



Bryn Athyn Church

ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019

~ NOTICE OF MEETING ~

September 25, 2019 / 7:30 pm / Heilman Hall

Items of Business

1. Prayer and Reading
2. Pastor's Report - Rev. Eric Carswell
3. Facilities Planning Update
4. Cathedral Report - Meg Rohtla
5. Treasurer's Report - Stewart Asplundh

HEAD PASTOR'S REPORT

Rev. Eric H. Carswell
(215-947-6225 x208,

Eric.Carswell@brynathynchurch.org)



Many good things happened within this congregation during the 2018-2019 fiscal year. Our Sunday worship services continue to serve a fundamental use. We have multiple Sunday worship services -- Young Children's Church under the direction of Rev. Phil Schnarr, Informal Family Service under the direction of Rev. Solomon Keal, and the adult and family services at the Cathedral -- that hundreds of people attend to raise their voices in song and praise, to hear important true ideas from the Lord and to reflect on how these can change the way we live our lives.

In addition to those who go to these services, there is also a significant group regularly watching the service from their personal electronic devices. For example, the statistics for the Cathedral adult service show an average attendance of approximately 160 people coming to the Cathedral and an average of about 70 electronic devices are streaming the service. We know that a number of those devices represent more than one person viewing. For example, Cairnwood Village shows the Sunday worship services via livestream in their dining room, and many of their residents come to watch. Beyond this, the archived version of the adult service is viewed regularly more than 100 times, sometimes as many as 400 times.

I am grateful for the number of formal and informal doctrinal or small group gatherings that meet throughout the year that I see supporting people in reflecting on the meaning of what the Lord teaches in order to understand and also to see its life implication.

A new program that started last spring was Godly Play, a program for children during the 11:00 service. With huge energy and direction, Anne Grace Glenn launched this effort with a group of volunteer assistants. From March to early

June of this past year, there was an average of 16 children participating in these child-focused learning sessions. Godly Play will begin again this fall.

The willingness of people in this congregation to help each other in so many ways warms my heart. Much of this occurs without structure or guidance. Some of it takes place under the auspices of "Pay It Forward." Whether it is working on projects at someone's home or the large turn-out of people cooking in the Society kitchen and then packaging and delivering this food, these efforts are symbols of well-wishing to people in many different places in life.

I am grateful to the many people I work with at the Pastors Office and the Cathedral; so many people who care about important things for this church and serving them with a wise kindness.

Bryn Athyn Church School throughout the academic year, makes a difference to the hundreds of students attending as well as the influence of what they learn has on their families and broader contacts. I am proud of the work and dedication of the administration and faculty. The willingness of this congregation to support this education both financially and through hours of volunteer work is testament to a broadly shared commitment to New Church education.

We are moving forward on the plan for possible renovations and rebuilding of the school and church office. We have agreed that the 1954 and 1958 original primary and intermediate buildings, as well as Heilman Hall and the Society Building, are well worth preserving with some improvements of windows, doors, etc. After interviewing several architectural firms, each of which seemed genuinely interested in our project, we hired Metcalfe Architects and we have had a number of meetings. We will provide an update of their progress at the Semi-Annual Meeting and I expect to have another society meeting when they have the design phase of this project along with the initial estimate of the cost. I look forward to seeing their plans and sharing them with you.

ASSISTANT PASTOR

Rev. Erik J. Buss

(215-947-6225 x207, Erikjbuss@gmail.com)

Bryn Athyn Church's strategic planning process has been progressing, and we are coming up with areas of focus for the church going forward. We have done a survey, held several public meetings, and received other informal feedback about goals for the congregation. Some clear themes have emerged. There are areas that are going well in the congregation that we want to enhance. The top three areas of focus were Bryn Athyn Church School, our worship services, and opportunities to be of service to others. These are the things most likely to draw people into the Bryn Athyn Church community, so we want to improve how we do them.

There were also areas about which people expressed varying degrees of concern. The three main areas were how to honor the role women play in congregational life, how to engage young adults in the life of the church, and how to improve outreach efforts to those currently not familiar with the New Church. These concerns may be hindering some from joining activities and/or programs sponsored by Bryn Athyn Church. Of note, these concerns are also prevalent in many churches across the country and around the world. Addressing them will be important for the future of Bryn Athyn Church.

