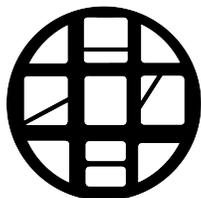


Giving thanks at Little Falls for

2017



Annual Report

LITTLE FALLS STAFF

Church Office

6025 Little Falls Road, Arlington, VA 22207

(703) 538-5230

www.littlefallschurch.org

Interim Pastor

Rev. Mark Tidd

mark@littlefallschurch.org

Director of Worship

Todd Robinson

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Director of Youth Ministries

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Office Manager

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Nursery Coordinator

Cynthia Strawser-Grant

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CHURCH OFFICERS (2018)

The Session

Administration & Finance: Rich Palmer

Adult Discipleship: Celal Kamran

Community Service: Rachel Brand

Family Ministry: Chris Dorsey

Fellowship: Kelly Pulsifer

National & World Missions: Kimberly Lane

Outreach: Carter Burwell

Prayer: Kelly Schomburg

Worship: Will Shields

Moderator: Mark Tidd

Minutes Clerk of Session: Kelly Schomburg (Elder)

Records Clerk of Session: Rae Kurasz (inactive Elder)

Deacons:

Lesley Daigle

Karen Hardee

Sheeba Kamran

Mark Loper

Deb Schueren

Richard Sellers

Jane Spadetti

Nancy Templer

(vacancy)

Trustees:

Lisa Dorsey

Dan Duvall

Suzanne Klein

Otto Kreisher

Dick MacEwen

Becky Ramsey

Bob Sellers

Larry Stump

Trent Templer

Nominating Committee (At-Large):

Kym McMillan

Gregg Kurasz

Co-Treasurers

John Dubeck

Susan Hotine

Assistant

Treasurer

Donna MacEwen

Financial

Secretary

Sarah Lindsay

CHURCH OFFICERS (2017)

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Community Service: Rachel Brand

Family Ministry: Chris Dorsey

Fellowship: Kimberly Lane

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Outreach: Monica Maher

Prayer: Kelly Schomburg

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Trustees:

Bo Bloomer

Dan Duvall

Suzanne Klein

Otto Kreisher

Dick MacEwen

Becky Ramsey

Bob Sellers

Larry Stump

Trent Templer

Nominating Committee (At-Large):

Kym McMillan

Deb Schueren

Seth Verry

Co-Treasurers

John Dubeck

Susan Hotine

Assistant

Treasurer

Hillary Schaeffler

Financial

Secretary

Sarah Lindsay

TRANSITION

Rev. Mark Tidd, Interim Pastor

This is an exciting time to be at Little Falls as we move from one chapter to the next and look forward to the ways God will use us in this neighborhood and the world.

After saying farewell to the whole Merrill family in August, we began the process of looking for the next pastor that God is calling to lead Little Falls into the next chapter of ministry. Our Pastor Nominating Committee has been hard at work on this process, working closely with both National Capital Presbytery and Vanderbloemen Search Group to identify candidates to lead the church.

This process is not quite the same as filling a corporate leadership vacancy. While there are some similarities, the PNC's main resources for accomplishing its work are faithful hearts and wise minds open to God's leading as the committee prayerfully discerns which candidates to interview. Our role in this process is certainly to offer input at the right times, but above all it is to surround each member of the PNC in prayer. Please continue to pray for them daily as they serve long hours on our behalf:

Norris Cochran	Sarah Lindsay
Jerry Dorsey	Robin Puttock
Karen Harned	Kelly Schomburg
Eric Yoder	

A time of transition such as we're experiencing can feel both exciting and a little disorienting. The good news for Little Falls is that we are always being called to live in the hope of God's promise and God's mission, whomever it may be that God calls to lead this church. We can do this together by living out the

four goals that the Session described in August for this interim time:

1. Stay unified as a congregation.
2. Stay on mission (proclaim, grow, share).
3. Care for one another well.
4. Grow in our prayer lives.

It's a privilege to join you on this sacred journey.

The Mission of Little Falls

We joyfully proclaim the love of God in Jesus Christ, grow in His truth, and share His Gospel with our neighbors.

