

2023 SPC ANNUAL MEETING of the CONGREGATION

Sunday, December 10, 2023, 10 a.m.

Report of the Session

AGENDA

CLERK
Dave Smith

Opening Prayer

MOTION

Report of the Pastor

Report of the Budget and Finance
Committee

Report of
the Nominating Committee
Election of Church Leadership
(see supplemental materials)

Report of
the Personnel Committee
2024 Pastor Terms of Call

Report of the Clerk
Resolution of Property Issue
First Reading

Break
(11am Worship Begins
through Welcome and Parish Life)

Report of the Clerk
Resolution of Property Issue
Second Reading and Vote

Closing Prayer
(the completion of Worship)

That the several Trustees of Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church be authorized and directed to execute and deliver a Deed by which the Church will convey all of its right, title, and interest, both legal and equitable, at and for no consideration, to Contemporary American Theater Festival, Inc., a West Virginia non-profit corporation, in and to all that certain parcel of real estate situate in Shepherdstown Corporation District, fronting 206 feet on the south side of German Street and extending back (southerly) between parallel lines, 206 feet. [Tax Map 3, parcel 45]

BEING all and the same real estate which was conveyed from Henry Cookus (Henrich Kuches) to the “Presbyterian Church” in and adjoining Mecklenburg Town lying and being in the County of Berkeley in the Colony of Virginia by a Deed dated May 16, 1774, and recorded in the office of the Clerk of the County Commission of Berkeley County, West Virginia, in Deed Book 3, page 39, and recorded in the office of the Clerk of the County Commission of Jefferson County, West Virginia, as Exhibit 2 with a Deed recorded in Deed Book 1304, page 155.

CLERK
Dave Smith

Eleven new members were received in 2023: Eva Barnett, Donna Dettling, Brian Dettling, Lee Doty, Eileen Espinoza, Jennifer Espinoza, Patricia Hartman, Xavier Hersom, Garrett Norman, Michael McGough, Michelle Sadat

Two were baptized in 2023: Emma Madeira, Gabriel Madeira (children of Siri McDonald and Ramón Madeira)

MODERATOR
Rev. Gusti Linnea Newquist

2023 was the year I finally felt as if I had my legs under me, on the other side of COVID and the many transitions we have experienced at SPC. I am grateful!

Significant pieces of my work this year have included: establishing a more thorough training process for Ordained Leaders; offering guidance and support to our various committee leaders; leading the Session through strategic budgetary decisions; collaborating with the Shepherdstown Ministerial Associate to co-host a weekly Lenten worship series; equipping our staff for their work as a ministry team; serving as Treasurer for the Presbytery Committee on New Church Development and calling a Pastor to serve a new worshiping community focused on the recovery community; serving on the Investment Committee of the Westminster Foundation Board (to fund campus ministry in WV); participating in a continuing education workshop with indigenous botanist Robin Wall Kimmerer; facilitating *Teach the Preacher* and *Bible at the Bar* gatherings; supporting the pastoral formation of Debbie Romano; leading the Deacon Shepherds through case studies; offering pastoral care and counseling as needed, including weddings and funerals of SPC members and those in the community; and just

generally doing my part to strengthen our collective commitment to SPC's vision of *welcoming all who long for meaning, hope, and belonging*.

Now that we are settling into a more stable life together on the other side of the challenges of the past four years, the question of how to cultivate post-COVID hybrid community is before us. Please consider how we as a congregation might adapt our expectations and practices of community to this new era.

In that spirit, I would also like to devote more of my time to simply getting to know you better, as individuals and as groups. Please feel free to reach out to the church office to schedule a coffee date or a walk along the canal.

I look forward to the ongoing journey!

ADULT EDUCATION AND FORMATION
Anne Teresa, Chair

The purpose of SPC's Adult Education and Formation Program is transformation through the renewal of hearts and minds. The program supports these goals by seeking to cover a balance of subjects, including theology, spirituality, history, Bible and the arts. Formats include discussion groups, book studies, classes, retreats, and other small group experiences, with leadership that is shared as broadly as possible. During this period Adult Education and Formation sponsored the following:

2023 Sunday Seminars:

Do I Stay Christian? A Guide for the Doubters, the Disappointed and the Disillusioned Brian McLaren (Winter-Spring)

In Defense of Kindness Bruce Reyes-Chow (Fall)

An average of 16 persons attended each Sunday, via Zoom and Fellowship Hall.

