

A Voice in the Pines



Presbyterian Kirk in the Pines newsletter

Volume XXXVIII, January 2022

Declining membership, pledges create some challenges 2022 budget

By Arnie Holtberg

The Finance Committee is preparing the annual budget for 2022. As always, our members are generous and faithful, responding well to the Stewardship Drive. For this, we are grateful.

Yet as we look ahead, we have much to consider.

For instance, since 2019 we have experienced a decline in membership and a correlative diminution in the number of pledges received by this time of year. Membership units (families) have declined from 204 to 184 and pledges from 129 to 110. Further analysis must be done, but this data is eye-catching.

As you can imagine, there are many reasons for this trend and an exploration of the various factors will be the subject of an upcoming article in this newsletter.

Cheryl Boehmke has picked up where Dennis Zymboly left off with stewardship, performing capably and professionally. Richard McPheters continues to manage budget construction with a keen eye and commitment to best practices.

Yet, with “fewer hands on deck,” their tasks and our vocation of performing ministries are challenged.

To balance the 2022 budget, we will once again use cash “reserves,” an allowable but undesirable pattern.

Moving forward, we hope to lessen our reliance on reserves because we will confront very hard choices if they are exhausted.

Please know that in 2022, we will balance the budget and strive to achieve our objectives. The future demands we think carefully as we plan.

Can we sustain the wonderful good works of the

Kirk at the desired level if we do not grow the congregation? Does increasing the Kirk’s membership through a robust and comprehensive membership drive seem necessary?

This congregation has many strengths, much to offer, and much to give. I am confident our army of Christian soldiers will find the right solutions and build a stronger future for the Kirk and all others we serve.

Arnie Holtberg is Moderator of the Finance Committee.



Giving Tree

Becky Wakefield, a member of the Missions Committee, with the Kirk’s Giving Tree. Giving Tree gifts were delivered to Vera Lloyd Children’s Home in addition to 22 gift cards for the Ouachita Children’s Center. Becky thanks the Kirk congregation for its generous gifts that make the holidays a happy time for children in our community.

When we meet

Sunday worship service
Begins at 10 a.m.



Saturday informal service
4 p.m. In Hoffius Hall

Wednesday Bible Study
9-10:30 a.m. Hoffius Hall



For more meeting times see
www.kirkinthepines.org/calendar



History filled with silly predictive ‘belly flops’

We mortals have never been very good at predicting the future. Of course, this has not stopped some people from trying. Here are some of my favorite silly predictions:

- “I said to my brother, Orville, that man will not fly for 50 years.” – Wilber Wright, 1908
- “Stocks have reached what seems to be a permanently high plateau.” – Dr. Irving Fisher, Professor of Economics, Yale, Oct 17, 1929
- “There is no reason at all for any individual to have a computer in their home.” Kenneth Olson, president of Digital Equipment Corporation, 1977
- “We don’t like their sound and guitar music is on the way out!” Decca Recording Company, explaining why they did not sign the Beatles, 1962
- “Everything that can be invented has been invented.” Charles Duell, Commissioner, U.S. Patent Office, 1899

History is filled with these kinds of predictive “belly flops.” Unfortunately, Christians are not immune from this anxiety to predict the Lord’s coming. Church history is littered with groups that knew for sure the Lord would come and history would end on this or that date, only to be disappointed.

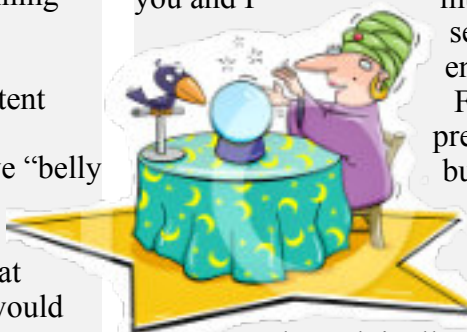
Most of us remember the Y2K hysteria 21 years ago. People thought they knew the world would end at the millennium.

But Jesus warned his followers not to get all caught up in this (cf. *Mark 13:32*). Perhaps our Lord knew it

The Pastor’s Corner *Bill Bailey*



would not be good for us to know. As people of faith, you and I



must always be careful with setting dates and predicting the end.

Finally, our calling is not to predict when our Lord will come, but to be faithful until he does.

