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month meeting and responds to the prayer requests from our members.
- Friends' Circle and the LCC Men's Group had a couple of small group outdoor gatherings over the summer.
- Adventures in Reading continued to meet on Zoom. (see their detailed report)
- God in Our Lives became a more consistent monthly event, and several individuals shared their faith journeys with a group on Zoom.
- A number of "Facebook Live" events also took place to help build community, including Trivia Nights, Madlib Night, Worship Nights with Chris Burns, and opportunities for members to reflect with each other.
- The Prayer Shawl Ministry continues to share their gifts with those in need and they meet periodically (outdoors weather permitting and via Zoom when not).

This year our focus was on staying safe and staying connected the best we were able.

Respectfully submitted by,
*Rev. Joanna
Sue Tamilio*, Chair

OUTREACH MINISTRIES

The Outreach Ministries at LCC strive to contribute to local and global initiatives. In the letter for the 2020 annual meeting, the Outreach Team stressed that while there was continued importance for monetary contributions to various organizations, our focus would shift more towards acts of service that LCC members can provide. Due to COVID precautions, we could not serve in the ways we originally imagined but feel that we have still made a significant impact during the past year.

The Alternative Gift Market

We once again held our Alternative Gift Market at Christmas to benefit Global Ministries, a joint ministry of the UCC and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Our members donate in honor of loved ones for alternative Christmas gifts. Global Ministries respond in bold ways to the challenges of poverty and injustice throughout the world by partnering with churches and programs in over 80 countries. Our gifts help them tackle some of the world's toughest problems. This year our Alternative Gift Market raised funds to assist the Mt. Selinda Hospital of the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe with various coronavirus pandemic related needs. The donations will provide much needed support including helping with doctor's salaries, COVID-19 response and preparedness priorities, food security efforts, a water reticulation project, and a new ambulance. (Vicki Smigelski)

Angel Tree

The Angel Tree prison ministry program was successful again in 2020, helping 44 local children from 21 families connect with their incarcerated parents at the holidays. LCC members

purchased gifts for these children on behalf of their parents to help them feel close and know they are loved. The children who benefit from the program receive gifts far beyond those we purchase—they get a chance to feel that their parent is near on Christmas. Members purchased two gifts for each child, one toy and one article of clothing, which were then delivered to families in Lakewood and Cleveland on the morning of December 21. (Christy and Chris Gray)

Building Hope in the City

Building Hope in the City (BHITC) is a Cleveland area organization that focuses on the support of refugees. One of its endeavors is The Hope Center, which is the center for services for those in West Park, Lakewood, and surrounding areas. The Hope Center offers citizenship and English courses, as well as after-school tutoring for school-aged children. The Hope Center also has a daycare for children of parents taking courses. LCC has several volunteers that have been volunteering at the Hope Center in a various capacities over the past few years.

While in-person contact was limited, LCC partnered with BHITC on two occasions. The first was a drive for donated items that could be sold at the BHITC store, Common Threads. Common Threads employs several immigrants and refugees. In addition, the proceeds from the store go towards BHITC's missions. In September 2020, youth from LCC participated in the second annual Rally CLE event. Prior to the event, individuals applied for grants to improve their communities. LCC sponsored one of the grants and worked to create a mural in the Clark-Fulton neighborhood of Cleveland. Artist Rafael Valdivieso created an inspiring mural and guided the group through painting it. In addition, the volunteers were able to assist with food distribution and voter registration.

We are looking forward to continued partnerships with BHITC. (Laura Hampton)

CLE Diaper Drive

Many Cleveland area families suffer from diaper need. During National Diaper Need Awareness Week, LCC participated along with many other organizations in the CLE Diaper Drive. The diapers collected went to local agencies that provide assistance to families in need. LCC members donated boxes of diapers to the cause. It is estimated that the CLE Diaper Drive donated over 51,000 diapers in 2019. (Laura Hampton)

Community of Hope (formerly Open Table)

In November 2019, six members of LCC began meeting with a young man who had been in foster care with 23 different families until age 18, when he aged out of the system. We had a birthday party for him in January, his first, he told us. He turned 27. We were also proud as our young person and Scott Suttell spoke at Trinity Cathedral at a fundraiser for the organization in early March. As with many things that involved meeting in person, COVID-19 meant we needed to find new ways to support our young person. We were able to meet during the summer as a group on our porches and in our backyards. We also took time for one-on-one walks and park visits. We maintain a connection through frequent group text messages. Although this was a one-year commitment, our young person knows that we're not going anywhere. We all feel like we've become *his people* and he turns to us to share joys and disappointments and for advice. We appreciate the continued prayers of our church family in our journey.

Community of Hope is always looking for volunteers to be part of a community with a young person. If you're interested in hearing more about the opportunities, contact Vicki Smigelski. (Vicki Smigelski)

Community Meal

LCC is one of 20+ churches in the Lakewood community serving a community meal on a rotating calendar schedule. Our meal is served the first Thursday of every month.

For January, February, and March we served "family style" with linens and flowers on each table. We continue to hope that this approach brought a feeling of community for our guests-55-60.

Beginning in April we shifted to a "take out" arrangement providing 48 individual meals: 40 with a meat entree, 8 vegetarian. We have been fortunate to acquire our protein without cost from the Cleveland Food Bank due to our partnership with Trinity Lutheran Church. This has helped us keep our costs down to under \$100 per month.

