

**AVONDALE  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH**

**2015  
Annual Report**

**“Called to love God, love one another,  
and serve community.”**

## ***Avondale Vision Statement***

*As a congregation, God calls us to:*

- *Create close relationships to support a dynamic faith*
- *Not only serve our neighbors but know them personally*
- *Prepare the hearts of children and families to abide in Christ*
- *Reduce economic inequities by breaking down barriers to education*
- *Develop and demonstrate a sustaining faith*

## **Staff 2015**

John Earl, Senior Pastor  
Christopher Lee, Associate Pastor, Youth,  
Family Life Center and Summer Ministries  
Regina Love, Director of Music/Organist  
Rich Stanley, ARISE Worship Coordinator  
Nadja Sefcik-Earl, Handbell Director  
Lynn Wilkerson, Children's Choir Director  
Renita Fowler, Financial Secretary  
Sande Darby, Clerical Receptionist  
Caroline Starnes, Administrative  
Communications Coordinator  
Ginny Mitchell, Administrative Coordinator  
Jane Summey-Mullennix,  
Parish Associate



## **Session/Elders 2015**

### **Class of 2015**

James Bowen  
Mary Comstock  
Lamar Hardegree

### **Class of 2016**

Sharon McCarthy  
Rick Parler  
Sigrid Sacra

### **Class of 2017**

Zach Chambers  
Ann Patterson  
Lisa Miller Worf

Jackie Shannon, Clerk

## **Ministry Team Leaders 2015**

Christian Nurture - Connie Love / 2015  
Communications - Shea "Erin" Barron / 2016  
Communications - Will Vick / 2016  
Congregational Life - Louise Lawson / 2015  
Congregational Life - Marian Stout / 2015  
Finance - Mike Mitchell / 2016  
Member Care - Susan Brandau / 2015  
Mission - Chris Gardner / 2016  
Mission - Janet Harrison / 2016  
Outreach - Nancy Bohrer / 2016  
Personnel - Kay Chelena / 2016  
Property - Todd Oswald / 2015  
Spiritual Growth - Amanda Shanks / 2015  
Spiritual Growth - Catherine Mitchell / 2015  
Stewardship - John Callaway / 2016



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# Letter from the Senior Pastor

Members of Avondale,

We are constantly told the value of looking forward and putting the past behind. The Annual Report reminds us that there is value in gathering light of memory from the past to shed upon the future. The backward look confirms God's guiding and undergirds God's providence. How many times, in looking back, I recognize the guiding of God which I did not see in the present moment. In the simple words of this Report we are all reminded that our movement, forward and backwards, belongs to God.

The 2015 Annual Report provides a brief moment for a **backward look** with gratitude.

The year was one of great movement and change. We released into God's care: Emily Bearden; Edd DeArmon; Diane Gunter; Polly Hollingsworth; Lois Lange; Betty Parker; Margaret Ratchford; Lucile Robertson; Paul Simpson; Eldon Stout; Linda Willis; and Margaret Winchester. Each a child of God and deeply missed.

With gratitude we have received from the estate of Emily and Watson Bearden a financial gift which will be invested within the endowment and plant seeds for future ministry. We wept as individuals left our fellowship and rejoiced when others entered.

Movement and change accurately defined our church staff as Jane Summey-Mullennix was offered an opportunity to serve as parish associate in Rock Hill and Ginny Mitchell, following five years of faithful service, stepped down from her position as Administrative Coordinator. That change has brought into our community Caroline Starnes serving as the Administrative Communications Coordinator and Sande Darby as our Clerical Receptionist. With their hiring also came a slight reduction in office hours with the office now being open from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. New to the Children's Center was the hiring of Jessica McQuillen as director.

The year now past celebrates the witness of mission to places far and near; Haiti, Sedgfield Middle School, Room in the Inn, Homeless Meal Ministry, Common Grounds Garden, a work camp in Charleston, W.Va., and nine Connect Camps with Avondale as base.

There continued the life-stream of the church with our two worship services, church school, youth ministry, wonderful meals and

fellowship, and stewards seeking to be faithful with that which God had entrusted to us. To mention a few, there was the Nativity Journey, Eggapoolza, the introduction of Journey Groups, “Cross Ponderings”, ASAP, Presbyterian Women and a VBS “Hometown Nazareth”. The Narrative Budget and a Faith Journey were two publications which stirred the soul reminding all of us of the grace of a backward look.

The **forward look** presents Avondale with enormous God-given challenges and more changes. With guidance from our church consultants, church leaders continue to bring focus to mission and ministry. An overall ministry vision has been defined and Kingdom-building will commence with directing efforts to:

1. build bridges to reduce inequities affecting the Sedgefield Middle School Community, and
2. enriching the lives of children through the development of a sustaining faith.

Defining that specific work will be a priority for 2016.