Our vocation is not to worry so much about the future, but to be found faithful come what may.

Through it all, we have God’s promise to be with us in all of life – therefore, we do not have to be afraid. Whatever happens this coming 2022, we can trust God’s providential care and love to lead us this coming year.

May you have a blessed New Year!



Pastor Bill Bailey passes a lighted candle at the Christmas Eve service. More pictures of this special event are on page 14. (*Robert Sonnen photo*)

Time to step up and help the Kirk regain its mojo

New member:

It is with pleasure that we welcome Susan Pendergrass to the congregation. Susan Pendergrass was presented to the Session on Dec. 10 and joined by Re-Affirmation of Faith. The Kirk office has her contact information.

When you see Susan around the Kirk or in the community stop and tell her how pleased we are that she has become a member of the Kirk and hope she will quickly find a place in the church.

Loss of members:

It is with a sad note we report the loss of two former Kirk members.

Bob Berry died on Nov. 8 in Lincoln, Neb.

Mrs. Shirley Freeman-Stollsteimer died on Aug. 11 in Tampa, Fla.

Church Statistics as of Dec. 10, 2021:

Members – 274

Family units – 185

Time to Step Up:

As the various virus strains decline, the Session has taken steps to bring the church back to what it was before the pandemic began.

The requirement to wear a mask while in church



Lorraine Berry thanks all for sympathy cards

I want to thank all the wonderful people at the Kirk who sent letters and cards to us during this dreadful time.

Bob was not ill long – only four days. We both had our two shots for covid since February 2021. We both tested positive several months later. Bob got sick but I didn't and he is now in heaven waiting for me.

Thanks again for all the cards. We both loved Hot Springs Village and the Kirk and miss you all.

Lorraine Berry

The Clerk's Corner

Jerral Johnson



was dropped. If you have been vaccinated, then wearing a mask is not required. If you feel safer wearing a mask, feel free to do so.

The coffee/cookie time after Sunday Service has resumed. This is being visited by more and more members.

Serving Communion will soon be changed back to what it was before the pandemic.

Committees are beginning to make plans for bringing back programs that were successful in the past. As the programs come back, it will require more participation by the congregation.

There will be a need for members to serve as ushers and greeters. Members will be needed to serve Communion. There is talk about suppers and the fellowship associated with getting together and enjoying a wonderful meal with friends.

Garden work programs need people to come and help keep our Memorial Garden looking beautiful. Many of our loved ones are buried in the garden or in the columbarium in the garden. We must keep it an attractive area.

Delivering Meals on Wheels and Lenten lunches need participation by the congregation if they are to be successful.

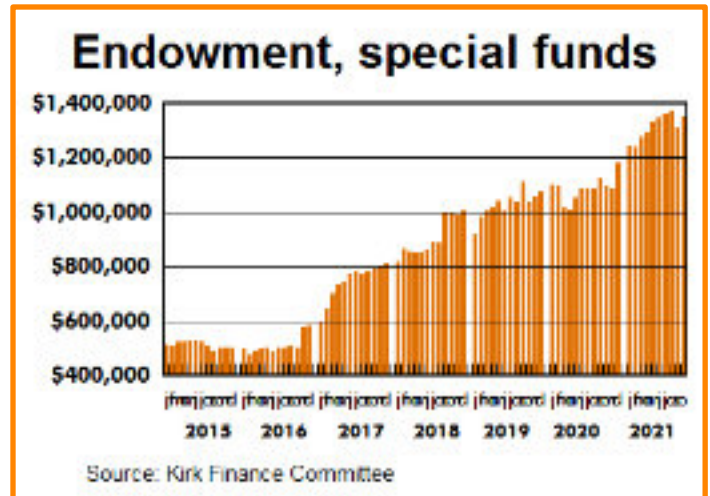
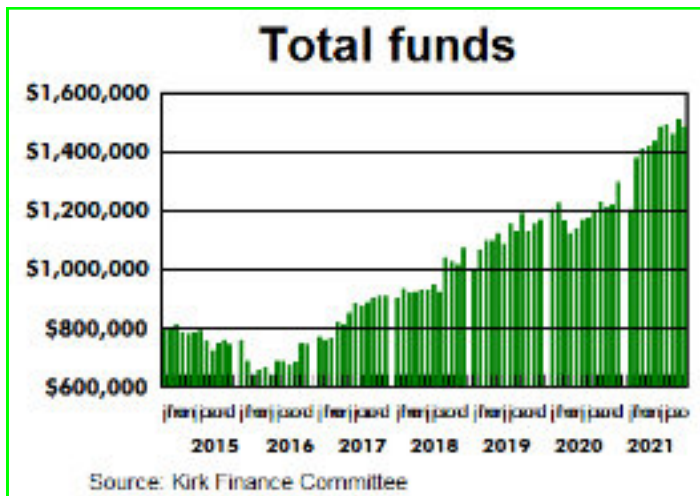
If you are a member of a committee, please attend the meetings and have a word to say in how the church comes out of this pandemic. If you are not a member now, consider getting involved with one or more of the committees.

