



An Interview with our New Staff Member Liz Wagner

Title: Director of Finance

Experience: Liz has spent 30 years of her career as an accountant in the financial world. She holds an accounting degree from UNC Charlotte.

She also is ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA) since 2014 and has served churches in Arkansas and Ohio.

Though she is not serving in that capacity at Wayne Presbyterian Church, she brings a unique perspective to the work of financial oversight.

Casey sat down with her and interviewed her:

About her family: Liz has been married to Jim Wagner for 35 years. They have two sons, Karl and Eric, who both live in Philadelphia on the same street as Liz and her husband. (Jim works at the Presbytery of Philadelphia as the Business Administrator.)

Do you have a favorite memory of church? “One of my favorite memories was singing Mozart’s Requiem at Myers Park Presbyterian and it was when we were still doing the requiems on a Sunday evening on All Saints Day. There was just a special moment when the orchestra and the choir just synced and it was just a magical musical movement.

Sunlight was dappling the stained glass windows and it was just like ‘Yes!’

“Another one I was on a Reformation tour in Geneva and we were worshipping in Jean Calvin’s church and everything was in French, and I don’t speak French but they closed the service with Widor’s Toccata.... To be sitting in Geneva and worshipping in a language I didn’t understand and then to hear the universal language of music was just fantastic.”

How will your experience as a pastor shape how you do this job? She replied that her job as a pastor will help her remember why she is doing what she is doing. She can help the church be the best steward of what it has received. She said, “The church has been blessed with gifts to implement the kingdom and I can help them make sure they are doing the best work they can do with that. I understand our mission.... It’s implementing God’s reign.”

Favorite travel destination spot? She would like to tour Scotland. She has been to Hungary five times and absolutely loves Central Europe.

Any special hobbies? Reading and knitting. Used to garden but is in a walkup now without the space. Her children would describe her as a professional student.

Do you have a favorite book? Liz likes murder mysteries and she just discovered Anthony Horowitz. But a favorite book is Fifth Life of the Catwoman by Kathleen Dexter.

144 YEARS OF HOPE AND HEALING PRESBYTERIAN CHILDREN'S VILLAGE BECOMES "GEMMA SERVICES" A NEW VISION BY JANE BEATTY

In the early 2000s, the Village (Presbyterian Children's Village) had transitioned to an all-girls population at the Rosemont campus. The Village continued to provide a wide range of family services at the Preheim Center in Southwest Philadelphia – the community it had served since the 1880s. As one mother phrased it, "I thank God for where we are because of the help [the Village] provided in an ever-worsening troubled family."



The Preheim Center at 6517 Chester Avenue continues to provide a wide range of family services in Southwest Philadelphia – where the Village has focused its activities since the 1880s. The Gemma Services programs – both in-home and at Preheim - are aimed at

developing strong, viable families, protecting at-risk children, and avoiding out-of-home placement into foster care.

Just as no one could have foreseen in 1878 or 2000 what changes lay ahead, in 2019, after considerable research and heartrending reflection, the Board decided to merge the Village with Silver Springs - Martin Luther School of Plymouth Meeting PA. The latter was founded as the Germantown Orphanage by Lutheran Women in 1859, just before the Civil War. Like the Village, Silver Springs has a residential program, but with a school on campus. Like the Village, it also affords a community-based program – theirs focused on Germantown.

The two organizations also dealt with different age groups: Silver Springs treats 6- to 14-year-olds, and the Village with 13-18-year-old youth.



Children at the Germantown Orphan's Home pictured in the 1880s. The Home, founded in 1859 by Lutheran women, merged with the Martin Luther School and moved to the Silver Springs Farm in Plymouth Meeting in 1972. Two years ago it combined

with the Village to form "Gemma Services" which will sustain the vital support of children and families in the Philadelphia area.

The decision's ramifications are both significant and

promising: The new name for the combined institution is Gemma. In nature, Gemma means a young plant that thrives independently; in Italian, it is something precious, like a gem. The Village residential program in Rosemont has been closed and the campus will be sold.

