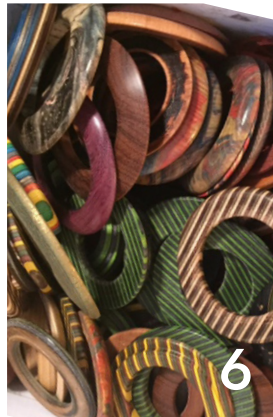


SACRED SPACE

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FEATURES

- 3 SABBATICAL:**
Rev. Catherine E. Foster, Associate Pastor
Mission & Adult Discipleship
- 5 CONNECTIONS MINISTRY:**
Member to Member
- 6 MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:**
Jim Hutchinson A Craftman's Legacy
- 7 ALTERNATIVE GIFT MARKET:**
Member Debbie Adams Shares the
History and Last Year's Success



ON THE COVER

Reverend Catherine E. Foster, Associate Pastor for Mission and Adult Discipleship faithfully leads during a worship service for Shallowford Presbyterian Church.

SABBATICAL

Submitted by Sue Ellen Williams, SPC Member

When you hear this word [sabbatical], what is your first reaction? You likely know it means someone is going to take time away for education or reflection. At Shallowford after seven years of service, ordained staff members are advised to take up to 12 weeks leave. **In 2021-2022, a sabbatical is going to happen here at Shallowford for Rev. Catherine E. Foster, Associate Pastor for Mission & Discipleship. The Shallowford session has voted to support Catherine in her upcoming plans and to uplift her different take on how her “12 weeks” will take shape.**

In lieu of a sabbatical, Catherine requested that Shallowford invest in her pursuit of a Master of Business Administration over the next two years. Rather than taking time away, she will continue with her ministry and stay connected to her Christian Education and missions' networks.

“I am very excited to support Catherine in her MBA studies, and I am proud of her for coming up with such a creative forward looking way to use funds in lieu of a traditional sabbatical in these pandemic days,” said Senior Pastor Reverend Anna George Traynham. “I finished my MBA in 2019,” Anna added, “and I am passionate about the intersection of ministry and administration as we seek to follow Jesus and lead the church in an ever-changing world.”

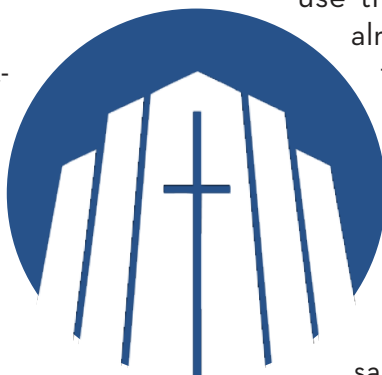
Mark Shaffer, Chair of the Personnel Committee, brought Catherine's proposal to the Session.

“Catherine came up with the creative solution of channeling the funding that would have been used for her sabbatical towards MBA studies. Our SPC community, mission partners and Catherine personally will all benefit from the knowledge and experience she will gain from MBA coursework.”

The Personnel budget will include \$3,000 for 2021 and \$3,000 for 2022 which is consistent with past sabbatical investments. Catherine will also be able to use the \$2,750 continuing education funds already allotted for 2021 and \$2,750 in 2022 towards her MBA. The Personnel Committee endorsed the proposal and presented it to the session where it was approved.

Carolyn Carl, member of personnel, points out that we are providing the same support as we would for a typical sabbatical, “We are deeply grateful for Catherine's seven years of dedicated leadership as our associate pastor of mission and discipleship and honor her service. We are excited for Catherine and her creative approach. With the pandemic and limitations on conferences and in person activities,” adds Carl, “this innovative approach is a win-win.”

So, it's the best of both worlds for us here at SPC. Catherine stays active and present during her sabbatical as she pursues her MBA, and ultimately everyone benefits. Let's look at her response to the following questions:





Q&A

with Reverend Foster

Q: Catherine, knowing your innovative spirit and energy, it comes as no surprise that your sabbatical will take a different form. Can you share how and why you came up with this plan?