If we are to be a truly caring church, we must step up and take our place helping in the many church activities. These activities are important to the growth of the church and the community.

Kirk in the Pines Financial Report

Year to date as of November 30, 2021

	Month		Year to date	
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
General Fund:				
Receipts	\$ 36,670	\$ 30,837	\$ 403,374	\$ 399,397
Disbursements	\$ 36,670	\$ 36,672	\$ 403,374	\$ 382,961
Building Fund:				
Receipts	\$ 4,412	\$ 6,707	\$ 48,528	\$ 123,985
Disbursements	\$ 4,412	\$ 2,091	\$ 48,528	\$ 121,691
Total all funds:				
Receipts	\$ 41,082	\$ 37,544	\$ 451,902	\$ 523,382
Disbursements	\$ 41,082	\$ 38,763	\$ 451,902	\$ 504,652
Checking balance				\$ 134,342
Special funds:				
Memorial fund				\$ 80,561
Luke 12:48 fund				\$ 316,329
Programs fund				\$ 40,737
Endowment fund				\$ 844,477
Maack-Ormsbee Fund				\$ 69,173
Total special funds (as of Oct. 31, 2021)				\$ 1,351,277



\$283 for Mission

Thank you for generously supporting our Mission Dollar campaign by placing your single dollar bills in the offering plate. A total of \$283 was collected in November.

If you wish to give more than a dollar, please use the envelopes in the pew racks. We are always grateful for your generous gifts and prayers.

Thinking of you ...

Each Saturday and Sunday the Congregational Care Committee will be asking Kirk members to sign a beautiful card to be mailed to a church member who has not been able to attend services due to illness or disability.

Please add your signature to these cards and join the congregation in wishing others well. Thank you.

Martha Nielsen

By Barbara Worthley

Martha Nielsen is excited about the opportunity to lead the Kirk's Education Committee because teaching has been such an important part of her life.

She has a Ph.D. in microbiology and spent 20 years as a professor at Creighton University School of Medicine in Omaha, Neb. Martha says, "I believe each of us needs to continue learning and growing as part of our commitment as Christians."

A native of Kansas, Martha has been involved with church work all her adult life – as a Sunday-school teacher, a youth group sponsor, and a Deacon in her former Disciples of Christ Church.

From 2014 to 2017, Martha served as Moderator of *Kirk Communication Committee.*



Martha Nielsen (Bob Morrow photo)

the Kirk's Congregational Care Committee, and is on the Congregational Care and Member Outreach Committees. She also has been the Bible Study leader for her PW Circle for several years.

Martha, and her husband, Jay, retired and moved to the Village 10 years ago after being introduced to this community by her brother and former pastor of the Kirk, the Rev. Dr. Mike Seitz, and his wife, Marilyn.

Martha has much to offer, and we are pleased to nominate her to serve as Ruling Elder on the Kirk Session and Moderator of the Education Committee.

Barbara Worthley is a member of the

Bill Worthley

By Susan Morrow

The nominee for Ruling Elder and Moderator of Building (Class of 2024) is Kirk member Bill Worthley. Bill is a native of western Nebraska. His wife Barbara says that's in the middle of nowhere.

Bill has a math degree from Nebraska Wesleyan University. Along with eight years in the U.S. Navy Submarine Service, Bill has an extensive background in construction and has owned and managed several other businesses.

The Worthleys moved to Hot Springs Village in June 2015. They were familiar with the Village because Bill's brother Ray had been here for about 10 years. However, when Bill told his brother they were moving here, Ray told them they were too late. He said people their age had already been here long enough that it was time for them to move back with their children!