The Silver Springs campus will serve the public in the Germantown area. The Preheim Center in Southwest Philadelphia will remain Gemma's base in that locale to provide prevention and protection programs to help ensure the wellbeing of children and families. These services – with both in-home case-management and activities at the Center - aim at strengthening and stabilizing families and avoiding out-of-home placement into foster care. Workshop topics focus on child development, healthy relationships, and strategies to strengthen the family unit. Childcare, tokens, and food are provided.



The merger of the Village with Silver Springs – Martin Luther School in 2019 to form Gemma Services enabled expanded community outreach from the Preheim Center in Southwest Phila. Here, Gemma team members provide a behavioral health information table

and screening event at a Parent Resource Day at nearby John Bartram High School in partnership with Healthy Minds Philly.

Underpinning the Silver Springs-the Village merger are the two institutions' similar values, goals, and programming. Practically, the merger will make it possible for both to pool childcare expertise and to continue financially stable into the future. Kristen Gay, former CEO of Silver Springs, now President and CEO of Gemma, looks forward to Gemma exploring new ways to provide psychiatric residential treatment care to youth in small home-like community settings, as well as new ways to help struggling families and children in their homes in Southwest Philadelphia. Recently Kristin learned that Gemma has received state permission to expand Martin Luther from a K-8 school to full high school grade 12.

Consider the impact those 30 Presbyterian women have had on thousands of orphans, troubled children, youth, and their families over the last 144 years – in large part because of those women's wisdom, compassion, time, and talent.

But it the Village's contribution to society is also due to the passion of hundreds of other volunteers who followed them as directors and as members of the Village Church Relations Council. Notable in this group were Wayne Presbyterian's

Debbie Vogel, Elisabeth Slate, Ruth Murphy, and Lindsay Belzer. Lindsay is a current Wayne representative on the Gemma council and Elisabeth is on the new joint Board of Directors. Gemma will continue to need the consistent and generous financial and hands-on support that our Wayne Church has generously given over many, many years.

The thousands of children helped by the two merged – for over 162 years in the case of Silver Springs. From a spiritual standpoint, these children were all our children. This view is captured very well in the words of Gemma’s Mission and Vision statements:

Our Mission - Gemma Services changes lives by transforming hope into action for children, youth and families facing emotional and behavioral challenges.

Our Vision – We envision a world in which children, youth, and families feel valued and have the tools to realize their highest potential.

This is the fifth and concluding Wayne Press segment excerpted from the full article contributed to the Wayne Presbyterian 150 Anniversary Stories by church member and longtime Presbyterian Children’s Village leader Jane Beatty. To read the entire article, visit the church website at www.waynepres.org/resources and scroll to 150 Anniversary Stories. (Photos for this article were taken from the Gemma Services Facebook page.)

REV. AISHA – POSTSCRIPTS TO AN AMAZING MINISTRY AT WPC

BY TED BEHR



Attending a recent Atlanta high school football game starring her son Ellington. (From the right) proud mom Rev. Aisha, her husband, Rev. Dr. Alonzo T. Brooks-Johnson, and Aisha’s mom, Deborah “Debbie” Grooms.

This is a sequel to the fond memories of Aisha Brook-Lytle (now Rev. Aisha Brooks-Johnson) and her two-decade ministry among us as related in George Aman’s Wayne Pres article last month. Both articles will be incorporated in the “150th Anniversary Stories” which can be accessed through the WPC website under “Resources.”

Rev. Aisha’s presence among us began with her teaming with Tony Sundermeier in youth ministry in 1998. After four memorable years in that position under the direction of Rev. Gerry Davis, she proceeded on to Princeton Seminary to earn her Masters in Divinity degree. By then, she had married

fellow Temple University musician Carl Lytle and welcomed an energetic son, Ellington, into their family. After seminary graduation, Rev. Aisha Brooks-Lytle served several churches before winding up as pastor at Mt. Airy Presbyterian Church in North Philadelphia.

Here at Wayne, several years of deliberation and prayer guided by Rev. Casey Thompson had resulted in creating “The Common Place” in Southwest Philadelphia. To provide dynamic outreach leadership, especially in the city, in 2013 we recruited Rev. Aisha as our Minister for Mission, and she and Rev. Sudie Neissen-Thompson were designated co-founding pastors of TCP.

