

Saints Alive!

Volume 16, Issue 1
February 2018
“Friends in Christ, Serving
Together with Love”



Saturday, February 10

9:00 am until 3:00 pm

Dr. Issam Nemeh

Healing Service

In the Sanctuary and Foyer



Ash Wednesday Service

February 14

7:30 pm

In the Sanctuary

Saturday, February 17

Valentine Edition of Parent's Night Out

Sponsored by ALPC Youth

4:00 - 8:00 pm

In Hart Hall



Cornerstone Preschool



Invites You to An

Art Show

Featuring artwork created
By the students of
Cornerstone Preschool!

Wednesday, Feb. 28th 11:15am to 5:00pm
In Hart Hall

*Avon Lake Presbyterian Church
Mission Statement*

In awe, we Receive God's Grace and Gospel.

In gratitude, we Respond with Worship and Servanthood.

In love, we Represent Jesus Christ

as we minister to transform lives
in family, community, and the world.



FROM THE PASTOR/ Charlie Swartz

Dear Friends,

This is how my annual report opened last year, "In response to our \$34,000 deficit in 2016, we need to make changes in the way we serve Jesus Christ. In every crisis is a gift. We must be wise to find it. A crisis invites a wise church to ask Jesus if there is a different way to live out its purpose." Fast forward to today. How did we respond to that crisis? We ended 2017 with a \$60,000 surplus! How did we do it?

We responded the way that a church centered in Jesus Christ always does. We pulled together and sought our Lord's voice and help. We did not rely on our own strength, but relied upon Jesus. Even when we were frightened, we did not panic nor stoop to blame. As is the way of this church, we faced the challenge in humility, wisdom and faithfulness.

As you remember, our session prayerfully came up with a plan that was strategic and prudent and shared it with all of us at the annual meeting. In that plan, we would cut costs by eliminating everything that was not absolutely essential. We would keep our mission works strong, but we determined that we were not large enough anymore to support denominational missions to the extent we had in the past. We planned income generating events. We created a six month budget with the message that if that budget could not be supported, we would cut positions and staff hours at the end of those six months. By the end of the meeting, we all knew the hole we were in. I asked if we would support the session's plan, and everyone said, "Yes."

God spoke to us and encouraged us to strengthen his church. We moved out of that meeting united in purpose, and we acted in faithfulness over the next twelve months. It was an extraordinary year. In Christ's grace-filled economy, the more we focused on blessing our church through our activities the more we felt hope and joy and laughter. God gave us the faith to entrust more of our personal riches to his Kingdom as we joined in the "Tithing Challenge" and increased our regular donations. One family was moved by the Spirit to bless our church with a huge \$25,000 gift, no strings attached. The gifts were encouraging to all.

In the spring, we said "Thanks" and "Goodbye" to our longtime youth director and recent contemporary worship director, Beau Dansizen. That was sad for us even while we were happy for the opportunity he had to use his education in a ministerial job. Thanks to God's providence, our youth met the fabulous Lauren Vann on their summer mission trip and she came here in August to join us as our youth director. She is having terrific results, as our youth respond well to her and show it through excellent attendance at the weekly youth group and at Sunday School.

By June the session was delighted to note that our offerings were not only matching but surpassing expectations. We were able to extend our budget for six more months and not make any staff cuts. Over the summer, God gave us a cooperative spirit and endurance as we worked together to create the extraordinary "A Bid of Class" silent auction. God gave us generosity as we shared our treasures and talents as gifts for the auction. That night was so much fun. I loved dressing up in a tuxedo and doing the "auctioneer's chant" to spur us on to greater generosity. What a great night! Sue Maloney exceeded all expectations as she managed and directed that "wow" event raising \$12,000. We all took pride in it, for it was all our success.

God gave us determination to do what was needed to see that our church succeeded. It took much sacrifice, much work, much planning, much prayer and we received much love, much joy, much strength as we not only reached our goal of a debt free year, but blew past that goal by sixty thousand dollars. What can't we do when we are united?

Which leads me to renewal. As focused as we were on restoring financial health, there is a sense in our church that we are a bit adrift. There is a feeling that while we have many, many wonderful ministries we do not have clarity about our direction. That is why our session has wisely decided that this will be a year of renewal.



