

West Emory Presbyterian Church Annual Report for 2016

“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”



ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

As this familiar passage from Micah 6:8 tells us, we are called to walk and work and worship together as the Body of Christ, the Church. When we respond to Jesus’s call to discipleship in profound and life-changing ways and the light of Christ’s love shines forth in each and everyone one of us, we are doing the will of God. This is who we are as West Emory Presbyterian Church.

As we begin the year 2017 and reflect on the year gone past, there are so many blessings for which we can be grateful and so many opportunities to serve our Lord open to us in the days ahead.

The members and friends of West Emory Presbyterian Church continue to be led by the Spirit using our gifts and resources in remarkable ways for the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ. We have worshiped and prayed together, rejoiced and grieved together; worked, served, studied, and played together.

Our worship bulletin reminds us each Sunday that:

“The Mission of our congregation is to grow as disciples of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and to reach out into the community and the world in his name. Through worship, study, fellowship and outreach, we are committed to serve God with joy and enthusiasm and to welcome all persons into this family of faith, the Body of Christ.”

One glance at this Annual Report brings to mind all the many ways this congregation has taken seriously our Savior’s call to discipleship. Though we may be a smaller membership congregation, our care for one another and our outreach beyond our doors is outstanding. We are truly *“The Little Church that Could, Did, and Does.”*

As a family of faith, year after year, we continue to experience the energizing and inspiring presence of the Holy Spirit working in our midst through the persons and ministries that are a part of our mission.

A number of Significant Events highlight our life together this past year.

In February we hosted a *Valentine’s Day Dinner* for residents of the halfway house at Midway Rehabilitation Center in Knoxville. In April two of our military veterans, **Doug McCall** and **Margaret Richardson**, were honored for their service to our country with a trip to Washington, D.C. through the *HonorAir Knoxville* program and many of our members turned out for the celebration at the airport to welcome them home. Both also were



presented during the year beautiful, hand-crafted patriotic quilts at church made by **Carrol Blake** as part of the *Quilts of Valor Foundation* program.

Upon Louise Edwards' Retirement in May, we recognized the remarkable contribution she has made to the worship and life of our congregation in her 30 years of service as our church's pianist. In November we grieved with the residents of Gatlinburg and Sevier county of East Tennessee in *the devastating wildfires* that struck this area. Our church family responded with our Child Enrichment Center's collection of food, water and clothing, donations to our presbytery's *East Tennessee Disaster Relief Fund* and individual volunteers who helped in the Response Center.



Worship continues to be the most important part of our life together as a family of faith. We are blessed by the gifts and talents of our choir and musicians as well as of the faithful and committed liturgists, acolytes and ushers. We have been feed spiritually in worship and through the Lenten Bible study series and Sunday School programs. Each year our worship experience is enhanced visually and artistically with the addition of a purple draped rugged cross during Lent that is then transformed and gives witness to the resurrection as an outstandingly beautiful flower-bedecked cross on Easter Sunday.

Our *Annual "Kirkin' of the Pumpkins"* led by a bagpiper and other special worship services including the Baptism of the Lord, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Pentecost, World Communion Sunday, All Saints Day, Reformation Sunday, and Advent services continue to enrich our worship experience. This past year our *Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols, Candlelight and Communion* was again graced by the children's depiction of the Nativity scene. Christmas Day was celebrated in worship with a birthday party for Jesus. A highlight of the year for our music program was the restoration of our Steinway baby grand piano in the sanctuary and the addition of a new Kawai digital piano made possible through the generous donation of a church member.

Our **Pumpkin Patch** ministry continues to be a blessing not only to this congregation and our neighbors, but



also throughout our larger community, across the state, and around the world. We sold \$24,153.00 in pumpkins and, with extra donations and our 35% of sales, gleaned \$9,246.55 to share with organizations and agencies like Knox Area Rescue Ministries (KARM), Family Promise of Knoxville, Living Waters for the World, Fisher House Foundation which ministers to wounded veterans and their families, John Knox Center, Second Harvest Food Bank, the Hunger Committee of our presbytery and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Through the proceeds of the Pumpkin Patch and extra in donations by church members and the Child Enrichment Center families, we provided 75 families with Thanksgiving dinner through *KARM's Baskets of Hope*

ministry. Our community outreach through the *Fall Festival* provided arts and craft activities, bounce house and hayrides, as well as bake, craft and book sales that were enjoyed by all. The proceeds from this event helped pay for the Fall Festival expenses and are also being used to supplement our youth program.



