

2022 YEARBOOK

“You Have to Believe”

SOUTH PRESBYTERIAN

an Acts of Faith Community

- "The Church has Left the Building" -



*A Report on our
Ministry & Mission in 2021*

P.O. Box 22782 | Rochester, NY 14692

www.SouthPC.org

CONTENTS

Welcome from the Pastor	3
Our Ministry & Mission	4
Our Acts of Faith in the Pandemic.....	6
Coordinating the Work of the Church	22
Your Session	22
Your Deacons	23
Your Office Operations.....	23
Your Staff	24
Your Nominating Committee	25
South Church Leadership – 2022.....	26
Finances	27
A Message from the Treasurer	27
2021 Report and 2022 Budget	29
The State of the Church	33

Cover Quote:

In a videotaped interview four years ago, Gordon Rickner said of our church:

“You have to believe. I mean ... my goodness ...
if you don’t believe, what else is there?”

Welcome from the Pastor

Every year our Annual Yearbook revolves around a word or phrase that is meant to summarize the year past. In 2020, it was “Balance” as we strove to keep ourselves and our faith in balance in the midst of a global pandemic. Little did we know that eighteen months later we would still be dealing with the disease and its aftermath.



This year, our word is “Believe.” In 2021, it was our faith helped us to survive while apart and to celebrate as one when we were again able to meet in person for our various Acts of Faith.

Throughout the year, it was our faith that was practiced through our online Prayerful Pause meditations and weekly worship that drew us together; it was our online Evening Prayer and Bible Studies that kept us grounded; it was our excitement at being together again that allowed our joy to energize us and focus us on welcoming the new possibilities brought by a baby born in Bethlehem.

When the Omicron variant required us to retreat into our respective homes at the end of the year, it was the way that we believed not only in God but in each other that allowed us to move seamlessly online, and to continue to care for each other through our newly reconstituted board of Deacons/Partners in Ministry.

In 2014 when South sold its property on Fort Hill Terrace, we reckoned that we had enough money to support us – our ministry & mission – for seven years. And while we are still precariously perched on a financial knife’s edge, we have outlived those projections. God has continued to lead us to new ways to being the church in the twenty-first century. Our prayer of

“Put us where you want us, and show us what to do”

has put us in good stead. We are still alive to share the really Great News that we are loved by a God who will not abandon us and will not let us go. As you read through these reports of our smaller ministry footprint in the greater Rochester area this year, you will still see the power of the Spirit at work through our members’ prayers and commitment.

When I was a little girl, my grandmother poured her Spirit into me, building for me many of the foundations that have become the pillars of my faith. One of her oft-quoted scriptures was Matthew 21:22 – *“If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”* Of course she went on to explain that the answer may not be in the form I was expecting it, but that God always hears our prayers.

My friends ... my brothers in sisters in the faith ... our prayers are being heard.

We are being shown what to do and where to go in order to continue doing the ministry and mission that we have been called to. This report bears witness to God’s presence and God’s glory as the Spirit has moved among you – the people who believe! Thanks be to God.

Our Ministry & Mission



The Mission / Vision / Calling of South Presbyterian Church

It is the Mission / Vision / Calling of South Presbyterian Church to live out the command of Jesus: *Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in [my] way of life* (Mt. 29:18, *The Message*). We embody our commitment to being a missional church through the practice of our Acts of Faith Model of Ministry and fostering grass-roots programs that spread the love of the Risen Christ through worship, education, and the arts. We hold that all believers are the hands and heart, the embrace and healing presence of Christ's love, acceptance, justice, and joy in the world.

Adopted: February 5, 2016

QUESTION: What does this look like for a merry little band of believers in the middle of a global pandemic? How do you “go out and train everyone you meet” when you can’t go out at all, and when “everyone you meet” is mostly Door Dashers and Wegmans curbside delivery personnel?

ANSWER: We turn to YouTube and our DVD Ministry as a means of reaching out to people and sharing the love of God. According to YouTube, our videos of worship services and Prayerful Pause meditations had **1,113 views in 2021** (627 Complete Worship Services, 297 Prayerful Pause with the Pastor, 124 Short Worship services). **500+ DVD's were burned and distributed** and we know that for most of the year, those were used at the Rochester Psychiatric Center and Cobbs Hill Manor for upwards of 30 people a week to worship (that's over **1,500 views on top of the YouTube ones**).

Even though we had fewer Acts of Faith this year because of COVID, we still managed to be true to our call! Just take a look at our contacts on the next page.

Group	# of Different People	Avg # of People x # of Meetings	Total Contacts
Cuppa the Bible	10	10*51	510
Evening Prayer	14	11*50	550
Fellowship of Faith	62	40*23	920
Food for Thought	13	8*46	368
Living Bread Ministry	3	3*5	15
Matthew 25	2	1*12	12
New Life Food Cupboard	34 + 7 vols		1,512 MEALS
Ring for Joy	8	8*10	80
Sing for Joy	13	12*47	564
Sizzling Summer Spirituality	6	6*10	60
Sophia Speaks	7	7*7	49
Water from the Well	13	11*15	165
TOTALS	192		3,293

In 2021, at the heart of the pandemic sequestering, 192 different individuals were touched by our Acts of Faith in 3,293 contact points. That is, 3,293 times people bumped up against Jesus through us and received 1,512 meals through our Food Cupboard. All of this is in addition to the 2,613 views of our videos and we have no way of knowing how many people were watching with each view.

That is 5,906 Times People Bumped Up Against Jesus through our Acts of Faith – even though we had to stay home, keep socially distanced, and be masked!

How does a group stay a church in the middle of a pandemic and live out his Great Commission from Matthew 28:19?

Just look at what this “wee kirk” did!

*“When you open your life to the living, all things come spilling in on you.
And you’re flowin’ like a river – the Changer and the Changed.”*
– Cris Williamson

SOUTH PRESBYTERIAN
an Acts of Faith Community
 - "The Church has Left the Building" -

In 2014, after 170 years on Mt. Hope Avenue in Rochester, New York, South Presbyterian Church discerned that they were called to take the energy and excitement of their Spirit-led congregation and move out into the community. Why expect people to come to one building for their needs to be met when Jesus went to the people; he didn't expect them to come to him. And so South created the Acts of Faith Model of Ministry[®] which, in many ways, is a 21st century embodiment of the first century Christian community.

An Act of Faith (AoF) is an organic grass-roots ministry growing out of the needs of the people. It may be overtly "religious" like a Bible Study, or not, such as a community choir. This model believes that we don't have to be talking about God all the time in order to be spreading the Good News; it believes that as we live out our faith and build community, people will "bump up against Jesus" through us. Therefore, if two people share a need or interest, we will sponsor their program for three months. How to determine whether, or not, to continue it after three months? Easy. Answer one question: **Does it create energy and excitement?** Believing that everything the Holy Spirit touches generates energy, excitement and holy presence that is felt by the people associated with it, South says that if an AoF does that, it continues; if it does not, they discontinue it immediately and await the movement of the Spirit to direct their next endeavor.