(continued on next page)



We have joined in with 14 other churches in our presbytery to work with Ray Schultz, a whiz bang consultant from the "Center for Parish Development" to help us create a beautiful renewal journey. Two of us have been going to educational gatherings and have had conversations with him as we design a process that will be a good fit for us. Our renewal coordinating team (Margre Mills, Bill Hamilton, JoAnn Wainscott, Sybil Wendling, and I) is meeting and designing our experience. In a nutshell, this is all about listening to God to learn what the Lord's mission for us is

at this time in our life. We hope that you will participate in the events, for your prayers and spiritual visions are needed. This will be fun, this will be loving, this will be unifying. By the end we hope to know better who we are and have clarity on our direction.

I ask us to put ourselves into this year's renewal activity with vigor. You are needed for it to be a success. Your story is needed as we celebrate our story and seek what the next stage of our awesome journey will look like.

With joy, Pastor Charlie

Session

Session Highlights for January 2018

- ALPC ended 2017 with the regular giving being \$14,000.00 higher than expected.
- The budget for 2018 was finalized.
- The Congregational Renewal Process will be starting and details will be shared at the Annual Meeting on January 28.
- Dan Maloney has regrettfully resigned from Session because of his travel schedule.



Kathy Navarro

Clerk of Session

Healing Prayer Ministry



This is not our home. Earth is where we make the choice to live on our own, independent of God or to live with God totally dependent on Him for everything, now and forever. God gave us the free will to make that choice for one cannot have a relationship without the freedom to choose it.

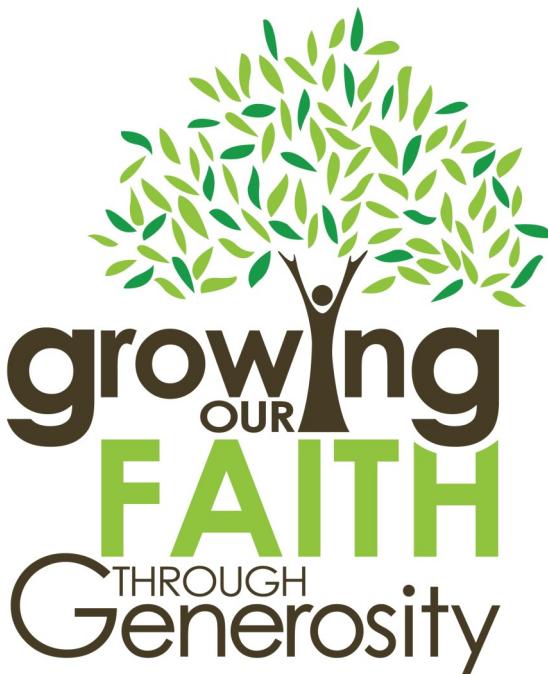
Every Sunday morning after the worship service, the Healing Prayer Ministry meets on the **left side** in the front of the sanctuary. We used to meet on the right by the grand piano but decided there is more room on the left. We meet for the purpose of prayer – to ask God for His help in choosing Him. Our ego which makes free

will possible also makes dependence on God difficult. It's always a challenge to surrender to Him, **trusting Him** with our lives even though He sent His Son, Jesus, to show us the way.

If you are struggling in your independence with tragedy, loss, pain, loneliness or despair, we would love to help you choose God and open yourself to the life giving, healing love of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Submitted by Arlene Strauch on behalf of the Healing Prayer Ministry.

Stewardship



use my research to help carry the message on the use of God's money in a serious manner.

But now is the time to celebrate your generosity with joy and a bit of humor. I found the statements below to be amusing and thought provoking and would like to share them with you.

- With the price of everything else going up these days, aren't you glad the Lord hasn't increased the tithe to 15%?
- Give to God what's right--not what's left.
- Some people give God a tenth—a tenth of what they ought to give.
- When it comes to giving until it hurts, most people have a very low threshold of pain.
- Real charity doesn't care if it's tax deductible or not.
- Money's only something you need in case you don't die tomorrow
- We didn't actually overspend our budget. The allocation simply fell short of our expenditure.
- Charity begins at home and generally dies from lack of outdoor exercise.
- You should give according to your income, lest God make your income according to your giving.