Barbara grew up in the Presbyterian church and Bill got his early religious experience in the Methodist church. After moving to Hot Springs Village, Bill and Barbara went "church scouting." It didn't take long for them to realize the Kirk in the Pines was the place for



Bill Worthley (Bob Morrow photo)

them. Bill likes to say there are four reasons: The sermons, the people, the music, and the coffee!

The Worthleys have been active at the Kirk since joining six years ago.

You may find Bill at the soundboard for Sunday mornings services or leading a Shepherd Group with Barbara, or outside with rake in hand hard at work during the Memorial Garden & Grounds workdays at the Kirk.

With many years in construction, (he says he knows a thing or two about hammers and nails), Bill feels comfortable with his nomination for Building Committee. It allows him to give back to The Kirk for all the support he received from Pastor Bailey, Clark and Jean Mowry and

the Congregational Care Committee during his extended stay at the VA Hospital in North Little Rock in 2017-18.

Susan Morrow is a member of the Communication committee.



**Session
nominees**

Gail Salmen

By Dotty Rector

Gail Salmen is the nominee for Ruling Elder and Moderator of the Kirk Worship Committee.

Gail is a 20-year member of the Kirk who has already been ordained. She was previously Moderator of the Kirk Memorial Committee. She is pleased to serve on the session again, since her first experience was so positive.

The worship committee is responsible for all the accouterments to the worship service, such as decorations, ushers, liturgists, communion elements and servers, memorial services, and probably more.

Gail isn't sure of all that is entailed. "It is a learning process," she says. She is looking forward to the challenge.

Gail has had a diverse church background. She came to the Kirk at the



Gail Salmen (Bob Morrow photo)

invitation of a neighbor. It fit her very well and she joined. Her husband is active in Sacred Heart Catholic Church.

Her term as Moderator of the Memorial Committee was when the Celtic Cross was purchased and installed in the Memorial Garden, and the columbarium was built.

In the past, the Memorial Committee didn't have regular meetings since each member was responsible for taking care of their responsibilities independently. That has worked well for this committee.

Gail is looking forward to serving the Kirk in this manner and is hoping we can take steps soon to transition to post pandemic normal worship.

Dotty Rector is a member of the Communication Committee.



Happy dates



Birthdays

Jan.1	Wayne Copeland	Jan.9	Mike Carpenter	Jan.25	Linda Hommema
Jan.2	Jerry Carroll	Jan.10	Priscilla Hayek		Halene Strautman
Jan.3	Dorothy Stroupe	Jan.12	Debra Cordell		Ben Meek
Jan.4	Jeanne Lowenthal	Jan.14	Karen Ammann	Jan.31	Marcia Bauer
Jan.6	Donald Elsenheimer		Darell Fisher		Emily Faulk
	Marsha Huff	Jan.18	Ted Sampsel		
	Susan Unger	Jan.22	Jerral Johnson		

Anniversaries

January 3	Dotty and Gary Rector	41 years	January 26	Marty and Art Volkema	65 years
January 23	Jean and Darell Fisher	62 years	January 29	Marty and John Davis	28 years
January 24	Karen and Ben Meek	52 years			

Susan Pendergrass returned to Arkansas and found the Village and our Kirk

By Barbara Worthley

A lifelong Presbyterian, Susan Pendergrass says she didn't have a choice. After all, her grandfather was one of the founding fathers of the Presbyterian Church in Crossett, Ark., where Susan was born and raised, and her mother was a charter member.

After high school, Susan began an exciting adventure which has taken her around the world.

She graduated from the University of Montana with a degree in English and a minor in Business Communication, Susan began her career as a director of business development for architecture and engineering firms in several states and one foreign country.

From 1988 to 1991, she lived in Sapporo, Japan, working for the Hokkaido governor's office. Seattle and Portland, Ore., were home for many years, and eventually, she decided to try a warmer climate.

She moved across the country to Savannah, Ga., for a "fun job" working for a firm that designed golf courses. Next, she lived in Orlando, Fla., for 13 years. Eventually, her mother's health required she move back to Crossett where she spent several years as her mother's caregiver.

After her mother passed away, Susan went to visit some friends in New Zealand. She spent three months there and started "house shopping" on the internet. She eventually decided Arkansas suited her just fine, (she has a sister in Little Rock).