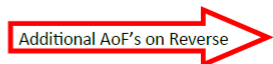
Updated: 12-10-21

 Cuppa the Bible ONLINE BIBLE STUDY <i>You supply the "cuppa" - the Spirit supplies the message</i> Zoom MONDAY, 10:30 a.m.	 Dinner and a Movie 6PM Dinner 7PM Movies Come to dinner, movie or any combination. RESUMING IN SPRING 2022 nation.	 EVENING PRAYER Zoom Prayer Service in real time THURSDAY, 6 p.m.	 Fellowship of Faith Weekly worship that is Positive, Progressive Prophetic & Pragmatic. Music—Prayer—Preaching Sacraments—Scripture SUNDAY, 1 p.m. St. John's Meadows
 Food for Thought Community Book Group Building community through our love of books, ideas, and each other. Zoom WEDNESDAY 2:30 p.m.	 Living Bread ministry Homemade bread as a reminder that "we are with you" and are nurtured by the Spirit of Christ, the Living Bread. Contact the Church Office	 Monthly Volunteering with the homeless, hungry and poor at the local Catholic Worker ministry - St. Joseph's House of Hospitality. Hands-on; Hearts engaged. Contact the Church Office	 New Life Food Cupboard Emergency Food support for those who need it. 2nd, 4th, and 5th THURSDAYS 9:30 a.m. — Noon Congregation Beth Shalom (1161 Monroe Avenue, 14620)
 Ring for Joy! Adult Bell Choir open to all. No prior experience or audition required. WEDNESDAY, 5:30 p.m. St. John's Meadows (1 Johnsarbor Drive, 14620)	<div> WORSHIP WITH US IN REAL TIME, OR ON YOUR TIME DAILY WEEKLY OR ON DVD's <i>God is open 24/7 — and so are we!</i> (Information on the reverse side.) </div>		 Slowly Sheep Walking Meditation Walk with others while meditating. Usually followed by breakfast out. Beautiful local locations. Check Website for Next Walk April - October

Please check the **website calendar** (see reverse side) for up-to-date information. **ALL TIMES ARE EASTERN U.S.**

These are South's current Acts of Faith. Everyone is welcome, regardless of religious belief, faith tradition, or lack thereof.

Come on ... check us out!



 <p>Mid-week opportunity to sing church - and non-church songs. No Audition.</p> <p>WEDNESDAY 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. St. John's Meadows (1 Johnsarbor Drive, 14620)</p>	<p>24/7 WORSHIP on YouTube: South Church Rochester</p> <p>Daily meditations with the pastor, uploaded M-F and weekly worship services — both COMPLETE (45-60 mins) and a SHORTER version (30-40 mins) which include sacraments, singing, prayer, reflection, and scripture.</p> <p>Thursday Evening Prayer Service: Zoom</p> <p>DVD's are available weekly for those who don't have internet connection.</p>    		
 <p>What role does the Spirit play in our aging process?</p> <p>TUESDAY, 2PM Brickstone Horizon Room</p> <p>Limited enrollment per section Contact the Church Office</p>	 <p>Time to socialize and be the church at rest.</p> <p>SEASONAL GATHERINGS AS POSSIBLE</p>	 <p>Online Bible Study for Thinking & Questioning People.</p> <p>FRIDAY, Noon to 1 p.m. Contact the Church Office for the Zoom Link</p> 	 <p>By harnessing the Firebird Spirit, South resources and supports other transforming churches & institutions.</p> <p>Professional experts from multiple disciplines and denominations provide insight from the Firebird team that works across the country sharing lessons learned and solutions pioneered by South Church.</p> <p>Contact Kevin Fuller, Director of Operations (kfuller@firebirdspirit.org) to schedule a visit or plan a workshop in your area.</p> <p>(585) 476 - HOPE (4673)</p>
 <p>Weekly, we produce DVD's of the COMPLETE and SHORT worship services as well as several of the PRAYERFUL PAUSE episodes from that week. Contact us if you would like to purchase one or help in creating your own.</p>	 <p>Our ministries at the Rochester Psychiatric Center's Chapel and the Regional Forensic Unit will resume when it is safe for us to do so.</p> <p>PANDEMIC SUSPENSION</p> 		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">     </div> <p>So ... when someone asks "Where's your church?" we can <i>literally</i> say: "Where would you like us to be?" because we are currently in 8 neighborhoods in Rochester, Brighton, and Henrietta, at 13 different locations and ONLINE. And isn't that what it means to be the Body of the Risen Christ? South Presbyterian has just under 50 "official" members, but the Acts of Faith Community had just under 6,000 (5,926) different people involved through over 25,000 documented contacts in 2019. From those, there were 255 <i>active participants</i> in our AoF's in 2019, and every week, 110 people worshipped through our services.</p>			



We proudly say, "The Church has Left the Building" and we are quick to pray:
"Put us where you want us, and show us what to do!"



For updates, to learn more, or to contact us, please visit the website. www.SOUTHPC.org/welcome

(585) 271.5078 P.O. Box 22782 | Rochester, NY 14692



Cuppa the Bible, an Act of Faith of South Presbyterian Church, met weekly on Monday mornings at 10:30 - noon, to explore God's Word.

Each week began with a time of check-in fellowship followed by discussion led by Pastor Deb. The Scripture texts were read from the week's Lectionary which Pastor Deb sent out prior to our meeting. This past year's gatherings were held on Zoom due to the pandemic.

Typically nine women participated in challenging and lively discussion as historical context was explored and applications to today's faith journeys were shared. Discerning a common thread or theme amongst the four lectionary readings was pursued each week.

On occasion, special studies were included (*The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach about Jesus' Final Days in Jerusalem* by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan; *The Messiah: An Adult Advent Study* from The Thoughtful Christian).

Cuppa the Bible provided new perspectives to our understanding of God's Word for us today through the Spirit's guidance.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Durfee on behalf of fellow participants





A weekly Zoom group capably led by Pastor Deb has been meeting faithfully for almost two years now and consists of a core group of 10 participants and the pastor. The meeting begins with a short check-in, focused on a question pertinent to the session's spiritual theme and followed by an opening prayer to center and guide our discussion.

Scripture readings throughout the hour provoke conversation on how Jesus' teachings apply to each of us as we live in community and in the larger world. Prayers of joy and concern are lifted up, followed by a group prayer, and ending with the benediction.

While the discussion follows a similar outline each week, the hour is filled with the fellowship of laughter, shared insights and personal experiences, and heartfelt appreciation for the blessing of being able to gather each week. Not all attendees are members of South – or not even Presbyterian, but all do share a love for Jesus and his teachings and strive to walk the path prepared for us.

Linda McLean & Katherine Pantlind
On behalf of the Evening Prayer Group



*Katherine Pantlind, Linda McLean, Avis Hooper, Gordon & Stena Rickner
Barbara Durfee, Jane Watt, Carole Knight
Mary Taglieri and Rachel McGuire*

Worship & Meditation

In addition to Evening Prayer, we provided weekly worship services through our YouTube Channel – **South Church Rochester**. But then we realized that not everyone has internet access, and thus was born our DVD Ministry and an expanding community.

At the beginning of the pandemic in March of 2020, our hosting organizations all shut their doors as they began their shelter-in-place procedures. St. John's Meadows, Cobbs Hill Manor, and the Rochester Psychiatric Center were off-limits to us throughout all of 2021, with one exception: On August 1, 2021, the Fellowship of Faith was able to return to the Parks Room at Chestnut Court in St. John's Meadows. We await the re-opening of Cobbs Hill Manor when the pandemic allows freer access.



Fellowship of



Returning to in-person worship

On Sunday August 1st FoF returned to in-person worship, our 7th anniversary of having services at Chestnut Court. However, in order to accommodate sharing our staff with other churches, and in order to have a leisurely approach to worship, we moved our worship service to 1PM on Sundays.

After almost a year and a half of not being able to worship in person, some things had changed at the Meadows. Our storage closet had been emptied and re-purposed, so our red library cart and safe had to be located, along with some other items. Our many thanks to Darryl Powell, who was able to be South's presence throughout those many months, Darryl had the connections and gave Deb and myself a little tour of other storage rooms, where we found the items we had, before the COVID shut down.

It became necessary to dust off our Welcome flag and directional signs, and consolidate our possessions to one location for FoF services, either under the Communion table or in the room, where the table is kept during the week. Given some time and planning, the rolling Communion table now keeps stands, poles, banners, communion supplies, name tags, offering plates, candles, the Cross and numerous other items we are used to seeing up front during FoF's weekly worship services.