Our guests have also benefited from donation of home cooked desserts on a monthly basis provided by committee members. Distribution begins at 5:30PM and typically we distribute all meals by 6:30. (Peggi and Michael Mizen)

Family Promise

Family Promise continues to provide emergency shelter for homeless families at their site on Cleveland's east side. LCC continues to support the organization in various ways. We collected socks and underwear through our Undie Sundays in January which were then donated to Family Promise. The money raised through the youth's Homeless Awareness Sleep Out (HASO) allows us to provide financial contributions to the organization in order to support this important ministry (Vicki Smigelski)

Global Outreach

The Outreach Committee increased our global outreach efforts in 2020 through completing a fundraising campaign for disaster relief and a water well in Mozambique, which raised \$15,063.30 between 2018 and 2020. The Africa Executive for the UCC Global Ministries, Reverend Marco Cable, participated in a summer 2020 Sunday service to thank us for our fundraising success and interest in Mozambique and provided some pictures and information about what our money went to.

For the 2020/2021 year we are again partnering with the UCC Global Ministries and are raising funds to assist the Mt. Selinda Hospital of the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe with various coronavirus pandemic related needs. Our church is working to raise \$10,000 to assist the hospital with a variety of important projects. As of January 2021, we have raised \$6,945.20. In the fall of 2020, we presented music, photographs, and information about the hospital in Zimbabwe during a Sunday service, and we hope to have an additional Sunday in 2021 focusing on the needs of the mission.

With our annual global mission project, we are part of the UCC's global mission church designation. Will you help us with this fundraising effort? (David Sangree)

Lakewood Community Service Center (LCSC) and Lakewood Alive

The Outreach team was grateful to begin working further with organizations in Lakewood during 2020. Prior to COVID, a team of volunteers packed food bags for LCSC at their facility on Madison. Our efforts continued in the fall. During the Blessings at Beck event on October 18, 2020, the congregation donated 12 large bags of food to go to LCSC. The congregation continues to collect food items and monetary donations for Hunger Sundays. Over the summer, a team of volunteers participated in a physically distanced yard clean-up session with Lakewood Alive. We are looking forward to future partnerships in 2021 and beyond. (Nicky Wills, Laura Hampton)

Martha's Table

We are calling this an "in-reach" effort for members of the LCC family who are in need of a home cooked meal due to health challenges, birth of a baby, death of a family member or any other need.

Martha's Table team members have the responsibility of preparing a casserole or dessert for the Martha's Table reserve on an as-needed basis. Team members also volunteer to deliver meals as they are available. In 2020 the Martha's Table team delivered 20 meals and maintained a stock of reserve meals for delivery as needed.

Martha's Table team members include Susan Walker, Laura Sangree, Judy Foote, Chiquita Matthews, Mike & Kay Galloway, Peggy Mizen, Debi Kasper, and Jan Young. We receive information about meal needs from Patti Komperda, Karen Lee, Rachel Burns, and Joanna D'Agostino as well as member's requests. (Jennifer Schwelik)

Laura Blesse-Hampton, Chair

FACILITIES

In Ephesians 2:19-22 we are reminded "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."

It has been an interesting first year for the new Building and Grounds Committee as we as a congregation have continued to "be the church" outside the church building through "virtch" (virtual church) and drive-thru Communion services. And yet, we are reminded when seeing Pastor Joanna preach or Ben Malkevitch play the piano or organ in the Sanctuary that we continue to be stewards of our beautiful, historic building on the corner of West Clifton and Detroit.

The Building & Grounds Committee updated the conditions survey of our building and found—thanks to the dedicated work of Karen Lee, Pastor Joanna, and John Mullen, the custodian, that

our facility is in excellent condition. Thanks especially to their efforts and the work of the committee the following work was completed this year:

Maintenance/Rehab

- Painting of the northmost stairwell (by Bowers Chapel)
- Painting of the Social Hall stairs kickplates
- West Clifton entrance improvements designed by Richardson Design (Scott Richardson)
 - This is an exciting project initiated by Pastor Joanna to rethink the West Clifton entrance to better utilize and make more welcoming the large hallway at the entrance. The design will include comfortable seating options that will make this space an extension of the Parlor.
- Changed 2nd floor men's room to a non-gender restroom (stall removed and painted).
- Repainting 2nd floor Women's bathroom.
- Painted and set up Haynes Director office in old choir robe room.
- A new remote annunciation panel was installed for the fire alarm.
- Getting quotes for stained glass repair in Chapel.
- Exploring repair/replace options for damaged seating in Chapel.
- Awaiting building assessment site visit by Cleveland Restoration Society's Sacred Landmarks Committee (Scheduled and postponed due to COVID-19).

Organization

- Moved the choir robes to the 1st floor closet to make room for Hayne's Office.
- West Clifton closet cleaned out and shaped.
- Parlor closet cleaned and re-organized.

HVAC/Air Quality

- Removed baseboard blocking airflow in the classroom across from the parlor.
- Reprogrammed the boiler to switch between units (consultant recommendation).
- Contacted an electrical/mechanical engineering firm for volunteer assessment of LCC's HVAC systems and air-quality.

Thanks to Pastor Joanna D'Agostino, Noah Hamrick, Karen Lee, Christopher Leo, Ben Malkevitch, Scott Richardson, Laura Sangree, Vicki Smigelski, and Liz Spahr for their efforts on behalf of our facility this year.

In looking ahead at future projects, we have sought to create a record of how the building has adapted and grown over its 100+ year history. To accomplish this, we examined permit applications in the Lakewood Department of Building & Housing, the Plain Dealer archives, and blueprints in the church Archives. The blueprints have been photographed to make them easier to access for future projects.