When Carey Davis retired as director of our City Lights ministry, Aisha, with divine insight, suggested Rev. Cean James, charismatic pastor of Grace Christian Fellowship (Southwest and Mt. Airy) to succeed her.

In December 2017, Aisha responded to the call to lead the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta as the Executive Presbyter for its 87 churches. Among the congregations she supports in her dynamic ministry: the 175-year-old First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta pastored by...Rev. Tony Sundermeier.

Shortly after her move to Atlanta, her beloved husband, Carl, succumbed to his neurological disorder. In due course, Aisha met and in April of this year married Rev. Dr. Alonzo T. Johnson, coordinator for the Self Development of People for the PCUSA headquartered in Louisville. Together, Rev. and Rev. Brooks-Johnsons have the joy of raising the three children of their blended family, Maya, Jasmine, and Ellington - lovingly assisted by Aisha’s mom, Deborah “Debbie” Grooms.

At The Common Place down in Southwest, Rev. Cean worked closely with Rev. Chris Holland, pastor of New Spirit Presbyterian, to provide a host of innovative family-related ministries that involved members of both churches. These two churches have now merged to form Salt and Light Congregation with Rev. Cean as senior pastor. Rev. Chris has taken over as the director of The Common Place backed by stalwarts Gene Burke overseeing operations, Huan Baum, program director, and Buff Barnes working on spiritual development.



Part of Rev. Aisha Brooks-Johnson’s lasting legacy, The Common Place scholars show their appreciation for after school enrichment activities (photo pre-pandemic)

The Salt and Light Congregation and The Common Place currently provide such varied community outreach activities as weekly distribution of clothing and food during the Covid-19 pandemic and becoming a designated polling place for municipal elections.

A poignant reminder of Brooks-Lytle legacy at The Common Place was the creation of a superb modern culinary center named "Carl's Kitchen" in his memory.

An added postscript from Rev. Aisha: "I am so honored to be included in the history of WPC. The experience (two times over) of serving there literally shifted the trajectory of my life. I am forever and eternally grateful for God's plans. I am so glad that God's visions and dreams are much bigger than our own."

COMPANIONS IN THE WILDERNESS CLASS SCHEDULE COMPANIONS IN THE WILDERNESS WAYNE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

"Companions in the Wilderness" Adult Ed Class

Taught by Rev. Katy Shevel

Starting Sundays on Nov. 7th: 5:30 p.m.

Starting Nov. 7th, Rev. Katy will introduce us to some very inspiring women and men from church history! For seven consecutive Sunday evenings, we will meet fellow companions of faith who found God with them in unexpected ways along the road of their wilderness journeys. Together we will explore the life and faith of many friends from history, including Martin Luther, the Desert Mothers, and Lemuel Haynes, the first ordained African American minister!

We'll be meeting both on Zoom and in-person in the Fireside Room. Come as you are, no book purchase required! Please email Katy at katy@waynepres.org for a Zoom link.



BLOOD DRIVE ON NOVEMBER 22

WPC is hosting a blood drive on Monday, November 22 from 1:30-6:30 p.m. What better way to show thanksgiving than by donating to help save lives. Please help us fill our 77 openings. Every pint is a lifesaving gift. Please sign up at redcrossblood.org Sponsor-waynepres or on our church website. If you can't donate....you can still help by spreading

the word through your networks and community. Thank you for your support of this important mission project!

CHRISTMAS ANGELS ARE NEEDED!

Join with the
Deacon Christmas Angels
this Holiday Season

Provide a Holiday meal and small gifts
for one of our mission partner families.

**Drop off day is Saturday, December 18
8AM – 9:30AM In the church parking lot.**

Please see our list of families and
make your selection at
www.waynepres.org/ChristmasAngels

A list of suggestions for filling
your Deacon Christmas
Angels 18 gallon tub and an
FAQ is also available on the website.