In addition, for our new AoF, Ring for Joy (started by Holly Powell), we now store a set of hand bells plus foam pads and the equipment needed by a hand bell choir. This, along with extra paraments, signs, and our



welcome flag, are centrally and conveniently kept in the electrical room across the hall from the café at Chestnut Court.

Respectfully, John Hust

A pandemic adaptation for continuing our worship has been the innovation of our DVD Ministry. This is the announcement of that ministry that was written for the Presbytery newsletter.

South Church Launches DVD Ministry

With the support of a grant from the Presbytery, South has launched its latest Act of Faith—its DVD ministry.

Because they do not have their own building to worship in, and because so many in their worshipping communities are movement-challenged, the future for in-person worship at South Presbyterian Church remains a question. "By creating new faith communities that are made up of both neighborhood residents and those living in various pre-existing communities (like Cobbs Hill Manor and St. John's Meadows) we are limited to those times when the institutions will allow us to return for worship," reported Rev. Deb Swift. "Furthermore," she continued, "our Session has decided that we will not worship in person until everyone in each of our five faith communities can worship together as they had been. We're all in this together."

As part of a recent congregational survey, South folks shared their preference for worship styles and results were 2:1 in favor of continuing weekly worship on their YouTube channel (South Church Rochester) as opposed to Facebook Live or Zoom gatherings. By creating and editing their worship service for YouTube, South is able to include music, multiple congregational leaders, etc., and members have expressed joy at being able to worship any day, at any time.

But there's a problem: as many as one-half of their regular attendees do not have access to the internet by phone, iPad, or computer.

Enter the DVD Ministry.

Every week, a disc is made that includes the complete worship service (45-60 minutes with a traditional sermon and sacraments as needed), a shorter (under 40 minutes) service which is more casual and interactive, as well as three episodes of South's daily meditations—Prayerful Pause with the Pastor.

"The Presbytery grant has allowed us to purchase all the materials necessary—including a tower TurboBurner that copies five DVD's in a matter of minutes. Currently, nine discs are prepared weekly and distributed to St. John's Meadows, Cobbs Hill Manor, Rochester Psychiatric Center, and Charlotte Harbortown Homes, as well as to individual members who are not able to access YouTube," Swift explained. In two cases, individual members had no DVD players and the grant has allowed South to provide them with portable ones that include a screen for viewing.



"This is so wonderful," said one member who lives in a nursing home facility. "I was feeling really disconnected and now I see and hear my friends every week even though we can't have visitors yet."

The DVD's are delivered by a team of volunteers who pick them up from Pastor Deb's house and then drive them around the city because the cost of mailing them all would be cost prohibitive.

However, if you or your church have at-home members, or those living in care facilities who have no other way to worship ... and you would like them to receive a disc each week through the USPS, arrangements could be made for them to have weekly Presbyterian worship through this DVD Ministry. Please contact South's Director of Operations, Kevin Fuller (office@SouthPC) for details. Arrangements can certainly be made for your congregation to assume the postage fees.

"None of this would be happening without the grant funding of the Presbytery. We are very grateful," adds Deb.



Each DVD contained both the services found on our YouTube Channel: **South Church Rochester**, and a sampling of the weekday meditations titled Prayerful Pause with the Pastor.

Prayerful Pause episodes reflect whatever Pastor Deb is thinking about in terms of living our faith in the 21st century. Humor, theology, TV shows, books, songs, artwork, her garden, the pandemic ... whatever we are experiencing becomes the basis for "carving a few minutes out of your day to focus on something greater than ourselves." In 2021, there were just under 300 views of

this series which helped us all stay connected – to Spirit, to each other, and to ourselves – Monday thru Friday between weekly worship services. Church is truly 24/7 when it's online.

For the online services each week, volunteers receive a reading for an upcoming service and, using their own phones, iPads, or laptops, record their "selfie-video" of the reading which is then sent to the South Office. Assembling the individual worship sections (usually numbering 13 or 14 and including hymns, offering, prayers, reflections and other standard elements of worship), Kevin Fuller then edits, adds text on the screen that allows responsive and unison readings, and uploads the final, complete, seamless service.

It takes an army of volunteers to provide these services which continued even when in-person worship resumed at the Meadows. Why continue them? For two reasons: we have people around the country who regularly worship with us now, and we wanted to be well-positioned if we needed to discontinue our in-person gathering – which we did in December.

The Volunteer Worship Leader Corps was made up of Presbyterians and non-Presbyterians, members of our Acts of Faith, and friends of the congregation. They live in Brighton, Henrietta, Ithaca, Penfield, Rochester, South Jordan (UT), and Tucson (AZ)! Their faithful service made all of our electronic presence (online and through the DVD Ministry) possible: Annie Marie LeBarbour,

Barb Sixbey, Barbara Durfee, Barbara Woodruff, Carol Santos, Eileen Smith, Gordon Rickner, Holly Powell, Karen Thomas, Linda McLean, Martha Moler, Mary Lee Miller, Nancy Rice, Rachel McGuire, Rheanolte LeBarbour, Sonya Kennedy, and Stena Rickner.



World Communion Sunday



Pastor Appreciation Day

Meanwhile, we remain in contact with Cobbs Hill Manor in hopes that we will resume our ministries there, including:



and



In December, Pastor Deb was in conversation with the new Wellness Manager there. We hope to have some announcements in early 2022.





The year unfolded after holidays that were muted because travel was limited and gatherings discouraged. We continued to be grateful for the Zoom technology that allowed us to see each other every week for an hour for a meaningful check-in and discussion in a wide range of topics.

January to March: We started with *THE BOOK OF JOY*, by the Dali Lama and Desmond Tutu as they related the story of their meeting in Tibet and the deep friendship they share, topics such as Sadness/Grief, Loneliness, Gratitude, Generosity enabled us to talk about the feelings that isolation

have brought to everyone.

April to May: Walter Bruggeman's *INTERRUPTING SILENCE* spoke wisdom about the places where people have been silenced, in the Bible and in our society. We have been made aware of this by the recent protests that proclaim that Black Lives Matter.

June to August: To increase awareness of inclusiveness, we read and discussed *A BIGGER TABLE* by John Pavlovitz.

September to November: We honored the memory of John Lewis by discussing his memoir, *ACROSS THAT BRIDGE*, with topics such as Patience, Truth, Peace, Love and Reconciliation which his life modeled for all.

November to December and onward: As our Advent and Christmas study, we read *BRIGHT MORNING STAR* by Madeleine L'Engle who shared her personal stories intertwined with Biblical narrative of birth and life of Jesus. The short chapters provided us with opportunities to share our own similar experiences.

We enjoyed a brief physical gathering at the Mt. Hope Diner in June while Nita was in town visiting family. Our wish is for a far better 2022 for everyone and many more great books and discussions ahead. Please join us in the Zoom room or in person, God willing.





The Living Bread Ministry began in August, providing loaves of bread to persons within and outside of our church community who may be in need of encouragement or spiritual support. The first loaf was given to a St. John's Home Meadows resident and Fellowship of Faith participant on August 10th in honor of his 100th birthday, and loaves have continued to be baked and shared by a small group of Fellowship of Faith participants, with an average of 3 loaves monthly. The loaves are wrapped warm in a kitchen towel, which serves as a lasting remembrance and gift of this outreach after the bread has been eaten.

Eileen Smith and I express our deepest gratitude for everyone who has contributed to this ministry by providing supplies, baking bread and suggesting names of recipients. The gifts of bread have been gratefully received and appreciated!

We look forward to continuing this outreach in this new year and blessing many friends in our community with the gift of fresh bread, in the name of our Lord, the "Keeper of the Loaf."

