

annual report
2017



UNION CHURCH

**Then I heard the voice of
the Lord, saying, “Whom
shall I send, and who will
go for Us?” Then I said,
“Here am I. Send me!”**

Isaiah 6:8

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Mission Statement

**In response to the gospel,
we will love God, love one
another and love the world
by making disciples of Jesus
Christ.**

As a congregation, we reaffirm what the church in all ages and places has proclaimed as a foundation of the Christian faith — the Apostles' Creed.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic (universal) church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

We recognize that humanity is created in the image of God, separated from God by sin, lost and in need of forgiveness. In the person of Jesus Christ we see the Trinity of God most plainly; through His atoning death and physical resurrection we receive forgiveness and eternal life. The church is the Body of Christ on Earth to spread His Kingdom, and embody His love for the world.

A YEAR OF SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

a message from our senior pastor

This past year was an exciting one for our congregation. At the beginning of the year our church wide emphasis on Public Faith triggered a renewed commitment in our community to share the hope we have with friends, colleagues and neighbors. We created new opportunities for people in the city to process their questions and doubts about Christianity. In February, we hosted a Shakespearean Improv Open Forum followed by a talk and Q&A with Tim Keller that was attended by 600 people. We helped to host the 7-week Questioning Christianity lecture series and started new Questioning Christianity groups where friendships were formed and many learned more about Jesus. Several people from these groups came to faith in our congregation and were baptized this year!

In the fall, our Prayer year began, which was a great way to build on Public Faith. Our congregation helped host a prayer event and began monthly congregational prayer meetings. Our year of prayer has not so much been one of programs and events, but of deepening and strengthening our sense of mission and community. By the end of the year, there were close to 80 Community Groups meeting regularly and almost 200 Community Group leaders who are all working to build a prayerful community.

To better support our growing and deepening community, this year we hired the Reverend Rom Ribar as our Associate Pastor of Youth and Families and Kellyn von Arx as our Assistant Director of Youth and Families, both of whom have been invaluable additions to our team. As a result of the faithful prayers by many, our congregation continues to flourish and it is our vision and hope that the city will be renewed through our presence in Robinson, PA.

Blessings,



Dr. William Younger
Senior Pastor

A YEAR OF SERVING OUR TOGETHER

a message from our session

The prayer ministry theme has been especially meaningful for Union Church. Going through the year focused on developing community has not only grown and deepened our reliance on God, but also has highlighted that the core strength of our church. The many lay ministry leaders who have stepped up to lead, serve and pray for our congregation.

There are so many things to celebrate! We had great participation at all of our leader meetings as we focused on renewing the vision of Union We held our first ever Union congregational retreat in the fall and a Community Group leader retreat in the spring, which were both well attended. To date, we have over 84 Community Groups supported by 192 leaders, 24 leader-coaches and countless others who host, cook and tirelessly work to care for their groups. We currently have five Questioning Christianity groups, more than we have ever had, to welcome people wrestling with faith and doubts. In addition, we have over 300 Sunday Service Team volunteers, 110 Children's Ministry volunteers, 40 prayer team members, 49 elders and staff, and countless other people serving with Christ for the City International, CFCI, short-term missions and many other ways.

We have been especially encouraged to see the amazing and unexpected ways God has answered our prayers. It has been a privilege and joy to participate through prayer in the renewing work of the Spirit in Robinson, PA. We thank God for the remarkable year that has strengthened our lay ministry and helped prepare us for an exciting year to come!

SESSION ELDERS & DEACONS

What is the purpose of the session?

The session of a particular church (i.e., local congregation) consists of the pastor, the associate pastor, and the elders in active service. Elders are those members - men and women - who have been called by God to serve the church. That calling is confirmed as the elders are duly nominated by the church's Nominating Committee and duly elected by the congregation and ordained by the Presbytery of jurisdiction. Elders are elected to serve a one three-year term, with the opportunity to serve a consecutive three-year term if re-elected. They are eligible for up to six more years after taking at least one year off as an "inactive" elder.