The survey also revealed that people are looking for a stronger sense of community. Bryn Athyn Church is a large congregation. We have multiple Sunday worship services, and many activities, but we rarely come together as a whole community, except for major holidays, namely Thanksgiving, Christmas, and our New Church Day picnic and pageant. People have expressed interest in developing a stronger sense of community, and in activities that can foster a sense of belonging and connection.

All of this, of course, takes place within the context of our overall mission. Our current mission statement reads as follows: *We are a community committed to growing closer to the Lord in order to lead lives of love and useful service. We do this by coming together to worship the Lord, explore teachings of the Word, and connect to community, service, and support.* And we have clear values that we do all this in the light of the Old Testament, New Testament and the Heavenly Doctrines, as understood in the General Church.

This presents some challenges in that some of the concerns, especially about women's roles, are about the view the General Church has toward what the Lord teaches. Our

task is to hold strongly to what we see the Lord telling us to do, while exploring ways to meet people where they are. I like the old Academy mantra of being firm in internals and yielding in externals. If we keep clear about what we see the Lord saying, my hope is that we will be able to come together in flexible ways to touch each other's lives and allow the Lord to be more and more present in the community.

Our hope is that people in the church can be aware of these areas and find their own ways of helping all of us move forward. The official church organization can do some things very well, but the church community changes when all of us internalize a value or focus and find ways to make it a reality.

**ANNUAL MEETING**

Wednesday, April 24, 2019

Reported by Rachel Glenn, Board Secretary



- After an opening worship service, the minutes of the Semi-Annual Meeting from September 19, 2018 were approved. The election for open Board of Trustees positions was held. Rob Andrews (incumbent), Rachel Glenn (incumbent), Caira Bongers and Derek Glunz were elected to the Board of Trustees.
- Rev. Eric Carswell presented a slideshow of the building consultant's proposed new floor plan for our facility. The next step is for the building committee to hire an architect to put together a design. He reported on the results of a survey that the Strategic Planning Committee sent out which showed high satisfaction with BACS, creating service opportunities and providing worship services, but suggested that more attention needs to be focused on engaging young adults and newcomers. He also reported that the General Church has hired Kaylene Glenn as coordinator for the 2020 GC Assembly.
- Staff members were acknowledged for their years of service, ranging from five to 30 years.
- Volunteer Coordinator Nina Dewees gave an overview of her work of providing community service and support.
- Principal Greg Henderson presented a slideshow of this year's activities at BACS. He acknowledged Carol Nash's retirement after 25 years of service. Carla Reuter will be her replacement for 7th grade girls, and Kate Gunther will take over in the 4th grade.
- Treasurer Stewart Asplundh presented the FY2019-20 budget for the society and the Cathedral. Both budgets reflect a surplus — \$12K for the society and \$38K for the Cathedral.

CATHEDRAL DIRECTOR

Meg Rohtla ((215-947-0266 x4601,
Meg.Rohtla@bacathedral.org)



Services and Special Events: This is my first year as the Cathedral Director, and I am honored and privileged to be overseeing this building and its many uses. A lot has happened in our beautiful Cathedral since its dedication nearly 100 years ago. Please refer to page 8 for the statistics on Cathedral services and events. Many of these services and events run smoothly with the help of our staff and dedicated team of volunteers consisting of floral designers, tour guides, ushers, and sound operators.

The Cathedral also hosts regular meetings and programs throughout the year – Cathedral Summer Camp, Landmarks in Lights, Star of Wonder, Pipe Organ Encounter, ANC Experiential Learning, Twining, Loss and Found, AA, Moms and Tots, Stephen Ministry, Eagle Scout ceremony, doctrinal classes and choir practices. There were also new programs added this year--Godly Play children's program on Sunday mornings in the Undercroft, men's discussion group, co-ed book discussion, preschool music play, and a Newcomers doctrinal class.