Respectfully Submitted,
Holly Powell



'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' - Mt. 25:40 (NIV)

When South became the first Matthew 25 church in the Presbytery, we had many of our Acts of Faith that spoke to the three founding principles of the PC(USA)'s Matthew 25 initiative:

- Building Congregational Vitality
- Dismantling Systemic Racism
- Eradicating Systemic Poverty

Our Acts of Faith Model of Ministry, along with our work at the Rochester Psychiatric Center, St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, and our New Life Emergency Food Cupboard made it easy for us to claim our role in living out the essence of Matthew 25. However, as with everything else, COVID has taken its toll.

In 2021, our Food Cupboard continued, as did our nominal presence one Sunday a month to help feed the guests at St. Joe's and share fellowship time with them. We lift up Judy Wandtke for her volunteer efforts at St. Joe's and draw your attention to the New Life Food Cupboard report, below.





This South Presbyterian Church Act of Faith serves those in need of food living in the 14620, 14610 and 14607 zip codes, or more upon request, usually the 2nd, 4th, and 5th Thursdays 9:30 to noon.

Not even COVID-19, Delta or Omicron kept us from maintaining our regular hours throughout the year, with masks, outdoor service, and a few deliveries. Surprisingly we, again, saw a decrease in numbers served instead of an expected increase in numbers until December when it picked up. Congregation Beth Shalom continued to graciously

host the New Life Food Cupboard 26 times in 2021 and provided storage for our food in between open dates.

We served **34 different people including 9 children and 6 seniors**. We assembled a 3-day supply of dry goods for each of the **17 households** each visit. Quantities depend on Foodlink's household size guidelines. Each household is eligible to come once a month. We averaged 4 visitors and 3 volunteers each time we were open. With repeat visits and 3 meals a day, 3-day supplies, holiday dinner wish list items, this accumulated to **1,512 meals provided in 2021**.

Our visitors include: a senior who is cooking his holiday meals in a toaster oven; neighbors without a car who arrive by foot or bicycle; a man who is trying so hard to improve his situation that he lost over one hundred pounds, three new families who just moved to Rochester from Puerto Rico, and those short-term visitors between jobs. One man was so grateful and connected to us that he stopped by to let us know his mother who we served had died.

Getting the word out is the hardest part. However, two new visitors are so excited they are personally spreading the word. Also, The People's Pantry is now referring people to us. As with other Acts of Faith we continue to evaluate our viability every three months.

Our food comes from three main sources: our Foodlink membership (which includes food covered by USDA grants, NYS HPNAP grants, federal stimulus funds, and the United Way), from our New Life Food Cupboard Fund, and from our generous members and friends of South Presbyterian Church. Many thanks to our Deacons for rounding up more supplies this holiday season. We welcome non-perishable donations from other sources, as well.

Our work force came from our four steady volunteers: Janis Castrogiovanni (chair), John Hust (most attended and Foodlink food transporter), Char Schuth (longest running volunteer and former chair), Marian Coger (very reliable hostess), and occasional substitutes Connie Izzo and David Durfee, and South's commitment to Matthew 25 so we can continue for years into the future. We gave Char Schuth and Marian Coger our gratitude and "bread for the journey," for their service as they move on to other parts of their lives.

Respectfully submitted by,
Janis Castrogiovanni



This past summer I had a thought "out of the blue." I wondered what had happened to a set of handbells from Lakeside Presbyterian Church, a congregation now disbanded where I had directed handbell choirs many years ago.

When I asked Pastor Deb if she knew of anyone who may have some information, she said, "Oh, we have handbells." Whaaaaat! :) And thus started the journey with Kevin Fuller, Pastor Deb and John Hust on looking for bell supplies and music and ordering what we needed to start "Ring for Joy!"

Nine members strong began rehearsing weekly in October, and we played in the Fellowship of Faith worship service for the first time during Advent, sharing a Michael Unger arrangement of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel".

I am very grateful for all of the Spirit-filled enthusiasm and support around this new music ministry, and look forward to a wonderful new year of growing together musically and ringing to the glory of God!

Respectfully Submitted.
Holly Powell



Members include: Mary Taglieri, Sandi Thomas, Holly Powell, Amy Doty, Mary Lee Miller, Rachel McGuire, Nancy Rice, John Hust, and Richard Taglieri



As 2020 turned to 2021, South's music ministry, Sing For Joy!, continued to weather the ongoing pandemic by holding our weekly fellowship online, via Zoom. Most Wednesday evenings from January to June, we met from 6:30-7:30 in the evening, checking in on each other, sharing stories and updates, and singing hymns. During the songs, participants' microphones were muted and they sang along as I played and sang from my home piano. Most weeks, everyone in attendance had an opportunity to select at least two hymns.

After meeting nearly every week for well over a full year, we agreed to take our customary summer break with the hope that we might be able to return to in-person rehearsals. Indeed, circumstances did allow us to resume our traditional format in September. Meeting now in the Parks Room of Chestnut Court (where Sunday's Fellowship of Faith also meets), our Wednesday evenings once again followed the pre-pandemic schedule, beginning at 6:30 with a hymn-sing, then transitioning around 7:00 into rehearsal of four-part choral repertoire for presentation during Sunday worship services. Per South's policy, these in-person rehearsals do require all present to be masked at all times. Some of our members have had to get creative with solutions to allow masks and eyeglasses to peacefully coexist!

As I write this in early 2022, South has once again turned to online-only meetings for what will hopefully prove to be a short time, as Monroe County struggles with increased case counts and a strain on the healthcare system. Sing For Joy! has returned to our online Zoom format for the time being, and hopes to resume in-person gatherings as soon as possible.

Over the course of the previous four months, our in-person rehearsals have allowed us to rehearse and perform some of our favorite anthems, as well as learning new ones that have been added to our choral library through the inheritance of folios from Calvary-St. Andrews and New Life Presbyterian churches. We continue to have an absolute blast spending time with each other and singing together!

Sing For Joy! currently comprises thirteen members (names in **bold** indicate regular attendees of our Zoom meetings): **Sue Bovay**, **Amy Doty**, **John Hust**, **Carole Knight**, **Mary Lee Miller**, Holly Powell, **Andy Pratt**, Fran Ratcliffe, **Nancy Rice**, **Gordon Rickner**, **Stena Rickner**, Barb Sixbey, and **Mary Taglieri**. We were frequently joined via Zoom by **Karen Thomas** (from Arizona!) and have had the occasional St. John's resident drop in to listen to our in-person rehearsals, as well. New members are always welcome (no audition required), and our Zoom hymn-sings are available to anyone with the link and password.

—Andy Pratt, Director of Music





For ten weeks, beginning on July 2nd, Amy Doty, Nancy Brown, Linda McLean, Kim McConnell, Susan Riblett, Darlene Saeva, Eileen Smith and Pastor Deb came together on Zoom to read and digest Marcus Borg's *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time*. With supplemental information exploring the geography and history of the Biblical region, the group members found themselves broadening their own experiences of Scripture.



On October 19, 2021, we women “of an age” gathered in person to share with each other our personal/spiritual experiences in this stage of our lives. We were Amy Doty, Janice Holbrook, Mary Lee Miller, Nancy Rice, Sally Lake, and Sue Bovay. Drawing from her own experiences and many published sources (chief among was *The Gift of Years* by Sister Joan Chittister), Pastor Deb was our facilitator.

During our seven meetings, we talked freely about some pressing hard topics: mental and physical limitations; regret; loneliness; idleness, and fear of the future. We also spoke of our joys, of developing new relationships, of exploring new endeavors. Somehow, whatever the topic, the Spirit sat among us, enlightening and uplifting us.

Our time of sharing was so satisfying that we decided to continue to meet, this time without Reverend Swift, using both in-person (as soon as that is feasible) and Zoom.

