

LIBERTY

Church, PCA

He who
dwells in the shelter
of the Most High will abide
in the shadow of the Almighty.

Psalm 91:1, ESV

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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SHEPHERDING PASTOR

Change. Being creatures of habit we tend not to like change. Change can be disruptive, unnerving and cause anxiety. Yet, change is a fact of life. Anyone who has experienced Maryland weather knows how fast things can change!

This year our church family has seen a lot of changes with Pastor Russ's retirement and Pastor Nick's departure to a new work and our treasurer Cindy Watkins moving on to a new chapter in her life. With all transitions, there is uncertainty about what the future will bring, but thankfully, we know some things never change which gives us hope and confidence in times of change.

We have a solid hope in the unchanging, unfailing character of the Lord and His wonderful promises – promises like Matthew 16:18 in which the Lord declares, “... I will build My church and the gates of Hell cannot prevail against it” and Isaiah 55:11 where we learn that God’s Word does not “empty” and through it, the Lord “will accomplish what He desires and achieve the purpose for which” He “sent it.” And the promise of Phil 1:6 gives us encouragement in times of uncertainty and doubt gives us encouragement in times of uncertainty and doubt: be “confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus”. So we stand on solid ground when we stand on these precious promises.

In this time of change I am thankful for so many of you - our dedicated staff: Lisa Maddox, Chuck Mitchell and Susan Smith; and for our new staff: Phill and Kelly Thomas who have taken on the leadership of the youth ministry, and Mark Tucker as treasurer. I also greatly appreciate the support of the deacons and my fellow elders and all those who serve so faithfully in leading and maintaining the various ministries of the church.

As we embark together on a new teaching series on Ephesians, we see how important each member of the Body is to the healthy growth and vitality of the church. I appreciate all of you for your faithfulness in serving and supporting the ministry of the church through your gifts, your time and prayers. As you read these reports you will be blessed by how the Lord is using many within the Body to advance His Kingdom.

Grace and Peace,

Dr. Barry Cureton
Interim Senior Pastor

Philippians 1:15-23

SESSION

Shepherding the flock

This year has been a year of continuing transition as two of our pastors have left Liberty Church and a pulpit search committee was formed to search for a new senior pastor. We as a Session, and certainly the whole Church, have been praying for God's leading as we continue the important work of the church. We are grateful for Phil and Kelly Thomas who have stepped forward to become our new Youth Directors, and we anticipate a new treasurer in 2018 as Cindy Watkins is retiring from that position. God's Church continues despite any circumstances and we pray that our body will stay united during this continuing time of transition. God is indeed faithful and will lead us, as He has done for 48 years, since April of 1969. We look forward to seeing God work in the life of our Church over the next 48 years.

The Session would like to express its gratitude to our entire church staff and the congregation for all the hard work and all that was accomplished in 2017. We are thankful for a caring congregation, which is very evident in the various ministry reports. Please continue to keep Pastor Barry, the church staff, and all the church leaders in your prayers.

As you read through this annual report of Liberty Church, think about the various people you know in your small group, or your circle of contacts, or even those you sit near on Sunday morning. God has brought you in contact with them to support them in times of joy and hardship. Our ministries seek to build one another up, be it through knowledge in Sunday school, sharing a meal with those in need, or fellowship and sharing the gospel at social events. As you read through the annual reports ask yourself if God is calling you to reach out and participate in a new way.

During the past year the Session held 19 business meetings, which included quarterly meetings with the Deacons. Each of these meetings began with a season of prayer for various members of the congregation and we welcome any request for which you would like us to pray. We would likewise covet your prayers as we seek to be faithful shepherds of God's flock here at Liberty Church.

In 2017 we received 3 new members, and 2 were transferred to other PCA or Reformed churches. 4 of our members went to be with the Lord, and there were 3 baptisms. The Lord's Supper was celebrated 12 times.