Seven *Exploring Spiritual Practices* events were held in 2023. These monthly sessions, led by Larry Neumark, feature a variety of practices that participants can try out, or with which they can renew their understanding. This program has reached a milestone of 5 years in the offering!

The Adult Education committee gladly welcomed Missy Wheeler and Dorothy Simpson to the group.

BUDGET AND FINANCE

Bob Tucker, Chair

Pete Spreen, Administrator

To be offered verbally

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Lonce Bailey, Mary Anne Hitt, Chairs

In 2023, the programs for children and youth at SPC finally began to bounce back after COVID. Those programs are divided by age – the nursery serves children up to age 4, Sunday Studio is for grade levels kindergarten through fifth grade, and the youth group is for those in middle and high school. Christa Joyce is the staff youth director, and Mary Anne Hitt and Lonce Bailey are the session members responsible for children's programs.

Nursery: Staffing the nursery has been a challenge since COVID, with volunteers filling gaps as needed, but that started to improve this year. By fall 2023, we had secured adequate staffing for the nursery and regularly welcomed 1 – 3 of our littlest children on most Sundays.

Sunday Studio: Attendance at Sunday Studio steadily increased in 2023, with up to 16 kids participating on some Sundays. During the

spring Sunday Studio was predominantly led by Christa and a small handful of long-time volunteers. We gained many more volunteers in August, when we held a Sunday Studio orientation to provide curriculum training, complete background checks, and share best practices. We now have a dozen families and volunteers regularly volunteering in Sunday Studio, with enough adults and teen assistants available each Sunday to cover two classrooms (and we always welcome more!).

Youth Group: We have about a dozen teens regularly participating in the program, meeting every other week during the school year and monthly during the summer. Their activities included service projects (such as serving the community meal and doing yard work for church members), fun activities to build camaraderie and fellowship (including Ram's Den and movie theater outings), and meetings at church to discuss the issues they are facing. The youth participated in several worship services, including creating a litany of concerns for a service this fall. They also participated in two retreats – a winter retreat at Rolling Ridge, and a spring service retreat in Baltimore.

COMMUNICATIONS

**Pat Hamilton and Carolee Youngblood,
Co-Chairs**

The Communications Team was formed in December 2022. The mission of the team is to: *Improve communications and messaging among SPC members, friends and community to assure the mission and goals of SPC are met and can be assessed. Assure that the development of a communications plan is an outgrowth of strategic clarity by Session.* The Communications Team strives to reach all of SPC's internal and external audiences in a manner that meets those constituencies where they live.

The Team's first full meeting in January of this year mapped out our current and future plans, some of which are ongoing:

The Facebook Organization and Group pages have been adjusted to create excitement on the Org page for those browsing for information about SPC, and boost Group page engagement; work has begun rewriting and updating website information as well as research a new website platform. A small team worked with Lynn Dampman to update the SPC Realm database in order to publish the 2023 Directory. New, centralized storage for SPC documents, pictures and artwork will provide access to all of this content in a central location. A shared use laptop was also made available in the Fellowship Hall for hybrid meetings using the SPC meeting OWL and Zoom.

The Team also provided organizational and promotional support for the following committees and events: publishing guidelines for E-News; Guns to Gardens event; promotions for Eastern Panhandle Youth Alliance/EPYA and Immigrant and Refugee Support Committee; publications and decorations for Pride Day; collection of banned books for Pride Day; planning and promotion for the Stewardship 2023 campaign and document management for the Social Justice Church History project.

The 2023 Plan included the following projects which were begun and will resume in earnest in 2024:

New member and visitor welcome materials and contact plan; enhancements to *The Messenger*—a monthly publication for news and expanded content; strategic use of messaging, texting, YouTube channel and other appropriate social media; continued research into a new website platform, a new SPC generic flyer and development of a structure to enable the Team's

support of other committees, staff and leadership.

DEACONS

Debbie Romano, Moderator

SPC has 10 Deacons serving as shepherds to every member of SPC, providing care for individuals and families as we journey together in the life of our community at SPC. We have one commissioned Deacon for animals, who are our family as all creations of God are our family. We are available to provide meals when needed after illnesses or joys of new additions to the household. And we offer rides to appointments or necessary errands if you are unable to do so. We meet monthly for training, discussion and to be together in prayerful communion with one another.

