

Highlights of last 25 years – 1997 – 2021

Although there is no way to list everything of interest to every one; we hope to provide this synopsis of activities and events over the last 25 years. In order to do this it meant reading through the minutes of Session, Trustees and Deacons; as well as Congregational Reports. What is listed is only a sampling but we hope it triggers some memories and provides a framework for looking back over this past quarter of a century. We decided to simply do it in chronological form. One thing the committee and the staff felt strongly about was that, important as it is to look back in this historical year; it is much more important for us as a church to look forward to where we are headed and how best we can serve God in our worship and ministries.

1997

The church school is under the direction of Timi Smith, with assistant director Linda Morgan. Clerk of Session is Emma Mustard. We sponsored a mission to the Holy Lands and began to raise money to build a new chapel for the hospital in Haiti. Our Financial Secretaries were Jane Cummins and Kathi Lynch; the Hostess was Beverly Rosell and Diane Jacob was hired as Church Secretary.

1998

Associate Pastor Cindy Karis leaves for a new calling. Elected to church offices were: Flower Coordinator – Elizabeth Gillespie; Church Benevolence and Treasurer – Doug Stevens. We undertook another mission trip to Maine and the Greater Woodbury Cooperative Ministries became active. There was a \$70,000 cost to repair the organ. Christian Education and Youth fell under the direction of the Associate Pastor – the Rev. Catherine Cook Davis who took on the role of Interim Associate Pastor. Howard and Marion Lopez filled the role of Sexton

1999

Emma Mustard became the new Flower Coordinator and Cheryl Schad was elected Clerk of Session. Kim Wehner and Tina Tittermary were the housekeepers. A Honduras mission trip expanded our international missions. Fred and Geri Petri represented our church at the opening of the dedication of the hospital chapel in Haiti.

2000

Minister of Congregation Care, Youth Director and Director of Christian Education were all proposed as staff positions. Associate Pastor Catherine Cook Davis leaves; Kim Wehner becomes the new custodian. Judy Platt becomes Christian Educator and Jason Rundell is hired as Youth Director.

2001

Kathi Lynch has official title of Bookkeeper; Chick Dougherty becomes the Clerk of Session and the Rev. Joseph Hourani becomes Minister of Congregational Care. Jason Rundell resigns as Youth Director. We go from two services on Sunday morning to one service. There are a number of special services and open prayer times after the terrorist attacks on 9/11.

2002

The discussion of sexual orientation, teaching and ordination shows some division in our church; but prayerful open meetings to share and learn continue/ Jonah Yamokoski become the new Youth Director.

2003

Church roof repairs are needed with a discussion on what type of slate to use. The cost for this construction is about \$270,000. Jonah Yamakoski resigns his position.

2004

We begin a relationship with Habitat for Humanity. Milt Fredericks is elected Clerk of Session. Katie Lewis is our Seminary Intern. Our church choir sings at a neighboring church for their 150th anniversary, as they did not have a choir. Theo's Cafe is expanded and Alison Mackey is hired as the new Church Secretary.

2005

A Baby Grand piano is purchased for the Sanctuary to replace the old upright. Milt Fredericks is named Lay Minister of Congregational Care. New carpeting and pew cushions (blue to replace the gold) are installed in the Sanctuary. The Haiti mission is on hold because of civil unrest in that country. A New Church Development initiative is now under consideration.

2006

Mission trips to Haiti and Honduras resume. The search for a new Youth Director culminates with the selection of Melody Newton. We sponsor a mission trip to the Gulf Coast. Our church participates in the Woodbury Fall Parade with a float and marchers. Jazz Vespers become a part of special worship services and planning begins to build an elevator.

2007

Youth are actively involved in Triennium, the Souper Bowl of Caring and the 30 Hour Famine, which meets at our church. There are many churches involved and all are under the direction of Melody Newton. Former Pastor Richard Craven dies and is laid to rest in the Old Cemetery on N. Broad.