All elders have responsibilities that are required of them as servants of the church on the session.

All elders also have responsibilities that are required of them as individuals who have been called, equipped, elected, ordained, and installed as elders in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). That ordination is to the office of elder and extends to perpetuity. Once an elder, always an elder, whether currently on the session or not.

The session is responsible for the mission and government of the particular church. It is a body of elected representatives and thus has responsibility and power to provide for the worship, ministry, education, fellowship, mission, service, and life of the church.

2017 SESSION ELDERS

Victor Chin
Alexander Chou
Gregory Clark
John Ellis
Bill Gough
James Herring
Carter Hinckley
Glen Kleinknecht
Arvin Soh

2017 DEACONS

Rose-Marie Armstrong
Linda Brooke
Eileen Buck
Kay Cain
Peyton Jenkins
Yvette Knight
Carol Labozzetta
Anita Mani
Kathie McEwen
Greg Nance
Tom Palumbo
Bill Papis
Jean Soo Park
Susie Park
Emmanuel Pizana
Andrew Protain
Carrie Robinson
Brandon Straub
Michelle Turner
Tony Vavroch
Diane Wenzler
Stella Yee

OUR STAFF

John Seybert
Director of Music



Mimi Masucci
Wedding Coordinator



Monica Laughery
Office Manager

Katie Parr
Childcare Center Director



George Shumek
Financial Secretary



Dr. William Younger
Senior Pastor



Sally Andrews
Pastoral Care Coordinator

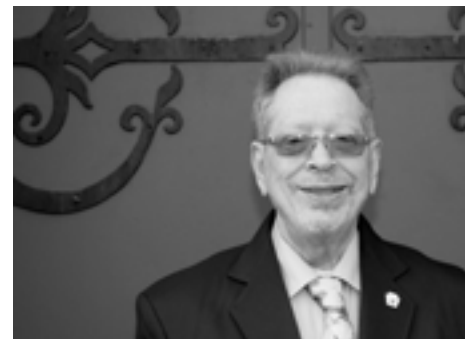
Kellyn von Arx
Assistant Director of Youth
and Families