Steve Bird

Clerk of the Session

DEACONS

Care of physical needs

Mercy Needs Committee

In 2017, the Mercy Needs Committee rejoiced in receiving many blessings, but were touched with sadness as well. As in years past, our work was well supported by your exuberant giving, and we sincerely thank all of you who gave to this ministry. One special blessing came last fall in seeing the large outpouring of funds raised by our church for hurricane victims in Florida, Texas and Puerto Rico.

In our local community, we were pleased to assist single mothers, those needing assistance with rent and food supplies, and prisoners needing assistance with clothing, toiletries, stamps and other necessities. Within the church body, members whose health needs impacted their ability to work were also assisted, and need-based financial support and counseling was provided to members struggling financially, or suffering emotional, physical or spiritual struggles.

This year, our congregational outreach ministries were continued, including sending 29 flower arrangements, mailing 81 cards and making 58 phone calls to people facing illnesses, hospital stays, or grieving the loss of loved ones. Also, 102 cards and letters were sent out to those in need of support and encouragement.

In service to our surrounding community, our *Food Pantry* regularly distributed groceries to folks outside the body, while also providing information on local supportive agencies and church brochures. Our pantry is always available to members and regular attendees who are in need. Sally Preece continued in managing, and was assisted by Denise Madden. Thanks to your donations, our pantry was kept well-stocked throughout the year.

Several of your monthly Mercy Needs offerings were designated for support of outside ministries:

May: \$1,505 – PCA Compassion Fund

June: \$652 – PCA Ministerial Relief Fund (for retired pastors and widows of pastors)

September: \$3,286 – Missions to the World (MTW), Mission to North America (MNA), Texas hurricane relief

October: \$581 – MTW/MNA, Florida hurricane relief

November: \$1,646 – MTW/MNA, Puerto Rico hurricane relief

The *Merry Martha Ministry* was thankful for the opportunity to provide 48 meals this year for those in the congregation who faced limitations due to illness, injury, surgery, birth of a baby, job loss, loss of a loved one, etc. They also kept two meals in the freezer to be used at the pastoral staff's discretion. Functioning as six teams, each responsible for two months of the year, they had 43 members serving as of December. If anyone is aware of a meal need in the congregation, please contact the church office or Debbie Stetson.

The *Friends of Liberty* list of widows, widowers, single parents, and others in special circumstances, and a listing of our unemployed and underemployed members were prayerfully reviewed, updated and lifted up each month. Most importantly, prayers were offered at each meeting with thanksgiving, worship and requests to God for each person reached out to by our committee.

The sadness we experienced was the departure of three long-serving members of the committee, Doug and Sandy Womer and Joe Leeds. Their presence and spirit is missed by those of us remaining on the committee. We were fortunate to have three others added to the committee.

In the coming year, we plan to update our procedures and literature for food pantry distributions. We hope to re-establish a mechanism to share our faith in the Lord and the gospel message with pantry recipients. We are also excited by new and ongoing mercy-related ministries in our church including the Fill My Cup Ministry, Open Hearts Ministry, and Liberty's benefit concerts.

We encourage the congregation to bring to the attention of any committee member, (Mary Ellen Gannon, Sandy Sunderland, Michael Anderson, Linda Anderson, Jeff Jordan, Mark Fuhrer) any opportunity they see within the body that our committee may address. It is our earnest wish that the Mercy Needs Ministry will bring Glory to our Lord and further His Kingdom. We covet your prayers and support knowing that we are insufficient and He is all sufficient.

Submitted by Jeff Jordan, Acting Chairman, Mercy Needs Committee



Property Management Committee

Three main projects were completed this year. Bat removal, the separate septic issue for the Mission's house and the choir loft modification. General maintenance of the church property was performed. The Property Management Committee is very grateful for the gifts of the body that are used at Liberty. We look forward to serving you in the upcoming year. Many thanks to the committee members: Ben Weinreich, Chris Bird, Chris Reiblich, Kurt Reiblich, Todd Weitzel, Shawn Huey, Luke Weinreich, Mike Tucker and Nye Hammer.