Pastor Barton announces he will be leaving as he has received a Call from the 1st Presbyterian Church of Hamilton Square NJ. His last day will be June 1. The Rev. Scott Morschauer fills in as supply preacher. Milt Fredericks is given permanent title of Lay Minister of Congregational Care as well as Temporary Church Coordinator and Head of Staff until an Interim is found. New Acolyte robes are purchased as well as AED machines for the church. The Rev. Neta Pringle is name Interim Pastor. Our first Cuba Mission trip takes place with Wendy Kunz, Charlie Miller and Keith Doughten.

2008

Our church makes a donation the the Near East Seminary in Beirut, Lebanon in honor of Rev. Joe Hourani. We begin a discussion of a renewed relationship with Habitat for Humanity and also hold a Service of Christian Unity for the people of Rwanda. The Manse is put up for sale as most new pastors would rather own a home. There is a New Orleans relief Mission trip and Becky Barrett begins a one year mission trip to Africa

2009

The funding for the full elevator will be \$240,000 and the repair of the Church Cemetery wall will be \$20,000. Cuba and Honduras mission trips continue. A Sabbatical leave policy is adopted for The Director of Youth Ministries, the Director of Christian Education, the Minister of Music and the Minister of Congregational Care. The Rev. Dr. Phil Oehler is elected as Pastor and Head of Staff for the Presbyterian Church at Woodbury at a called Congregational meeting Pastor Oehler and his family are officially greeted at a luncheon at Nicolosis.. Trustees will make improvements to the Chapel.

2010

Christian Education in a Lenten Service project prepares hygiene kits for the people in Haiti. Many mission projects continue; including 30 hour famine, Triennium, CROP walk and the silent auction -which raises funds for Youth activities and trips, A Building Vision process begins and we have a church mission trip to West Virginia. The Alternative Gift Market is named for Dee Tanzola; who created the idea.

2011

A West Jersey Presbytery Congregational Life Seminar is held at our church. A funding drive for a youth trip to Malawi begins. The church elevator is paid off with the use of Memorial Funds. The Rev Scott Morschauser offers a great lecture series on the early church and the development of Western civilization. Xiomare Arenas, from the Placetas church in Cuba; speaks to our Session and to the congregation at a worship service.

2012

Kristen Franchetti is named the new Flower Coordinator and Dave Schad is the new Historian; replacing Woody Backensto a treasured member and Historian for years. New Hymnals were purchased by the members of the congregation. Melody Newton resigns as Youth Director to accept a position near her home in Western Pennsylvania. We sponsor a Church Open House as part of the Woodbury Arts Festival with many activities for young people on our front steps and sidewalk, Lauren Christian is hired as Youth Director. Prayers of support for the victims and families of the Sandy Hook shootings. Kathi Lynch becomes Financial Secretary and Janet Edick full time Custodian.

2013

A new picture directory is put out. The Doyle family (missionaries to Kyrgyzstan) speak to our church school. Capital improvements planned for the repair of the organ, repair and replace floor in Fellowship Hall, repairs to the Jr High room and to Margaret's house. Dave Schad is elected as Church Treasurer as Doug Stevens concludes 30 years of service in that position.

2014

A once a month Com minty dinner begins; on the 3rd Thursday of every month from 5:30 to 7PM. We begin to fund the fixing of the front steps, replacing the front and side windows in the Narthex and Pastor's study; and replacing the doors on both Broad and on Centre St. at a cost of \$150,000. Beverly Rosell resigns as hostess after serving 25 years in that role.

2015

Work begins on the celebrating of our 300th Anniversary in 2021. Jack Hill is the chair, to be assisted by Linda Blackwell, with a number of volunteers expected. Planning work begins to address other major church issues: the heating system, new ovens and hoods for the basement kitchen, a handicapped accessible bathroom, painting of the Sanctuary and pews, a new sound system, new windows in the Sanctuary, new carpet in the Chapel and a new ceiling as well. Estimated cost around \$300,000. Study and prayerful discernment continue on GA initiatives. Church donates Margaret's House to Habitat for Humanity. Security volunteers established during times of worship. Staffing changes: Secretary – 20 hour week – Kathy Federici. Custodian 30 hour week – Janet Edick. Kristin Franchetti named new Coordinator of Christian Education. A Sabbatical for Pastor Oehler approved for May 1, 2016- August 31, 2016. GA vote to allow churches to set own policy on ordination and marriages for Gays and Lesbians has some families leave the church. A new sound

system for the church approved.