Deacons Shepherds for 2023 were: Cathy Cross, Jennifer Jones, Patti McCarthy, Derek Smith, Paul Denchy, Ellie Lloyd, Chris Morehouse, Debbie Romano, Mica Martin, and Jeananne Stine. Carol Wood was a commissioned Deacon Shepherd for Animals.

MISSION COMMITTEE

Stephanie Jamieson, Chair

The Mission Committee continues its work, both locally and internationally.

Locally, the committee supports the JCCM homeless shelter, providing volunteers, food and monetary donations. Bert Wright stepped down from organizing the monthly community dinners, but the Patterson family stepped up and began running the dinners this fall. The committee also provides support to those working with immigration, earth care and the Rescue Mission. They are active with the Shepherd Shares program, providing money and volunteer hours. Coalfield Development continues to receive financial support, as do the

Children's Home, Shenandoah Women's Shelter, and Annunciation House.

Internationally the committee supports those working in Nicaragua (VERBO), the Congo Women's Center, SABEEL and Ukraine.

The committee faithfully continues its work, and can always use more people to help with planning and setting goals.

PARISH CARE
Paul Denchy, Chair

The Parish Care Committee serves and nourishes the congregation. Through the caring and sharing of many members, we are able to supply short-term meal preparation and/or transportation for members of SPC. The monthly newsletter article serves as a source of relevant medical information.

We sponsor occasional workshops and last year was on Breaking the Silence: Preparing for end of life.

We wish to thank the Session and the congregation for your loyalty and support of our mission. We are open to new ideas and welcome your feedback and input as we strive to go forward with our goal of ministering to the parish.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
Lois Spreen, Chair

The Personnel Committee is responsible to attend to SPC staff and staffing needs. The committee members include Diana Eldridge, Mary Ellen Lloyd, Rob Mahaffey, Lois Spreen, and Bob Tucker. This year's activities included facilitating year-in review meetings for staff, developing ministerial and staff compensation recommendations, putting together offer packages, presenting proposals to Session regarding offers, salaries, and staff actions, and

providing advice and counsel to the Pastor and staff as needed. Personnel is also responsible for setting up benefits each year, processing the bi-weekly payroll, and ensuring year-end W-2 and 1099 statements are correct..

This year SPC hired the following new employees: Sam Jannotta as Accompanist, Steve Grives as Choir Director, and Camryn Monroe as Nursery Attendant.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN
Suellen Myers, Carolee Youngblood,
Moderators

The Presbyterian Women of SPC meet at 10 AM on the first Thursdays of each month September through June for Bible study discussion, prayer and fellowship. This year the group is using the Horizons Bible Study, Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus in Luke - Acts by Olive Mahabir. The group participates in missions with the international fellowship of Presbyterian Women by giving to the national Thank Offering and Birthday Offering. These gifts help fund grants awarded to a mix of domestic and international projects in areas of health, education and economic development and the needs of women, children and families. In addition, as a local mission, financial and material support are given annually to Bethany House, a shelter for women and children in Martinsburg. Presbyterian Women has an active prayer shawl ministry to give prayer shawls, lap robes and baby blankets to SPC members and friends. All women of the church and community are welcome to join the meetings for lively discussion and caring fellowship.

PROPERTY
Daryl Kuster, Chair

The Property Committee has been busy this past year repairing damages throughout the building

and revamping the outside of the building as well. The pillar in the Narthex was repaired and painted; all the window sills in the Sanctuary were repaired and painted. The handicap entrance door off the narthex was repaired and painted. The stairwells up to the balcony and the narthex received a fresh coat of paint. The many outside projects that were completed include parching all around the building, repairing bottom of steps at basement door, redoing the bench, cleaning up the Ivy and preparing the grounds for a nice spring up-do of Native plants, applying mulch in the meantime. An energy device was added to help save on cost with the monthly savings being noticeable. The HVAC unit on the first floor had to be replaced and was successful on 12/3/23. The committee continues to replace burned out light bulbs; move furniture; fix broken toilets; and respond to other property incidents and issues as necessary. In spring the outside grounds will be given a lot of attention as well as the plans to repair and paint the windows on the Washington Street side. The committee would like to thank all of the church members for their commitment to give their time and talents and the necessary funds to continue to take care of our building.