In Him,
Tom Crone
Property Committee Chairman



Financial Management Committee

As of this writing the final numbers for the church are still in process. Final reports will be given sometime in mid January when the final reconciliation of all accounts is completed. In general 2017 proved to be a year where some unexpected expenses did occur and of course were expensed within the year offsetting our income. It was a year though where tithes and offerings, with some ebb and flow, stayed within the budgeted requirements. In the fall of this year the church did receive additional income as a result of logging the property. This helped balance expenses realized during the year. Also expenses were diminished somewhat by the youth pastor position being vacated.

This was Cindy Watkins last year as treasurer. We thank Cindy for her faithful service. Mike Tucker will be the new treasurer starting January 1, 2018.

As always we as a committee ask for your prayers and input as we seek to use those funds given by God's people for the building up of His kingdom. As committee chairmen I would like to thank my fellow committee members for their diligence and commitment. I would also like to thank the office staff, the counting teams and those who deal with the financial business of the church on a weekly and sometimes daily basis.

In His Service

MUSIC & WORSHIP

It has been said that the highest calling for man is the worship of the true and living God, our Lord, Jesus Christ. In the year just ended, Music & Worship activities here at Liberty continued to be designed with God's glory as our highest priority. The ongoing worship leadership of the Choir and the Praise Team continued from week to week with our eclectic approach to music, that is to say, that a wide variety of compositions and styles were represented. Taking into account the soloists who volunteered throughout the year, the variety broadens even more.

The Praise Team (and I'm sure it's true for our keyboardists as well) are grateful to the Lord for the new and improved space in the front of the Sanctuary, provided by the efforts of both members and our deacons. This new separate space, with wires out of the way, is a safer and more efficient position from which to minister and lead during worship and other special events.

The Choir saw the Lord answer prayer over concerns about our declining numbers with the addition of new singers! Although we're still asking the Lord to increase our numbers, the Choir remains a potent musical ensemble with the ability to glorify our Savior with many different musical textures!

Regarding special events, the Music & Worship Committee extends its thanks to the Lord for all who participated in singing, playing or supporting our 2017 Christmas Benefit Concert by operating sound, baking, serving refreshments, ushering, creating a program, and many other tasks!

For 2018, while the weekly worship roles of the Choir and the Praise Team will continue, we're looking forward to what the Lord will lead us to do for His praise & glory!

Ron & Susan Smith
Music & Worship Committee

MEN'S MINISTRY

Baltimore Rescue Mission Outreach



The monthly men's outreach to the Baltimore Rescue Mission is one of Liberty's charter ministries. For 30 years on the 3rd Saturday every month a group of Liberty men visit the Baltimore Rescue Mission for a service of prayer, reading God's Word, singing hymns, and sharing short messages. The central purpose of the Mission remains unchanged: "to proclaim the unsearchable riches of the Lord Jesus Christ and to seek the salvation of the lost."

During the past year three teams were led by Don Pahl, Chuck Mitchell and Jeff Watkins, with each team traveling once per quarter departing at 7pm and returning by 10pm. We sincerely thank the men who have given of their time and talents during 2017. Every month gospel seeds are being planted and watered - and we know the Lord is faithful and will provide the increase.

Volunteers for 2018 are needed. If you would like to serve but cannot commit to attending every quarter, your attendance would be welcomed whenever your Saturday evening schedule allows. This is an ideal way for Liberty's men – whether teenage, middle age or AARP age – to connect with each other and advance God's kingdom. No one is ever required to speak unless they want to and transportation is always provided from the church. For additional information, please contact Jeff Watkins at jefferydeanwatkins@gmail.com or 410-402-0250.

Mark 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

MISSIONS

Serving Local, National and Foreign Missions

The committee meets monthly to pray for our missionaries as well as carry out any business relating to missions such as planning for quarterly speakers for Sunday School, plan a missions weekend, respond to the needs of the missionaries we support, and disperse available funds for those needing additional gifts throughout the year. We currently support 17 foreign missionaries as well as 23 national and local organizations.

The Mission House

We have been blessed with a house on our property that we use for our missionaries who are on home assignment. Since there were no requests to use the house in 2017, Pastor Russ and Donna were able to stay there on the weekends when they came to Liberty to minister and Russ to preach.

