



ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



PASTOR/HEAD OF STAFF
Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian

**EXECUTIVE ASSOCIATE
PASTOR**
Rev. Paula Mann

**PASTOR OF MISSION,
OUTREACH, & PASTORAL
CARE**
Rev. Mark Jones,

WORSHIP
JA'Michael Davis-Hoag,
Sunday Receptionist
Laurel Sanders, *Organist*
Dan Redfield, *Director of Music*

LEADERSHIP
Anne Cioffi, *Coordinator of
Membership & Lay Ministries*
Sarah Davis,
Director of Operations
Farrah Mikail,
Financial Manager
Brianna Naiman,
Preschool Director
Jessica Place,
*Director of Children & Family
Ministries*
(July 2023-April 2024)
Jake Putich,
*Director of Youth, College, &
Adult Faith Formation*

SUPPORT
Tajmaya "Taj" Anders,
Curriculum Specialist
Priscilla Glaza,
*Preschool Administrative
Assistant*
Heidi Rudd,
Preschool Office Manager
Linda Martinez
Administrative Assistant
Javier Torres, *Maintenance*
Lourdes Torres, *Custodial*
Joshua Torres, *Custodial*

DEAR WPC MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,

So much good happened this year – and every area of ministry made a difference! It shouldn't surprise us, since Scripture says each part of the Body of Christ matters (1 Cor. 12). This year's Annual Report encourages us to appreciate the many different – and crucial - parts of our church's body:

- ♦ *Parts providing comfort to our members* - Deacons encouraging the sick or bereaved, and bringing communion to our homebound.
- ♦ *Parts tending to our inner workings* – Finance and Personnel ensuring fiscal health and staff development.
- ♦ *Parts helping us grow stronger* – Adult Education and Spiritual Formation, Children & Family Ministries, Student Ministries, College & Young Adult Ministries nurturing every age and stage.
- ♦ *Parts looking to the future* – Vision & Planning sharing a renewed vision and mission, and Session's Property Development Commission overcoming obstacles as we look to ground-breaking.
- ♦ *Parts drawing us outward* – Mission & Outreach giving over \$140,000 in support to mission partners, and providing opportunities to roll up our sleeves.
- ♦ *Parts drawing us together* – Membership & Fellowship welcoming newcomers and hosting church-wide get-togethers; and Children & Family Ministries and our Softball team gathering us for fun.
- ♦ *Parts helping us value our own gifts* – Nominating and Stewardship urging us to offer whatever we can.
- ♦ *Parts challenging the status quo* – College & Young Adult Ministries engaging older generations in LGBTQ+ inclusion and Israel/Palestine, and Vision & Planning testing committee changes.
- ♦ *Parts guiding our way* – our Session overseeing the good of the whole as each part fulfills its purpose.

Each of these parts matters! But they're even ***better together***. And this year, our collaboration ***grew***.

We've grown in mutual awareness of the work each part is doing. We've shared appreciation for the difference we can make. And we've grown in teamwork, joining forces for good. As Worship & Music and Spiritual Formation wove services and small group studies in one theme, our faith and discussions grew deeper. As College & Young Adult Ministries invited adults of all ages to discuss a book on Israel/Palestine, our understanding and compassion expanded. As Children & Family Ministries and Preschool engaged young families together, our church family grew. As Mission & Outreach provided families with opportunities for hands-on mission, our outreach to the community expanded.

What will this next year bring? My prayer is that the Lord will continue to guide us into the future – that *each* of us will do our part - that we will celebrate that *all* of our gifts matter.

- Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian
Pastor/Head of Staff

DEAR WPC MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,

"That's why every person belongs ... why every person's gifts matter. Our gifts of Welcome; our gifts of Prayer; our gifts of Compassion: together, we are W.P.C." Pastor Chris and the Stewardship Committee shared this in the stewardship letter sent earlier this year. I was inspired to think of other words that express who we are.

Westwood Presbyterian Church
Welcome, Prayer, Compassion
Worship, Pray, Commune
Wishful, Possibilities, Challenges
Workers, Presbyters, Committees
Wonder, Potential, Creative
Wise, Priesthood, Christened
Whisper, Prayerful, Chancel
Welcome, Prayer, Compassion
Westwood Presbyterian Church

Some words could become the beginning of a poem or a story. There are many stories in this place and I have been blessed to hear some of them. The stories connect us to our past and give hope for the future. Please continue sharing them with each other and with me. I would love to learn more about your hopes and dreams and to walk alongside you during challenging times.

I have the privilege of working alongside the Administrative Commission, the Finance Committee, the Personnel Committee, and the Vision & Planning Committee. Each has its specific areas of responsibility and each group looks for its impact on the other areas of the church. Collaboration is key to the successful implementation of the mission and ministries of Westwood Presbyterian Church.

This past year has brought more excitement in the 'work of the church.' I am excited when I hear what is happening and usually wonder how we will get it all done. The Personnel Committee and Finance Committee have the challenge of making sure our human resources and our financial resources are available and capable of making the dreams come true. The Vision & Planning Committee has found that the committees want to be connected and collaborate. The Administration Commission is seeing some light ahead on the dream of the new facilities for this faithful community.

Thank you for the privilege to serve God with you.

-Rev. Paula Mann
Executive Associate Pastor



Executive Associate
Pastor
Rev. Paula Mann



DEAR WPC MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,

The 2023-24 fiscal year, working alongside the faithful members of the Board of Deacons (BoD) and the Mission & Outreach Committee (M&O) proved to be an exciting one and a blessing to the members and friends of our WPC Family. Serving as support staff for these two incredibly committed servant groups provided a ringside seat to observe God at work through their caring spirits and tireless efforts in serving the WPC congregation and the larger community in many ways.

It is an honor to be part of WPC's God glorifying worship services with faithful preaching of the Word, and the blessing of its anointed music offerings. Thanks be to God!