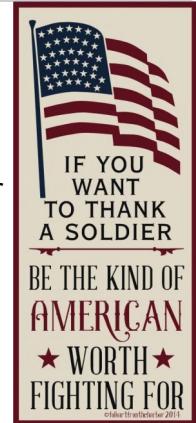
Dan Maloney
Stewardship Chair

A Message from The Thank-A-Soldier Group

What beautiful and generous hearts you have! We can't begin to thank you for your wonderful generosity you have shown again for [Thank-a-Soldier](#). We were able to send this past fall five soldiers who are stationed in the states a card with a \$50 restaurant gift certificate tucked inside, and three soldiers who are stationed overseas a goody box. We heard back from so many of them as you filled their hearts and souls with love and joy.

Not only were we able to recognize our own active service men and women, but with your kind giving we were able for the first time to send checks to two worthy organizations who help veterans. In our own backyard is Valor Home, 221 W. 21st Street, Lorain, OH 44052. The other is Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust, P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250-0301.

Again, thank you so much for continuing to support our active military men and women and now our veterans as well with your love, money and prayers. Our church family is awesome!



Youth Ministry

February 9th- Winter Jam with Rocky River United Methodist Church.

We will be partnering with RRUMC's youth group and heading to Winter Jam. We will be meeting at RRUMC at 4pm to carpool. \$15 cash per person at the door. Sign up with Lauren by Sunday, Feb 4th so we can plan accordingly. This event is open to the youth and church as well. Any child that is not of youth age will have to be accompanied by their parent to this event. Contact Lauren Vann at lvann@avonlakepc.org with any comments or concerns.

February 17th- Parents' Night Out.

We will be hosting another parents' night out from 4pm-8pm, Valentines Edition!! All funds will support the 2018 youth mission trip. Anyone participating in the mission trip is required to be present. If there is a conflict, contact Lauren ASAP. Sign up on the youth ministries bulletin board outside of the CE and youth office. Any adults willing to participate in helping with this event please sign up on the youth bulletin board as well.

Forever His, Lauren Vann
Director of Youth Ministries



Mission Matters

Thank-you to everyone that shared their 2¢ with us on the 21st. If you forgot, just keep saving for the summer offering in July. The money goes to support Presbyterian hunger programs.

The Lunch Bunch lunch will be on Thursday February 15. I'll bet there will be some post Valentine's Day desserts. As always, volunteers are needed to bake (or buy) desserts, set up, serve, CLEAN-UP, etc. Drop in at 9:15 and you can be a part of the fun. Or come from 11:30-1:00 and enjoy a hearty lunch. Contact Carol Madson 934-2643 to be a scheduled volunteer or Kathy Navarro 233-6214 if you have questions about desserts.

Looking ahead: One Great Hour of Sharing March 25. Easter Offering April 1. (No fooling)

Want to join the small but mighty Mission Committee? Or perhaps just come for a visit? We meet on the 1st Monday of each month at 7:00 in the session room at ALPC.

This is what the ramp project was all about! About 120 volunteer hour, over \$700.00 (donated) and below freezing temperatures, "Piece of cake!" Submitted by Beth Janis 440-522-1771

Offering Envelope Surprise

If you have paged through your boxed set of offering envelopes already, you probably got a surprise when you came to March 11. In addition to the regular weekly envelope, there was another special offering envelope for the United Methodist Committee on Relief! My guess is that there is an overly zealous Methodist that works at the print shop or it was just an operational error. So, let's go with the notion that this was simply an error and should be treated as such. It cannot be said that God does not have a sense of humor!



Christian Education



It's been a while since Christmas Eve and the children's pageant, but I think the congregation would like to know who took part. Thank you to the participants and my helpers:

Narrators – Sara Austin, Bella Balaban, Grace Knox, Leigha St. George, and Madeline Waggoner; Joseph – Trent Waggoner; Mary – Ella Lombardozzi; Shepherds – Tommy Austin and Eric Doran; Sheep – Lincoln Novak and Nathaniel Zuehlke; Angels – Isabel & Melanie Brunner, Reagan Kugel, Kara & Maya Lombardozzi, Madeline Poyer, and Amelia Waggoner; Wise Women – Rory Knox, Makayla McAfee, and Ariana Zuehlke; and helpers Jenny Doran, Jen Lombardozzi, and Michelle Zuehlke. A special thank you to Michelle Zuehlke for teaching “Away in a Manger” with signs to the children and accompanying on the guitar.