At the January 2016 retreat, leadership adopted a new organizational model which is intended to free up members to redirect energy and effort to the two objectives mentioned above. The intent of the new organizational model is to lessen time of members spent in meetings enabling more time devoted to actual participation in ministry.

There exists a level of anticipation and anxiety in regards to the decision of leadership to return to a single worship service. An appointed task force continues to meet and, at some point within the first quarter of 2016, will offer recommendations to the Session in regards to moving forward.

Unfolding out of our forward movement are new opportunities for faithfulness and obedience. When failing to understand the larger picture of where God is leading we can often take the first immediate step which faith requires. How often life is about living one day at a time and doing one task at a time. While often uncertain of the end result we work together with conviction that God is leading and guiding.

Your in Christ,



# **Report from the Associate Pastor**

## **“ODD” Youth Fellowship, CONNECT Camps, and Avondale Basketball**

### **Youth Fellowship**

“ODD” Youth Fellowship had an amazing 2015 and look forward to where God is leading for 2016!! Last year’s highlights:

- Senior youth members served in increased leadership roles as small group leaders
- Summer youth trips included – combined work camp to Charleston, WV (over 25 middle/senior high youth), senior high conference at Montreat Conference Center, middle school conference at Massanetta Springs Camp and Conference Center in Harrisonburg, VA.
- Over 25 youth attended both our Fall Retreat (Camp Grier) and our Winter Retreat (Pipestem State Park, WV)
- Sunday evening fellowship has tremendous energy and is very well attended.

What’s ahead in 2016:

All roads for a large portion of Avondale’s youth ministry lead to Peru and Massanetta in 2016. We also prepare to send off a large number of senior high youth to college in 2016. Excited to see what God has in store! Youth leadership recognize the need to continue to evolve the program, especially with rising numbers on Sunday evenings: this is a great “issue” to have. We will pray, pray and seek God’s guidance for new ways to be authentic and dynamic in 2016!

### **CONNECT Camps**

CONNECT Camps experienced unprecedented growth with nine groups from five different states in 2015! Another great addition was the hiring of CONNECT Interns, J.T Earl and Emily Shannon. The interns provided direction, leadership, and hospitality to each group that came to Charlotte to serve. Last year’s highlights:

CONNECT Camps in 2015:

- First Presbyterian Church...Tallahassee, FL
- Westminster Presbyterian Church...Charlottesville, VA
- Swift Creek Presbyterian Church...Moseley, VA

- North Wilkesboro Presbyterian Church...North Wilkesboro, NC
- First Presbyterian Church...Barnett, VT
- Harpeth Presbyterian Church...Brentwood, TN
- Trinity Presbyterian Church...Arlington, VA
- Parkway Presbyterian Church...Winston-Salem, NC

What's ahead in 2016:

With the increase in the number of CONNECT camps, CONNECT leadership recognizes a need to continue to expand marketing and communication strategies to promote sustainable growth. We also will be working rigorously to involve and include more Avondale members in the CONNECT ministry in a variety of ways. Stay tuned!

### **Avondale Basketball**

Avondale participates in the Playbook for Life Ministries League. Last year's highlights:

- We had 14 total teams (over 110 players and coaches)
- Several teams participated in various mission opportunities at Avondale, such as Uptown Meal Ministry and Room in the Inn.
- Partnered with AG Middle School and Community Use of Schools by sharing gym space. Avondale's FLC cannot hold practices for all teams since there were so many. AG Middle School's gym is rented twice a week so that the ministry can continue to grow in number.
- Avondale Boys D division team, coached by David Hood (member of Covenant Presbyterian Church), won the league championship!

What's ahead in 2016:

As we have "maxed out" our space in terms of numbers, we recognize the need to re-evaluate this ministry and create new opportunities for members and member involvement. We are also seeking and praying about ways we can "branch out" to include/recruit teams, players and coaches from the Sedgefield Middle School community.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Christopher Lee, Associate Pastor for Youth, Family Life Center and Summer Ministries

# **Christian Nurture**

## **Children's Ministry**

- The Spring Avondale Adventures for K-5, concluded with an Easter musical. The fall Avondale Adventure choir sung their hearts out at Park Road Shopping center sharing the Christmas carols they had learned.
- "Faith and Sexuality" workshop was offered to the 5<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents.
- Two workshops were offered to children and their families, "Wonders of Worship" lead by Linda Haigh, and upon receiving their Bibles, a workshop for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders led by Jane Summey-Mullennix.
- 140 adults, youth and children participated in Hometown Nazareth Vacation Bible Camp, 87 children from our congregation, Avondale's Children Center and the neighborhood shared the Good News. Thank you to Kelly Platt and her dedicated team for a great camp.

Thank you to Ginny Sloan and all the dedicated teachers of Sunday school for living their baptismal promise made to our children.