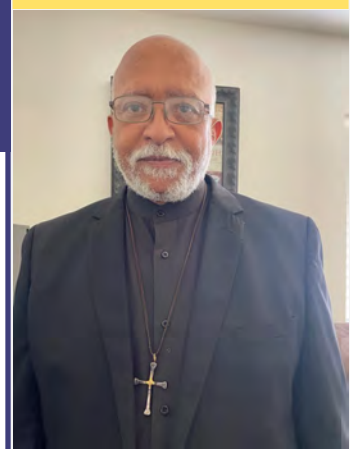
Thankful for Our Deacons: It was a joy to provide pastoral support to the BoD who work as a team taking the lead in various ministries in the communal life of WPC. Witnessing their spiritual fervor, energy, and care in what they do is gratifying. I am thankful for their solemn commitment to the vows of their office that I pray is seen and valued by their WPC family. I pray also that members of the congregation recognize the Deacon's important connectional caring ministry to members experiencing illness, hospitalization, loss of loved ones, and to members who are in care or assisted living facilities or are homebound for various reasons. I encourage anyone who is inspired to become more involved in the life of the church, to consider serving in the Ordered Ministry of Deacon. The Deacon's is a Prayer and Care Ministry – SECOND TO NONE!

About the WPC Mission & Outreach Committee: Enough cannot be said! The list of its outreach and stewardship of mission benevolence on behalf of WPC is extensive, growing, and the level of enthusiasm with which each member contributes is incalculable! I am inspired by the lively, engaging dialogue at each committee meeting that belies the rumor—Presbyterian Committee meetings are too long and boring. Every M&O member is energetic and keen on efficient use of WPC resources to assist people in need.

The 2024-25 year is teeming with promise. I continue to serve on PATH's and the Westside Coalition's Boards of Directors and the LA County Department of Mental Health Clergy RoundTable. These three, together with our other Mission Partners (FosterAll, Habitat for Humanity Greater LA, and Westside Food Bank), are central to a vast network of Supportive Services Agencies. Through this network we connect people in need to arguably every service imaginable—including members of WPC. Increasing my effort to engage members of the BoD, M&O, and WPC Congregation with this network promise to increase the number of referrals for assistance exponentially. Collaboration with WPC and Pacific Presbytery Committees and the added focus on EarthCare as a Mission Pod of M&O adds to the excitement! Please read the BoD and M&O reports.

Thanks to Pastor Chris, Pastor Paula, WPC Committees and Staff for exceptional Teamwork, and my wonderful wife, Romana, for understanding the rigors of life in ministry!

In Christ's service and yours ~ Pastor Mark

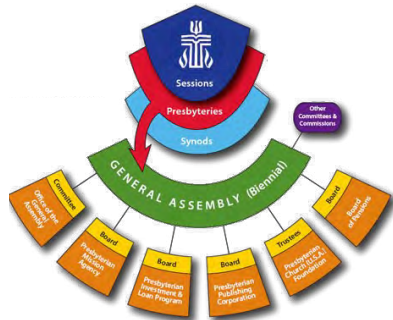


**Pastor of Mission,
Outreach, & Pastoral
Care**

Rev. Mark S. Jones, Sr.



SESSION



The governing constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) holds Session responsible for guiding and governing the life of the congregation. Session leads the congregation in fulfilling its responsibilities for the service of all people, for the up-building of the whole church, and for the glory of God.

We worked particularly closely with Vision & Planning Committee and were excited to hear about their work discerning how the church can best respond to the needs of the congregation. Based on their recommendations, we continue to work on ways to avoid siloing and involve as many as possible in the life of the church. In the Spring of 2024, we were excited to learn about and enthusiastically endorse Vision & Planning Committee's proposals for the church's new Vision and Mission Statements.

Vision Statement:

We are a community that welcomes everyone to grow in faith and care for the world God loves. Join us as we seek to pursue justice, practice kindness, and walk humbly with God.

Mission Statement:

We are called to:

- Walk humbly with God through inspired worship, impactful service, open fellowship, and curious learning for all ages.
- Practice kindness through welcoming and including all of God's people, as we grow in faith and friendship, and share the grace we receive in Jesus Christ.
- Pursue justice through our collective and individual relationship with neighbors in L.A. and the world, and care for the earth God gave us.

As we look forward to the upcoming year, Session continues to value the sacred responsibilities entrusted to us by the membership of the church and looks forward to further serving God and His church.

- Graham Beattie, Clerk of Session

The Presbyterian Church (USA) *Book of Order* charges, "The Session shall have responsibility for governing the congregation and guiding its witness to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that the congregation is and becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness." [G-3.0201]



Moderator:

Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament:

Rev. Paula Mann
Rev. Mark S. Jones, Sr.

Ruling Elders:

Graham Beattie (Clerk)
Carlton Bailey
Cathy Brown
Elizabeth Evans
Breen Frazier
David Hartle
Scott Hartle
Cami Hamilton
Steve Hauser
Kathryn Welch Howe
Martha Kadue
Brooke Larson
Connie Price
Emma Puglia
Kelly Sheridan
Lou Moore Singleton
Jann Williams



"The ministry of deacon as set forth in scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ..."

It is the duty of deacons, first of all, to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless, and to any who may be in distress both within and beyond the community of faith."
– Book of Order

Moderators:

Kelly Sheridan, Elder
Heather Leatherwood,
Co-Moderator

Deacons:

Kate Branaman
Madrona Casey
Kevin Glynn
David Hartle
Peumi Jayyasuriya
Patricia Kurtz
Matheus Oliveira
Kitty Sankey
Cindy Transgrud

Staff Resources

Rev. Mark S. Jones, Sr.
Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian



BOARD OF DEACONS

We have the sacred privilege of seeing God at work in countless ways through our ministry as Deacons. Through hands on, tangible events, large and small, we work together to serve our church, our mission partners, and the world at large.

Among the highlights of our year is taking communion to our homebound members in August, December, and May. Serving with the pastors and elders, we pair-up after worship on those communion Sundays to bring the sacrament in person. At times, over 20 households are served! Christ is truly present with us, in the tenderness of sharing stories and the joy of breaking bread together.