A friend in Hot Springs Village convinced her to "come to take a look." She bought a house and moved here two years ago just before covid shut everything down.

When her Presbyterian friends in Crossett learned she would be moving to Hot Springs Village, they told her about the Kirk. "One trip here was all it took," Susan said. She was very glad to learn Howard Baldwin, whom she knew from Crossett, was a member of the Kirk.

Susan has been attending the Kirk regularly but only recently moved her membership from the church in Crossett. And now Susan has agreed to serve on Session as Moderator of the Member Outreach committee.

Susan is active in her PW circle and on the



New member Susan Pendergrass. (Bob Morrow photo)

New members

Congregational Care Committee, giving to the Kirk with her hands and her time. She looks forward to serving on the Grounds Committee next spring. "I love to work outside," she said.

Susan's mother played a vital role in her life. It was hard to find words to describe her, but Susan said her mother was a quiet, strong woman and she tries to model her life after her mother. When asked if her mother was her "pillar," Susan stated emphatically "She was much more than that!"

Another influencing factor in her life is a group of eight girlfriends who have been friends since childhood. Throughout their lives, they have maintained contact and a strong bond. They all get together at least once a year.

Three of the eight now reside in Hot Springs Village.

Susan has much to offer, and we are pleased to welcome her into our membership. When you see her on Saturday night or Sunday morning, be sure to give her a warm Kirk welcome.

Barbara Worthley is a member of the Communication Committee.

Christmas Potluck



The ample and varied options made choosing challenging. The potluck event was organized by Carol Clark and members of the Member Outreach and Fellowship committees.



**Photos by
Jamie Federick**

Musical entertainment was provided by (from left) Patty Barnes, Tina Kneisler, Randy Toney, Ron Kneisler, and Donna Toney (not pictured).



From left, Millie Croson, Pat and Mel Kuntz, Jean and Clark Mowry, Peggy Trent, Merilyn Seitz, Denny Zymboly, and Bev and Mike Carpenter wait patiently for their table to be called for lunch.



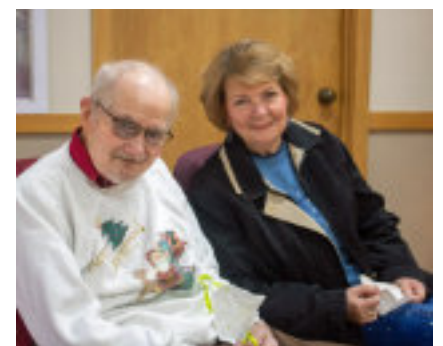
Bill and Barbara Worthley went all out with Christmas sweaters.



Tony and Barbara Booth (left) were joined by new member Susan Pendergrass.



Kelle Wolf, Joyce Hayek, Emily Faulk, Bev Bullard, and Katy Hill are all smiles while in line for their meal.



Lowell and Sharon Gardner.



Members of the Greenhorns with their dessert cakes are (from left) Carol Clark, Marcia Bauer, Becky Wakefield, Wendy Gage, Ellen Marshall, Judith Rosenthal, Rosalyn Halbert, Jane Moore, and Becky Baldwin. (Susan Pendergrass photo)



Sharon Collar played the organ for the PW Gathering. (Bob Morrow photo)

Winter Gathering for PW has food for thought, music, cake

By Vicki Rosenquist

On Monday, Dec. 13, Kirk's Presbyterian Women came together in the sanctuary for their winter gathering. There was beautiful music by Sharon Collar and Christmas hymns sung by all. Pastor Bill Bailey talked with the group about the 14 traditional Christian practices.

After the program, everyone was invited to Hoffius Hall for a delicious lunch planned, prepared, and served by the Greenhorns. They also had baked six cakes for dessert. It was like being in a bakery with so many choices!

Circle Four set up the festive tables and cleaned up after the gathering. Thirty-six women came together to enjoy the fellowship of one another and celebrate the joy of the Christmas season. A huge thank you to all who had a part in making this December Gathering such a success.

Our next gathering will be on March 14 in the Kirk sanctuary, so mark your calendar and watch for more details coming in the next edition of the Voice in the Pines.

Vicki Rosenquist is PW Moderator.