At the end of January, I will be traveling to Louisville, Kentucky, for the annual conference of the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE). I will be learning about curriculum that the denomination has to offer, attending various workshops, and connecting with other church educators. Thank you for allowing me the time to attend this conference. I am looking forward to it and sharing what I learn.

Lee Lohr, Director of Christian Education

Worship & Spiritual Life

Ah, January! A time to hunker down by the fire and think back about the wonderful “Old Fashioned Christmas” that we had; all the people who were blessed by the beautiful decorations, the music, the sermons, the fellowship after church with the warm drinks and cookies, Christmas caroling, the pancake breakfast and Santa, the children’s excitement in the Christmas pageant, the glow of candlelight on a snowy night on Christmas Eve, even our celebration of Epiphany, and our remembrance of Jesus and our baptism Sunday.

But wait.... Moving ahead there is much to do. Ash Wednesday, February 14th marks the beginning of Lent. The Worship and Spiritual Life committee is planning an Ash Wednesday service at 7:30. This a quiet service of introduction to Lenten discipline. The Christian Education committee is planning a Lenten study. There will be a service of Tenebrae on Maundy Thursday, a service on Good Friday, and two services on Easter. Stay tuned for the details in next month’s *Saints Alive!*

On Saturday, February 10th Dr. Issam Nemeh will be here to lead a healing service, coordinated by the Deacons. Details are elsewhere in this publication.

A huge THANK YOU to the 29 youth and adults who participated in the Lighthouse Contemporary Worship Assessment on Wednesday, January 10th. We met for a little over an hour, enjoyed pizza, pop and cookies, and most importantly, produced 5 pages of suggestions! We identified many things we did well, as well as some things that could be done even better going forward. If you were not able to attend or you did attend and have more ideas, we’d still love to hear your thoughts. Please contact Margre Lind Mills at 440-785-1116- or email lind-mills@oh.rr.com.

We have such a wonderful choir, it is not surprising that the congregation wishes to express its appreciation, and applause after an anthem has become traditional. However, when the choir sings in the service, they are not performing; they are leading us in worship. Applause is usually not appropriate. The choir would appreciate much more an awed silence--or perhaps a quiet "amen." On the other hand, when they present one of their more exclamatory anthems, applause may be irresistible. A personal thank you to a choir member is always welcome.

If you would like to volunteer for any of the jobs that keep our church running on Sunday morning or if you would like to speak to anyone about worship, the people on our committee are: Margre Lind-Mills, Dave Brunner, Lynn Campsey Clutter, Chris Chase, Muriel Homer, Barbara Lehmkuhl, Janet Hukill, Beth Shoemaker, Marcy Uhl and Ruth Weeks.

The
Season
of
Lent



Evangelism



Daily prayers for the Church

Every Monday through Friday morning, the Evangelism Committee sends out a prayer (or two) for the ministries of the Church via email to 48 church members. Below are some examples of the email that we send out:

1/11/18

The Stewardship Committee encourages everyone to pay their per capita contribution of \$30.23 per member to the Presbytery.

II Corinthians 9:7 - "Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

Dear Lord, we lift up the Stewardship Committee and all members of our Church Family and ask Your special blessing on us as we find the joy in contributing to Your Church through our per capita expense. Help us to experience Your love so that we may share that love with others as You add to our number. And THANK YOU for all the ways You are blessing the ministries funded by the Per Capita money. . . Amen

12/21/17

Today is the monthly Community Lunch Bunch.

Matthew 25:35 - "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,"

Dear Lord, we lift up the Community Lunch Bunch and ask Your special blessing on all those who have worked so hard to provide this wonderful opportunity to be blessed by good nutritious food and warm, satisfying fellowship and on all those who attend. Help them to experience Your love so they may share that love with others as You add to their number. And THANK YOU for all the ways You are blessing this ministry. . . Amen.

1/16/18

The Renewal Committee will meet at 11:00 today and the Program Staff will meet at 1:30 today.