## **Youth Ministry**

- The Sunday morning Junior High class has adopted a study model from "Community of Faith", this study will focus on creating more intentional opportunities for youth ministry. During their retreats, teens have a very special time to experience God at work in new and unexpected ways.
- In May, following the Youth Sunday service, finger Labyrinths were presented to 5<sup>th</sup> graders and 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

Thank you to the teachers and advisors on the youth council for your enthusiasm and hard work.

## **Adult Ministry**

- "Marriage: Christians at a Crossroads" was offered as a three

week lecture study designed to look at what the Bible says about homosexuality and viewpoints within the church. Several members from Charlotte area churches attended.

- Praise God for the vision given to Jane Summey-Mullennix that has encouraged Avondale to grow in faith through the Journey Group Ministry. Five groups were formed to promote, faith Study and Spiritual Growth, give Support, share through Social/Affinity and Service to others. Your response has been amazing, 94 members of Avondale joined 15 new groups and expanding the 20 existing groups. Groups ranged from cooking and clay working to Mystics to more traditional Sunday studies.

The future of Avondale will grow in the light of Christ. As we share with one another, we will contribute to a better world.

I would like to offer a very special word of thanks to all who have offered their gift and talents to the nurture and growth of God's kingdom. Especially to the Christian Nurture team members: Kay DeArmon, Ruby Cathey, Ginny Sloan, Tracie Hummel, Lisa Worf elder discerner and Jane Summey-Mullennix staff.

"...if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it."  
1 Corinthians 12:26b

With gratitude for God's Grace,  
Connie Love, Christian Nurture ministry team leader

## **Communications**

- Managed and maintained Avondale's website
- Oversaw 'eNews' and monthly Newsletter
- Created and produced "Faith Journeys" magazine
- Created and approved Social Media Policy
- Provided tools for ministry teams to be able to create: Post-cards, Flyers, Posters, and Tri-fold handouts as needed

# Social Media Guidelines

## Child, Youth, Staff, and Volunteer Protection Social Media Guidelines

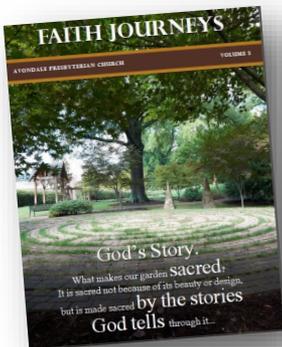
1) Inappropriate use of smart phones, cameras, imaging or digital devices is prohibited.

It is easy to unintentionally invade the privacy of others with these devices. Do not take photos of individuals who object. Never use these or similar devices in or near shower houses, restrooms, or other areas where privacy is expected.

2) Staff and volunteers will be mindful of the content on any portable electronic device, social networking pages, or other electronic media that might be accessible to any children and youth.

3) The *Open Spaces* rule also applies to the use of social media. Social media channels used in connection with children and youth ministries must be public. No private channels or private communication allowed – i.e. private Facebook groups, invite-only YouTube channels, etc.

4) The *Two Adult* rule also applies to use of social media. There should be no private messages and no one-on-one direct contact



Pictured: Avondale’s website, eNews, Facebook, newsletter, and magazine

through email, Facebook messages, Twitter direct messaging, chats, instant messaging, or other similar messaging features provided through social media sites. All communication between youth and adults should take place in a public forum (i.e. the Facebook wall), or should include another adult. In the case of ministerial or youth leader counseling, written permission by the parent is required for private communication. For example, if a youth reaches out via text or email to youth minister or youth leader seeking advice, the youth minister or youth leader should email or text the parent asking to engage with the youth on a one-on-one basis at the youth's request.

Parents will have an opportunity to give permission for youth leaders to text or respond one-on-one to texts or emails about youth group logistics (dates and times of activities, supplies needed, etc.).

5) Do not claim to speak for Avondale on social media unless you are authorized to do so.

6) Remember that social media sites and content live forever. If you create a social media channel for a ministry or event, consider transitioning the administration rights and duties when the initial administrators end their involvement in children and youth ministries.

## **Congregational Life**

Congregational Life spread God's light during many events this past year including:

- Unity Sunday Quiche Brunch in January;
- Eggapoolza in April;
- Easter morning breakfast;
- Unity Sunday covered dish in April;
- Unity Sunday "Cook-out" in August;
- Unity Sunday international covered dish in October;
- Refreshments during Journey to Bethlehem
- Unity Sunday brunch in December; and
- Weekly lemonade stand fellowship following the 11:00 service.

We would like to express appreciation to our team for their time, commitment and dedication. Our team is essential to the success of our events. Another vital part of our team is our Men's Cooking Group. We thank Bill Platt, Michael Harrison (and Evan), Ryan Patterson and Mike Mitchell for their energy and time. There is always great energy, enthusiasm and grace in preparing the feast!