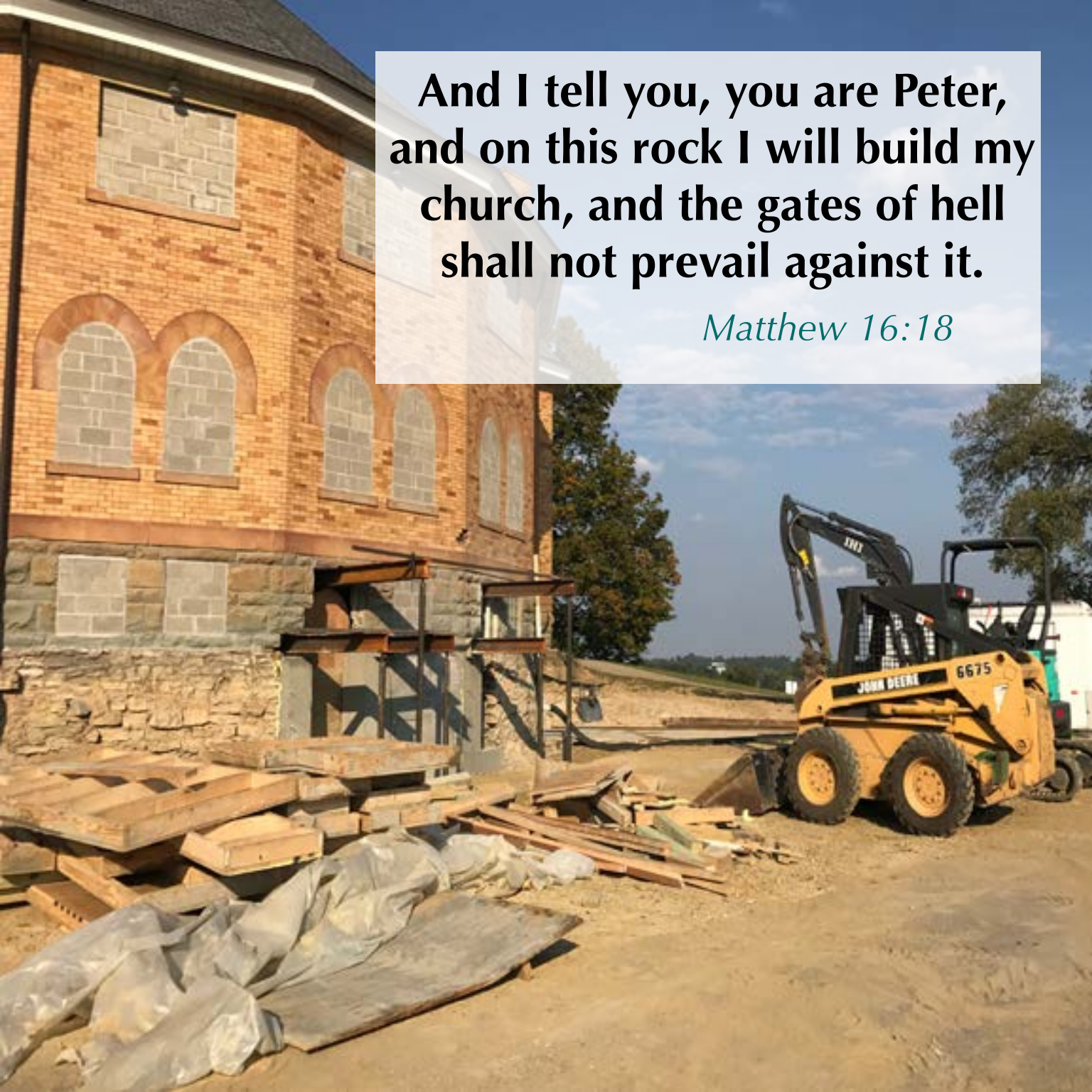
Sue Shumek
New Member Coordinator



Dr. Tom Ribar
Associate Pastor



Carl Reed
Sexton



**And I tell you, you are Peter,
and on this rock I will build my
church, and the gates of hell
shall not prevail against it.**

Matthew 16:18

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

2017 updates

Our Capital Campaign and renovation plans are moving forward.

The air conditioning was added to the CE Building and the sanctuary over the summer, just in time for Vacation Bible School.

The foundation for the elevator has been poured. This was a long process as the foundation of the original church structure had to be secured in order to start the process of starting to build the structure which will hold the elevator that will open into the sanctuary. Our construction crew says the elevator should be up in running by Spring 2018.

The retaining wall along side the CE Building, below the Childcare Center playground has been completed. Now staff and parents can rest assured that the area will continue to be safe.

The process of connecting our two parking lots has started, but a projected completion date has not been established.

Contributions that have
been received for 2017

\$544,453
Thank YOU!

MISSIONS

2017 highlights

Buckets of Hope - Over 200 buckets of supplies were collected, transported, and distributed to those affected by Hurricane Harvey.

Christmas Outreach – Thanks to all who supported our Union Christmas party at the Bradley Center. Because of your generosity we were able to assist 129 kids and 50 families for Christmas!

Operation Christmas Child – Thanks to everyone who prayed, packed a box or helped load the trucks. More than 120 volunteers worked during Collection Week to load 29,847 boxes! (8000 more than last year, which was the most we had ever done at that time). Lakewood People contributed almost 1000 shoeboxes again this year. We had more than 120 people volunteer to work during the week. These shoeboxes with the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are on their way to children around the world, pray that they are received with joy!

5th Annual Thanksgiving Meal Outreach – Thanks to all who came and helped pack & deliver boxes to local families, and all who donated! We packed 620 boxes. It was a wonderful show of God's love to our community.


Compassion Mobile Experience – First time ever hosting this event ... Close to 4,000 people from the community went through the mobile experience. Over 220 children were sponsored globally.

Perspectives: God's Heart for Global Missions: Had over 30 from Union and our community complete a college level mission training class on God's Biblical Mission. This was a 15 week study course that ran from January to April 2017.