Matthew 18:19, 20 - "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

Dear Lord, we lift up the Renewal Committee and ask Your special blessing on them as they work together to lead us towards Your vision for Your church. Help them experience Your love so they may share that love with others as You add to their number. And THANK YOU for all the ways You are blessing this ministry . . . Amen.

Dear Lord, we lift up the Staff of ALPC and ask Your special blessing on Pastor Charlie, Muriel, Cindi, Lauren, Lee, Marcy, Julie and Julie as they work together to lead us towards Your vision for Your church. Help them experience Your love so they may share that love with others as You add to their number. And THANK YOU for all the ways You are blessing their ministries. . . Amen.

Every now and then we like to extend an invitation again in case there are more of you that would like to jump on board. Many have shared that they like this daily connection to the church and it reminds them of all the different ministries of the church. Sometimes it actually reminds them of a meeting that they were planning to attend and had forgotten all about. It's also a quick and uncomplicated way to lift the church up to God reminding us in times of concern and celebration that ALPC **belongs to God**. We don't have to fear the future – God will not abandon us when His children make poor choices. And we don't want to take too much credit for the blessings – pride commeth before a fall. If you would like to participate, just send an email to alstrauchs@aol.com and we'll get you on the prayer email list!

Submitted by Arlene Strauch on behalf of the Evangelism Committee.

Journey of Renewal



Has anyone ever asked you to go on a journey? What did you answer? Did you ask where you were going or what to pack? How about who else was going along or how long would it take? Or, who else is going on this journey and how will we know when we get there?

Renewal is a like a journey of the people of God, where we listen to God and to each other; we trust God and each other. We rediscover our strengths and core values as a people of God; we discover together what God is calling us to be and do right now. We become more

faithful, more open to the Holy Spirit, and more understanding of how we can participate in God's mission in our community and in the world. We become doers in a vision-led church.

So, why are we going on this journey? There are many reasons for a renewal journey, such as

- Wanting to do more than just go to church, but wanting to really be the church.
- Needing and wanting increased clarity of purpose as ALPC.
- Seeking a greater sense of trust and unity, pulling together toward common goals.
- Wanting to not just talk about God's mission, but organize to move concretely toward realizing that vision.
- Having an opportunity to claim a strong, shared spiritual identity among the members of ALPC.
- Believing God's mission needs a church, and that we are called to respond to that call for today. We believe it is God's idea for us to be ALPC.
- Seeing that ALPC has so much to offer and realizing that we can become better at sharing it.
- Seeking increased excitement about, and greater sharing in, our Christian faith.

Do any of these reasons excite you or compel you to join on this journey?



Who else is going? Hopefully the entire congregation of ALPC will join along. On a larger scale, and with help from the Presbytery's Committee on Renewal and Vitality, we are one of 14 churches in our presbytery (of 37) who have said yes to the journey, so we can share and draw on others' experiences. We have access to resource materials and a consultant from the Center for Parish Development (missionalchurch.org) that will be packed for our journey and help us navigate along the way. Guided by Session, who approved this journey in June 2017, we have a servant team consisting of Bill Hamilton, Margre Lind Mills, Charlie Swartz, JoAnn Wainscott and Sybil Wendling, who will be planning activities and events throughout 2018, and communicating learnings along the way as we listen to God, discover his plan for us, and become what he wants ALPC to be.

God is inviting us on a journey. Will you come along?





Avon Lake Presbyterian Church's **CORNERSTONE PRESCHOOL**

Burr...What a start to the New Year!!!! We hope that you had a wonderful EXTENDED holiday vacation and enjoyed plenty of fun and relaxation with your children. We are ready to get back to work and play at Cornerstone! We have a few reminders and updates for you as we get back to school, and as usual, please let us know if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions for us.



From all the staff of Cornerstone Preschool; We wish all our families a healthy and happy year in 2018.

SNOW DAY REMINDER
Cornerstone Preschool will follow the Avon Lake Public School Closings.



CORNERSTONE REGISTRATION TIME!

If you haven't registered your child for the 2018/2019 school year (September - May), please return your registration forms to the school office. We opened registration to the public on Monday, Jan. 8th, and we want to be sure that all our current students are placed first.