In 2016, we look forward to sharing God's light and love through hospitality and more meals on the grounds to enjoy God's creation.

With gratitude, Louise Lawson and Marian Stout

## **Finance**

### **Accomplishments:**

- Completed first financial audit of Avondale's financial records and processes in five years. Review was very complimentary of the role our Financial Manager, Renita Fowler, does in overseeing our overall finances.
- Introduced new financial presentation/overview to Session and Ministry Team Leaders to enable them to have a concise, but better understanding of our finances.
- Moved our \$500,000 Endowment to Vanguard and restructured our portfolio mix. This direction has resulted in approximately \$7,500 more in annual income for Avondale. Improved oversight, organization, and record keeping of this significant fund. For 2015, the earnings from our Endowment funded over \$15,000 in Avondale initiatives/programs, such as TAG, Montreat Music Camp scholarships, etc.
- Further implemented on-line giving/payment alternatives and introduced PayPal Here as our mobile payment process (used by ASAP, Youth BBQ, Mission, etc.).
- Outsourced critical payroll processing of Avondale's staff to a third-party and at a very attractive rate.
- Renewed \$300,000 line of credit with our bank at a very attractive interest rate. We have rarely had a need to utilize this credit

facility, and we have not borrowed on it in a number of years.

- In conjunction with the Stewardship Ministry Team, developed the Narrative Budget that was introduced to the broader congregation during the fourth quarter of 2015. Developed and oversaw the more detailed 2016 Budget process, and provided guidance to Session along the way.
- Improved understanding of Avondale Children's Center finances, and how they impact the broader church.

## **2016 Vision and Direction**

- Continue to work towards greater simplification and transparency with our financial information.
- Further support our Session and Leaders from a financial point of view, especially as it relates to implementing new programs/ministries coming from a refined Vision.
- Increase awareness and understanding of giving opportunities as it relates to Avondale's endowment. Better educate the congregation as to the importance of this fund, and how it works to help further ministries at Avondale.
- Continue to explore ways that technology can complement and enhance our financial management, and encourage broader giving among our membership.
- Begin development of a multi-year financial plan that will focus not only on the ministries of Avondale, but begin to proactively address the capital requirements associated with our physical campus.

## **Recognition and Thanks**

Sincere appreciation and gratitude goes to the many people that operate behind the scenes, but have worked so very hard to insure we use the financial gifts that have been provided to us by God in a sound and satisfactory manner. These include the members of the Finance Ministry Team, our discerner from Session, the dedicated group of "offering" counters that are here every Sunday and Monday, and our faithful Financial Manager, Renita Fowler.

## Member Care

Member Care helped build the Kingdom of God by providing rich opportunities for our loving Disciples to touch the lives of others. Our Disciples illustrated God's love and kindness, ensuring others they are loved and important to us. Friends we reached out to on their journey were enduring either challenging difficulties or joyous happy times.

Our Disciples:

- Provided meals or refreshments for grieving families
- Provided meals and/or cards for births, baptisms, sick individuals or families in transition
- Celebrated the gift of marriage
- Our Shepherds attended enlightening training to better care for our shut-ins. They helped our numerous shut-ins celebrate the birth of Christ with a joyous visit bringing a gift of delicious chocolates.

Loving appreciation to our Ministry Team Members for their love, time and talents shared throughout our faith community.

Looking forward to 2016 we hope to continue to provide opportunities for others to grow spiritually, become Disciples and build the Kingdom. Our desire is to reach out and build bridges, connecting hearts and souls.

Susan Brandau, Leader

I thank God for the gift of members that give freely and lovingly to care for those in our church family. I pray that the Spirit continues to nurture and guide our ministry team leadership and volunteers in this meaningful ministry.

Mary Comstock, Elder



*Let all that you do  
be done in Love*

1 Corinthians 16:14

## **Mission**

In 2015, the Avondale Faith community strengthened and built relationships across the church community, beyond the church doors, and beyond our borders. Many of the missions can be explained through numbers and financial statements but many can only be shared through transformational stories. The following is a brief description of the missions our congregation has participated in and supported.

- The Face to Face in Milot program fed and comforted 35+ elderly and disabled Haitians throughout 2015. Avondalers travelled to Haiti in May and October to monitor the program and be with our partners and the people we serve. An offering during worship in May and a dinner concert in November included pictures and stories of Milot, and raised approximately \$8,500.
- Avondale is one of 135 host sites for Room in the Inn. Between December 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015, we hosted 225 homeless neighbors through the efforts of 300 volunteers giving 1,000 hours of service.
- Our partnership with Sedgfield Middle School continues to grow from Reading Buddies to students working in the Community Garden. Throughout the year, 20 Avondalers served a staff of 80 breakfasts and luncheons. Students participated in our Community Garden by planting and harvesting vegetables.
- In the summer, the Community Garden engaged in a partnership with Friendship Trays. There were 20 or more Avondalers who gathered, washed, and delivered the food.
- Work Camps continued to be a meaningful outreach for the Charlotte Community.
- Avondalers, young and old, remain committed to our Uptown Meal Ministry.
- Avondale joined the larger Presbyterian Church in four offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing, Joy Offering, Pentecost, and

Global & Peacemaking.