PASTORAL SEARCH

In the fall of 2017, Session launched the search for a new senior pastor for Little Falls by forming the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) and contracting with the Vanderbloemen search firm. The PNC is made up of seven members, including Jerry Dorsey, Karen Harned, Sarah Lindsay, Robin Puttock, Eric Yoder and co-chairs Kelly Schomburg and Norris Cochran.

The PNC meets weekly and has been in regular contact with the National Capital Presbytery and the search firm.

By the end of the calendar year the PNC produced a detailed description of Little Falls and the characteristics sought in a senior pastor. This information was used to produce the search firm's listing and populate the Ministry Information Form used by the Presbytery. At the start of 2018, both are in the process of moving toward posting.

The PNC anticipates beginning to receive prospective candidates from the search firm and the Presbytery in February

of 2018. While the individual names of applicants must be kept confidential, the PNC will continue to provide updates to the congregation on the status of the search effort.

It is God who truly calls our next pastor, and Jesus who is the head of our church. The Committee is working hard foremost to be guided by God, and is eager for the congregation to continue to engage in prayer, reflect on scripture, and listen for clues in our conversations with one another so that we can piece together a picture of God's plan for us.

Little Falls Presbyterian Church will select a pastor to guide the church in carrying out its mission under Christ in the Gospel



Prayer to discern God's plan will serve as the foundation for this process among the Congregation, Session, Interim Pastor and Pastor Nominating Committee

During this time of transition, we are very grateful for the regular preaching load being carried by our interim pastor, Rev. Mark Tidd; long-time Little Falls friend Rev. Lee Corder, and staff member Chris Lugo.



WORSHIP

Todd Robinson, Director of Worship



Worshipping Together

Whether we are having two Sunday morning worship services or just one, music continues to be an integral part of worship at Little Falls (LF). This past year we discovered even more hidden talents from some of our members that made their way into either the Worship Praise Band, the Festival Choir or the “Hallelujah Chorus.” What a blessing to have such depth of musical talent!



We started this year with two services on each Sunday. The first being a contemporary (9:30 a.m.) service, then a more traditional (11 a.m.) service and have finished the year with one service (10 a.m.) that is more of a blended style while we are in transition and searching for a new lead pastor. We have heard from the Chancel Choir, Praise Band, Hallelujah Chorus and other guest musicians.

Chancel Choir

We are blessed with a deep love of great music here at the church and the



adult choir is a big part of that gift. The Chancel Choir continues to deliver beautiful anthems in the service and lead worship with their gifts of music. The door to this choir is never closed. We encourage anyone who might have the desire to “give the choir a try” to please do so. We work hard but we do a lot of laughing too! This choir is a group of ‘worship leaders’ that love to make beautiful music and have huge hearts for God. The choir sings to enhance the worship service and preserve the traditional sound of worship through choral music. It is an honor to conduct and work with them.

Festival Choir

For Easter and Christmas the Festival Choir (FC) continued to deliver beautiful music. Easter Sunday the FC presented challenging music that was very beautifully performed.



This past Christmas they presented “*Holy Night of Miracles*,” a lovely cantata with soaring new melodies, elegantly narrated by our own Lesley Daigle. The FC is for people who love singing choral music but might not have the time to

commit to the weekly engagement of the Chancel Choir. We will be presenting more music at Easter and Christmas in 2018 so, time to dust off the vocal pipes and come raise your voice to the Lord!

Praise Band

With great joy, energy and Christ-centered music, the praise band continued to deliver excellent music for us to worship to. We’ve played everything from the Beatles to Bach and traditional hymns to the most current



Christian music. We are there to worship *with* you, engage you

in singing and make the service not only satisfying to all our souls but, more importantly, to be a glorious offering to our amazing Creator. Our roster grew over the past year and included: Alan MacEwen, Rich Palmer and Jeff Hayes on guitar; Chris Lugo, Jeff Hayes, Sarah Pullen and Rich Palmer on bass guitar; Jason Hayes, Chris Keever and Chris Lugo on percussion; Jennifer Taylor, Charlie Knott and Michelle Knott on keys; and strong vocal support from Karen Harned, Kinga Ferguson and Will Shields. All these musicians are multi-talented and I am honored to make music with them. We have a lot of fun on and off the stage and look forward to growing as your band and in our daily walk with Christ. Thanks for another AWESOME year!