Members of Circle 4 displaying their gift-wrapping skills are (from left) Becky Wakefield, Carol Clark, Anne Bailey, Judith Rosenthal, Susan Pendergrass, and Barbara Fuquay. (*Jamie Federick photo*)



Lora Eckhart, Gloria Pickett, Charlotte Massey, Millie Croson, Susan Morrow, Della Reimers, and Martha Nielsen, members of Circle 1, enjoyed fellowship while wrapping gifts. Not pictured: Lesley Case. (*Beverly Schaumburg photo*)

Choir Party



The Kirk Choir celebrated the holiday spirit with a Christmas luncheon and party in the beautiful home of Donna and Randy Toney. Among the celebrants were (from left) Jean Mowry, Clark Mowry, Darell Fisher, Jean Fisher, Mike Terry, Jack Bullard, and Bev Bullard.



**Photos by
Jamie Federick**

Donna and Randy Toney provided the entertainment for the party at the piano.



“The Christmas spirit was present at the Toney house,” declares Randy. Indeed, it was. The Kirk choir met at Randy and Donna Toney’s beautiful home for a Christmas luncheon/party. And what does the choir do at a party? Well, they sing, of course. They sing and visit and eat. What a lovely tradition!



Enjoying the choir party were (from left) Linda Heitz, Bev Raskin, Barbara Booth, and Helen Van Stone.



Ben Meek, Linda Hommema, Ted Hommema, and Karen Meek joined in the fun at the choir party.



The Christmas Eve service of Lessons and Carols ended with singing *Silent Night*. The traditional Ceremony of Candles signifies the coming of the light of Christ into the darkness.



Denny Zymboly sang *Sweet Little Jesus Boy* as only Denny can. This has become a Kirk tradition over the years.



Tenor soloist Jesse Kneisler provided a beautiful interpretation of the song *Sing of Mary Pure and Lowly*. Jesse is the son of Tina and Ron Kneisler, Kirk choir members.

**Photos by
Robert Sonnen**

Kirk, Ferncliff helping Afghan refugees settle in the U.S.

By Bob Morrow

The Ferncliff mission statement says: “As an expression of God’s love, we welcome people into a life of caring for creation, others, and themselves.”

In addition to supporting the new Welcome Backpack Program for asylum seekers and refugees, Ferncliff is also working to assist with temporary housing for Afghan families.

According to Axios news, an initial group of approximately 37,000 Afghan refugees will be making their way to U.S. states in the coming months after a war which claimed about 47,000 civilian lives. Up to 98 Afghan refugee cases will be coming to Arkansas, according to Gov. Asa Hutchinson.

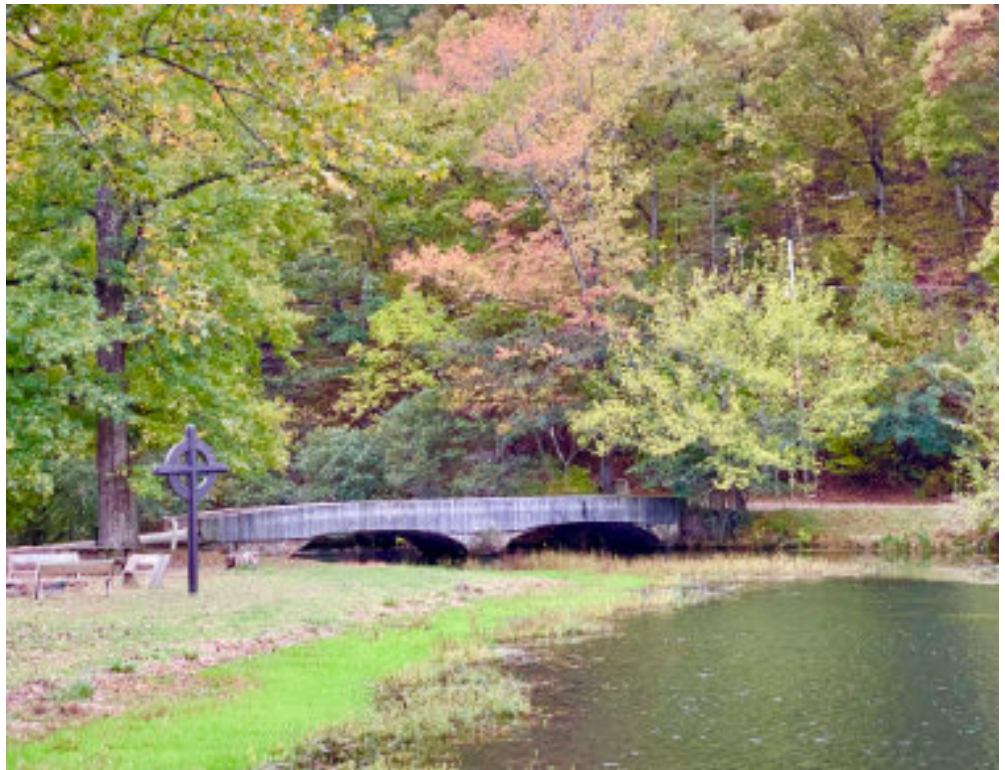
Faced with the urgently evolving situation, Ferncliff established communication with local congregations about becoming a temporary housing location for Afghan refugees. The congregations sponsor families and help them “get on their feet” in their new homes.