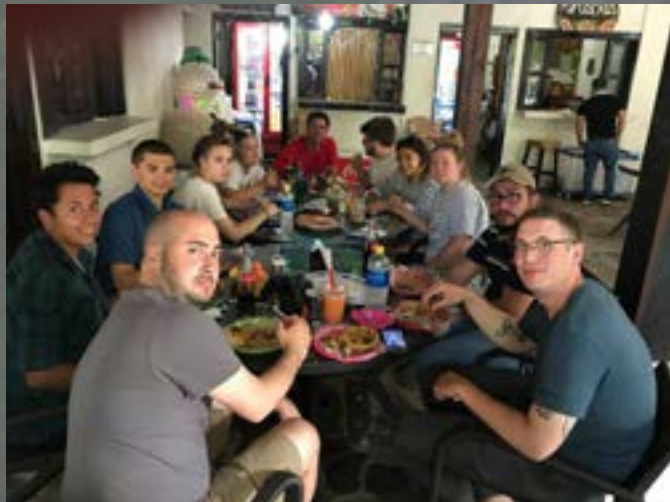
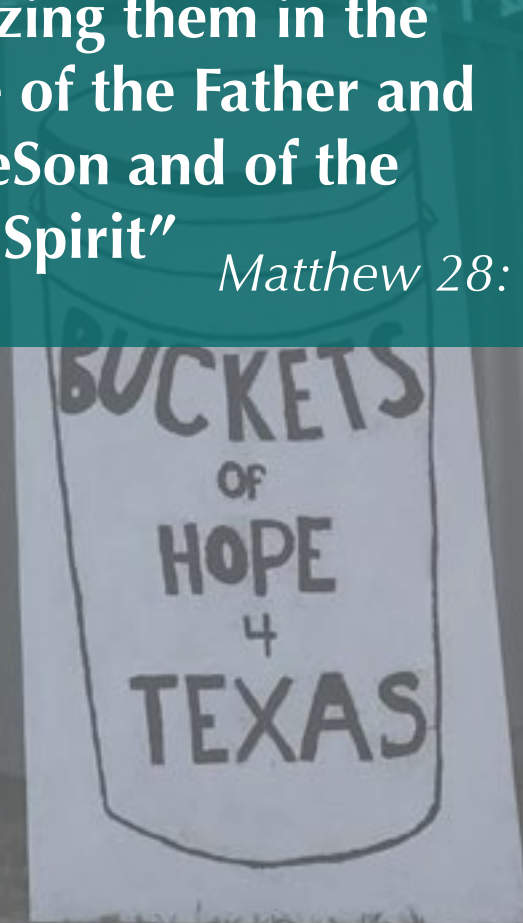
The goal of Union Mentoring is to be a place where we are a light and healing balm, a safe place for children to come and hear about Jesus, a place for children to come and be loved, and a place for children to receive a hand up in their academics.

Union Mentoring has been successful in this endeavor through having about 20 tireless volunteers who show up week in and week out pouring into these children, taking the initiative to lead Bible lessons, and go further in presenting Jesus during their one-on-one time with the children.

Many of the kids show up before mentoring starts, take ownership in the program, and help set up snacks and chairs, and then stay after to clean up, and take out the trash.



“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”
Matthew 28: 19



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

2017 highlights

Our delightful children's Christmas musical, "The Loaned Manger", involved nearly 70 grade school children and over 45 preschoolers. Staff and volunteer leaders were amazing!

Created a second winter parent-child dedication after twenty families responded to participate in the January service.

Code Keeper participants (kindergarten-fifth grade) have memorized and recited over 1,000 Bible verses since August and have earned over 6,000 beads.

The Bridge computer check-in for children and security codes for parents is up and running well thanks to the efforts of our staff.

Five Sunday morning small groups have volunteered to serve monthly during the 11:00 hour in WeeCare and GroZone. This has been a tremendous encouragement to our staff as we continue to secure consistent weekly workers for all classes.