NOVEMBER 2021 THURSDAY MORNING MEN'S MINISTRY 7:00 AM AT WAYNE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH & ONLINE VIA ZOOM



November 4, 11 & 18
David Bronkema, Ph. D.;
Associate Professor of
International Development;
Templeton Chair for Christian
Service through Entrepreneurship;
Eastern University

Topic: Critical Race Theory, Social Justice, and
Intersectionality: From a Christian viewpoint, what is
all the uproar about?

Description: Critical race theory, social justice, and
intersectionality have all come under heavy criticism from
many individual Christians, congregations, and
denominations, even as they have been defended with
equal vehemence by many others who fall into those
by many others who fall into those same categories. What

exactly are these theories and approaches, how are they portrayed and used, why is there such controversy around them, and how might we as followers of Christ best serve as prophetic peacemakers in this polarized context?

Thursday Morning Men's Ministry is an informal group of Wayne Presbyterian Church that meets at 7:00 am each Thursday. It is a wonderful opportunity for relationships, prayer, and learning. The program year runs from September through June.

The morning begins with prayer & fellowship. This is followed by learning time: a 30-minute presentation typically from professors from Eastern University. We usually wrap up at 8 am, although the speakers often stay for a while to answer questions and chat.

Are you looking to explore the world of history, bible study, astronomy, philosophy, theology, and a host of Bible-related topics? This might be just what you are looking for. The lineup of speakers will challenge your mind and fill your spirit. Join in for a morning or two or the entire series. You will be glad you did.

Please note: We are currently offering a hybrid-format meeting including live in the Fireside Room as well as access via Zoom. Please see the WPC weekly News & Views email blast to stay up to date on details.

For more information or to get on the email Zoom invite list please contact **Tim Pretz at tpretz@eastern.edu** or **Sal Ambrosio at sambrosio55@gmail.com**

MITCHELL SCHOOL UPDATE BY JANE BEATTY

When a story appears on the first page of a big city newspaper, you know it is significant – good or bad. Not once, but twice in three days, Mitchell, Wayne's K-8 partner school in SW Philadelphia, made the Inquirer's front page. It was not good. Not enough expected breakfasts and lunches for 400 students arrived from the School District. Most of the students qualify for government meals. The principal Stephanie Andrewlevich ordered pizzas and paid the bill. Some teachers had snacks on hand, others had exhausted their supply.

From time to time, individual families also experience crises. A car needs a new tire, a monthly rent bill can't be paid, an older student loses her one chance at a free SEPTA pass, a stove needs replacing, grocery money is short.

To help with these unexpected crises, Mitchell is asking for donations to meet in-school crises, such as not having an adequate supply of healthy snacks on hand and has created a BASIC FAMILY NEEDS FUND for temporary help for individual families. Recipients receive guidance to help avoid future crises.

Donations should be made out and sent to Delaware Valley Fairness Project, % Ed Riehl, 133 N. Bread Street, Suite C3, Philadelphia, PA 19106. Please put MITCHELL BASIC FAMILY NEEDS FUND in the memo line if you want to help individual families with a crisis or MITCHELL RESOURCE ROOM if you want to fund snacks and other needs when there is a crisis in school. (The name of the street is Bread, not Broad.) DVFP is a 501C3 organization that deducts no administrative costs or fees from your contribution to Mitchell.

Please contact **Jane Beatty jnbeatty@verizon.com** or **Wendy Norman wnormanpa@yahoo.com** if you have questions.

ARE YOU WALKING THE MOURNER'S PATH? YOU CAN JOIN OTHERS ON THE JOURNEY ...

Walking the Mourner's Path is a Christ-centered ministry that has been active in the WPC community for nine years. Its name comes from the time of King Solomon where there was a separate path around the Jewish Temple for mourners to walk. As others in the community noticed their neighbors on the path, they offered prayers and solace for those in grief. At WPC, this small group ministry has brought together more than a hundred participants over the years who have shared the stories of the loved ones they mourned, cried, laughed, prayed and worshiped together. Unique friendships were formed, and many have noted their transformation during the eight weeks and after. Each of the eight sessions ends with a prayer that sums up the community being built with God's help... "I place my hand in yours... And together we can do what I cannot do alone."