As a committee, we continue to plan and budget for the ongoing needs of the facility—especially in considering how we can make the church environment healthier—as we have all become more cognizant of air-quality, as well as more sustainable and adaptable to the continued growth of our congregation and the time—hopefully soon—when we will be able to utilize the building again safely.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michael Fleenor, Chair, Buildings and Grounds

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

*This slate of candidates is presented by the 2020-2021 Nominating Committee. Below is the current list of church positions and the date the term expires. Names in **bold** represent people seeking election in a new position to serve their first term/slated to renew a position in which they are currently serving.*

Executive Team: 2-year terms, may serve 2 terms.

Position/Committee	Name	Starting Term Year	Ending Term Year	Term	Approval
Chair	Liz Spahr	2020	2022	1 st	
Chair-Elect	Bill Fraunfelder	2020	2022	1 st	
Welcoming	Vicki Smigelski	2020	2022	1 st	
Nurture & Growth	David Diemert	2021	2023	New	
Diaconate	Lauren Smigelski	2020	2022	1 st	
Outreach	Laura Blesse Hampton	2021	2023	2 nd	
<i>Moderator</i>	Jan Young	2020	2022	1 st	
<i>Treasurer</i>	Steve Hotchkiss	2020	2022	1 st	
<i>Buildings/Grounds</i>	Michael Fleenor	2020	2022	1 st	

Diaconate: 2-year term, up to 12 members, may serve 2 terms.

Term 2020-2022 (continuing their term)	Term 2021-2023
Lauren Smigelski, Chair Andy Barlow Chris Burns David Burns* Debi Kasper Nora Katzenberger Shannon Katzenberger Patti Komperda Jill Richardson (2 nd Term) Jennifer Robey (2 nd Term) Robin Suttell Parker Toms	Lisa Blasko (2 nd Term) Beth Clark Paula Deal (2 nd Term) Evelyn Richards (2 nd Term)

*Youth Member

Changes may be announced at the Annual Meeting

Nominating Committee: up to 6 people, a 2-year term, may serve no more than 2 terms.

ADDITIONAL REPORTS

COVID-19 ADVISORY TEAM

Under pastoral leadership, Lakewood Congregational Church and Trinity Lutheran Church created a joint advisory council in spring 2020 to help guide decisions pertaining to COVID-19. The council is represented by both congregations, offering medical, structural and data gathering expertise. The council meets at a minimum of once per month and carries regular ongoing discussions. As questions are brought forward, the team confers as a group and then provides recommendations to the executive team before the decision is shared. We are so appreciative of your continuous support and patience.

Attending worship indoors is one of the activities associated with the highest rate of transmission of COVID-19. While other churches have returned to in-person worship, we have been focused on protecting the vulnerable members of our community. We are fortunate to have dedicated staff that has been creative in ways to keep us connected remotely. We trust them to continue this work fostering meaningful connections even with physical separation. At this point in time, we have decided that there will be no in-person indoor activities through the Easter season. This includes worship, meetings and other in-person gatherings.

Our recommendations are based on a number of different factors. We track ongoing COVID-19 trends at the national, state, county, and local levels. We rely on data, but we also look into information that the numbers may not be capturing, such as community risk factors, medical supply accessibility and medical provider availability. While we are blessed with a historic church building, it also comes with limited ventilation, which makes indoor gathering much riskier than in other buildings that have newly updated systems.

We continually try to answer questions, but we also recognize that there are many questions that we do not have the answers to just yet. The answers to these questions will hopefully come over the next few months as safety measures are implemented by the new U.S. administration and more data is known regarding vaccination and COVID-19 as a whole. Some of these questions include:

- Do vaccinated individuals still have the ability to infect non-vaccinated individuals with COVID-19?
- How many individuals need to be vaccinated before indoor gatherings are safe?
- What additional precautions will need to be taken before indoor gatherings can be held?
- Once the weather permits, how can we safely meet outdoors?

We are hopeful about the prospects of vaccination. We are looking forward to finding ways to see each other outdoors once we reach warmer weather. In the meantime, we want to express our gratitude for the strength and tenacity our congregation has shown over the past 11 months. We recognize that it is not easy being one of the churches that does not gather in person. Yet, we want to stress to you just how important that action has been. You have allowed the

members of the staff and congregation to remain safe. You have decreased spread throughout the community. You have saved lives. You have been the church in a way that we never thought we would have to be and we know you will continue living out our mission, even at a distance.

If you have a question for the advisory team, please contact lblesseh@bw.edu. The question will be brought to the advisory team and reviewed with the executive team.

To access the list of sources where we obtain COVID-19 data that informs our decision-making process, please see the Google doc at:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ic8wa4wZ07X0eDrL3Y8IhrfCyxh6F3kmL39D5RFJHv0/edit?usp=sharing>

Respectfully,
The COVID-19 Advisory Team:
Reverend Joanna D'Agostino
Reverend Sara Cogsil
Laura Blesse-Hampton, PA-C
Amy Daso, MD
Steven Fesko, Professional Engineer

ADVENTURES IN READING

Adventures in Reading is an informal book review/discussion group that has been in existence since 1962. We read books recommended by members and are chosen from a variety of genres such as bestseller, classic, fiction, non-fiction, mystery, biography, memoir, and others. Each month one of our members serves as discussion leader. We currently have 15 women on our roster, and an average of 10 are at any given meeting.