We also have the privilege of preparing communion elements every first Sunday of the month for worship in the sanctuary. This year, some of WPC's youth have joined us in this work, as well as cleaning up afterwards. It is an invisible but gladsome task! A very special communion tradition has also been brought back: the Maundy Thursday supper and service in Hoffman Hall, as we celebrate the night our Savior broke bread with his disciples in the Upper Room.

Sharing the love of God is the greatest gift we bring, and a blessing to us too. Bringing Sunday's chancel flowers to someone grieving a loss or celebrating a great joy ... sending cards to welcome the confirmation class, encouraging the sick, or simply sharing a prayer ... sharing resources with those who may need meals delivered or care provided ... and so very much more. One serendipitous benefit of deacon ministry is the sense of fellowship and awe we experience - the kind of experience the disciples who were privileged to serve alongside the Savior - as we serve together in the Spirit of Jesus Christ - serving our brothers and sisters in Christ.



We look forward to implementing some new approaches that will allow us to streamline recurring responsibilities and focus on expanding outreach. We are honored to represent WPC with each and every ministry of compassion.

- Kelly Sheridan, Chair of the Board of Deacons

The Adult Education Committee offers education and feeds the life of the mind, providing regular and periodic opportunities for Christian learning that bring faith to bear on contemporary issues.

ADULT EDUCATION



Kurt Dahlin

We've seen God at work in our committee in a variety of ways through a year of solid programming. We worked to host Faith Conversations that were timely, challenging and thought provoking. We partnered with Mission & Outreach Committee for a Faith Conversation about the installation of water wells in Africa and the varied and at times surprising benefits those provide.

Dr. Reinhard Krauss joined us from Berlin to discuss the Israel/Palestine conflict and give Christian/interfaith perspectives on peace. We had a screening and discussion of the "1946" documentary as part of Pride Month. During Earth Care Month, Adam Hirsch and Clark Taylor from the Trust for Public Land joined us to discuss their 28x28 Project and its profound impact on LA schools and their neighborhoods. The project's goal is to green 28 schoolyards in LA by the time of the LA Olympics.



Dr. Reinhard Krauss



Linda Kinstler

Former WPC Pastor Rev. Peggy Krong presented "The Fingerprints of God," discussing Celtic Christianity and its roots. And we've looked for new areas of thought and discussion to present. Linda Kinstler, author of the NY Times essay "Can Silicon Valley Find God?", joined us to discuss Artificial Intelligence and its effects within religious and spiritual communities. These were just some of the topics we offered. Our committee's mantra for our Faith Conversations is "to not tell you what to think but rather give you something to think about." These presentations also gave the congregation ideas for how they could be involved in a productive way in our community and around the world. And our Sunday morning classes, Faith, Search & Support and Adult Bible Forum, continue to be stalwarts of study and thoughtful discussion.

We've discussed and analyzed a number of things that we'll take into our next year in an effort at greater faithfulness. We'll focus on advance calendar planning to allow for stronger planning, promotion and engagement. We'll continue to look for ways to collaborate with other committees within the church and we'll seek to be ambitious in our outreach. We'll reach for big "gets" and dare to imagine beyond what we've traditionally done. We'll continue our discussions after all of our Faith Conversations, where we discuss how they went and look at strengths and weaknesses and ways to fully optimize the experience. And we'll continue to look at how we can best support Faith, Search & Support and Adult Bible Forum. We're looking forward to the year ahead!



- Scott Hartle, Adult Education Committee Chair

Committee Chair
Elder Scott Hartle

Committee:
DeAnne Crossley
David Kadue
Abraham T. H. Kim
Patricia Kurtz
James Louie

Staff Resource
Jake Putich



The Children and Family Ministries Committee carries out the church's commitment, made in the vows of baptism, to assist parents in raising their children to a deep and loving relationship with Jesus Christ, by providing infant through elementary school age children opportunities to grow in faith.

Committee Chair
Elder Brooke Larson

Committee:
Kate Branaman
Kristyn Humphreys
Kimberly Gallant
Andrew Kim
Jane Kinsey
John Langfitt
Camille Morris

Staff Resource
Jessica Place
(July, 2023—April, 2024)
Brooke Larson
(Interim Director of Children & Family Ministries, April—July, 2024)



CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRIES (CFM)



Trunk or Treat

God is the best teacher to children, their parents, and the church. With the staff changes to CFM this year, we have been blessed by the reminder that walking along side our merciful and mighty God in our children's Christian education is a lesson that tells itself. We have worked with youth to create an incredible Christmas pageant and volunteers to bring activities from Trunk or Treat and the Easter Egg Hunt to smaller outings to life. For a small committee of busy folks, our Christian Education program has remained a creative, participatory, inclusive, and loving space for children to grow in their faith knowledge and formation, with the help of God's grace.

As ever, this committee has learned how vital every part of the church is to the work of growing and developing children's Christian learning. We have learned to dream bigger for the program for next year, with VBS reimagined as an off-campus event, a camping trip, and adult education programs for parents. We will continue to learn that God is good and will continue to help our children to see that church is a safe space where they are loved, just as God loves them.



Christmas Pageant

- Brooke Larson, Children & Family Ministries Committee Chair



Manna Bag Packing



Palm Sunday



Children's Summer Musical Actors

CYAM exists to provide a sanctuary for college students and young adults on the Westside. We desire to create a space for curiosity and connection, where faith can bloom into acts of justice, love, humility, and peace for the sake of our neighbors and our world.

Committee Chair
Elder Emma Puglia

Committee:
Jim Louie
Anne Mathews
Scott McDowell
Emilie Nordhues
Gabby Price

Staff Resource
Jake Putich



COLLEGE & YOUNG ADULT



2024 Los Angeles Homeless Count

saw God call upon us toward leadership and speaking up for each others' truths.

First of all, remaining open to one another in our hearts and minds is so crucial for authentic faith to be cultivated. As we continue to grow our college and young adult group, this will be essential towards welcoming folks from all different walks of life. Growing comfortable with others takes time, but we will continue to create spaces of welcome for other young adults.