- Two events, Eggapoolza and the Journey to Bethlehem invited church members, Child Development Center families, and neighborhood families.

The Mission Ministry extends a heartfelt thank you to all those who have led Avondale to serve our neighbors while building relationships.

Our team is especially thankful for the gifts and talents of the Bowens, Chambers, and Meiers families. We are grateful for Sharon and Jim McCarthy's passion for our families in need of care. Lynn Wilkerson and longtime servants and new servants, your endless love for our neighbors gives us all witness of God's compassion. Cindy McKenzie and Robert Rogers have given new life to the Sedgefield partnership and for that we are appreciative.

Through God's grace we continue to move forward in faith.

1 Peter 4:10 *Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.*

## **Outreach**

### **Accomplishment:**

- Greeting guests at the Eggapoolza
- Engage Training Class
- 1001 New Community Discernment Team
- Members sharing faith messages at Saturday's basketball
- Nativity Journey

### **Vision for 2016:**

- Engage Training (perhaps as a Journey Group)
- New Membership Drive

## **Thanksgiving:**

I had the remarkable privilege of working with a marvelous group of people that contributed so very much. The energy abounded, and each and every member of the team needs to be commended for all the faithful services they provided. They have all taught me so much. I am truly blessed again and again.

Nancy Bohrer

## **Personnel**

### **2015 Annual Recap:**

- Staff members established goals and objectives for 2015.
- Conducted all staff member annual reviews in the same month as we moved to a merit-based pay process.
- Received the resignation from the church Administrative Coordinator, Ginny Mitchell.
- Developed job descriptions for Communications Coordinator and Clerical Receptionist to replace the Administrative Coordinator position.
- Conducted an extensive recruitment process to fill the two open positions. Successfully filled the positions with qualified and experienced candidates by December 2015.
- Supported the request to hire two individuals to serve as the CONNECT Summer Coordinator, a supervised ministry internship.
- Received the resignation from Parish Associate, Jane Summery-Mullennix.
- Hosted two congregational events to celebrate the gifts and talents of our departing staff members and to express gratitude for their years of service.
- Developed a Conflict Resolution Strategy to provide guidance to Personnel Ministry Team members and church leaders to address third-party conflict issues. Please refer to Appendix A for a complete copy.

## **2016 Tasks for Personnel Include:**

- Continue to streamline the staff review and merit-based pay process.
- Recruit a part-time janitor.
- Conduct staff annual reviews.
- Work with staff members to establish clear and measurable goals.
- Ensure job descriptions and goals are aligned with Avondale's vision.
- Establish a means of open communication with Session members.

Appreciation is extended to members of the Personnel Ministry Team for their faithful and diligent work this year. Team members: Kay Chelena, Debi Medlin, Jeff Meier, Patti Oswald, Bruce Vestal, and John Earl.

Kay Chelena, PMT Leader

## **Avondale Personnel Ministry Team Conflict Resolution Strategy (September 2015)**

Members of the Personnel Ministry Team ("PMT") and Session (together, "Leaders") occasionally find themselves in the position of hearing informal complaints from church members about personnel employed by the church. When this occurs, Leaders are put in an awkward position, as (i) attempting to act as an intermediary may backfire in the absence of specifics or first-hand knowledge of the facts, (ii) taking no action can be seen as being permissive of questionable behavior, and (iii) challenging the complainant can be seen as reflexively dismissing potentially legitimate concerns. As a result, the Personnel Committee recommends the following strategy going forward when Leaders find themselves in these situations:

- 1) Ask if the complainant has made his or her concerns known to the relevant employee.
  - a. If yes, ask what was said and what outcome occurred. If this is

an ongoing concern and attempts at remediation have failed, escalate the situation to the Personnel MT.

b. If not, proceed to step 2.

- 2) Ask the complainant if he or she is comfortable expressing his or her concerns to the relevant employee and reporting back.
  - a. If yes, thank the complainant and follow up if nothing is heard back within a few weeks.
  - b. If no, proceed to step 3.
- 3) Ask the complainant if he or she would be comfortable discussing this with the employee if you or another member of the Personnel MT is present.
  - a. If yes, proceed.
  - b. If no, proceed to step 4.
- 4) If the complainant is uncomfortable speaking about the issue with the employee alone or with a Leader, please communicate the basic contents of the complaint to the Personnel MT.