On behalf of our searching sisters, peace.
Respectfully submitted,
Mary Lee Miller



One of our farthest-reaching Acts of Faith is our Friday Bible Study led by Pastor Deb, Water from the Well. At noon, for an hour, we gather from across the country on Zoom: Amy Doty, Eileen Smith, JoMae Spoelhof, and Susan Riblett from the Rochester area, Marcia Reiff (Dansville), Linda McLean (Ithaca), Beth Struever (wintering in Texas), Darlene Saeva (wintering in Nevada), Diane Hoener (NJ), Martha Moler (UT), and Peggy Hughes St. James (FL).

The group, which grew out of our Sizzling Summer Spirituality Group, is focused on the Book of Acts as we read it from a justice perspective. With members from eight different churches (including Presbyterian, Christian Reformed, UCC, and Roman Catholic) as well as a long-time Baha'i member, our conversations focus on the development of the first century church and how the challenges faced by our spiritual ancestors still plague us today.

All are welcome to join us at any time. There is no time limit for our work on the Acts of the Apostles; we are letting the Spirit dictate our pace as we work together to share our own journeys and see scripture in a new light.



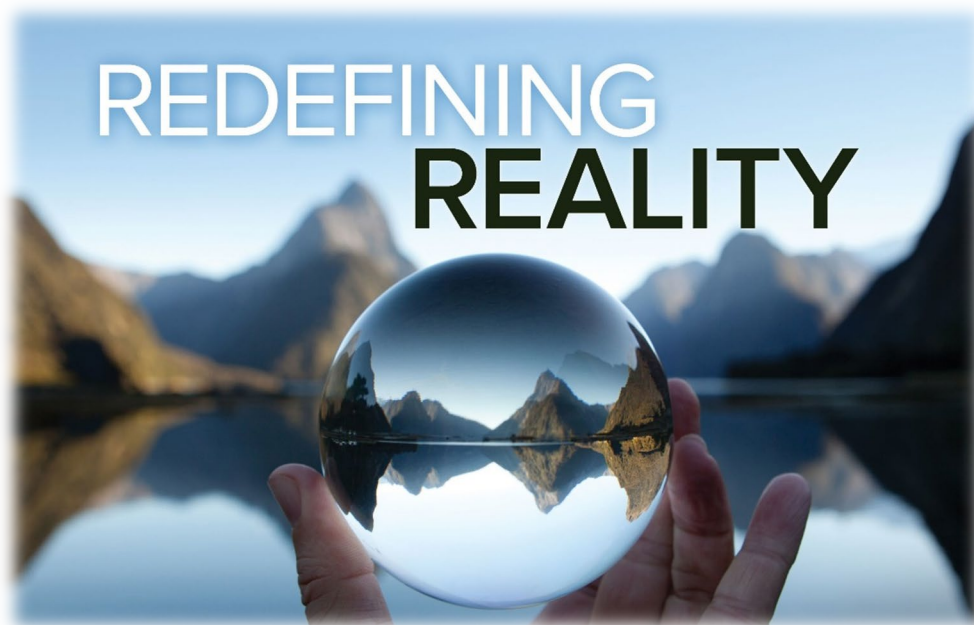


Although not an Act of Faith of South Church, Family Promise of Greater Rochester (formerly RAIHN) is an avenue through which South members address some of the Matthew 25 initiatives.

Through New Life Presbyterian Church's partnership with Third Presbyterian Church and RAIHN (Rochester Area International Housing Network), three current members of South Presbyterian Church have continued to be active in the RAIHN ministry of providing shelter and sustenance to homeless families (uniquely including both parents and their children) in the Rochester area.

During the 2021 pandemic season, RAIHN/Family Promise of Rochester transitioned from providing shelter in a weekly rotation of churches and synagogues with volunteer hosts for meals and overnight support to housing families in apartments associated with the Family Day Center on Webster Avenue. Volunteer opportunities included providing food items for meals and Wegmans' gift cards to feed the families sheltering in the apartments.

The board of RAIHN/Family Promise recently made the decision to transition to using the apartment model instead of the weekly rotation from church/synagogue to provide for increased stability for the families in shelter based on the increasing duration of time families are remaining in need of shelter. A new model for using volunteer support is being developed through conversations with volunteers invited to on-line round table discussions. More information about volunteer opportunities will be forthcoming.



Coordinating the Work of the Church



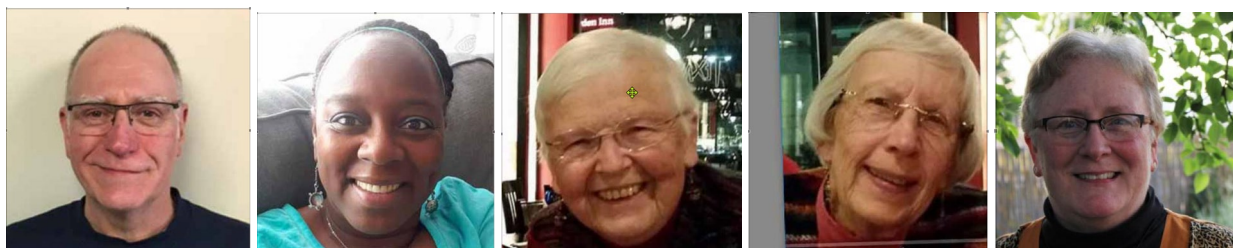
Your Session

The session is responsible 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. – Book of Order



The Session saw numerous changes this year within our shared model of Clerking; and our faithfulness and steadfastness continues to forge ahead! I experienced my first annual reading of the minutes, and needless to say it was a daunting and laborious task. With many helpers for the work, we prevailed and the task was completed. Returning to in person worship this year was also a bit of a challenge; mainly start times and wanting the time to be convenient for everyone involved. God continues to lead us in our decision making. It's a blessing that the Session works very well together, and that, I believe, is because we all care for each other! We meet ten times a year.

Sonya Kennedy, *Clerk of Session*



Your Deacons



The ministry of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, witness and service, sharing the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress. – Book of Order

SPC Deacons, Brian Preston, Ruth Dempsey, and Judy Wandtke, together with Partners in Ministry Sonya Kennedy, Holly Powell and Barbara Durfee provide the caring outreach of South Presbyterian Church in conjunction with Pastor Deb. After answering a call to be co-facilitators, Holly Powell and Barbara Durfee convened a meeting of the Deacons on 11/16/21 (Zoom). Monthly topics include Communion set-up by Deacons, Prayer and Caring Outreach contacts (phone calls, cards, and visits as allowed by COVID protocols), Special seasonal remembrances for those unable to gather, and Special donation requests.

Caring Outreach contacts were made to those who did not return to in-person worship when we were able to gather at St. Johns Meadows. The online YouTube ministries and DVD options continue to be available for worship along with the Prayerful Pause with the Pastor.

Special seasonal remembrances (angel ornaments) were delivered along with well-received visits during December.

A Food Cupboard Donation Request was made during December to supplement the pantry shelves and Christmas baskets through the New Life Food Cupboard.

Throughout this challenging pandemic year, the Deacons remained grateful for the opportunity to serve.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Durfee and Holly Powell
on behalf of the Deacons



Your Office Operations

With all of 2021 mired in the continuing COVID pandemic, there was little change to the South Church office operations. There were few personal gatherings in our physical offices and nearly all meetings were held via Zoom. This may have been a minor blessing, since the building our office occupies was riddled with maintenance issues throughout the year, including roof leaks, heating and air

conditioning problems and a mysterious black dust that coated everything in our section of the building. If it's not one thing, it's another.

All the normal work of communications, bookkeeping, payroll and benefits, etc., continued routinely. However, at the beginning of the year, we shifted some of the worship video production and DVD distribution to my responsibility. Pastor Deb did all that work for a long time. But, when her tenure at DUPC was unknown, we decided to balance the video production between her time and my time. The videos and DVD's continued throughout 2021.