2020 started with our regular in-person meetings at Porter Library for the months of January, February, and March. Books discussed during those months were:

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith
The Pioneers by David McCullough
A Chance in the World by Steve Pemberton

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced the closing of libraries, churches, schools, and many businesses we were unsure what the immediate future would be for resuming our in-person meetings. Zoom meetings soon emerged as the new method of communicating, and we were challenged to learn the technology. Susan Walker offered to host our Zoom meetings, and we “met” in April, June, and September just to visit, talk books, and look to the future.

Two books scheduled for April and May were not discussed, and we opted to start fresh with a new list of titles. Books scheduled but not discussed are: *The Whole Town's Talking* by Fannie Flagg and *The Lost Girls of Paris* by Pam Jenoff. We resumed our book reviews/discussions in October with the following books:

The Girl Who Wrote in Silk by Keli Estes
The Giver of Stars by Jojo Moyes
The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek by Kim Michele Richardson

Zoom meetings have been different (challenging at times) but successful and have helped us stay connected and engaged with each other and our love of reading. We traditionally meet the second Tuesday of the month at 12:30 pm, but we have tried to be flexible with the date to accommodate various schedules. What a difference from the early years of the book club when members would meet in their homes and gather around the dining room table for coffee, tea, dessert, nuts, and candy. Adventures in Reading transitioned to meeting at the church (library or parlor) until 2008 when we started meeting at Porter Library. We look forward to the time when we can gather together in-person, but we are grateful to the technology that allows us to connect via the internet and phone. All are welcome to join us.

Kathy MacDougall, Chair

THE LYMAN G. FARRAR COLUMBARIUM

The church dedicated The Lyman G. Farrar Columbarium on September 11, 1994. It allows for the interment of a loved one's remains following a cremation.

It is located in the area directly behind the sanctuary. There are 210 niches with oak fronts for an urn or a container of ashes. A brass nameplate is placed on the front of the niche when ashes have been placed inside.

The cremated remains of Donald Schultzberger and Keith Rasey were committed to the Columbarium this year.

The Executive Team asked a group to meet to review the current policies regarding the Columbarium as this had not been done in many years. As a result of that meeting, the agreements and policies were updated at the end of 2020. A team was formed to address any Columbarium issues moving forward and includes Claire Stair, Chair, Michael Fleenor, Chair of Buildings and Grounds, Vicki Smigelski and Rev. Joanna D'Agostino. We hope to hold an annual information session for the congregation about the Columbarium and also to plan some programming about end-of-life issues as part of conversations about the stages of our spiritual lives.

At the present time we have 77 of the niches either in use or reserved. The price of an individual niche is \$400.00. If you are interested in purchasing a niche(s) or if you have any questions regarding the Columbarium, please contact Reverend Joanna.

DIACONATE

Members of Diaconate: Lauren Smigelski, Chair, Andy Barlow, Lisa Blasko, Chris Burns, David Burns, Paula Deal, Debi Kasper, Nora Katzenberger, Shannon Katzenberger, Marian Kenney, Patti Komperda, Evelyn Richards, Jill Richardson, Greg Robey, Jennifer Robey, Robin Suttell, and Parker Toms

Members of Diaconate are responsible for assisting the pastor in providing a meaningful worship experience. Typically, we prepare and serve the Sacrament of Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month. Communion is served two ways: at the altar by intinction and in the pews. However, this year members of Diaconate worked with staff and other volunteers to serve communion through Blessings at Beck/Communion Commute. We hope to continue these drive-through communion efforts in the coming months (to be in accordance with any stay-at-home advisories/orders).

The Board continues to seek ways to provide additional spiritual support and connection to everyone at LCC. A very warm thank you to Kay and Mike Galloway, Debi Kasper, Patti Komperda, Jill Richardson, Jennifer Schwelik, Vicki Smigelski, and Karen Wagner who have been making regular calls and sending letters/cards through the LCC Callers initiative. The Board also thanks Marinika Beaver, Paula Deal, Melissa Diemert, Nancy Fraunfelder, The Murray/Fraunfelder family, Thom Geist, Sandie King, Patti Komperda, Karen Lee, Peggi & Michael Mizen, Chiquita Matthews, Helen McDermott, Joann Riordan, Lauren, Vicki & Paige Smigelski, Claire Stair, David Stair, Jack & Lily Wills, and Jan Young for collectively writing over 410 postcards to every member and regular attendee at LCC.

In an effort to better integrate our ministry into church activities, Diaconate had a position on the Executive Team for the first time this past year. As you will see in the Nominating Committee report, most Diaconate members have elected to extend their term by one year, due to the irregular activities of 2020. We thank outgoing member, Marian Kenny, for her service on Diaconate and we look forward to working with the new members of the Diaconate.

The Diaconate
Lauren Smigelski, Chair

HAYNES NURSERY SCHOOL

Haynes Nursery School (HNS) operates under the authority of the LCC Executive Team, which has placed HNS under the general supervision of the Haynes School Board. The Haynes School Board members include: Jennifer Schwelik, HNS Board Chair; Sarah Banyasz, LCC member-at-large; Sue Tamilio, LCC Congregational Executive Team representative; Shannon Lubas, HNS Director; Susan Frost, HNS teacher representative; Joanna D'Agostino, Lakewood Congregational Senior Minister; and Rachel Burns, Lakewood Congregational Director of Children and Family Ministries; Lauren Tabor, HNS parent representative who was replaced by Abigail Eshbaugh as the HNS parent representative in November, 2020.