The Personnel MT will keep a log of all non-voiced complaints. To the extent that any employee accrues a number of non-voiced complaints, this information can be communicated to the employee as part of regular or ad-hoc performance reviews and/or included as a required area of improvement going forward.

## **Property**

Our aging property continues to be the focus of the Property Committee. Thanks to faithful giving to the facilities fund and contributions of time and resources by congregational members, we have been able to address the major issues in 2015.

- Window replacement in the Children's Center area, bell room, and along the breezeway to address lead abatement issues
- HVAC repairs throughout the campus, including a major repair to the Sanctuary HVAC
- Plumbing repairs in the Family Life Center
- Exterior light replacement along Fellowship Hall breezeway
- Sorting and tagging keys for all of the campus including a new

key box and checkout process

- New shelving in the Fellowship Hall and Family Life Center storage closets
- New stone benches in the Sacred Garden and courtyard

The congregational support on our spring and fall workdays is appreciated. The workdays are an opportunity to accomplish significant campus cleanup activities. They are always accompanied by great fellowship. Thanks particularly to the young members whose time and involvement with workday is so meaningful.

Looking forward, the contributions to the Facilities Fund and the dedication of time and talents by congregational members will continue to be important as we continue to address issues associated with an aging facility. The initial priorities for 2016 include addressing a leaking hot water tank in the Family Life Center, a major overhaul of door locking mechanisms and a campus-wide Wi-Fi upgrade.

Thanks to the commitment of the 2015 Property Committee members. Thanks to all congregational members for the continued vigilance in keeping up with our facilities. We welcome your support and recommendations. The committee is dedicated to the continued maintenance of the facilities that God has blessed us with here on Park Road.

Todd Oswald

## **Spiritual Growth**

2015 provided many opportunities for meaningful worship at Avondale.

Our Traditional Service held in the Sanctuary at 11:00 each week stands on the liturgy, hymns and creeds that have built the church throughout the ages. Through scripture, sermon, music, prayer and sacraments, we come together to renew our spirits, equipping us to build up the Body of Christ, and encouraging each other to do the same. Led by our clergy and choir, the traditions that have formed the very infrastructure which supports the church are celebrated each week.

ARISE continues to engage worshippers in a lively experience. Led by the ARISE Band, with texts, prayers and sermon visuals displayed on the screen, the service is held in the Family Life Center with seating in the round. Coffee and hot chocolate are served in the ante room and are available before, during and after the service.

We continued to celebrate Holy Communion the first Sunday of each month. We celebrated the 2015 Lenten Season with the theme of “A Time of Cross-Pondering” and the 2015 Advent Season with the theme of “Christmas in the Home”. We joined together as one body with four Festival Sundays– celebrating Creation on April 19, Re-Connect, Worldwide Communion Sunday and Christmas Sunday, enjoying the multitude of gifts and talents in our congregation via music, drama and art.

We express our deepest gratitude to the members of the Spiritual Growth Ministry Team for their faithful service with gifts in the way of communion set-up, enhancing our worship spaces and ensuring personnel needs are filled for our worship services.

Catherine Mitchell and Amanda Shanks, Co-Chairs

## **Stewardship**

The year 2015 was a bold one for the Stewardship Ministry Team in moving members of Avondale to a deeper understanding of building and caring for the Kingdom.

- The concept of the 5 W’s – Worship, Work, Witness, Wealth and World – were introduced to the congregation
- During both worship hours each week, the “Stewardship Moment” highlighted a personal story and/or emphasized an opportunity for stewardship growth (the 5 W’s) beyond dollars.
- The narrative budget, a new way of looking at financial giving, was introduced to show how ministries are supported with building and personnel.
- Stewardship efforts were shared with youth with recognition that youth (and children) are an important part of the Kingdom.

We sincerely appreciate the willingness of many to present the 5 W's during worship, highlighting the diversity of experiences and joys of stewardship. We also thank those who worked on the fall campaign, preparing and presenting the narrative budget and shepherding the process through the end of the year.

Going forward in 2016 and beyond, Stewardship will continue to be a primary focus as we move beyond Avondale in our strategic initiatives.

## **Avondale Music**



### **Adventure Choir**

“Worship isn’t just about singing loud, it’s living loud for our great God!”

Living loud for our great God, through singing, was how kindergarteners through fifth graders at Avondale shared their faith this year!

We presented the super-hero inspired spring musical, “The Agape League”!

A joyful week of singing took place during our summer Bible School!

Learning and singing Christmas hymns for worship was the focus of our fall/winter session!

Singing and signing during the Bethlehem Journey and caroling at Park Road shopping center were highlights of the Advent season!

We are busy preparing special music for Palm Sunday and we are already thinking about Bible School music. All children are invited to join us in the Adventure Choir!