The congregations may receive little notice of when they will be receiving a family, sometimes less than 48 hours to prepare. Ferncliff works with the local congregations to be a temporary housing location, the first stop on their way to beginning their new lives here in Central Arkansas.

This effort is organized at a national level by Catholic Charities, which coordinates with churches and organizations like Ferncliff.

One such family arrived just as the Kirk Session retreat was ending early in November.

Imagine the family’s reaction



This tranquil scene at Ferncliff last Nov. 2 is what Afghan refugees would first see when they arrive after fleeing from their homeland. (Bob Morrow photo)

when it entered the serene and comfortable surroundings at Ferncliff after their tumultuous journey after escaping Afghanistan.

That family has now transitioned to permanent housing and begins the process of establishing a life in a foreign land, but more families are anticipated.

Churches sponsoring a family are responsible for seeing them through this transition which includes finding employment, learning English, and, for the children, starting school. The congregations commit to underwriting the associated costs.

Ferncliff, for its part, has five housing units (cabins with upgrades) available through mid-February, but the need may persist well into the summer months. A typical family may have temporary housing at Ferncliff for two to four weeks at a cost of from \$2,000 to \$4,000 for housing alone.

Churches that cannot commit to sponsoring a family have helped those

that can by covering some of the expenses. Kirk in the Pines has generously supported Ferncliff for many years, but in this special time of need, our Mission Committee responded and voted at their November meeting to provide additional support to Ferncliff earmarked for supporting these refugee families.

In making this gift we are reminded of the words of our Lord: “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” (Matthew 25:35-36)

Bob Morrow is member of the Missions Committee and Moderator of the Communications Committee.

Thanksgiving Prayer

By Jean Mowry

O God of all that is gentle and kind,
We, your people, do forget, so help us find
You at the center of all that we do and all that we are.
Help us always to keep our faith in You, our Beacon
and Star.

So many worries, so many fears
Fill our days, our nights, and so many
years.
We must empty our souls burdened by
stubborn sorrow,
Which, if we allow it, will rob the joy
from each new tomorrow.

Fill us with courage in our journey to
live.
Stretch our limits, gird our energy to want to give.
Help us to cherish Your Gifts which on all of us You
bestow.
Implant in our hearts, that by sharing with others, we
all can grow!



Your Son, our Shepherd, Who walks with each,
Has shown us how, and by His example does teach
How to give Your gifts of tenderness, mercy and
grace to all.

Unplug our ears. Turn us around. Strengthen our faith
to answer Your Call.

Though the road be rocky and the path be
steep,
Your hand reaches out to us even in waters
murky and deep.
Help us empty the closets of our hearts
which rob beyond measure.
Then help us discard past selfishness so
that we can be open to Your Treasure.

Great Teacher, trusted Guide, faithful Friend,
Direct all of our actions. Our aimlessness amend.
Help us to remember Your Sacrifice, the Greatest Gift
You keep giving,
Your limitless Care, pouring out Life-giving Love, to
make our lives worth living.

Kirk staff

William B. Bailey – Senior Pastor
Randy Toney – Director of Music
Donna Toney – Organist/Pianist
Chris Taylor-Wilmoth – Secretary
Beverly Schaumburg – Business Administrator
Arthur “Chip” Johnson – Sexton

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