Visiting Missionaries

The following missionaries were able to be with us in 2017 and share how the Lord is working in their lives as well as update us on happenings in their ministries.

Steve & Beth Brunson who were going to Guam to serve with Trans World Radio.

Tom & Cindy Homans who are working with the Community Center in Baltimore.

Ben Weinreich who went with Serge Ministries to Southern Chile to serve on a building project.

Representatives from Young Life in both Baltimore and Carroll Counties

Hannah Cate, who was raising support to serve in China, teaching English as a second language.

Eric & Anna Graham who were raising support to go to Bogota, Colombia to serve with Next, a ministry of MTW.

Missions Budget

Because of an increase in the mission budget, the committee was able to increase support to all of our missionaries serving with MTW and Campus Ministries. The 2018 budget has been increased some more, so beginning this year we are able to increase the other missionaries we support. We were also able to help Hannah Cate with her trip to China and Ben Weinreich with his trip to Chile.

Committee Members

We thank the following members for serving so faithfully on the Committee: Barb Hunzeker, Joyce Klein, Chuck Klein, Elaine Cullen, Nancy Helm, Catherine Scheuch, Barbara McKay, Hannah Cate and Ben Weinreich.

Goals for 2018

To make the body at Liberty more aware of the missionaries we support and what they are doing at the present time.
To work with Ben Weinreich as he plans 4 short term missions trips in 2018

To welcome Chris and Victoria Cox and their family to our mission house this summer. They are currently serving in Cambodia and plan to be with us for a year.

We also praise God for His provisions and thank the congregation for their support of the missions program at Liberty. Please continue to pray for our Missionaries, and the Missions program at Liberty.

Submitted by Barbara Hunzeker, Missions Committee Chairperson

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

LADIES: Linda Runkles started the year finishing up her study "Praying the Names of God" using Ann Spangler's book. After that the Ladies were again blessed with Linda's teaching by studying Genesis chapters 1 through 11. Following that Linda led the ladies in a study of the book of Hebrews during the Summer. Since then there was no ladies class due to lack of anyone volunteering, for various reasons, their time to teach.

SO...if there's any interest in resuming the Ladies Class then please step up and let me know what you'd like to teach!

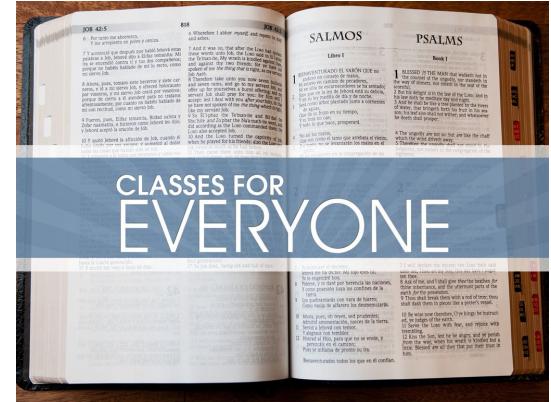
Mixed Adult Class: Charlie Cate took up the mantle again this year by teaching through Ecclesiastes and Colossians which has continued into this new year. Earlier in the year the book of Romans led by Charlie and Steve Madden was studied and completed.

Youth and Adult Summer Class: Taught by Pastor Nick and Glenn Cote, the class dove into 1the book of Acts.

Howard Hill: Led a study on the book of Nehemiah and also then led a study on 1st and 2nd Peter which has continued into this new year.

Leadership Training Class: Pastor Barry's ongoing leadership training class covered such topics as the Book of Church Order and the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Submitted by: RE Steve Madden, Christian Education Chairperson



CHRISTIAN SERVICE BRIGADE

Christian Service Brigade (CSB) at Liberty Church, PCA continued into its twenty first year. CSB is an organization for boys designed to instill Christian teaching and discipline through achievement, Bible-teaching, physical activities, and service activities. CSB is made up of three age groups: Tadpoles/Tree Climbers, ages 4 through 7; Stockade, boys in grades 3 through 6, and Battalion, grades 7 through 12.