Most of our income and expenses were in line with budgeting, but the pandemic and lack of in-person worship for 7 months of the year did take a toll. There were some unexpected computer problems and then we had an influx of spending related to the resumption of in-person worship at St. John's Meadows. Additionally, there was some unexpected spending on AoF's... but also some generous giving to offset those expenses.



Throughout 2021, we received quite a few significant gifts from our community. A few of those gifts were very generous and all helped us get to the end of the year without further withdrawals from the investment funds. Additionally, the church participated in the second round PPP loans from the federal government COVID relief funds. That program was completed in the summer and the loan was completely forgiven in December. There was no cost to the church for the PPP2 loan and there are no residual responsibilities carried over to 2022. We ended 2021 with a clean slate.

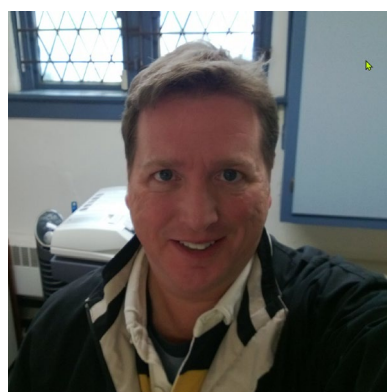
Respectfully submitted,
Kevin Fuller, Director of Operations

Your Staff

Every now and again – if you're lucky – you know that you are part of something special: a special project ... a special program ... a special performance ... or, as in this case, a special staff. It is my pleasure and privilege every day to work alongside (figuratively speaking) two men who are highly competent ministers in their own right:



Andy Pratt
Minister of Music



Kevin Fuller
Director of Operations

It's not just that each is a consummate professional in his own field; it's that both of them are so darn qualified in areas *beyond* their own fields. And both of them are committed to the ministry of our Acts of Faith.

I am often asked what it is that makes South able to try these new, innovative programs; what is it that allows us to think outside the box and yet stay so connected. One of the answers has to be these two men. They are creative, brilliant, and caring. What a winning combination!

Whether it's Andy making sure that Sing for Joy folks stay connected by having a hymn sing/online rehearsal every week (save two or three) for an eighteen-month period, or it's Kevin delivering books and DVD's around the city, or troubleshooting computer problems over the phone with frustrated members, these two invite us all to BELIEVE in what we're doing, BELIEVE in who we are, and BELIEVE that we can always find a way to accomplish the seemingly impossible.

Without a building to support, our largest expenses is our staff, and from where I sit as one-third of this trio – these two are worth every penny and more!

Deb Swift
Pastor

Your Nominating Committee

As is the case in the Presbyterian Church, the Nominating committee is elected directly by the congregation and reports back to the congregation instead of to the Session. This year the committee was elected on Sunday December 19th at a special congregational meeting following worship at Fellowship of Faith and again consisted of one representative each of the Session and Deacons as well as three at-large members.

We are charged with coming up with a slate of Deacons, Elders, and President of the Corporation to be voted on by the congregation at the Annual Meeting. Pastor Deb has been present to those who have been discerning their call in their positions. She has answered their questions and we are grateful that we have so many members who are actively listening to the Spirit. It sure makes this committee's task much easier.

What follows is the slate of officers that we will present at the Annual Meeting on February 13, 2022. Other nominations will be welcome from the floor, should any be forthcoming.

I would like to thank our committee members: Amy Doty, Marylee Miller, Holly Powell, and Stena Rickner for their help in completing this important work!

Respectfully submitted,
John Hust (NomCom chair)

South Church Leadership – 2022

SLATE OF OFFICERS

(x) is the number of their term – first or second three-year term. Each may serve a maximum of 6 consecutive years.

Class denotes the final year of their term. Newly elected officers begin their terms at their Service of Ordination and Installation following their election and examination by the sitting Session.

Those in **bold-red** are the slate to be voted on at the February 13, 2022 Annual Meeting.

Session

Sonya Kennedy, Clerk of Session

<u>Class of 2022</u>	<u>Class of 2023</u>	<u>Class of 2024</u>
Mary Lee Miller (1)		Karen Thomas (1)
Nancy Rice (1)		John Hust (2) (5 years total)

Deacons & Partners in Ministry

Barbara Durfee and Holly Powell, Co-Convenors of the Deacons

<u>Class of 2022</u>	<u>Class of 2023</u>	<u>Class of 2024</u>
Ruth Dempsey (1)	Jan Holbrook (1)	Sue Bovay (1)
Judy Wandtke (1)		
Barbara Durfee (1)		

Partners in Ministry are those who serve but, for one reason or another, are not PC(USA) members of South and therefore not eligible for Deacon ordination: **Rev. Holly Powell**

Each of these people has been previously ordained.

Corporation Officers

President

John Hust (annually renewable)

Secretary

Sonya Kennedy

Treasurer

Nancy Rice

The Session elects the Clerk of Session and Treasurer who serve as the Secretary and Treasurer, respectively, of the Corporation. The Congregation elects the President at the Annual Meeting.

Pastor

Reverend Deborah Fae Swift, Moderator of Session

Finances



A Message from the Treasurer

Here we are again, just past the end of 2021, so it's time to review the financial picture from last year.

First, 2021 was undoubtedly a very difficult year for all of us because of the Covid pandemic and inevitable shutdowns of so many aspects of our lives, including the need to go to on-line worship services and meetings.

Financially, some of our expenses decreased, although not as many as one might think. Office expenses shifted somewhat, but still remained high because of the need to produce DVD and on-line worship services. Personnel expenses largely stayed the same, as their activities shifted to on-line production instead of in-person modes. Thus, our total expenses had been projected at \$143,221 but were actually \$138,106.

The wonderful news of 2021 is that our income, largely from our members and friends, was even larger than we had estimated pre-pandemic, thanks to your wonderful generosity! It was also assisted by income from Pastor Deb's temporary service at DUPC for a few months. **While we had projected income of \$79,175, our actual income was \$130,335.**

The result of these developments was that **our deficit ended up at \$4,226.90, instead of \$64,046 as we had projected!**

For 2022, after meticulous scrutiny by our Finance team, we have budgeted our total income at \$125,865 and our expenses at \$143,221 (and a few cents). This leaves us with a deficit of \$64,046.

The amount of money in our investment funds as of 12/31/21 was \$90,421.88. We have already had to take out \$15,000 for our on-going expenses, leaving approximately \$75,000 for future needs.

There are two take-aways from these figures:



- First, the financial support of our friends and members last year was heroic and generous!
- Second, that level of support must continue this year if we are to be sustained as a lively and loving Christian body.

I know we can do it, with your dedication and God's help!!!!

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Rice, Treasurer



Our thanks to Kevin Fuller, our Director of Operations, for his continuing work as our bookkeeper and his heroic efforts to keep our expenditures as minimal as possible. If there's a deal to be found, he will find it, and for that, we are very grateful.

If you have not yet made a Pledge of Support for our Ministries in 2022, it's not too late. Just detach this [Pledge Card](#) and send it in.