A: “The Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment indicates that my top five strengths are achiever, input, intellection, learner, and connectedness. So, along with working hard and relating to people, what makes me tick and brings me joy is learning.”

Q: You have decided not to pursue a Doctorate of Ministry but rather an MBA which seems untraditional. Can you tell us why?

A: “After much thought which ultimately led to setting the DMin aside, I began to look at my skill sets and at what other skills might help me in my ministry. Every day I manage volunteers, classes, and mission projects which require fluency in spreadsheets and budgeting along with marketing. I can more effectively engage Shallowford’s volunteers, serve our mission partners, and advance our ministries if I can build these competencies. All this pointed to the value of pursuing a Master of Business Administration.”

Q: So, in lieu of the traditional sabbatical, will you explain how that time will be spent?

A: “Deciding that the MBA is the right degree for me, I will be pursuing this in 2021 and 2022. I asked that Shallowford provide financial support over the next two years at a cost comparable to a three-month sabbatical, pairing a sabbatical cost with my continuing education budget.”

Q: How will you make this work? And what does this mean for Shallowford?

A: “I will not take an “away” sabbatical, but rather maintain my current ministry. Most online programs are intended for full-time professionals so I will be able to perform my regular responsibilities. The yearly structure of MBA programs should have few conflicts with my regular activities. I hope to be able to invest what I learn into Shallowford, and this flexible schedule enables me to continue my existing Christian Education and mission activities. In addition, the church and staff will have no disruption nor will they have to transition my roles to others.”

CONNECTIONS MINISTRY

MEMBER TO MEMBER

Sometimes what we need most in life is to feel connected to someone or something. So, we become part of a group or a church. We make phone calls or go to events. We are in book clubs or running groups or men's breakfasts. Experiencing a disconnect or feeling really isolated makes the need for connection real. There are places in our hearts that simply seek to be filled.

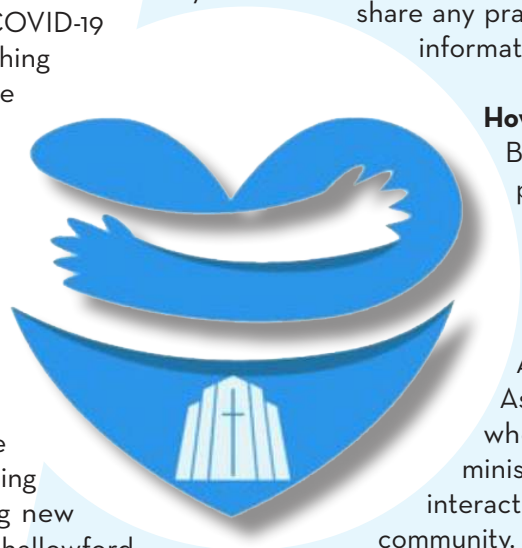
When COVID-19 brought our physical gatherings to a halt, a hiatus which left many isolated, a need was identified by Julie Burkhard and Bob Smithers for the Shallowford family to stay connected. Out of this need, the COVID-19 Call Center was born, focusing on reaching out to at home members to see if there were special needs or requests. With the meaningful success of the Call Center outreach, the question became "why not connect to all households in our church?"

Sherry Cross, the COVID-19 Call Center spreadsheet mastermind, feels that there was a lot more to the call center than just picking up the phone. "We quickly realized that, in addition to checking in on each other, we were discovering new friendships and connections with our Shallowford family." She adds that the group wanted the same thing for the larger church membership. "We want to know more about our Shallowford family", adds Sherry, "to bring us closer in a stronger, richer relationship."

This April, Shallowford will launch Connections Ministry, an idea originated from the special meaning found through the call center. Connections leaders Sherry Cross, Kyle Kilch, Ruth Gronde and Bob Smithers have recruited 30 Shallowford members. These connectors will reach out to 15 households twice a year. Bob Smithers reflects, "During

a pandemic or more healthy times, I want our members to feel that even if they cannot get to church, they are still very much a part of our community, our Shallowford family."