In February, the HNS Board established a search committee to find a replacement for Alison Yonkers who announced her family's plans to leave NE Ohio this coming summer. The Search Committee included:

Lauren Tabor (HNS parent)
Jennifer Schwelik (LCC member/Haynes Board Chair)
Sarah Banyasz (past and future parent/LCC member)

Susan Frost (HNS staff)
Christine Hauck (HNS staff)
Rachel Burns (LCC Director of Family Ministries)
Joanna D'Agostino (LCC Senior Minister)

The committee concluded their work with the hiring of Shannon Lubas.

In March, along with the rest of Ohio, HNS closed due to the worldwide pandemic. This did not mean Haynes was not serving students, however. The Haynes staff, under the direction of Alison Yonkers, began an intense transition from face-to-face classes to remote learning using Zoom technology. By April, remote classes were underway. HNS became a model of how to provide remote learning for preschool children.

In May, we wished Alison Yonkers and her family well as they moved away from Lakewood. The celebration of Alison's work with Haynes was held virtually and with chalk drawings at LCC done by the Haynes students.

In July, the HNS board welcomed a new HNS Director, Shannon Lubas. Fortunately, Alison was able to transition Shannon into the director position. Shannon entered the position with a pandemic underway and continually changing advice on best health practices. Shannon and the Haynes teaching staff expanded the remote learning delivery. School, in 2020 and the beginning of 2021 continued in a remote learning environment. The remote learning began in the fall with four-year-olds only. In January 2021 three-year-old remote classes began.

The board met quarterly in July, October, and February. When the pandemic hit, we met virtually and frequently in March, April, May, August, and November to handle the ever-changing needs. In 2020, the HNS Board worked with the Executive Team to:

- Accept the director resignation and hire a new director, Shannon Lubas, to fill the resignation,
- Establish a scholarship for two students whose families met financial crisis,
- Maintain and oversee the budget for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school year,
- Ensured the Haynes staff member salaries were included in the pandemic relief grant provided to LCC.

Highlights this year included:

- A January parent social get-together that included a fundraiser
- Continuing the February fundraiser that focuses on heart-felt love for Haynes children, employees, parents, graduates.
- Continuing the involvement of Lee Mechenbier as a permanent Haynes volunteer.

The HNS fiscal year runs July 1st to June 30th to more easily manage the funds. The HNS board works closely with the LCC office staff who oversees the HNS income and expenditures. Because of the work Alison Yonkers and the HNS board did to maintain reserve funds in the case of an emergency, Haynes was able to project through the end of the 2020-21 school year that all staff would continue with their work remotely. The pandemic relief funds were added to the reserve funds so that Haynes will be able to continue in 2021-22 as we look hopefully toward returning to face-to-face classes once the NE Ohio area has enough vaccinations to stop the COVID-19 spread.

The Haynes student population reduced from 87 in 2019-20 to 26 in 2020-21. LCC member children have priority to the seats available in HNS. This year we are serving 26 four-year-old children and their families. Two of the children are attending with a partial scholarship from LCC. One is an employee's child and is attending using the qualified tuition remission.

The 2020-21 and 2021-22 tuition rates are:

January 2-day 3-year old class	\$115
2-day 3-year old class	\$115
3-day 3-year old class	\$155
3-day 4-year old class	\$195
4-day 4-year old class	\$225
There is an \$85 non-refundable registration fee.	

The balance in the HNS KeyBank checking account as of December 31, 2020 is \$48,862.

Jennifer Schwelik, Haynes Nursery School Board Chair

MARKETING

The LCC Marketing Committee meets every month and is focused on two main goals: helping make sure members are aware of the events and outreach initiatives of the church and reaching out to the community to raise awareness about LCC and potentially attract new members. These goals have been more challenging during the pandemic, but committee members have worked hard to maintain a steady stream of information.

The committee has six members: Val Mechenbier, Joanne Riordan, Cathy Spicer, Robin Suttell, Scott Suttell and Erin Werek. Pastor Joanna, plus Karen Lee and Vicki Smigelski, also attend meetings, now held virtually, to brainstorm ideas about promoting upcoming events. The committee – and in particular, a subgroup spearheaded by Val Mechenbier – led a substantial revamp of the LCC website, LCC-church.org. The committee also promotes the church via LCC's Facebook page, with Joanne Riordan taking the lead in some creative posts. (Please join if you haven't done so already.)

Looking ahead to the rest of 2021, committee members hope to be part of a campaign that welcomes members back into the LCC space, when the time is right. If you have suggestions for how we can improve communications while we're still physically distant, please reach out to committee chair Scott Suttell at scottsuttell@gmail.com. We all appreciate the opportunity to serve.

Scott Suttell, Chair

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Over the past year, thanks in great part to Stephanie Fries, we have developed a Pastoral Relations Committee (Lovingly called the Pastor Posse). This is a group of people who I chose to help promote healthy relationships between me and the congregation. Many churches have a PRC, and I believe that it's best to create these support systems in "good times" so that if "hard times" ever arise, we have already built relationships of trust and teamwork.

We have met via Zoom, one time masked and in person, or communicated by email approximately once a month since March.

The team consists of Stephanie Fries, Thom Geist, Michael Komperda, Emma Petrie-Barcelona, and Peter Kuhn. I chose each of them because they are people I trust to hold me accountable with truth and grace. Their support and feedback has been valuable and I am optimistic about the growth of our connection as a group in the future. This team is not elected and does not have a term limit.

You are welcome to reach out to any of them with concerns you might want us to discuss. That being said, we discourage anonymous communication and ask that you bring concerns directly to me as a first step, in keeping with the Biblical Model in Matthew 18:15ff.