2016

Care Connectors programmed revised and updated. Linda Blackwell, Bob Roberts and Sharon Knauss elected as Church Historians. Family Promise Mission initiated under the direction of Fred and Jean Hills. Game nights with residents at the Green Building begin. We imitate a Capital Program with Horizon. Pastor Oehler has created a new outreach ministry involving his cycling friends.

2017

Director of Youth Ministry to be a part time, 20 hours per week. Junior and Senior High will fall under Christian Education. One Call Now system put in for phone blast announcements. Choral Arts of Southern New Jersey uses our church as a home base for rehearsal and concerts. Concerts held at no charge are open to the public and are very successful.

2018

Mission trip to Staten Island. Block scheduling initiated for Sunday School classes, creating a more flexible schedule for teachers and families. An Active Shooter Policy is adopted. A mini health fair after worship is sponsored. Becky Schad is named new Youth Director. Adult Acolytes are used for all summer worship services and proves to be very popular. Because of declining enrollment a discussion begins to reduce the size of all Boards. New Bible studies and small groups develop to include people of all ages with varying times and days to participate.

2019

Plans for 300th celebration now in full gear. All Boards are restructured Session 9, Deacons 12 plus youth; Trustees 6. Medical supplies are taken to Cuba with many donations from congregation. We hold a very successful Christmas caroling, using a donated bus for transportation, to shut ins and nursing homes. Repairs for the Sanctuary roof will cost \$95,000 The completion of the Chapel has been extraordinary with the full stained glass window, the beautiful wood beamed ceiling, and an air conditioning system. It is a wonderful gathering spot.

2020

Marylynn Diehlman is named the new Librarian after the passing of longtime Librarian Florence Meyer. It is decided the libraries will be renamed in her honor and memory. Becky Schad enrolled at Princeton Theological Seminary. COVID 19 hits and everything changes.- all worship is virtual,, all meetings are held via Zoom Initially before going totally virtual, we put into practice: social distancing, every other pew seating; temp checks, contact tracing lists. No handshakes, hugging or singing. Communion in sealed containers and packets put together by volunteers who are masked and gloved. Monitors are installed in Sanctuary and a new control panel is proposed. Official reopening set for Sept 20 Jack Hill hires a choir of 4-6 college students to do the singing and they are such a blessing. Church membership number reduced as letters go out to those not attending or participating in any way for a period of two years. The Education wing is carpeted and the libraries refurbished Most work is contracted but Janet Edick is heavily involved with so many improvements It will take \$26,000 to waterproof Fellowship Hall, the basement kitchen, the boiler room and the electrical room Christmas Eve worship was virtual only with staff present to assist Pastor Phil.

2021

All Holy Week services virtual, so as not to have any danger of overcrowding. Larry Diehlman

becomes the youngest Deacon elected to a full term. New drainage system to be put in . Guest preacher on the first Sunday of each month. Ryan Coleman hired as worship technician. Choir finishes July 4, to return in September.

There is so much more. We thank our Deacons for the many many missions and acts of grace they provide on a weekly basis. We thank our Women's Association who always step up first to help when a need appears and we look forward to their scheduled rummage sale returning in November. We give thanks for so many ministries over the years such as the GWCM Food Pantry, Mother and Child Services, the Handy Helpers, those who work closely with Urban Promise like Bob Harris, Bernie Carlson, Rich Anastasi and Fred Schnarr. We give thanks for our choir and music ministry led by Jack Hill We give thanks for all of our ushers and acolytes. And we thank all those who on a daily basis, do God's call when no one else knows; and after all isn't that the real legacy we should leave as we move ahead to new calls and challenges. Thanks be to God.