- Emma Puglia, College & Young Adult Committee Chair

It feels like God has impacted us by opening our hearts and our minds. One of the things we're most proud of as a committee is providing meaningful ways for your YA community to lead the church in deep and profound conversations (e.g., LGBTQ+ inclusion and Israel/Palestine). Not only did it allow us a chance to bridge the gap between age groups and open our eyes to other perspectives, but we



Renaissance Fair Outing



Ember Contemplative Service,
1st Thursdays of the month

The Finance Committee establishes and oversees the church budget, ensuring careful, transparent management of all church funds and investments.

Committee Chair
Elder Elizabeth Evans

Committee:
Graham Beattie
Mundi Fomukong
Betty Glick
David Kadue
Mary Pringle

Investment Sub-Committee:
Matt Covington
Elizabeth Evans
Freeman Hall
Don Morrison
Todd Popovich

Staff Resources
Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian
Rev. Paula Mann
Farrah Mikail

FINANCE

This past fiscal year (2023-2024), Session authorized an Operating Budget with a deficit of \$379,483, which was less than 4 percent of the Westwood Fund. The final results reflect, however, that only \$198,089 was needed from the Westwood Fund. This year's (2024-2025) Operating Budget has a deficit of \$470,361, which is also lower than 4 percent of the Westwood Fund (\$471,331).

The Committee continues to try to avoid the WPC siloes by meeting with other Committees. For example, in this fiscal year we met with Lou Moore of Stewardship Committee and Con Howe of Administrative Commission/Property Development. Any Committee desiring to meet with Finance is welcome.

The Committee continues to emphasize the need for overall fiduciary responsibility by Staff and Session in abiding by the use of only 4 percent of the Westwood Fund to achieve a balanced operational budget.

The Committee continues to revise the WPC Accounting and Finance Manual so that it may be used as a reference tool by Session, Committees, and Staff. We are a committee that is not afraid to ask questions and we know how to listen to one another.

One of the Finance Committee's accomplishments this year was to revise the financial statements it presents to Session. We now present Condensed (1-page) Profit and Loss statements as well as detailed Profit and Loss statements so that Session members can have the data presented to them in whatever form they like.

The Committee continues to research the budget process. Last year the budget process began in March, but that was stressful under the circumstances of last year where a large initial gap existed between sources and uses of funds for the Financial Manager to prepare accurate Operating Budgets in a timely fashion. This year we began the Budget Process a month earlier to give everyone more time, but we understand that Staff complains that February is soon for them to know what their programming needs will be. The revisions to the budget process will continue!!

- Elizabeth Evans, Finance Committee Chair

The WPC Budget is available on the next page.

Detailed financial reports are always available for WPC Members. Please contact the church office at office@westwoodpres.org or (310) 474-4535.



WPC OPERATING BUDGET: SOURCES AND USES OF FUNDS

	2020-2021 Fiscal Year Budget	2020-2021 Fiscal Year Actuals	2021- 2022 Fiscal Year Budget	2021-2022 Fiscal Year Actuals	2022-2023 Fiscal Year Budget	2022-2023 Fiscal Year Actuals	2023-2024 Fiscal Year Budget	2023-2024 Fiscal Year Actuals	2024-2025 Fiscal Year Budget
Income	Pledge/Non-Pledge	701,085		709,760		734,996	725,000		725,000
	Other Income	7,875		11,867		7,298	10,000		11,500
	Fund Income	145,980		181,691		206,697	200,000		225,000
	Preschool (1)	245,295		522,113		302,730	146,095		143,049
	Church Rental Income	153,280		9,075		33,890	11,000		17,600
	Property-Ashton House	47,329		66,822		51,330	51,348		65,000
	Manse Rental Income	56,953		58,539		55,862	56,190		56,175
	Belmont Income	-	-	-	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Total Income		1,357,796		1,709,865		1,542,804	1,349,633		1,393,324
Expenses	Personnel	672,832		720,401		762,628	813,361		872,796
	Preschool Committee	100		-		-	-	-	-
	Properties & Infrastructure	133,478		214,621		261,509	238,150		244,950
	Session	12,490		13,274		15,787	15,250		16,750
	Mission & Outreach	60,675		60,402		64,934	44,300		53,800
	Pastoral Expenses	325,887		294,791		450,181	473,870		488,669
	Staff	-	-	-					
	Administration	42,299		73,446		59,193	59,760		81,260
	Pastoral Care	66		367		684	600		600
	Membership	343		378		725	2,000		2,250
	Nominating	-	-	-	150	259	150	187	300
	Vision & Planning	-	-	-	543	-	-	-	-
	Communications		375		-	669	3,000		8,260
	Congregational Life/ Fellowship	11,700	25	5,900	3,090	15,400	11,250	15,600	5,886
	Adult Ministries		1,600		3,798		6,455	6,800	11,200
	Spiritual Formation		1,907		2,625		5,007	5,725	5,350
	Student/College/Young Adult Ministries	4,650	2,513	4,250	3,805	12,400	7,763	10,650	6,261
	Children's Ministries		2,540		6,833		6,135	6,050	7,800
	Music & Worship		16,506		34,569		48,739	33,850	47,600
Total Expenses		1,273,635		1,432,944		1,701,917	1,729,116		1,863,685
Net Income/Loss		(252,080)	84,161	(428,888)	276,922	(383,259)	(159,114)	(379,483)	(198,089)
Contribution from Westwood Fund		-	-	-	-	159,114	379,483		470,361

(1) The WPC Preschool uses common services and site overhead from the church. But these costs are not allocated to the preschool.

(2) The Session of WPC has authorized spending up to 4% of the principal of the Westwood Fund to support its operations.

MEMBERSHIP & FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES



Monday Nighters, 2023

We have seen God work through this committee as we're reminded there is no way to know Christ apart from Christian community. Christ exists as community, and that is evident in all our Membership activities. As we increase WPC's Membership, we also increase opportunities for fellowship, connection, and community building through God's presence and love. We were blessed this year with the addition of eight new members in November, 2023, and four new members in May, 2024. The membership committee planned and hosted a New Member's reunion in March which was well attended and enjoyed by all.