Kindergarten Registration

Step 1: Visit Avon Lake City Schools [website](#). Click on the link "Departments" located towards the top of the webpage. From there you will choose Student Registration. Locate the New Student Registration for the 2018-2019 School Year. (Please be sure you are in the correct academic year of 2018-019.) From there you will click on the link "2018-2019 Online Registration for Kindergarten" (This link will be available mid-January 2018). You will be directed to the Info Snap portal to create an account at which time you will proceed as prompted.

Step 2: After completing the online portion of the Kindergarten Registration process, gather the necessary documents.

Step 3: Bring documents to one of the Kindergarten Registrations—February 26, 27 and 28 in the Performing Arts Center.



Focusing attention

Paying attention is a skill your youngster can develop over time with practice.

Try these ideas to give him plenty of opportunities.

Tap interests

Improve your child's concentration by taking advantage of activities he loves. For instance, if he enjoys snapping together tracks for his toy train, suggest a shape or size to make, and let him work on building it.

Join in

Nothing will make your youngster want to stay with an activity quite like having you play, too. Find things to do together that require close attention. You could try concentration building games like Red Light Green Light and Simon Says. Or pretend to be mimes, and copy each other's moves.

Avoid interruptions

While your child is busy with a task, such as sorting his blocks by color, try not to interrupt him. Allowing him to stay focused will help him build his attention span himself.

Try another

When your little one begins to lose interest in an activity, encourage him to do "one more" before he stops—attempt one more basket, try to balance on his bike one more time, put away one more book. Over time, these small increases will add up. Note: If you're concerned about your youngster's attention span, talk to his teacher. She can tell you if she has noticed any problems.♥

Try New Foods!

Most children love to try free samples at the grocery store. Why not have a nutritious taste test at home? Cut fruit, vegetables, and cheese into bite-sized pieces, spear them on toothpicks, and offer the "samples" to your little one. He'll enjoy the novelty and could discover new healthy foods he likes.

Volunteer from home

If you work during school hours or are home with a baby, you can still donate your time to help your child's class. Ask the teacher for tasks to do from home, like getting crafts ready or making phone calls to organize class parties. Your youngster will feel good to know that you're a "class helper."

Worth quoting

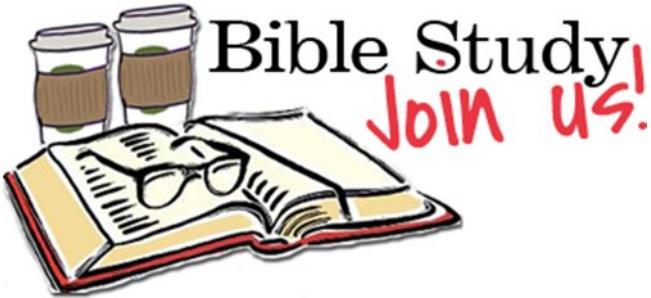
"How much good inside a day?
Depends how good you live 'em.
How much love inside a friend?
Depends how much you give 'em."

Shel Silverstein

Just for fun

Q: What do snowmen like to do in their free time?

A: Chill out.



Bible Study
Join Us!

**Pastor Charlie's
Bible Study
Mondays at noon in
the Session room**

Monday, February 5 - John 11:17-27-
I am the Resurrection and the Life ...

Monday, February 12 - John 14:1-14 –
I am the way and the truth, and the life.

Monday, February 19 - No Class – President's Day

Monday, February 26 - John 15:1-11 -
I am the vine, you are the branches

The Church office will be closed on Monday, February 19



Avon Lake Presbyterian Church
32340 Electric Blvd.
Avon Lake, OH 44012
Return Service Requested

Sunday Worship

Worship at 10:00 am

Youth & Children's Sunday School at 10:00 am

(440) 933-6240

www.avonlakechurch.com

www.facebook.com/avonlakepc

alpresby@avonlakepc.org

Pastor	Charles E. Swartz
Pastor Emeritus	Alfred A. Hart
Custodian	Jessica Huggett
Director of Christian Education	Lee Lohr
Director of Music	Muriel Homer
Director of Youth Ministries	Lauren Vann
Financial Secretary	Lynn Morway
Lock-up Custodian	Ed Homer
Office Administrator	Cindi Dansizen
Social Media Director	Julie Burr
Treasurer	Marcy Uhl
Director of Preschool	Julie Erker