Other Musicians

We are also blessed to have other musicians who performed with us this past year. We have heard JoAnn Rothenhoefer (organist), Judy Wisniewski (flute), Emma Sophie Moore (singer/actress), Peter Shields (trombone), Alan MacEwen (trumpet) and Chris Lugo (trumpet) throughout the year. I am grateful for the talents of these folks and will be expanding on this list as we move forward.



VBC Sunday and Christmas Eve (4 p.m.)

These two worship services continue to be our largest services of the year. We don't hold anything back in preparing for these as they reach so many of our neighbors. We

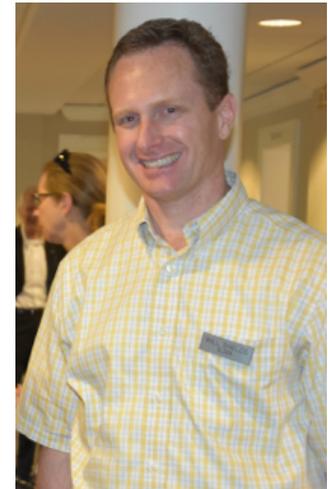
were able to share the good news of Jesus to roughly 600 people in those two services alone.

They are great opportunity to “invest and invite” and provide guests, non-believers, returning believers or mature believers a glance into the heart of LF members and how we love our community through Jesus.



Worship Volunteers

There are *so many* volunteers (sound, projections, ushers, greeters, hospitality, decorators, lay readers and more) who make worshipping here special. Each one of you is an important part of giving back to God. Thank you. We are excitedly looking forward to what God has in store for 2018 and beyond.



A Grand Donation

Our grand piano in the sanctuary received a really awesome



upgrade. Jackie and Richard Sellers made a donation in honor of her mother, Joanne Block. This generous gift went toward putting a regulator on the piano. This regulates moisture, which on a piano is a big deal, and will add

decades to the life of this fine instrument. So, if it looks like I'm “watering the piano,” well, I am! Thank you Jackie and Richard for your generosity.

CHILDREN

Jennifer Greenleaf, Ministry Associate

Children's Church

You know you're doing something right when kids are so excited to be in Children's Church that they run and skip their way to class. This is exactly what happens when elementary-aged children are dismissed from the service



Third graders receiving Bibles

for Children's Church each Sunday at Little Falls. You would run and skip, too, if you had the same fun, enthusiastic and loving adult volunteers helping you deepen your relationship with Jesus and grow in your knowledge of His Word!



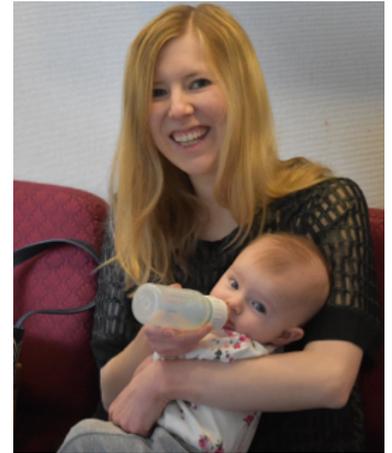
We gave a new curriculum called *Explore the Bible* a try this year. Through thought-provoking questions and dynamic activities, children are taken through the entire Bible over the course of three years, one book at a time. What a joy it is to see kids coming alive to the reality of Jesus and the wonders of Scripture!



Nursery



The Nursery continues to flourish under Cindy Strawser-Grant's capable leadership. She and our wonderful team of childcare providers lovingly care for babies and toddlers during the Sunday morning service and teach a delightful class for preschoolers. Through playful interactions and super fun activities, the children in our Nursery engage with the truths of the Bible and the God who loves them.



Vacation Bible Camp

Pink pigs poked their noses from behind wooden fences, while chickens strutted around the barnyard and cows munched on bright green grass. Yellow sunflowers and John Deere tractors swirled overhead, all setting the stage for our Barnyard Roundup VBC in July. Still one of the largest outreach events hosted



by Little Falls each year, 150 children had a rootin' tootin' good time during Camp in 2017. Through games, crafts, snack, music and Bible teaching, children explored Psalm 23 and what it teaches us about our God who shepherds and loves us.