The Membership & Fellowship committee has learned we work really well together as a team. We care about each other, and know each other's strengths and respect our limitations as well. In the coming year we look forward to the Holy Spirit guiding our team as we serve and support WPC's Membership and Fellowship ministries.



Homecoming, 2023

- Connie Price, Membership & Fellowship Committee Chair



Homecoming, 2023

The Membership & Fellowship Committee assists the congregation in being a welcoming and inviting community. They welcome newcomers, provide new member seminars and walk with new members until they are established in the ministries and fellowship circles of the church.

Committee Chair
Elder Connie Price

Committee:
Stephan Ceci
Shari Godbold
Anne Louise Rice
Koorosh Yeganeh

Staff Resources
Anne Cioffi
Jessica Place
(July 2023-April 2024)



The Mission & Outreach Committee seeks social healing and extends compassion beyond our faith community, providing opportunities for our congregation to care for the poor, the hungry, and the disenfranchised as Christ has asked us to care.



Spring Book Drive

Committee Chair
Elder David Hartle

Committee:
James Babbin
Ellen Caldwell
Lara Fedoroff
Craig German
Carole Grogan
Scott Hartle
Dr. Earnest Hayward, Jr.
Samantha Jetter
Martha Kadue
Mark Meyer
Leslie Owens
Ann May Schloss
Kelly Sheridan
John Shustitzky
Michelle Whelan

Staff Resource
Rev. Mark S. Jones, Sr.



MISSION & OUTREACH (M&O)

Mission and Outreach continues to see God at work through the active hands-on compassion and generosity of WPC.

Some of our hands-on highlights of this past year were:

- M&O's ongoing relationship with Esperanza Elementary School continues to deepen. Our now annual Fall and Spring Playground Mornings at Esperanza brought many WPC members and families out again this year. Our Spring Playground Morning, led by M&O's Scott Hartle, had its largest turnout yet, and included an added offering of arts and crafts that was very popular and effectively broadened engagement with the students and families. Principal Brad Rumble continues to express deep appreciation for WPC and the widening impact on the Esperanza students and families. On a separate note, Scott exclusively used WPC's new software system, Church Community Builder, for sign ups and group messaging, a positive sign for WPC's organizational and operational future.
- Our Spring Book Drive returned in a big way with a total of 26 boxes of books collected and divided between Esperanza Elementary, PATH (People Assisting the Homeless), and SPY (Safe Place for Youth). The Spring Book Drive has become another highlight of the year with WPC members and families organizing and packing the books in Hoffman Hall on the final day and then eating some well-earned pizza together.
- Team WPC, organized by M&O, returned to the Homeboy 5K in Chinatown, another of our now annual activities. We had our largest turnout for the post-race meal yet!
- M&O and WPC members continue to participate in builds for Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles.
- M&O combined the Monthly Food Drive supporting the Wilshire Presbyterian Food Pantry and the Hunger Table collection supporting the Westside Food Bank into one Sunday, streamlining the collection process. This effort continues to be a steady source of contribution to these worthy causes in our greater Los Angeles community and provides an opportunity for mission discussion on the side porch.
- At Christmas, WPC's generosity provided nearly 700 Christmas dinners (\$30,600) for families in need in the LA community, a successful Toy Drive, with gifts going to FosterAll (including an in-person party with a magician!), fast food cards and gift bags to SPY (Safe Place for Youth), and gift cards to the Salvation Army Village and St. Joseph's Center.

Through the generosity of WPC, Mission & Outreach was able to allocate the following Mission Grants this year:

\$8,000 to Water Wells for Africa	\$5,000 to FosterAll
\$5,000 to PATH	\$5,000 to Westside Food Bank
\$2,500 to Habitat for Humanity Greater Los Angeles	
\$1,000 to PC(USA) Mission co-workers Ryan and Alethia White (Berlin)	

- continued on the next page



Homeboy 5K Run/Walk



Homeboy 5k Meal



Spring Book Drive



Hunger Walk

MISSION & OUTREACH (M&O)...CONTINUED

\$1,000 to PC(USA) Mission co-workers Nancy and Shelvis Smith-Mather (South Sudan)
 \$1,000 to Armenian Missionary Association of America
 \$749.31 to Academy for Judaic, Christian, and Islamic Studies
 \$500 for Little Tokyo Business Assoc. party for downtown mission families
 \$350 to Westside Coalition Membership
 \$300 for National Black Presbyterian Caucus (Institutional Mission Partnership)
 \$918 for monthly lunches throughout the year at SPY

In addition to those allocations directed by M&O, the Committee was involved in encouraging and facilitating donations by WPC members to the Christmas Joy Offering, Christmas Dinners and Toy Drive, FosterAll, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles, Meals on Wheels, One Great Hour of Sharing Offering, PATH, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Westside Food Bank, and Wilshire Presbyterian Food Pantry.

The total benevolence disbursed through M&O in the 2023/2024 fiscal year was **\$140,857.60**.

M&O continues to focus on providing hands-on mission opportunities for the WPC community. We continue to ideate on ways to increase congregational engagement in hopes that those giving voice to this interest will become active mission participants.

M&O continues to focus on WPC's role as a Matthew 25 church, including the commitment to work on building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism and eradicating systemic poverty. We know ultimately our call is to help everyone around us — *"whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me,"* and everything we do should be aligned with this call.

M&O officially agreed that Earth Care should be a fifth area of mission focus for WPC, along with our longstanding areas of mission focus: children and youth, food insecurity, housing and supportive services and International mission.

In order to be more efficient and further empower members of the committee, M&O reorganized into pods for each area of mission focus. Generally, each pod will have a Lead and a Second who will be the point people for anything related to their specific area of mission focus throughout the year.