If you'd like to understand more about the purpose of a PRC, please don't hesitate to reach out. For now, I'd like to share a few excerpts from the Living Water Association's description:

PRC...

- Is about RELATIONSHIPS – promoting healthy relationships between pastor and congregation
- Is about LISTENING – members listen and respond with care to the pastor
- Is CONFIDENTIAL – offering sacred space for the pastor and members to share constructively
- Is ADVISORY – members share hopes, dreams and aspirations of congregation with pastor
- Is about SUPPORT and CARE of the pastor.
- Is an INDEPENDENT committee/team that does not report to the governing body or another entity but is held accountable to the congregation

What PRC is NOT

- A "business" decision-making meeting
- A personnel/human resources meeting
- A performance evaluation

STEWARDSHIP

In 2019, revamping our stewardship strategies was a major part of the church's work. We increased our number of pledges by 40%, our amount of dollars pledged by 44%, and significantly decreased our endowment draw.

If we had not done that work in 2019, 2020 would have been a very different story. Our congregation was gracious in fulfilling 2020 pledges, which allowed us to maintain our resources, care for our building, support the community, and respond to unexpected needs. Most importantly, it allowed us to maintain all of our staff, including the staff of Haynes Nursery School. We were blessed that we had the ability to provide financial consistency to those who have relied on the church for income. The work we did last year prepared us for this season and allowed us not to live in scarcity.

Of course, Stewardship looked different this year. As we looked at the numbers, we felt confident that we did not need to exhaust ourselves with an extensive, formal stewardship campaign. Instead, we prayed, took a deep breath, and simply asked the congregation to just "keep going." We had confidence in your commitment to the church and understanding of stewardship as a spiritual practice.

For the most part, we have seen a positive response to that request. There are still a number of regular stewards who have not submitted a pledge form, but seem to be consistent in regular giving, so we invite you to fill out a form for our records. You can fill out an [electronic pledge form](#), or [download, print, and mail a physical copy](#). You may also simply contact the church office directly with your pledge.

Karen Wagner and I also attended a workshop in August led by Michael Piazza, a well-known stewardship consultant for churches, which was offered for free by the Living Water Association. Piazza advocates year-round stewardship, teaching, modeling, and unabashed congruence between members' lives and their giving. He offered many tools, strategies, and templates, that we will continue to explore moving forward. I look forward to continuing to discern Michael Piazza's theories and revisiting what we learned in that workshop. You will likely hear more about that in 2021. If you would like to look him up on your own, you can find him through Agile Church Consultants (agilechurch.com)

Rev. Joanna

TREASURER'S REPORT

This past year, to say the least, has been full of surprises. For some of us it has been very stressful, even threatening. For others, we have discovered new resources, new ways to solve old problems, and hopefully, we have all discovered that our church continues to provide spiritual sustenance and support. From a financial point of view, here is how we accomplished and exceeded our expectations.

Pledges amounted to \$326,031. With understanding and compassion for those who have been and are financially stressed, those who can have maintained and in some cases increased their giving. The withdrawal from the endowment was \$18,000, the smallest amount in over 20 years.

In addition to the above, during 2020 the church applied for a government loan for \$76,800, which was granted and forgiven during the year. The bulk of the proceeds were used to sustain the payroll of our Haynes Nursery School, which has been operating on a hybrid schedule.

We were also the recipients of a generous gift of \$5,000 from Winfield Associates, who have managed our endowment for many years and who support a charitable foundation.

Expenses include five major categories: Pastor, Administration, Maintenance, Faith Formation, and Music. In all of these categories the church has either been at or below budget. You might ask why the expenses have not been less? 84% of our expenses are related to contractual commitments, which include salaries, insurance, utilities and building maintenance. In total, we spent \$429,619, which after the government loan produced a surplus of \$28,189.

In addition to the above, our church continues to engage in a number of outreach programs, both budgeted and unbudgeted.

Budget 2021 (Interim)

The proposed interim budget for 2021 is a reflection of the actual income and expenses experienced during 2020. Pledged income is at the same level budgeted for 2020. Withdrawals from the endowment, at \$89,000 are expected to be greater than the actual amount drawn in 2020 (\$18,000).

Aside from a modest increase in salaries of 3%, there are modest increases in Faith Formation (\$3,617), and Outreach (\$320). In 2020 we budgeted income to be \$449,900. Excluding the loan for \$76,800, actual income was \$381,008. For 2021 our budgeted amount is \$434,500 to be in line with expenses

With respect to expenses, in 2020 we spent \$19,331 less than budgeted (\$448,950 versus actual \$429,619). For 2021 we are budgeting \$434,150, which is \$4,531 or 1% greater than 2020 actual expenses, as explained above.

LCC contributes to outreach programs from two different sources:

1. Budgeted commitments such as Church & Ministry, Wider Mission, Outreach Fund, and Greater Cleveland congregation.
2. Unbudgeted or passthrough activities, a host of which are included in the report under Outreach Ministries.

Haynes Nursery School, until Covid19 struck, had been a self-sustaining operation. As an arm of LCC, in 2020 of the \$76,800 borrowed under the Federal PPP loan, \$37,000 was applied to Haynes' employment expenses. Insofar as 2021 still presents a number of uncertainties to Haynes, LCC may continue to provide additional assistance during the year to sustain this critically important community service.

Many thanks are more that due to Patti Dobro for her conscientious care of our financial records, Gloria Van Peeren for her unrelenting stewardship and patience with me, and to Assistant Treasurer, Dave Mechenbier, for his expertise; and, of course to you for your continuing commitment and willingness to unlock you purse strings for the benefit of us all at LCC.