Our active, hands-on involvement in local and area missions gives us a better understanding of the needs of our neighbors and our call to respond as we are able. Installation and maintenance of clean water systems in the Tennessee and Kentucky border area through *Living Waters for the World Appalachian Network* and the new *“Under the Bridge”* ministry to the homeless continue to be priorities for us. This

past Christmas, through the leadership of the *Women of West Emory*, we helped bring a little warmth and love into the lives of our brothers and sisters in Christ by collecting hats, gloves, scarves, and socks for our Angel Tree, gifts for one of our Kid’s Hope family at A. L. Lotts School, and 100 Gift Bags filled with various items for Mobile Meals recipients. Our annual *Undie Sunday* brought in additional clothing items to share with others.

Food donations for *Smokey’s Pantry* at UT Campus Ministry House, the monthly *Two Cents-a-Meal Offering* that supports a large number of local groups and agencies providing aid to those in need, as well as the annual *Souper Bowl of Caring Offering* all are ways this congregation helps make a difference in the lives of so many in our area.

We still seek new ways to strengthen our ministry to and support of our Military and their families, Police Officers, Firefighters and First Responders in our community. During the year donations for various disaster and relief offerings were received along with the four special, ongoing offerings of our denomination—One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Peace and Global Witness and Christmas Joy Gift. The Christmas Eve offering was designated for the East Tennessee Disaster Relief Fund of our presbytery and the *Benevolence Fund* has been used to provide financial assistance to church members and others in our community.



Helping those in need

This year our church family responded by generously donating over \$6000 to a *Special Lighting Campaign* to replace the lighting in the sanctuary with new LED fixtures. We are grateful to **Jim Whitehead, Jon Michel** and others who gave their time and expertise to the installation of these fixtures.

We continue to be excited about our mentoring outreach ministry to children through *KIDS HOPE USA*. In partnership with our neighborhood school, A. L. Lotts Elementary, our mentors are working one-on-one with three at-risk elementary students providing them academic and personal attention one hour a week. We are also pleased to be sponsors of *Cub Scout Pack 865* which includes boys in the 1st through 5th grade and their leaders who meet 2 to 3 times a month at the church. We look forward each December to our Cub Scouts participation in

worship on *Scout Sunday*. We are pleased that we will be adding the sponsorship of a new Boy Scout troop in the fall of this year.



Work days, yard sales, church dinners, the Palm Sunday pancake breakfast and the Easter egg hunt, Thanksgiving luncheon and picnic on the grounds, after worship fellowship times and the annual Christmas Open House provide opportunities for our members, friends and visitors to enjoy time together. Our *Dinner for Eight* program continues to grow as well as the Sunday morning class of adults, *The Monday Connection*. We look forward to expanding our education ministry for all ages even further.

Our children and youth are participating in a variety of activities and ministries including serving as acolytes, ushers, liturgists, choir members and musicians, and childcare helpers. A number have experienced the benefits of attending presbytery and denominational-wide camps and conferences. **Collin Patten** attended the *Horizon's Conference at Maryville College* this year and **Matthew Whitehead** was part of the staff at *Youth Triennium* this past summer. Our Women's group continues the *Prayer Shawl ministry*, the collection of items for homeless ministries as well as meeting monthly for dinner and fellowship and leading the congregation in new outreach opportunities.

One of our major ministries of the church, the **West Emory Child Enrichment Center**, continues to thrive as parents in our community find a safe and loving environment for the care of their children. We currently have around 65 children at WECEC, ages 12 months through elementary age in the after school program, and a staff of 13. We are looking forward to relocating our playground to the large, fenced-in field near the parking lot this spring.

Our church's flower beds and grounds, indoor plants and the week attention to the orderliness of our sanctuary as well as our myriad of repair needs that come from the active use of our facilities are attended to by the loving care of dedicated individuals for whom we are very grateful. Our newest challenge this year will be the repair of the foundation problem in the kitchen/fellowship hall corner of our building and attention to an ongoing leak in the flat section of our roof. Through the generous giving of time, talents and financial resources of our members and friends, the ministry and mission of West Emory Church is strong and vibrant.



In 2017 may we look forward to the future with great energy and expectancy. May the light of God continue to shine forth through us into our community; may our beautiful rose window remain a beacon of hope and love even in the darkest of nights; and may our lives joyfully reflect the presence of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

***We at West Emory Church have much to be thankful for.
As we have been so richly blessed, let us continue to be a blessing to others.***