Pod Lead and Second assignments are:

Children and Youth	Scott Hartle and Michelle Whelan
Food Insecurity	Martha Kadue
Housing and Supportive Services	Lara Fedoroff and Craig German
International Mission	Carole Grogan and David Hartle
Earth Care	John Shustitzky and Ellen Caldwell*

(*rolling off M&O but remaining involved with Earth Care efforts)

M&O continues to foster our spirit of collaboration across committees, particularly with Deacons, Children & Family Ministries, Student Ministries, College & Young Adult Ministries, Adult Education, WPC Preschool, and the addition of M&O's Martha Kadue as liaison to the Pacific Presbytery.

- David Hartle, Mission & Outreach Committee Chair

NOMINATING

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!' - Isaiah 6:8

The Nominating Committee (Nom Com) members draw upon each other's involvement and connections in the church to identify individual members and friends to participate in the committee, Deacon, and Session life of WPC. After launching "Nominating Season" and soliciting nominations, the committee meets on retreat for this important work. Much like putting together a Mr. Potato Head, with eyes, ears, a nose, the Nom Com suggests people to fill empty seats on specific committees and boards to help each group thrive happily in its service to WPC life.

In addition to filling vacancies to reflect the rich diversity of the WPC community, members of Nom Com are mindful of finding the right person for the right position as a step to greater grace among members. This year marked an update in ensuring that opportunities for service were part of more lives. The Committee's work was influenced by the Terms Limits of Service according to the WPC by-laws: *"Committee members shall not serve on the same committee for more than six years without at least one year break in service."* This awareness brought sharper focus to the need for new faces and spiritual gifts.

After making personal invitations to serve, Nom Com confirms the composition of each committee for next year's service, with personal terms of three years, two and in rare cases, only one. The Committee chart is given to Session.

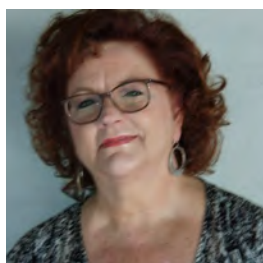
"Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves people of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task." (Acts 6:3).

- Co-Chair, Cami Hamilton and Scott McDonald

The 2023/2024 Nominating Committee



James Babbin



Janet Bishop



Mundi Fomukong



M.C. Haslett



Jane Kinsey



Heather Leatherwood

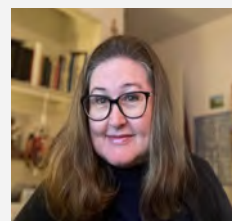


Michael Sohigian

The Nominating Committee serves as the church's Volunteer Resources department, inviting each member to serve in some aspect of the church's mission and ministry.

Committee Chair

Elder Cami Hamilton
Scott McDowell (Co-Chair)



Cami Hamilton



Scott McDowell

Committee:

James Babbin
Janet Bishop
Mundi Fomukong
M.C. Haslett
Jane Kinsey
Heather Leatherwood
Mike Sohigian

Staff Resource

Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian



The Personnel Committee serves as the church's Human Resources Department, overseeing all aspects of employment, staff development, oversight and care.

Committee Chair
Elder Cathy Brown

Committee:
Freeman Hall
Peter Helms
Callie Kramer
John Langfitt
Dale Larson
Sheila Lawrence

Staff Resource
Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian
Rev. Paula Mann



PERSONNEL

The Personnel Committee's efforts this last year have focused on ensuring the infrastructure, care and appreciation of the work of our church staff team. Our work included updating job descriptions to align with the church's current ministries. For example, some of the "trial-run" committee-structure changes recommended by the Vision & Planning Committee and approved by Session, shifted responsibilities for fellowship activities as well as Preschool connections. In addition, we reviewed the Employee Policies and Practice Manual, as well as compensation for our staff.



Brooke Larson

Over the course of the year, our staffing was relatively stable, with the exception of Jessica Place's departure in the Spring. We are blessed to have Brooke Larson step in as Interim Director of Children & Family Ministries, and as the new year begins, to welcome Marin Miller as our new Director.

Since Marin is part-time, she will not have capacity to take on the additional duties such as Women's Ministry or Fellowship. Our work going forward includes defining and delegating those responsibilities. We also recognize that we need to ensure accurate and timely communication where appropriate during major change.

We give thanks for the whole committee's faithful leadership through the year, and look forward to fulfill our calling for the new season.

- Cathy Brown, Personnel Committee Chair



Marin Miller

The Property Development Committee exercises stewardship of the church's properties, overseeing all aspects of upkeep, maintenance and enhancement.

Commission Chair
Con Howe

Commission

Jan Cloyde
(July 2023)
Betty Glick
Martha Kadue
Jon Stewart

Staff Resource

Rev. Paula Mann
Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian

Consultants

Rev. Dr. Lynn Cheyney
Turner Smith

SESSION ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION (PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT)



During the past year, the Administrative Commission continued to oversee and guide the WPC's project to provide new facilities and a long-term endowment for the Church and its mission. WPC previously approved an agreement with Belmont Village Assisted Living to ground lease the Church property (except for the Sanctuary) for 99

years, making substantial monthly payments to the Church in order to build and operate an assisted living facility on the current surface parking lot.

Phase 1 of the project is a new 2-story building in the rear of the Church's property containing the Pre-School, Church offices and meeting rooms, and a meditation chapel. Phase 2 of the project includes a 12-story assisted living facility plus a new Fellowship Hall and other Church facilities, as well as underground parking.

A video presentation on the design of the project appears on the Church's website at westwoodpres.org.

The project has been completely approved by the City of Los Angeles. That lengthy process included approval by 2 Neighborhood Councils, the Westwood Design Review Board, the Zoning Administrator, the City Planning Commission, and the City Council. Unfortunately, after that long public process, some next-door neighbors sued the City (and Belmont and WPC) claiming that the City erred in approving the project.

In March 2023, the Los Angeles Superior Court ruled entirely in favor of the City/Belmont/WPC. The same opposition subsequently appealed to the Court of Appeals, which is the last step in the legal process. (Under our agreement, Belmont is responsible for paying for all of the legal defense of the project and in addition continue to make monthly payments to the Church.)

While the judicial process gets to its inevitable conclusion, the Administrative Commission has worked with the architect of Phase 1 to refine the design and to prepare for construction.