Stephen Hotchkiss, Treasurer

BUDGET

Lakewood Congregational Church				
	12/20/2020	Budget	Difference	Proposed
	Est. Actual	2020	Budget to Actual	Budget 2021
Income				
Pledges current year	306,414	303,600	2,814	300,000
Unpledged contributions	19,607	10,000	9,607	10,000
Endowment income	18,000	72,000	-54,000	83,400
Rental income	25,022	38,000	-12,978	28,000
Haynes income	5,880	8,800	-2,920	
Other income	6,085	17,500	-11,415	7,500
PPP loan	76,800	0	76,800	
Total income	457,808	449,900	7,908	428,900
Expenses				
Pastoral salary & benefits	104,576	100,900	-3,676	103,700
Other expenses	2,322	2,500	178	2,050
Total pastoral expenses	106,898	103,400	-3,498	105,750
Office salary & benefits	35,449	44,575	9,126	37,400
Administrative equipment	20,084	20,000	-84	15,200
Other expenses	8,037	11,000	2,963	8,450
Total administrative expenses	63,570	75,575	12,005	61,050
Building & grounds				
Maintenance	22,044	22,000	-44	21,000
Custodial services	41,450	38,400	-3,050	40,000
Insurance	21,427	18,500	-2,927	21,500
Utilities	20,591	27,500	6,909	21,500
Other	10,841	15,000	4,159	12,000
Total B & G expenses	116,353	121,400	5,047	116,000
Faith formation				
FF salary & benefits	68,148	74,250	6,102	75,200
Youth	2,943	2,000	-943	3,000
Adult	288	1,500	1,212	
Other	3,204	4,000	796	
Total FF expenses	74,583	81,750	7,167	78,200
Music				

Music salary & benefits	43,039	46,425	3,386	43,800
Maintenance	4,935	2,000	-2,935	1,600
Other	2,811	2,000	-811	2,500
Total music expenses	50,785	50,425	-360	47,900
General				
Welcoming	797	2,700	1,903	1,000
Church & ministry	5,359	1,000	-4,359	5,000
Wider mission	0	7,500	7,500	7,500
Outreach fund	2,258	2,000	-258	4,000
Greater Cleveland Congregations	0	0	0	2,500
Other	9,016	3,200	-5,816	
Total general	17,430	16,400	-1,030	20,000
Total expenses	429,619	448,950	19,331	428,900
Income minus expenses	28,189	950	-27,239	
Footnotes				
Budgeted outreach	12,660	10,500	-2,160	18,500
Unbudgeted outreach			0	
Total Outreach	12,660	10,500	-2,160	18,500
Haynes				
Income	56,961	129,000	-72,039	62,814
Expenses	94,836	129,000	34,164	110,719
Income minus expenses	-37,875	0	37,875	-47,905

ENDOWMENT FUND 2020 ACTIVITY ANALYSIS

The Endowment realized an increase in market value of 10.7% prior to distributions and fees and 4.3% after distributions and fees. As indicated below, the portfolio is balanced among equities (stocks) fixed income (bonds) REITs (Real Estate Investment Trusts), and money market instruments (cash) in a structure designed to take advantage of market opportunities while simultaneously protecting the endowment against unanticipated risks or market downturns.

LCC budgeted to use \$82,000 use of endowment funds and withdrew \$18,000 during 2020.

Below are the financial numbers of the endowment:

Balance as of 12-31-2019	\$ 2,130,173
New gains (losses) including income	228,323
Balance before income and withdrawals	2,358,496
 2020 withdrawals	 18,000
Extra-Mile Fund	108,056
Management Fees	9,715
 Balance as of 12-31-2020	 \$2,222,725
 Total return on the endowment for 2020 (pre-withdrawals)	 10.7%
Change in endowment for 2020 (post-withdrawals & fees)	4.3%

LCC establishes investment guidelines within which Winfield Associates exercises discretion regarding specific investment instruments. The portfolio balance as of year-end 2020 was:

Equities	66.9%
Fixed income	27.1
REITs	2.9
Cash (money markets)	3.1

In November 2019, the Executive Team approved the establishment of a fund managed by United Church of Christ into which the Extra-Mile Fund. In January 2020, the amount of \$108,056 was transferred. The year-end balance of the fund was \$117,644, an increase of \$12,058, or 11%.

Stephen Hotchkiss
As of December 31, 2020

BEQUESTS & OTHER GIFTS TO THE ENDOWMENT FUND

As of December 31, 2020

<u>DONOR</u>	<u>ORIGINAL VALUE OF GIFT</u>
Ruth Achor	\$1,380.00
C. S. Albright Family	997,997.00
John Adams	2,645.00
Anne Allen	1,020.00
Harold Baker	10,430.00
Ruth Buckstaff Baker	9,480.00
Virginia Baker	8,389.00
Merle Baker	2,085.00
Richard & Dorothy Braund	3,820.00
Lorraine Cisar	1,000.00
Robert L. Corns	1,000.00
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Aaron Cowles	1,000.00
Theodore & Elizabeth Cunningham	1,230.00
Arnold Dobay	3,515.00
Etta G. Ellenberger	5,355.00
Judy Saltz Gannon	1,500.00
Ernest & Helen Goldsack	3,436.82
Katherine M. Grulich	1,000.00
Margaret Newell & Donald L. Harbaugh	2,500.00
Marjorie Haynes & JoAnn Wright	1,102.21
Mort & Janet Hitchcock	1,294.00
Peter Molin Huffman	1,100.00
Mr. & Mrs. Clair King	1,050.25
Augusta P. Knowlton	1,070.00
Gertrude Kroeder	1,115.00
Richard I. Kuhn	1,550.00
Marie H. Lightbody	1,016.68
Austin & Florence Lloyd	790.00
George S. Love	500.00
Robert S. Maddox	1,000.00
Alfred & Marjorie Merritt	4,000.00
Harold A. Minnich	1,395.00
Jean Montilla	1,050.00
Paul & Wilhelmina Neuber	1,010.00
George S. Paul	3,025.00
John Paustian	2,585.00
William A. Plotz	1,345.00
Alice Walz Poindexter	2,030.00