Many thanks go to ...the parents who support our music program and lend their talents to help make our annual musical a special event... to Regina Love, Rich Stanley and the ARISE Band for joyfully including the children in worship music... to each and every one of you who come right up and tell our children that

their participation in worship was meaningful – it is impactful.  
We are so thankful to be singing with your children.  
Lynn Wilkerson and Eleanor Ramey

## **ARISE Band**

The ARISE Band has added three new members, new instruments and new styles of music.

The dedication and energy of the band remains strong and we are continuing to examine ways to enhance worship.

Additional church members have expressed interest in the band and recruiting will continue through the next year.

Thank you to all who served and continue to serve in the band, your gifts are greatly appreciated.

Rich Stanley, ARISE Worship Coordinator



## **AVONBELLERS**

### **Work of this year:**

- Practiced each week on Tuesday nights.
- Played in worship at least once a month (often more).
- Purchased more chimes so the members ring 5 octaves of handbells and 4 octaves of chimes.

### **Striving to live in Avondale's new vision statement:**

- Creating close relationships to support our faith as we gather to practice and ring in church.
- Developing and demonstrating a sustaining faith through the faithful service of ringing, some as many as 28 years.
- Enhancing worship with our ringing to prepare the hearts of the congregation to abide in Christ.

### **Future Goals:**

- Serve our neighbors and know them personally.

- Encourage others to join us as we serve Christ and others.

Nadja Sefcik-Earl

## **Sanctuary Choir and Youth Choir**

The music ministry of Avondale is varied and rich in talent. Our heritage of reformed worship is supported at the 11:00 service by the Sanctuary Choir. Their faithfulness was evident last year, singing every Sunday and special services. Men's Choir and Instrumentalists likewise gave of their talents. Handbells played and children sang out with joy.

We linked our music to special sermon series, the liturgical calendar and six Sundays of worshiping together as one congregation. These Unity Sundays and special occasion Sundays illustrated the vitality that our musical groups have when in collaboration.

The Sanctuary Choir is a group that has journeyed through many decades. It is a cornerstone of our church, and its sustainability will be ensured with new members. Recruitment is a priority issue for us, and we need those who will say "YES!" for the future.

Realizing the many talents within our Youth Fellowship, the Youth Choir was originated. They have the opportunity to show us a possible way to the future. They have participated in both services, learning different styles and musical techniques.

As we merge our musical resources towards one service, the future holds richness in Avondale's next chapter.

Regina G. Love, Director of Music/ Organist



## **Avondale Senior Adult Program (ASAP)**

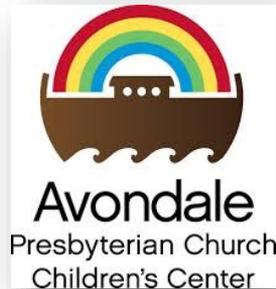
ASAP was established as a ministry opportunity for older adults. We seek to provide social activities, including meals and day trips; service activities such as our support for Sedgewild Middle School staff; learning situations like mission ministry topics and sharing opportunities for spiritual growth.

While our group of 40-50 participants are all Avondalers, the possibilities for outreach exist. We are active adults who have time and means to give to our community.

Our leadership team consists of John Earl, Betty Chambers, Brenda Coble, Stewart Farris, Sigrid Sacra, Connie Stout, Lyn Sweet, Leslie Saleeby and Caroline White.

## **Avondale Presbyterian Church Children's Center**

Greetings Avondale Community!



Avondale Children's Center has been a busy place this past year. As we leap headlong into the new year, there are just a few highlights that we wanted to share with our church community.

Our school was proud to continue the tradition started in the summer of 2014, of participating in the Vacation Bible School. This year, 2015, our bible camp experience was spectacular! Several of our classrooms were transformed into "Home-Town Nazareth" as we celebrated the theme "Jesus as a Boy". In addition to the 40 children that participated from our school, we had fifteen additional children, from the surrounding community, attending the preschool, week-long bible camp! This was a fantastic way to connect school, church and community, and we have already begun to make plans for 2016!

In October and November, we held two collaborative events with the Avondale Senior Adult Program. In October, A.S.A.P. and the center collaborated for an Art Auction and Halloween Read-Aloud event. The children created "refrigerator-art" pieces and displayed them in the Fellowship Hall. The senior's bid on these beautiful works of art, and the lucky highest bidders received original works of art from our students! Prior to the auction the students were invited to sit for a few Halloween-themed stories, read to them by members of the A.S.A.P. group. The event was very well attended and the children used the proceeds from the sale to purchase books for the center.

In November, we had another collaboration event in the Fellowship Hall. During this "Make a Joyful Noise" event, our oldest children sang to the elder group. The Munchkin Classroom, a group of three and four year olds, had been practicing their holiday songs for weeks prior to the event, and the children were delighted to share their voices with the senior group!