- Con Howe, Administrative Commission Chair



The Spiritual Formation Committee provides opportunities to nourish the life of the Spirit and deepen one's relationship with God through contemplative services and practices, and by enriching a sense of community with one another.



Committee Chair

Elder Kathryn Welch Howe
Megan Imundo, Co-Chair

Committee:

Rebecca Crane-Okada
Charles Cioffi
Ellen Caldwell
Michele Hauser
Li Myers-Trivers
Bill Soldwisch

Staff Resource

Jake Putich



SPIRITUAL FORMATION

The purpose of the Spiritual Formation Committee is to engender a community of faith at WPC by communicating an understanding of Christian values, personal faith, spiritual practice, and community. We understand that the vitality of our faith is a foundation for the entire church.

Our committee meetings begin with prayer and conversation about spiritual formation. God has helped us with focus and creativity as we consider “How can spiritual practices engender Christian Community at WPC?;” “What does Spiritual Formation mean to you, to WPC?;” “What is valued and distinctive about WPC spiritually?” The excellent and enthusiastic SF members are clarifying our priorities for Spiritual Formation at WPC.

Programmatically, SF continued to host small group book studies for the congregation in the fall and during Lent. 6-8 small groups of 5-8 people discussed faith-related topics raised in the books, such as justice, kindness and humility. This year, *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer and *The Rebirthing of God* by John Philip Newell led to a conscious commitment to strengthening both our faith community and our work as stewards of faith in this world.

We again organized 3 Vespers services--in the Fall, during Advent and on Good Friday, providing a contemplative worship in the meditative, ecumenical style of the Taize monastery focused on health, peace and justice. We strengthened collaboration this year by sponsoring fellowship following Vespers and coordinating with Ember members.

We wish to continue to build and strengthen the presence of faith and joyful, healing transformation at WPC—in church services and with other ministries such as Mission & Outreach, Adult Education, Ember, Youth & Children. We expect to be helpful with the church’s work in peace-keeping and care for our community and our planet.

We will continue our book and Vespers programs and look for opportunities to expand. SF has organized day retreats in the past and we plan to revive these, possibly including a longer retreat within an active monastic community in order to focus on issues of spiritual practice and community and to attract inter-generational participants.

Next year, we want the church and its membership to grow as a result of faith and collaboration among the important ministries of WPC. We would like to see “community of faith” take on real meaning—as a congregation that seeks out spiritual growth, that understands the elements of community, that values spiritual practices, that participates in the world, and that embodies justice, kindness, and humility as the foundation for our church and our lives.

- Kathryn Welch Howe, Spiritual Formation Committee Chair

STEWARDSHIP

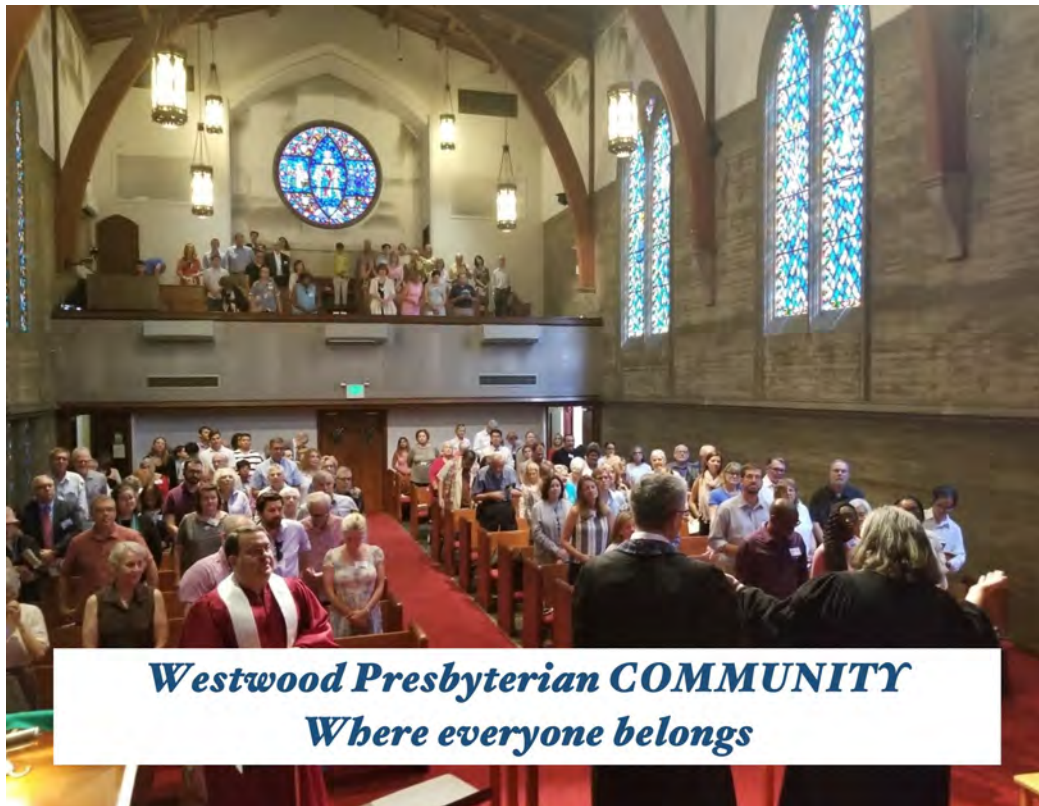
This year, the Stewardship Committee's theme for our Pledge Drive was this: Westwood Presbyterian COMMUNITY: Where everyone belongs. We are grateful for everyone's financial support – both to support ministries for our congregation, and also to share God's love for the community beyond our walls.

We were blessed to have inspiring messages from members who shared why the WPC community matters so much to them. As Don Morrison reminded us, studies have shown that loneliness is a toxic problem – and the gift of our community is a gift of life itself!

Thanks to everyone who gave so generously to our Pledge Drive. Because of you, our community is strong – our community is where everyone belongs.