January leadership for Stockade was Chris Byrd, Nye Hammer and Jonathan Goedeke. In the fall leadership included Chris Byrd and Nye Hammer. This year our focus has been on learning outdoor skills. The Stockaders look forward to crafting their rockets and shape and race cars and competing in our church and regional competitions. We would appreciate your support by attending our race and perhaps volunteering as a shape judge. We are very thankful that so many boys and their Dads are participating in Stockade this year.

Battalion was lead in January by Nick Hathaway assisted by 3 Lieutenants. In October, with the departure of Nick

Hathaway, the Captain duty was assumed by Karl Johnsson for the balance of the year. The battalion had 7 active guys during the 2017 year. The Battalion activities are planned to instill leadership qualities.

The highlight this spring was Camp-O-Rama at Camp Hemlock where the boys came in second place in overall competition. Also, a campout and Bike Ride on the C&O tow path to DC from Marsden Tract. This fall it was a Campout and short Backpack Hike on the church property. Study subjects for the weekly meetings have included "how to instruction" in; getting a first job, studying, bible study and leading a bible study, grilling, Backpacking and financial management. The Battalion also was able to send the Sergeant and one Lieutenant to Leadership training at Camp Hemlock in September. The Battalion participates in service projects.

God instructs believing men to train and build up their sons in the Lord through many different means. CSB is a means towards that end. The boys, young men and leaders of CSB are thankful for your support.

In His Service,

James Helm, Chairman

OPEN HEARTS MINISTRY

Serving others in foster care, adoption, and vulnerable families

God blessed the Open Hearts ministry this year by the Church serving children and families in foster care in Carroll and Baltimore Counties. In March 2017, we set up an information board to share ways the congregation can volunteer in the community through Safe Families, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), Baltimore and Carroll County Departments of Social Services, as well as sponsorship opportunities with Compassion International. In May 2017, Erin Tracht attended the Christian Alliance for Orphans conference, where organizations and ministries from across the nation and world came together to discuss how to encourage the Church to answer the call to serve orphans. Later in May, the artists of Liberty Church designed duffle bags for children who initially come into foster care in Baltimore County. Others donated items to fill the duffle bags, such as pajamas, stuffed animals, and toiletries. In July, many donated furniture and toys to refresh the children's waiting room at Baltimore County Circuit Court (where children in care wait sometimes many hours to see the Judge for their court hearings). We deep cleaned and put up stencils to make the room more inviting. For Orphan Sunday on November 12th, we had an awareness presentation during the church service. Bryant and Becky Loomis (a Safe Families support and host family), Russ and Donna Sukhia (respite care providers), and Michael and Linda Anderson (foster and adoptive parents) all shared of their experiences with serving children in care or who were at risk of entering the foster care system. Finally, in December, the congregation served teens at The Children's Home in Catonsville, by donating and filling stockings with gifts and necessities. We then served with the youth group to have a Christmas party on their campus. We enjoyed hot chocolate and baked goods donated by the congregation. The kids connected through playing games led by the youth group leaders in the gym.



Looking forward into 2018, Open Hearts hopes to continue raising awareness of the dire need for vulnerable families and for children in the foster care system. We hope to continue to work with Safe Families to train members of the congregation in the many roles within their program. We also hope to bless the Carroll County Department of Social Services by creating wall art and donating furniture to refresh their visitation room (where children have visits with their biological families at DSS). To address the risk of children being placed into the system, we hope to complete the “Blessings Closet”, using a space under the stairs to the Old Sanctuary. We have already collected clothing and toys that we can use for families in need; we want to the Blessings Closet to work similarly to how the Food Pantry at Liberty works. We plan to collaborate with the Mercy Needs committee for this purpose. Open Hearts hopes to also work with the youth group to plan a Parents Night Out event, where the teens provide childcare so parents can enjoy a night out to reconnect, and encourage strengthening marriages.

We are blessed by the outpouring of support for this ministry and know that the Holy Spirit is working in the hearts of our church body, to love as God has called us to love.