Kids Cove Weekday is in its second full year of providing a five-day, half-day option for preschool children and currently has nearly 60 children enrolled. Requests for 2018 registration information from new families has already been significant.

**"Train a child
in the way he
should go, and
when he is old
he will not
turn from it."**

Proverbs 22:6





2017 highlights

We have been more intentional about our ministry to the Bradley Center and are now seeing 20-25 student attend youth group on Sunday mornings and 15-20 attend on Wednesday nights. This is a mix of both believers and non-believers from the local area, around the nation and around the world. These students are hearing the gospel and learning what it means to follow Jesus Christ.

We have started 7 new D-Groups (small groups of students that meet outside of church with an adult leader to dive into the Word of God and put spiritual disciplines into practice) and plan to begin several more this semester.

We have developed our ministry to parents which includes a new weekly group for parents of teenagers, bi-monthly communication/training, and yearly parent seminars.

We are in our 2nd year of a Student Leadership Team composed of both middle and high school students. There are now 27 students on this team that have made a commitment to grow spiritually, to serve at church, to pursue an authentic Christian lifestyle to reach their friends for Christ and to be actively involved in our church and student ministry.

We are in the process of planning another DNOW for our middle and high school students this March. Union will one of two host sites for this regional event that will involve several thousand students, leaders and parents from 17 different churches in our area.

We have formed a mission team of 28 students and leaders who will be serving with our ministry partners in Guatemala this April. For 14 of these students, it will be their first time to serve on an international mission trip.



YOUTH MINISTRY



ADULT MINISTRY

2017 highlights

There was a great turn out as Don Ormsbee and Bill Risinger led our Senior Adults in a "Journey Off the Map" for Senior Adult VBS in August. Our focus this week was on Isaiah 30:21... "This is the way; walk in it!"

We have had great fellowship in our monthly trips as well, including visiting Pittsburgh locations of the Pittsburgh Botanical Gardens, the annual PC USA Senior Adult Rally, Apple Picking in Franklin, PA, and Christmas Shopping Trip.

There are now 83 couples connected into weekly community in the Young Couples (Millennials) Ministry (up from 39 couples 2 years ago).

47 couples were mentored in the Marriage Mentoring Ministry this past year.

46 groups participated in Experiencing God.

82 people have completed Discover since August.

120 young moms joined MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers)

A Prayer Ministry team of 42 people has been established and assists on a regular basis in the prayer needs of our church in various ways.

Five members of the prayer team were able to go to the Bradley Center Christmas event and pray for the residents. We had a great response and were able to pray with at least 12 residents or families that attended. We also put these needs in our Bridge process for prayer.

We also formed a team for our Real Life venue that has 5 people each week to be prayer team in that service. One person stays in the pastor's reception area to pray throughout the service. Four people, in pairs, are placed at the front during the invitational song to receive those that want to come for prayer. Our church is growing in response and comfort level with this process and we continue to see people helped in a great way by having someone pray for them.



CHILDCARE CENTER

Our philosophy is to provide each child with the opportunity to grow mentally, socially, spiritually, and physically through individual and group experiences under the guidance of qualified and dedicated teachers and caregivers. We are licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and we participate in the following professional growth activities:

PACCA (Pennsylvania Child Care Association) "A nonprofit, membership organization that facilitates the provision of quality early care and education to children." www.pacca.org

Keystone STARS "Keystone STARS is a quality rating and improvement system in which early learning programs and practitioners are encouraged and supported to meet specific, evidence-based performance standards in four key areas: staff education, learning environment, leadership/management, and family/community partnerships." www.pakeys.org

HighScope "HighScope works to create and deliver high-quality educational resources plus independent evaluation services to improve educational outcomes for children, families, and communities." www.highscope.org



**But Jesus called the children to him and said,
"Let the little children come to me, and
do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God
belongs to such as these."**