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Lynn Coddington, Chair

MORE LIGHT PRESBYTERIANS,
IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE SUPPORT,
EPYA, GUNS TO GARDENS

Mission Statement: To inform and educate on key social justice issues in our church, community and the world leading to deeper engagement and expanded capacity to advocate for meaningful change, resulting in a world of increasing justice, wholeness and peace.

RACIAL JUSTICE – REMEMBRANCE,
REPAIR, RECONCILIATION

Exploring early 19th Century and pre-Civil War SPC by reading original Session minutes has been a primary focus in 2023 – the goal is to enhance known SPC histories and understand the role of the church in the community and with the onset of the Civil War. Minutes from Session meetings from 1814 - 1843 have been transcribed and are available. The 1841 - 1871 minutes transcription is underway. A 2024 Lenten Sunday seminar series will share what we've learned through the eyes of those involved with transcribing and with the help of local historians; topics include the Presbyterian church and slavery, and the Colonization Society and the Presbyterian Church. The Social Justice Committee joined with the Martinsburg-Berkeley Co. NAACP and local citizens to support and pay for placing an ad in the March *Martinsburg Herald Mail* newspaper on the 10-year anniversary of the death of Wayne Jones, who died as a result of actions by Martinsburg police.

The Community Remembrance Project is a collaboration of SPC Social Justice with the Martinsburg-Berkeley Co. NAACP chapter and local African-American groups to tell the untold stories of lynching victims. The location of the death of John Toliver, the second known victim in Berkeley County, is now known. As with the first victim, Joe Burns, the goal is to commemorate Mr. Toliver with a West Virginia historical highway marker. The Remembrance Project is a nationwide effort inspired by Bryan Stevenson's Equal Justice Initiative that seeks to memorialize local victims of racial terrorism

LGBTQIA JUSTICE

Writing a letter opposing and then tracking anti-trans legislation in the WV legislation – some of which was signed into law – started the year off. In June, SPC More Light Presbyterians, Social Justice and Eastern Panhandle Youth Alliance (EPYA) volunteers supported Eastern

Panhandle Pride's celebration in Martinsburg and, partnering with Four Seasons Bookstore, gave away more than 75 banned books. EPYA also reprised its very popular face painting.

A Progress flag was unfurled in June by ML outside SPC replacing the traditional but faded Pride flag. More than 15 EPYA youth and volunteers were joined by SPC youth in a June outing to Washington, D.C.'s Museum of Natural History, made possible with support from the church during the 2022 Alternative Christmas. EPYA has added one new volunteer and 15 more youth to the program

IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE SUPPORT

With the US immigration system in disarray and finding it difficult to effect systemic change in the system, IRSC's focus turned to supporting individual needs. IRSC responded to the call for clothing for immigrant women and children cared offered by The Holding Institute as they arrive in Laredo, TX, after their legal border crossing. "Your kindness and your contributions are greatly appreciated," The Holding Institute responded. IRSC also provided \$1000 to support Salvavision in Tucson AZ. IRSC told the story of Salvavision in a fundraising video last year. Our partner there, Dora Rodriguez, has been serving refugees and immigrants turned back into Mexico by the US Border Patrol. IRSC also financially support driving lessons for an Afghan mother and her eligible children who relocated locally, and financial support was provided for a refugee family in northern Virginia connected to us by a committee member

GUNS TO GARDENS

Support for this program came in the form of promotion, volunteers and financially

WORSHIP Debbie Romano, Chair

Our year of worship activities include participants from children, youth, and adults in our Sunday morning worship services, and special worship services during Lent and Easter. Teams are in place for Ushering, Sanctuary and Communion Guilds, and Liturgical Art. We gathered for celebrations of life, welcomed guest preachers, provided online worship each Sunday and held a Blessings of the Animals at Morgan Grove Park this past year. Many thanks to the amazing SPC staff and the faithful volunteers who make this weekly blessing possible.

2023 SESSION MEMBERS

Class of 2024

Mary Anne Hitt
Paul Kradel
*Lois Spreen
*Anne Teresa

Class of 2025

*Lonce Bailey
*Lynn Coddington
Adam Ware
Carolee Youngblood

Class of 2026

*Emily Gross
Keri Mahoney
*Dave Smith
*Bob Tucker

(* indicates second term)

Fundraising Goal: 5% above 2023 pledges



Current pledges

88% \$242,514

Almost there!

**\$34,432 more
to meet our goal**