In December, the children's center got involved in the church's advent offerings. We collected mittens, hats, gloves and socks for the Uptown Meal Ministry and also did a book drive for books for the students at Sedgfield Middle School. Getting our families involved in this church-sponsored event, made this experience all the more meaningful. We hope to do more community outreach projects with the church in the future.

On March 23rd, I started my journey as the director of Avondale Children's Center where we serve a population of 76 children. I am so proud to be a part of this school and church community, and my mission moving forward is to find more opportunities for the church and school to work together. On behalf of Avondale's Staff, we wish you all a wondrous new year!

Peace and Blessings to all,  
Jessica McQuillen and Millie Norris, ACC Administrative Team



# Membership Overview

## Membership In Brief 2015

Three weddings took place at Avondale.

Two baby girls and two baby boys were born.

The Sacrament of Baptism was administered to five children.

Active Membership 12/31/2014	449
Adults welcomed into membership in 2015	+ 10
Youth welcomed into membership in 2015	0
Memberships Restored to Active	+ 2
Members Placed on the Inactive Role	- 11
Deaths	- 12
Memberships Transferred	- 6
Active Membership 12/31/2015	432

## Births 2015

Sena Rose Miller, March 2, 2015

Daughter of Ben and Renee Miller

John Maxwell Shanks, April 27, 2015

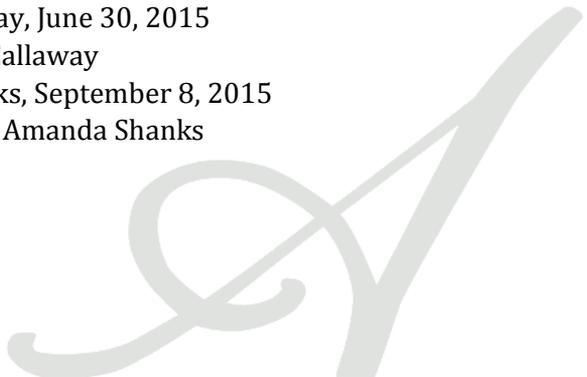
Son of Corey and Jessica Shanks

John Frederick Callaway, June 30, 2015

Son of John and Joy Callaway

Taylor Elizabeth Shanks, September 8, 2015

Daughter of Eric and Amanda Shanks



## **Baptisms 2015**

Jane Pearl Swart	April 12, 2015
Daughter of Chris and Katie Swart	
Sena Rose Miller	July 26, 2015
Daughter of Ben and Renee Miller	
Evelyn Claire Hautop	October 25, 2015
Daughter of Doug and Vicki Hautop	
Taylor Elizabeth Shanks	December 20, 2015
Daughter of Erica and Amanda Shanks	
John Maxwell Shanks	December 20, 2015
Son of Corey and Jessica Shanks	

## **In Memoriam 2015**

Edd Wolfe DeArmon	January 31, 2015
Margaret Phillips Ratchford	February 17, 2015
Lucile D. Robertson	March 22, 2015
Paul Murdoch Simpson	April 4, 2015
Lois Lange	April 8, 2015
Emily Jeanette Pettit Bearden	April 29, 2015
Margaret G. Winchester	April 29, 2015
Margaret Elizabeth Sawyer Parker	June 16, 2015
E. Diane Gunter	August 1, 2015
Eldon Earl Stout	October 30, 2015
Linda Willis	November 16, 2015
Mary "Polly" Ligon Hollingsworth	December 10, 2015

## **Marriages 2015**

Jodie N. Herrmann and Thomas T. Lawson	
	April 25, 2015
Robert Clay Parler and Megan Christina Savage	
	May 16, 2015
Kendel Page Todd and Charles (Chad) Joseph Parks	
	September 26, 2015

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

	2015 Actual	2016 Budget
Contributions	\$614,898	\$578,500
Rental/Other Income	13,879	11,000
Children's Ctr. Reimbursement	19,000	25,000
Family Life Ctr. Ministries	39,337	40,000
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$687,114</b>	<b>\$654,500</b>
Personnel	\$430,331	\$397,659
Property	143,563	132,560
Office Supplies/ Technology	20,146	21,250
Denominational Support	32,650	32,650
Ministry Teams	59,758	71,193
Family Life Ctr. Ministries	15,341	17,500
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$701,789</b>	<b>\$672,812</b>
<b>OPERATING LOSS</b>	<b>(\$14,675)</b>	<b>(\$18,312)</b>

### OTHER SELECT FINANCIAL DATA

(as of 12/31/2015):

Operating Cash & Investments (Unrestricted)	\$234,035
Total Endowment	\$555,838
Facilities Fund	\$43,507
Columbarium Fund	\$35,294



*Avondale*  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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