Luke 18: 16

ANNUAL GIVING

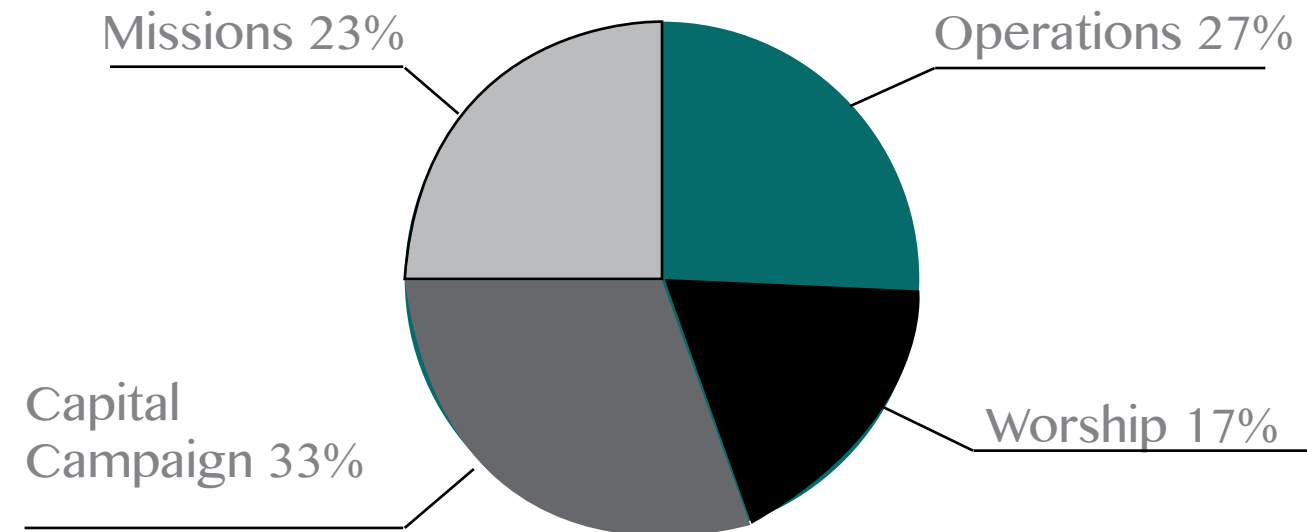
As co-chairs of this year's Annual Giving Workgroup we are very thankful for the hard work of our members: John LeDuc, Katie and Bill Parker, Chris Queen, Brian Baumhover and Lee Roberts. Throughout the campaign other members of the congregation responded generously with their time by making telephone calls, writing articles for the newsletter, and giving Sunday Faith in Action talks. The entire church staff provided invaluable guidance and support.

Our theme, Grace and Gratitude, was reflected in the written materials developed by the committee, the music chosen by Tom Granum, and the scripture readings selected by Rev. Dr. William Younger. Our goal was to convey this message in a simple, straightforward way that encouraged people to focus on God's grace as they prayerfully considered how to respond with their pledges for 2017.

The five-week formal campaign kicked off on September 18 with a Faith in Action presentation and mailing of the Stewardship packets to the congregation. Presentations were made to new member classes during the Fall to explain the importance of pledging to the work of the church. Members of the congregation representing different demographics shared their Faith in Action stories each week. The committee decided to highlight the aggregate numbers in our budget by presenting large graphic checks made out to the four areas of ministry, Congregational Life, Mission, Christian Education and Worship.