- Lou Moore Singleton, Stewardship Committee Chair

The Stewardship Committee challenges our church family to respond to the privilege of responsible Christian stewardship, encouraging generosity through the spring stewardship drive and year-round stewardship education plan.



Committee Chair

Elder Lou Moore Singleton

Committee:

Sali Fomukong
Donald Morrison
Kelly Sheridan

Staff Resource

Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian



STUDENT MINISTRIES



Over the past year, our Student Ministries Committee has seen God's presence in the simple yet profound moments of connection and growth. The launch of "Youth Connection Sundays" has been a gentle but powerful force, bringing our young people together each Communion Sunday to serve the broader WPC community, a vital component in their spiritual nourishment.

By expanding our volunteer pool, we were able to provide more focused attention to the unique questions, struggles, and joys of our middle school and high school populations, pouring grace and love into their lives.

Our partnership in the "Westside Youth Collective" has been a highlight, too. Like streams converging into a river, we've joined with other churches to make something bigger and more vibrant than we could alone. Collaborating with 9 other churches in our presbytery, we held a Lock-In event with over 50 students sharing in laughter and prayer.



As we look ahead, our committee has learned the importance of collaboration and adaptability. The collective strength found in our partnership with other churches will guide us to even greater faithfulness. We aim to continue building upon these relationships, enhancing our programs, and reaching out to more youth, ensuring that our ministry remains a vibrant and nurturing space for all. In doing so, we honor God's call to be stewards of the next generation, leading them towards a future nourished in the soil of faith, hope, and love.

- Breen Frazier, Chair of Student Ministries

The Student Ministries Committee carries out the church's commitment, made in the vows of baptism, to assist in raising the young people of the church to a deep and abiding faith in Jesus Christ, overseeing all aspects of the church's ministry with middle-schoolers and high-schoolers.

Committee Chair
Elder Breen Frazier

Committee:
Laurie Flenner
Robyn Paris
Laura Scott
Alisa Stewart
Michelle Whelan

Staff Resource
Jake Putich



VISION & PLANNING

The Vision & Planning Committee's continued commitment to focus on God's will for Westwood Presbyterian Church led us to connecting with every Committee, Board, and Staff member of the Church. This past year, Vision & Planning spent a great deal of time communicating, meeting and talking with each WPC Committee and Board Chairs, Members and Staff. We also held some special conversations with Session to appreciate and strengthen the spiritual connections between their plans and the Vision and Mission of WPC. These conversations included a wide range of topics from participation to how to evaluate events. The research we have done has given us a reserve of information on which we will base our insights and recommendations. We are very grateful for the time and effort Committee Chairs, Committee members, and Staff have given us, so we can be sure we are connected to the relevant thoughts and concerns of our church.

It is clear to Vision & Planning that God's will is active and effective within our Church community. It is clear that keeping prayer and the Vision and Mission statements of the Church in front of us as we begin meetings and make plans for the year, help us stay aligned with God's calling for WPC. Asking ourselves at our meetings, how we are keeping our focus on Micah 6:8, is a very influential practice. It is also apparent that shared communication between committees is a very fertile ground for new ideas and collaborations. Many collaborations have bloomed this past year and we are hopeful this pattern will continue.

We also understand the congregation's desire to have more social events as they are such a real way to strengthen relationships among the members of the church as well as develop relationships with our newer members. Getting to know each other better is a joyful way to strengthen God's community of shepherds.

As our last year begins, Vision & Planning will identify and implement the recommendations we have discerned and work with Session, Deacons, Committees and Staff to make sure they are relevant and effective before our term expires next year. It has been our intent to pray and reflect in order to understand God's calling for Westwood Presbyterian Church and by understanding clearly the concerns and dreams of each committee, to align the one with the other in ways that will carry this community for years to come.

- Jann Williams, Vision & Planning Committee Chair

The Vision & Planning Committee seeks to discern and manifest God's call for WPC and design a plan for action.

Committee Chair

Elder Jann Williams
Caryl Carothers, Co-Chair

Committee:

Ellen Caldwell
Lara Fedoroff
Scott Hartle
Peter Helm
Kathryn Howe
Anne Mathews
Brad Paris
Brett Whelan

Staff Resource

Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian
Rev. Paula Mann



WORSHIP & MUSIC



Messiah Sing-a-Long

Our committee is privileged to provide encouragement for the worship and music ministries of the church, which inspire the congregation. One of the blessings we have enjoyed is our fellowship at meetings, as we reflect on our experiences together. As we learn more about each other, we also grow in our appreciation of the wishes and desires of the congregation.

The sense of community is increasingly evident in our chancel choir. With the tone set by Music Director Dan Redfeld and our wonderful section leaders, our time together is more than rehearsing or singing – it is fellowship that we cherish as well. Though we have sadly lost some of our choir members due to moves or health issues, we are blessed with new members to fill our ranks.

Community has also been evidenced by collaboration with Spiritual Formation, Adult Education, Mission & Outreach Committee and more. This year we aligned our worship series' themes with small group studies and the Earth Care theme. This integration has contributed to faith growing deep and wide.

Music is always an inspiration to our faith. This year's Music at Westwood concert featuring Copland, Rutter, and Williams was deeply moving. The Messiah Sing-Along was particularly well-attended, which brought great joy. Special seasonal music inspired us too – in Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter, and beyond.



We look forward to the coming year as we continue to collaborate thematically. This fall's theme, "Blessed are the Peacemakers," points us to our hope in Jesus Christ. That hope will continue to flow through Advent, with Britten's "Ceremony of Carols" and the Messiah Sing-Along, and into a delightful Spring concert of a Music at Westwood cabaret.

Thanks to all who make our worship and music possible. To God be the glory!

- Steve Hauser, Worship & Music Committee Chair

The Worship and Music Committee cares for all aspects of worship, providing excellent Sunday morning and special services, and guides the church's music ministry.

Committee Chair:
Elder Steve Hauser

Committee:
Andy Beer
Stephen Dawson
Marilyn Robertson
Kathy Schreiner

Staff Resources
Rev. Dr. Christine Chakoian
Dan Redfeld