The highlight of the week was the day 43 children put their trust in Jesus and committed to follow Him as Savior and Lord. The VBC celebration continued the next Sunday with a joy-filled worship service and picnic.



Music & Story Time

Preschoolers, parents and nannies danced, sang and learned about God's love on Tuesday mornings with Alan MacEwen. It was particularly exciting to see Winter Music & Story Time grow a lot during 2017, with 20 families participating regularly. Alan keeps everyone clapping, singing and groovin' to fun, interactive songs. There is always a faith-based story shared.

Everyone who comes
LOVES it!



Winter Music & Story Time

YOUTH

Chris Lugo, Youth Director



What a year! We had several new faces and lots of movement. Many of our junior high students became high schoolers! Some highlights of the year were in March most of our junior high teens attended our DiscipleNow Junior High weekend. In the summer, we had our Gillette Shaving Cream games for our rising sixth graders. In September we had over 60 people come to our Kaleo Cookout to kick off the year. In October we took teens to Belvedere Plantation to get lost in several corn mazes and watch fireworks. We also continued to have Parent Kaleos to help parents connect.

Throughout the year we had several teens take steps to grow in their faith. Some asked for more resources on how to grow in their walk with Jesus, some asked for Bibles and devotionals to read daily, and some prayed for and with each other with more intentionality.

This past year we studied:

Eternity

How Amazing is Grace

How to Surrender: sin, stuff
and status

Being Wired for God

The Parables of Jesus

The Book of Exodus

Measuring Up

Fuge 2017



This past summer we returned with our senior high to Philadelphia to do mission work in the inner city. The teens have really enjoyed our trips to Philly as they get to serve others and be in areas unfamiliar to them. Many got to help out low income kids by leading games and recreational play at parks and the very first Boys and Girls club in Wassahawken, PA. Others helped out older local residents by cleaning, painting and reconstructing parts of their homes. All of the people we encountered were humbled and grateful for all the work and time we spent with them. We look forward to returning next year!

Later in July, the junior high went to Lynchburg, Virginia to CentriFuge. There, thousands of teens from all over the U.S. worshiped God and learned more about trusting Jesus with their

daily life. Many of our teens felt more connected with God and had a renewed sense of growing in their faith back at home.

Senior High Trip



In November, we took our annual senior high retreat to a lake house in Mineral, Virginia. We enjoyed beautiful scenery, playing pool, watching movies together, making s'mores and growing together. We spent the weekend examining fellowship—what it means and looking at examples in the early church in Acts 2:42-47. We ended the weekend having our very own worship service together, laughing, praying and building community.

ADULT DISCIPLESHIP & FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship Highlights



On August 13 the congregation, as well as former colleagues and members, attended a farewell luncheon for Pastor Matt Merrill and his family. District Taco, Pastor Matt's favorite, and a golf-themed sheet cake were served as close to 150 people came together to send the Merrills off with best wishes for their new adventure in Richmond.

In October, we celebrated 66 years of Little Falls with a Route 66-themed luncheon. Thank you

to Gregg and Rae Kuraz for classic photos that dated all the way back to 1951, when the church was founded. With a diner



Construction of the Little Falls main sanctuary.

motif, homemade pies for dessert were aplenty.



At Refill Wednesday we enjoyed fellowship, delicious dinners and great



studies of relevant topics such as:

- *Post-election Christianity*. At the beginning of the new year we looked at biblical wisdom in praying for elected officials;
- *Soul-Keeping*. During Lent we went through John Ortberg's book on caring for your soul amidst hectic schedules and trying times; and
- *Follow*. During a new transition period, we studied Andy Stanley's teaching on what it means to follow Jesus, regardless of where we are in life or our beliefs.



We also hired Chef Marcus to help us out in the kitchen on Wednesday nights!



**Refill Wednesday
Two-minute Talent Show**

Refill Wednesday Kidz

“Knock, knock. Who’s there?”...marked the start of every children’s session during Refill Wednesday. In addition to telling jokes, kids played games, created art for a bulletin board, made ornaments for the church’s Christmas tree, and dug deeply into what the Bible teaches us about Jesus and what it means to live our lives with Him. Kids read and discussed The Lord’s Prayer, the Apostles Creed and the Beatitudes over the course of the year. Learning and laughter can go hand in hand!