The first question they will ask is "how are you and what do you need from Shallowford? They'll give you space to share any prayer requests or update any contact information.



HOW WILL IT WORK?

STEP 1

YOU'LL RECEIVE A POSTCARD IN THE MAIL FROM YOUR CONNECTOR!

STEP 2

YOUR CONNECTOR WILL REACH OUT TO YOU VIA PHONE CALL, TEXT, EMAIL, OR IN PERSON.

STEP 3

YOU RESPOND AND "CONNECT"!

How will this benefit us in the long term?

By having our connectors tracking the progress of these connections, we'll be able to ensure over time that no member gets lost as our church continues to thrive and grow!

According to Rev. Bradley Kibler, Associate Pastor for Youth & Programs, who is overseeing this ministry, "This ministry will provide a cross-generational interaction as we share God's love and foster community. In addition, we will engage volunteers in meaningful ways which allow them to use their spiritual gifts of relationship building and communications as we connect with our entire church. We are excited for this new opportunity to engage our mission statement of "inviting". Bob Smithers likened this Connections Ministry to the concept of the Farthest Pew where we cultivate relationships and foster community.

Members of Shallowford, you may feel your pew is far away but it is much closer than you realize. Shallowford worships and Shallowford prays. As a church we Zoom, eat, step, and continue to connect.

JIM HUTCHINSON: A CRAFTSMAN'S LEGACY

Submitted by Denise Webber



Jim Hutchinson made a substantial contribution to the Prayer Shawl Ministry for years.

The idea for a prayer shawl fastener came from Jim, when he saw one in a wood turning magazine in 2014. He came to me asking about the dimensions of our shawls, which come in all sizes, with most being generously wrapped around an individual. He suggested the fasteners as a way of anchoring the shawl around someone. He brought me a box of prototypes to think about. The circles and pins he had

made were without paint or stain or other adornment and they were beautiful. He offered to make the fasteners for the shawls that were given away by the ministry, and I accepted his offer. **When we asked Jim how he became interested in wood work, he wrote:**

"My artistic wife, Mickey, was at one time an active wood carver. One of the men in that group also was also a woodturner, and took me to a demonstration offered by the woodturning club. That stimulated my interest more than wood carving, resulting in my purchasing a machine, called a lathe, and also becoming a very active member of that club. Mostly I had turned wooden bowls, but happened to read an article in a woodturning magazine about someone who turned prayer shawl fasteners, so I gave it a try. Mickey liked it, so I asked Denise Webber, who chairs our SPC shawl ministry, if she thought it might be something they could give to recipients of the

shawls? She said yes, and it grew from there."

It did not take long for both shawl recipients and crafters to graciously admire and accept Jim's beautiful work. In time, Jim began to experiment with different decorative wood, paint and gems as enhancements to his fasteners. I was able to coordinate the different colored shawls with a contrasting fastener. Jim would give me a small group of fasteners at a time and would resupply my stash when I ran out. His fasteners made our shawls look good.

Jim faithfully kept the ministry supplied with fasteners until now. I never kept track of how many he made but I have received all he has made and will use them until the supply is exhausted. His work has been consistently beautiful, colorful and creative, and provided the function of a closure for the shawls. **Jim's passion turned into a hobby, one that benefitted Shallowford and beyond:**

"The fasteners offer an element of nature to the lovely shawls our super knitters create. To me, it is gratifying to know that I have a small part in an SPC ministry that brings comfort to many at a very challenging time in their lives. This ministry allows our church to have a visible and tangible item to bring Christ, Christianity, and Shallowford to people far and near."

This year Jim decided to put this wood turning skill aside, something that only he would know. **The Prayer Shawl Ministry will always be grateful to Jim for his time and talent which he so freely gave to this ministry and to this church.** It has been a joy and a blessing to work alongside Jim in this ministry.