With interest, we plan to offer a session that will take place over the holidays into the new year. We have heard from past participants that this can be a particularly difficult time in the process of grief and sharing this time with others is beneficial. The program suggests the death should be six months ago or longer but could be unresolved grief from long ago. Commitment to attending all of the sessions is important for full benefit. The last two sessions were offered exclusively via Zoom and worked well. Based on participation, and the current state of the church building, we will determine what works best for the group.

Please contact **Lynne Eckman**, lynnee@waynepres.org, to learn more and to indicate your interest for the upcoming session or one in the future. You can also be put in touch with Richard Miller, our trained facilitators or past participants if you would like to discuss the program in detail.



DEACON FOOD DRIVE TO SUPPORT GREAT VALLEY FOOD CUPBOARD

Your Wayne Presbyterian Deacons are currently running a food drive to support the Great Valley Food Cupboard. Their current needs are the following:

1. Broths - Beef, chicken, and veggie
2. Oil
3. Beef stew
4. Cookies
5. Crackers
6. Shelf safe milk
7. Nuts

Your donations may be left in the food box on Sundays or whenever the church is open. On other days, you may leave your donations in the labelled boxes in the breezeway between the double doors coming in from the parking lot. We thank you for your support and generosity.

YOUTH GROUP HIKE

Youth Group is moving forward with our Way in the Wilderness theme. We've been taking highlights from the book of Ecclesiastes, a book that can feel barren like the wilderness, and we've been contrasting that bleakness against the full light of the Gospel. Soon, we will be switching our focus to Advent, which is a season of waiting—similar to being in the wilderness. Our focus, however, will be on hope.

In upcoming events: The Youth Group will be taking a hike in The Willows on October 31st, where we will embark on a photo scavenger hunt. We are also planning to brighten up the Youth Room with a mural, which we'll draft out and begin in November. And as the days grow shorter and colder, we look forward to some movie nights with hot cocoa. May our souls be as warm as our bellies!

WINGS CHRISTMAS TEA

LET'S Move from the Wilderness and into the HOLIDAY SPIRIT!

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021,
FROM 9:30 - 11:30 AM**

Live in the Chapel or via Zoom invitation

Sip a hot beverage, Enjoy some Festive fare,
Sing carols with friends.

HEAR A PRESENTATION ABOUT ONE OF OUR
LONG-TIME MISSION PARTNERS:
THE SHERWOOD SOUP KITCHEN
By SUSAN AGGARWAL

RSVP on the
Church website:
www.waynepres.org



Christmas Poinsettias

Sign up for Poinsettias in the Chapel before and after all morning services on November 28, December 5 & 12 2021. The cost for each plant is \$10.00.

Name(s) of DONOR(S):

Telephone:

(day)

(evening)

Please check and print name(s) to be:

☐ **Memorialized** (*deceased*)

☐ **Honored** (*living*)

Total number of Poinsettias requested _____

ORDER(S) MUST BE RECEIVED BY DECEMBER 12.

"Wayne Presbyterian Church"

and send along with this form to:

Attn. Chancel Committee

125 East Lancaster Avenue, Wayne PA 19087

Proceeds benefit Wayne Presbyterian Church Needs.



LIFE EVENTS

Baptisms

We rejoice in the baptisms of...

Lucy Marie Marian-Landais
September 26, 2021

Luke Lawrence Shively
September 26, 2021

Deaths

We give thanks for the life and the ministry of...

Eben Lang
August 15, 2021

Cynthia Brown
September 15, 2021

Robert Tiffany
October 3, 2021

THANKSGIVING FUNDS FOR SOUTHWEST PHILADELPHIA

It is again time to be thankful for all we have. As has been our tradition for at least the last 10 years, we are once again going to collect funds to support vulnerable citizens with Thanksgiving meals. Baskets will be distributed by Southwest CDC. For \$40, you can support a family in SW Philadelphia with a turkey and all the extras. Please send a check to the church with Thanksgiving in the memo line. Or give on line at www.waypres.org under Giving and choose Thanksgiving in the fund drop-down box..



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8:30 am–4:30 pm

If you are receiving the Wayne Presbyterian newsletter by surface mail and would prefer to receive it by email instead, please email ruthw@waynepres.org. It is also available online at waynepres.org/publications.

November 2021