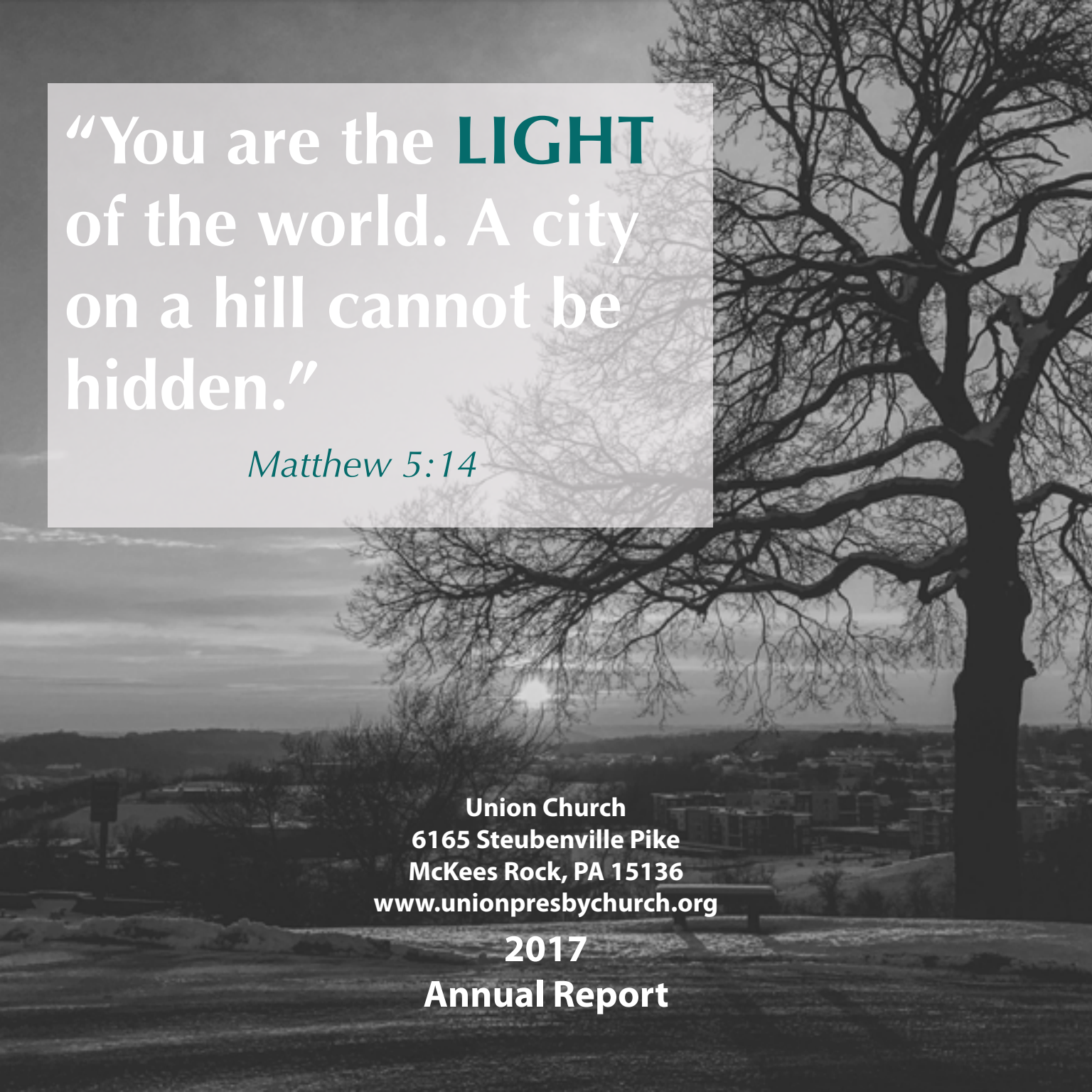
Commitment Sunday was October 23 with a final Faith in Action appeal. That afternoon a team of volunteers made phone calls to all households that had not pledged up to that point. The feedback from these calls was helpful in guiding our efforts to wind-up the campaign. A second round of phone calls was made in early December. In closing, we want to express our gratitude to all who have submitted pledges for 2017.

EXPENSES



Pledges received as of January 20 total \$1,581,861 with 540 households participating. We are at 93% of our goal for 2017. While the formal campaign is over, the finance office reports that pledges are continuing to come in daily. We have stressed that no pledge is too big or too small and we are hoping to increase this percentage so that vital programs can be maintained in the coming year.

	2016	2017	2018
Households	478	540	342
Percentage	84%	93%	
Capital Campaign	\$247,876	\$544,453	
Total	\$1,298,456	\$1,581,861	



“You are the **LIGHT**
of the world. A city
on a hill cannot be
hidden.”

Matthew 5:14

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