Alternative Giving Market

DEBBIE ADAMS SHARES THE HISTORY AND LAST YEAR'S SUCCESS

The definition for an Alternative Giving opportunity on the PC-USA Presbyterian Mission web page states: *An opportunity for people to support nonprofit, cause based work with ministries that support clean water, agriculture, or relief and assistance projects, and when doing so, honor friends and family.*

Alternative gifts are signs of our gratitude for God's grace that move us to join with ministries of love and justice, reconciliation and peace. These gifts support ministries that feed the hungry, comfort the broken-hearted, and reach out into our community to share our faith with young and old.

I love history and learning how events, people, or places developed over time. When our family joined Shallowford in 1995, the Benevolence Market (precursor to Alternative giving) was already in place, the vision of members Suzanne Ginn and supporters. In those days, representatives for the supported missions, and sometimes an actual mission representative, would gather at Shallowford for one or two Sundays in December to share first-hand their work in our neighborhood. One on one discussions occurred, pamphlets shared and surely a table or two offered candy to lure you over. Those "mission Sundays" were very powerful.

Over time, with so many members working outside of the home and raising families, the large-scale market place adapted and became an information hub in the atrium outside of the Great Hall. Church volunteers welcomed questions and engaged in conversations about Shallowford's many mission partners. Members continued to give and receive their Alternative Gifting cards to send to friends and family. Because my extended family has more adults than children, this has become my preferred gift giving alternative.

In 2020, Nancy Anderson handed the reigns for Alternative Giving to me, who, in turn, took them from Martha Rosselot in 2016. As we all have experienced, 2020 brought COVID-19 and big challenges. Our talented staff (in particular, Catherine Foster, Rebecca Porter, and Sara Hinton) quickly came together and, using their talents, made the

www.shallowford.org

WHY DO SHALLOWFORD MEMBERS MAKE ALTERNATIVE GIFTS?

TIMELESSNESS - impact goes beyond the season or year. The families and communities that receive our gifts might benefit for a lifetime.

UNIVERSALLY APPRECIATED - engage in intentional gift giving with no concern about "will my gift be used or liked."

LESS STUFF ON HOLIDAYS - friends and family focus on the true meaning of Christmas.

LEGACY - start a family tradition of alternative gift giving knowing recipients will appreciate the good works done in their name.

COMMUNITY - provide an opportunity to connect others with Shallowford's mission partners.

Mission Ministry (contd.)

online year-round giving opportunity a reality as part of "Shallowford 365."

As a mission team member, I cannot thank them enough for helping to get the message out with the quick development on our new online alternative giving webpage.

The effects of this pandemic on our ten mission partners has been devastating. With the leadership of Shallowford's Mission Committee, we brainstormed the idea of offering Shallowford matching funds. **Members came through with alternative giving totaling \$43,256.** This giving, plus a one-time "matching gift" from the church capped at \$25,000, were made possible by the generosity and faithfulness of our church community who maintained their financial commitment during a tough year. That faithfulness, coupled with our forgivable Paycheck Protection Program loan and our fast-acting finance committee made the matching gift possible.

It truly takes a community to make things happen and I am grateful for my SPC family!



PAY IT FORWARD

Many of you have asked how you can continue to support Shallowford's mission partners after the seasonal Alternative Giving Market ends each December. **We invite you to visit our new webpage and consider making a gift today!**

GIVE ONLINE

Browse Logos to Donate



Thornwell



Shalom
International
Ministry



Presbyterian
Disaster Assistance



NETWorks
Cooperative
Ministries



Memorial Drive
Ministries



LaGonave Haiti
Partners



LaAmistad



Habitat for
Humanity



Shallowford Food
Pantry



Decatur
Cooperative
Ministry



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Rev. Anna George Traynham
Rebecca Porter

Sunday Morning Worship
Sunday School Hour

8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.
9:30 - 10:30 a.m.



STAY CONNECTED!