Small Groups

After the ladies from her small group trickled out of the house, her husband surfaced from the family room where he had been



hiding and asked, “I thought you all were going to study the Bible?” “We did!” she quipped. “But all I heard for the past hour and a half was laughter!” observed her hubby. “You can laugh and have a good time while you study the Bible!” the wife giggled.

This was a real life exchange between a husband and wife from Little Falls, and it pretty much sums up what small groups are all about: forming rich friendships while learning together from God’s Word.

During 2017, over 50 people (about a quarter of the adult population at Little Falls) actively participated in our Small Group Ministry. Most groups chose to spend part of the year studying the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12) and considering how spiritual character is developed. They used the John Stott study guide of the same name to focus their reading and discussion. Deep, supportive friendships were formed and folks grew in faith as they pressed into the marvelous teaching of Jesus.

Little Falls still aspires to have every adult among us involved in the Small Group Ministry. We’d love for you to join the fun.

Act III

When long-time Act III Coordinator, Mary K Johnson, moved to Pennsylvania to be closer to her children, our ministry to seniors transitioned into a new season of ministry. A team of volunteers with the support of staff member, Jennifer Greenleaf, enabled a new



version of Act III to meet. Gregg Kurasz and Dick MacEwen, along with a handful of other volunteers planned, shopped, prepared and served satisfying meals. Ann Potter and her faithful team of



callers touched base with every participant each month; and Gladys Oliver helped create an inviting atmosphere with season table decorations. Doug Faley joined the party as the Master of Ceremonies and sometimes teacher.

Staff leadership had been working with Mary K prior to her departure to transition the program portion of Act III to one with an explicitly Christian focus. We continued to roll out this vision during 2017 with programs about Living a Life of Love, Why Bible Study is Important for the Followers of Jesus, and hearing from Rob MacEwen about his ministry to professors on college campuses. We wrapped up the year with Adult Ministry Elder Kerry Knott teaching a three-part series on What Heaven Is Really Like.

Although Act III moved forward without a coordinator, the Lord was with us and 2017 was a rich year of learning and fellowship.



Men's Gatherings

We continued our monthly gathering of men for teaching and fellowship, hosted in a different home each month. We typically have between 15-23 men each month, and this year we are doing a discipleship series led sometimes by Pastor Mark, Chris Lugo and others from a variety of local ministries. This is a great event in which to bring friends or new members in order to meet others at Little Falls in a casual and fun environment.



FAITHFULNESS IN MINISTRY AWARD

In May 2016, the Session established the *Faithfulness in Ministry Award* as a way to celebrate seniors from our church whose lives bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus and whom God has used to make significant contributions to the mission of the church.



The *Faithfulness in Ministry Award* is intended to be given annually to one or two seniors. The award is a custom-made plaque presented during worship one Sunday each spring.

The first recipients of the *Faithfulness in Ministry Award* were Mary K Johnson and Mary Holt. Both have served Little Falls and its neighbors in myriad ways over the years. Mary K envisioned, launched and led our ministry for seniors, Act III, while Mary Holt assists with administrative duties every week and has played a key role in almost every meal Little Falls has hosted for more years than we can count! Both of these women are living and serving in ways that are helping people grow in faith and in love with Jesus. We are grateful for the privilege of serving alongside them.

NATIONAL & WORLD MISSIONS



Kids bring change to dump in the large metal trashcan for the noisy offering!

This year Little Falls generously gave \$16,500 to our annual “Be Rich” offering and the kids’ “Noisy Offering.” All of these funds went to International Justice Mission, the Arlington Food Assistance Center, and Rob & Lisa MacEwen with CRU.



Christmas began early in October and November as Little Falls began collecting Christmas care packages for kids. The congregation stuffed 30 Operations Christmas Child shoeboxes filled with goodies to brighten the Christmas of children in need around the world.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Little Falls had a busy year implementing its community missions focus: “Feeding and sheltering the homeless and neediest in Arlington.”

With our annual missions calendar as a guide, we volunteered with and supported some of our favorite local organizations.