Mr. & Mrs. J. Elmer Reeb	2,030.00
Mr. & Mrs. Albert K. Rheem	13,870.00
Mabel Rowe	1,030.00
Mr. & Mrs. J. Clifford Rumbarger	1,320.00
Margaret Rupert	5,000.00
Arthur B. Sansom	1,780.00
Mr. & Mrs. Neal Scovil	3,000.00
Albert & Carolyn Shelton	1,000.00
Ruth Simmelink	1,000.00
Joan T. Sinclair	1,000.00
John Page Swing	1,185.00
Ernestine Tedor	1,000.00
Dorothy & Bernard Vixseboxse	1,500.00
Harriet Weddell	1,035.00
Harold B. Wright	1,025.00
William A. Achele	4,502.85
Estate of Miss Harriet Baldwin	2,422.00
Bowling League	954.33
Estate of Bernice Bramley	172.00
Estate of Hattie Broie	1,000.00
Estate of William C. Burrows	2,500.00
Estate of Georgia Case	8,627.97
Estate of Ethelyn B. Connelly	604,071.90
Pauline F. DeKalb	1,000.00
Mr. & Mrs. Trafton M. Dye	20.00
Edward L. Emerson	10,000.00
Estate of Mallard E. Foster	1,358.49
Estate of Eleanor Gaiser	1,000.00
Estate of Marvin D. Girardeau	5,000.00
Estate of Dorothy Ruth Graham	1,000.00
Estate of Elsie Lee Green	1,705.05
Estate of Laura B. Hale	20,100.00
Estate of Norma K. Hammer	3,282.00
Camilla B. Hysell	500.00
Ernest N. Jennison	5,000.00
Estate of Alice M. Keil	2,000.00
Florence B. & Henry H. Kern Living Endowment Fund	9,500.00
Joseph Mitchell Kiss & Helen Reed Kiss Endowment Fund	2,000.00
Estate of Muriel Lehr	1,000.00
Estate of Esther E. Lent	1,050.00
Estate of Edna F. Longcoy	8,414.33
Charles Edward Manville (Marguerite & Margery Ann)	6,000.00
Mark & Myrtle (Moncrief) Meriam Living Endowment	6,000.00

Luther L. & Kate Miller	10,000.00
George & Grace Pleasance	10,000.00
Estate of Ida O. Poe	39,936.93
Estate of Marion S. Powell	5,000.00
David Clifford Reed & Jennie Miller Reed	1,000.00
Mrs. Charles W. Root	500.00
Estate of Hugh Runkle	1,000.00
Flora M. Seibig	1,000.00
Paul E. Simon	1,000.00
Estate of Sheldon R. Tibbott	5,000.00
Thurman Tippy	3,000.00
Estate of Albert T. Zillmer	57,201.02
75th Anniversary Endowment Gifts - Various Donors	58,052.00
R. V. Allen	2,862.20
Florence Peterson	36,558.19
Kathryn Yenne	1,000.00
Pearl M. Brazee	12,212.12
Gertrude E. Hawkins	61,386.82
Margaret E. John	73,221.15
Walter Greene	10,000.00
Ruth Hange	5,000.00
Elizabeth White	2,000.00
John & Norine Prim	1,000.00
Robert Hotchkiss	1,500.00
Pearl Lee	1,049.52
Hildegarde Dobay	3,000.00
Katherine Waltz	36,959.72
Estate of Anna Moyer	76,386.00
Estate of Bertha Hauck	1,754.00
Estate of Wilma Reynolds	34,745.69
Estate of Leonard Ferman	5,000.00
The Rev. Dr. Lyman G. & Betty W. Farrar Living Endowment Fund	1,000.00
William Huffman, Jr	1,525.00
TOTAL	2,387,517.24

LAKWOOD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH SENIOR MINISTERS

The Rev. Benjamin Williams	1906-1908
The Rev. Ross W. Sanderson	1908-1909
The Rev. Edgar E. Scovill	1910-1911
The Rev. George LeGrand Smith	1912-1917
The Rev. Roy E. Bowers, D.D.	1918-1939
The Rev. Everett W. McNair, Ph. D.	1939-1948
The Rev. George Drew, D.D.	1949-1970
The Rev. Donald W. Morgan	1971-1978
The Rev. Frederick A. Meyer (Interim)	1978-1979
The Rev. Lyman G. Farrar, D. Min. (Pastor Emeritus)	1979-1994
The Rev. Alexander Campbell (Interim)	1994-1995
The Rev. Rosemary R. Iha (Interim)	1995
The Rev. Dale Stohre	1995-2000
The Rev. Martha Chenault (Interim)	2000-2004
The Rev. Dave Shackle (Interim)	2004
The Rev. Mark Thomas	2004-2018
The Rev. Joanna D'Agostino	2018-