2022 PLEDGE CARD

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

_____ **ZIP** _____

Phone _____

Email _____

I pledge that I will give \$ _____ per

☐

Week

☐

Month

☐

Total - Year

signature

South Presbyterian Church 2022

Adopted by the Session on 01/11/22

	2021 BUDGET ESTIMATE	2021 BUDGET ACTUAL	2022 BUDGET ESTIMATE	NOTES
Income				
4100 Per Capita Contributions	\$ 850.00	\$ 926.00	\$ 900.00	
4200 Worship Collections				
4210 Pledge Income	\$ 59,500.00	\$ 58,486.00	\$ 54,000.00	Pledges received as of 01/11/22
4220 Pledgers' Additional Giving	\$ 750.00	\$ 23,477.00	\$ 15,000.00	
4230 Non-Pledgers & Misc	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 11,163.63	\$ 10,000.00	
Total 4200 Worship Collections	\$ 70,250.00	\$ 93,127.30	\$ 79,000.00	
4300 Earned Income				
4320 Consulting			\$ -	
4360 Publications	\$ -	\$ 64.00	\$ -	Covered by Firebird Spirit now.
4370 NYS Reimbursements	\$ 1,875.00		\$ -	NYS payment for services at RPC - maybe 6 months? \$3,750/yr
4380 Reimburse Clergy part-time	\$ -	\$ 20,081.90	\$ 42,965.00	2021-from DUPC; 2022-from Irondequoit PC (50% of 11/12 of pastor package)
Total 4300 Earned Income	\$ 1,875.00	\$ 20,145.90	\$ 42,965.00	
4400 Support				
4420 Foundation Grants	\$ -	\$ -		
4430 Mission Support	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 3,540.00	\$ 3,000.00	Pittsford PC for RPC ministries, Contributions from other AoF's, or Other Churches.
4440 GV Presbytery Grants	\$ 1,200.00			
4470 NLPC Legacy Operating Support	\$ -	\$ 12,271.11		
4490 SPC Support Acts of Faith	\$ -	\$ 325.00		
Total 4400 Support	\$ 6,200.00	\$ 16,136.11	\$ 3,000.00	
Total Income	\$ 79,175.00	\$ 130,335.31	\$ 125,865.00	

Expenses		FULL-TIME	ACTUAL WITH 5 Months at DUPC 50%			
5100 Pastor (3% increase over 2021)						
5110 Cash Salary, Pastor	\$	38,953.00	\$	25,378.00	\$	35,487.00
5120 Housing, Pastor	\$	22,740.00	\$	15,321.00	\$	22,000.00
5130 Utilities, Pastor						3% Increase over 2021 as recommended by GVP.
5140 SECA, Pastor	\$	4,375.26	\$	3,005.32	\$	4,474.00
5150 Board of Pensions, Pastor	\$	21,161.41	\$	16,519.92	\$	22,780.00
xxxx Other benefits and allowances	\$	-	\$	-	\$	4,500.00
5160 Professional & Travel Expenses, Pastor	\$	2,500.00	\$	1,862.76	\$	3,500.00
5170 Continuing Education, Pastor	\$	1,000.00	\$	-	\$	1,000.00
Total 5100 Pastor	\$	90,729.67	\$	62,087.00	\$	93,741.00
5200 Associate Pastor						
5210 Cash Salary, Associate Pastor						
5220 Housing, Associate Pastor						
5240 SECA, Associate Pastor						
5250 Board of Pensions, Associate Pastor						
5260 Professional & Travel Expenses, AP						
5270 Continuing Education, AP						
Total 5200 Associate Pastor						
5300 Employees						
5310 Wages, Minister of Music	\$	15,000.00	\$	11,344.49	\$	15,000.00
5320 Wages, Administration	\$	15,000.00	\$	38,129.49	\$	54,000.00
Total 5300 Employees	\$	30,000.00	\$	49,473.98	\$	69,000.00
5400 Employer Expenses						
5410 Payroll Taxes	\$	5,200.00	\$	4,472.03	\$	3,500.00
5420 Worker's Compensation/Disability	\$	1,400.00	\$	619.00	\$	1,600.00
5430 Staff/Volunteer/Leadership Appreciation	\$	500.00	\$	209.70	\$	300.00
Total 5400 Employer Expenses	\$	7,100.00	\$	5,300.73	\$	5,400.00
5500 Professional Services						
5510 Pulpit Supply	\$	300.00	\$	150.00	\$	-

5520 Music Supply	\$	350.00	\$	475.00	\$	600.00	Lawyers \$2000, BSA settlements \$3000 ea. Total \$9000
5540 Legal Fees					\$	11,500.00	
5550 Independent Contractors							
5560 Contracted Services	\$	1,200.00	\$	764.00	\$	1,200.00	Payroll and Accounting Services ~\$1200
Total 5500 Professional Services	\$	1,850.00	\$	1,389.00	\$	13,300.00	
5600 PCUSA & Mission							
5610 Per Capita	\$	1,100.00	\$	1,581.00	\$	1,600.00	GVP estimate 2022
5620 PCUSA Mission Pledge	\$	1,100.00	\$	1,100.00	\$	700.00	GVP (\$500) and Synod/GA (\$100 each = \$200)
Total 5600 PCUSA & Mission	\$	2,200.00	\$	2,681.00	\$	2,300.00	
5700 Facilities							
5710 Insurance	\$	800.00	\$	900.00	\$	950.00	2022 increase
5720 Office Rent	\$	3,300.00	\$	4,550.00	\$	3,900.00	PER KEVIN: Rent is \$650/mo. (12 mos=\$7,800) FBS is paying 1/2.
5730 Telephone/VOIP	\$	100.00			\$	100.00	Potlucks, etc. Reunion party. (Payment to Beth Shalom \$500 comes out of the Food Cupboard fund but we note it here.)
5740 Venue Rentals/Donations	\$	900.00			\$	500.00	
Total 5700 Facilities	\$	5,100.00	\$	5,450.00	\$	5,450.00	
5800 General Church Expenses							
5802 Office Supplies	\$	750.00	\$	613.09	\$	700.00	PER KEVIN (if half the year is still in pandemic)
5804 Copier Lease	\$	2,150.00	\$	2,138.31	\$	2,150.00	
5806 Copier Usage	\$	1,000.00	\$	324.21	\$	1,000.00	PER KEVIN (less than this if half the year is still in pandemic)
5808 Postage	\$	500.00	\$	136.23	\$	550.00	PER KEVIN (this covers 4 mailings not counting books which are moved over to FBS)
5810 Computers/Technology	\$	1,500.00	\$	1,369.33	\$	1,000.00	PER KEVIN (this includes software subscriptions, network equipment, etc)
5812 Internet Service	\$	720.00	\$	389.95	\$	1,080.00	
5814 Web Presence	\$	750.00	\$	199.00	\$	400.00	PER KEVIN (includes, template, domains, and web server. We moved the web server billing to FBS office expense for now, waiting to see how things shake out.)
5816 Publicity/Advertising/Marketing	\$	200.00	\$	-	\$	-	Book printing has been transferred to Firebird Spirit.
5818 Printing	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	
5820 Instrument Repair & Tuning	\$	250.00	\$	-	\$	-	
5822 Music Supplies	\$	100.00	\$	-	\$	100.00	Ring for Joy!
5824 Worship Supplies	\$	500.00	\$	238.75	\$	400.00	DVD Ministry costs \$355/year (est) currently funded from the GVP grant but this is for when it's not covered, candles, etc.
5826 Hospitality	\$	1,000.00	\$	-	\$	-	We no longer have paid coffeehours with worship.