Highlights included:

January – Kicking off the year with adults and kids making a trip to AFAC to sort food donations.



February – Purchasing tons of food and holding a church-wide event in Friendship Hall to sort 5,000 pounds of produce.



April – Filling 19 Easter baskets for kids at Doorways and stuffing plastic eggs with candy for their Easter Egg hunt.



May – Serving dinner at the A-SPAN homeless shelter.

July – Holding a food drive during VBC in which campers donated 403 pounds of non-perishable items to AFAC.



August – Collecting and filling backpacks with hundreds of dollars worth of school supplies to help kids from Doorways and My Friend Mayvis start their school year off on a great foot.

October – Journeying out once more to AFAC's south Arlington warehouse, bagging produce and sorting donated food.

November – Raising \$350 in gift cards for local families connected to Arlington Bridge Builders to have money for Thanksgiving (Safeway and Giant).





December – Providing Giving Tree gifts to Doorways, My Friend Mayvis and gift cards to hurricane victims in St. Thomas (USVI). The St. Thomas gift card collection netted over \$900 worth of gift cards that will be distributed directly to those negatively impacted by the double hit of Hurricanes Irma and Maria through the charity My Brother’s Workshop, a mission of the St. Thomas Reformed Church.

Also throughout the year, each first, third and fifth Monday, we continued preparing bagged meals for the homeless through A-SPAN and delivering the food to distribution locations.



Faithful Meals on Wheels couriers!

PRAYER

Listen, love and pray. That is what prayer teams did as they offered intercession – quiet, confidential prayer on behalf of another – to those who shared concerns for themselves, family members, friends and neighbors during communion each Sunday. Prayer Ministers also prayed for 73 concerns shared by members and visitors during the year via the church’s email prayer chain.

The vision of the Prayer Ministry is to share the transformational love of Christ with others by carrying their troubles to God in prayer and asking Him to intervene as He sees best.

We started 2017 with five Prayer Ministers – Chris Dorsey, Karen Hardee, Rob Hersh, Kelly Schomburg and Patti Yoder – then doubled our team in October with the addition of Jen Bosley, Norris Cochran, Lesley Daigle, Celal Kamran and Sheeba Kamran.



DEACONS' CORNER



The 2017 Board of Deacons included nine Little Falls members: Cathy Brady, Jan Brown, Carter Burwell, Lesley Daigle, Mark Loper, Richard Sellers, Jane Spadetti and Patti

Yoder. The Deacons met on a monthly basis to pray and discuss ways in which we could support Little Falls members, visitors and our neighborhood with prayers, meals and transportation to those in need. We are thankful for Jennifer Greenleaf who prayed with us and provided guidance at the meetings.

During 2017 the Deacons organized and hosted funeral receptions for several Little Falls members who passed away. This is one of the most important Deacon responsibilities, to surround the grieving family and friends with love and support during a difficult time. Pastor Matt trained Deacons on how to give home communion when requested by members of Little Falls who were no longer physically able to make it to Sunday services. We held a spring prayer walk through a portion of the Little Falls neighborhood to pray for neighbors, businesses and schools. Each week, Deacons greeted at Sunday services and set out cards of prayers, encouragement and good wishes, signed by the congregation and sent to those in need.

BUILDING & GROUNDS



The Trustees in 2016 continued efforts to make improvements to the church building and grounds and to fix problems occurring in our aging building. The most visible project was the installation of the new, more readable sign in front of the church, replacing two fading wooden ones. We also completed a beautification of the Memorial Garden in front of the church office, installed new lights and ceiling tiles in Friendship Hall and replaced the worn-out chairs used for so many events in that room. The old chairs were donated with joy to a school in Africa. We refurbished the adjacent women's restroom and replaced the faucet handles in all of the restrooms to reduce water wastage. Among the repairs and improvements



in the church were the replacement of the air handling unit in the attic (which provides heating and cooling on the second floor), new outside doors from the parking lot to the Narthex, new closure mechanisms for the front doors and leveling of concrete sidewalk slabs at the rear of the church, which were a safety hazard. Most of our major projects were financed by the Little Falls Church Foundation.



The Foundation also provided the funding needed to complete an extensive roof repair to keep our heads dry!