5834 Subscriptions	\$	60.00	\$	83.95	\$	-	We no longer offer publications like <i>The Upper Room</i> .
5840 Other Event Expense					\$	-	Expenses for Deb to represent church outside her own expenses
5842 Memberships/Dues Expense	\$	50.00	\$	48.94	\$	-	Sam's Club
5844 Other Acts of Faith Expenses	\$	250.00	\$	9,921.73	\$	1,000.00	Miscellaneous that don't fit elsewhere
5848 Bank/Monetary Fees	\$	400.00	\$	213.11	\$	200.00	
5850 Miscellaneous Expense	\$	500.00	\$	485.87	\$	500.00	If needed we can use this to tune the piano at Fellowship of Faith.
5854 SPC Support to Acts of Faith	\$	(4,438.53)	\$	(4,438.53)			
Total 5800 General Church Expenses	\$	6,241.47	\$	11,723.94	\$	9,080.00	
Total Expenses	\$	143,221.14	\$	\$134,052.45	\$	198,271.00	Keep in mind that \$11,500 of that is reserve for legal fees.)
NET OPERATING INCOME:	\$	(64,046.14)	\$	(\$3,717.14)	\$	(\$72,406.00)	
Withdrawal from Investments to cover the deficit					\$	72,406.00	
					\$	-	

The State of the Church

Vision for 2022 from the Pastor's Point of View



Someone asked me a couple of years ago why I write a “State of the Church” statement when so few other ministers do that. And my answer is that I think more pastors *should* write one – every year! While the Pastor does not have the final say in a Presbyterian Church (that would be the Session, the Bible and the Book of Order), we sit in a unique position. We see not only all that is happening in our congregation (and in our case, there is a lot happening, even during the pandemic), but we are also aware of large movements and trends both in the denomination and in the larger society in terms of religion, generational tendencies, etc.

But that having been said, I am grateful for my colleagues who give me some perspective and keep my vision grounded in the historical truths of who both South and New Life Churches have always been.

The Spirit is strong – our Finances are not.

And just when I got to thinking that we were going to have to close down operations and maybe dissolve the church, one of my friends said, “For as long as I’ve known both South and New Life, you have been on the precipice of closing. Don’t sell yourselves short. God seems to have a purpose with you still. You may not know where the money is coming from, but you are a long way from a dying church – the Spirit is strong!”

Nancy’s Message from the Treasurer bears this out.

We had projected income of \$79,175, but our actual income was \$130,335. That’s more than \$51,000 over our projection. And yes, part of that is because of the PPP program of the federal government, but who says God can’t work through the federal government? And ...

We planned a deficit of \$64,000, but ended up with one just over \$4,000.

I don’t pretend to know the ways of Spirit, but I do know that we are still here by the Grace of God. And as long as we are still here, we are to be “going out and telling people far and near about Jesus’ way of life,” his way of faith ... we are to continue to BELIEVE. So, from where I stand, I have to affirm that “God has a Plan” even though we might not see what it is.

Believe

It was about seven years ago when our Session decided to call an Associate Pastor and asked me to devote the majority of my time to figuring out a way for the Acts of Faith Model to be sustainable. We tried everything:

- Expanding our grant writing
- Developing programs that could be used by other churches to combine office services, saving money for all that participated while bringing income to South
- Welcoming visitors and interviews as there seemed to be a growing desire for us to serve as consultants with churches and presbyteries. That, of course, led to the
- Development and launch of Firebird Spirit, Inc., all the while
- Consolidating our expenses, and
- Continuing to redefine ministry in the 21st century

We were the first to get permission from New York State to take our community into a Forensic Unit and then to get paid by the state for our time on-site.

But even those things were not enough to have a clear picture of how to achieve the sustainability that we were thinking of.

And that's when it dawned on me that even though we have been redefining "church" in a new way, maybe we were continuing to define "sustainability" the old way.

Maybe God is not as concerned with *financial* sustainability as with *spiritual* sustainability.

What would it look like if we continued to grow in our own faith to such an extent that the role of pastor would be more different than we had ever seen before?

And if so, what would that look like?

As I continued to pray and discern with the Session and friends, it became clear that we were really talking about three different sets of needs:

- **the needs of our faith community** to have an ordained minister to offer the sacraments, teach, empower and shepherd the spiritual

growth of the congregation, preach, lead worship, and make sure everyone has the care they need;

- **my needs as an individual** to make a living that will support my family; and
- the challenge of our faith community to provide the **volunteer administrative leadership** needed in order to be a Presbyterian Church.

Financially, the challenge is that much of our ministry is to communities that are not in a position to support us. We are a *missional* church. We would never expect a foreign Mission to support the pastoral services needed in order to help form those missional communities. Instead, the Missionaries work at raising money to support the foreign mission work.

What we are doing is *local* mission work, but we have no groups to bring on board as our sponsors or supporters.

For eight months from October of 2020 thru May of 2021, we were able to get a sense of what it would be like for me to be half-time at South and half-time somewhere else (at that point it was DUPC). Nothing was lost at SPC. Our ministries continued to flourish. And since that time, I have been called half-time to Irondequoit Presbyterian Church where I will begin serving on February 1, 2022.

Re: the first bullet above, it is clear that our current AoF configurations don't need a full-time pastor. I'm not sure if we even need a half-time one. It might be that moving ahead, we would be just fine with a one third- or one-quarter-time minister. And that is probably what we could currently support, financially.

Re: the second, every year I become closer to retirement, my children become less financially dependent upon me, and God seems to be taking care of my family's financial needs.

But it is the third bullet – our ability to field the volunteer administrative leadership needed in order to be a Presbyterian Church – that continues to be a challenge for the Session and me.

In order for a church to be a Presbyterian Church ... it must have a Session of ordained elders that will meet and be able to do the business of the church.

Increasingly, as our membership ages and people are drawn to other activities, or as they age and begin to face their own dwindling energy and narrowing scope of involvement in outside events, our ability to field such a group for the long term is increasingly in doubt.



In the next year or two, we are going to have some hard decisions to make:

- a) **Do we continue as a faith community?** — Currently, the Spirit seems to be saying YES to that because our Energy & Excitement for sharing the Good News continues to grow. Just look at the AoF's that have started up this year and how the number of our nation-wide participants has quadrupled.
- b) **Our roots are Presbyterian. Are we committed to remaining part of the PC(USA)?** — If so, we need to find a way to satisfy the requirement of a Session to have authority over us.
 - 1. One possibility is for **us to become a ministry of the Presbytery** of Genesee Valley ... though I don't know if there's willingness to take on the responsibility of our Acts of Faith and all of their related costs. Like many churches, the Presbytery, too, is mindful of expenditures and over-committing itself.
 - 2. Another possibility is for **us to find a church (or combination of churches) who would be willing to take on our Acts of Faith as their own missional presence** in the city of Rochester. This would mean that either South would blend with them (as New Life did with us) or that South would dissolve and all of our members would join one or more of those churches. Either way, our Acts of Faith would be under the authority of their Session and we would continue as Presbyterian.

My friends, we have come this far by faith, leaning on the Everlasting Arms.

Now, as much as ever, we must all be prayerfully discerning where God is leading us next.

What is the vision that God is sending us to be the Church of Jesus Christ in the 21st century here in Rochester, NY? What is that meant to look like?

I sense that we need to do this work NOW, before we are faced with any direct choices. We need to discern and claim what is most important for us. Staying together? Meeting in person for worship? Studying scripture?

What is it for you? (And it may be something beyond what we are currently experiencing or aware of. Something brand new.)

When God's offer comes to us – in whatever form it takes – we must be ready to embrace it and not hesitate.

I leave you with these words – selections from the Message Version of Isaiah 43. May they carry us into 2022 and all that lies ahead:

**¹⁻⁴ But now, God's Message,
the God who made you in the first place, Jacob,
the One who got you started, Israel:
“Don't be afraid, I've redeemed you.
I've called your name. You're mine.
When you're in over your head, I'll be there with you.
When you're in rough waters, you will not go down.
When you're between a rock and a hard place,
it won't be a dead end—**

...

**“But you are my witnesses.” God's Decree.
“You're my handpicked servant
So that you'll come to know and trust me,
understand both that I am and who I am.
Previous to me there was no such thing as a god,
nor will there be after me.
I, yes I, am GOD.**

...

**“Forget about what's happened;
don't keep going over old history.
Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand-new.
It's bursting out! Don't you see it?
There it is! I'm making a road through the desert,
rivers in the badlands.**



Pastor Deb