During this year, the Cathedral had 8,831 visitors--1,879 from scheduled tours and 6,952 walk-ins. Peter Boericke handcrafted a donation box using a 100-year-old oak door that was stored in the basement. This box collected over \$7000 in donations and over \$9000 from individual and group tours.

Stonework: Jens Langlotz and Grayson Zuber worked throughout the year repointing and restoring stonework. The south steps and drain were completed at the beginning of the year. For his Eagle Scout project, Karl Cranch, repointed a large section of the south patio adjacent to the new staircase. With the help of two assistants, repointing and cleaning of the south-facing chapel walls was completed in the summer of last year. Repairs done in the Ezekiel Tower included repointing, resealing staircase joints, replacing bird netting and deep cleaning the stonework. During the winter months, the fourth West Balcony, four-piece limestone finial was re-installed after being re-carved. As the weather warmed up, repairs focused on the parapet wall Minister's Vestry roof and south facing wall. Grayson and three summer interns repointed and repaired the upper southeast chancel walls this past summer. In addition, two buttress terminators were re-carved and installed. Displacement caused extensive damage to the tracery in all three windows in the upper southeast chancel. We have hired a conservation firm to address these areas.

I would like to give special recognition to Jens Langlotz, who has retired as the Cathedral's head stone mason, but he will continue to assist with carving. He was trained in Germany as a Master Carver and first came to the Cathedral in 1988 working under Al Walter. His notable contributions to the Cathedral involved extensive repointing of the Ezekiel Tower and the Nave, as well as re-carving intricate finials. Jens has worked for over 23 years and has shown tremendous affection and dedication to his craft. He spent three years repointing the Ezekiel Tower. Grayson Zuber, the assistant head mason, will be taking over as the head stone mason. He has spent the past seven years under the supervision of Jens to learn all aspects of stone carving, restoration and repair. Thank you Jens for sharing your craft with us.

Other Projects: To improve security and monitoring of the building and grounds, 23 security cameras were installed in the fall. These were painted to blend in with the surrounding stone. This project was made possible through the generous donations of members in the community and the Glencairn Foundation. Stone veneer with flagstone caps were added to the Cathedral's sign on Huntingdon Pike to match the other existing signs for Glencairn Museum and Cairnwood Estate. They in turn installed metal banner frames to match the Cathedral's side. Two beautiful metal handrails, designed and crafted by Warren Holtzman and Iron Works, were installed on the newly replaced south steps. The unique design allows for access on either side of each railing for handicap accessibility. The upper parking lot was repaved early this summer. Rainwater had seeped through the broken pavement, contributing to the collapse of the walls in the shop building a few years ago. There is still ongoing work which includes retouching teak doors, roof repairs, and minor repairs to the shop building. Danielle Odhner, the Cathedral garden crew, and other independent contractors work throughout the year to maintain the beautiful gardens surrounding the Cathedral.

Centennial: October 5, 2019 marks the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the Cathedral. We are planning to host special tours and events to celebrate this event. Historic photos will be on display throughout the year until the General Church Retreat in June 2020. You can view the schedule for the Centennial celebration at <https://brynathynchurch.org/>. It is also included in the Charter Day Schedule. We hope you can join us in celebrating the Cathedral's centennial anniversary.



MARRIAGE PROGRAM

Rev. John L. and Lori S. Odhner

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It continues to be a blessing to be part of the pastoral staff, supporting marriage and families. We have a range of areas, some public, others more private. There are efforts that happen a few times a year and others that occur every day. It is our sincere hope that we can bring hope and inspiration to people as they try to create strong homes.



Marriage Moats: These are brief messages that are sent daily via email and Facebook. Hundreds of people read them, creating conversations and connection. Sometimes they include quotes from the Word or Swedenborg's writings. They are adorned with beautiful photographs by generous artists. If you want to be included in the mailing list for these messages, please visit www.caringformarriage.org.

Parents Night Out: This event is for a parent or parents to enjoy an evening out while their young children are being cared for. It happens a few times throughout the year. Volunteers provide a safe space for children to play and watch a movie. The children also receive snacks and dinner. It is a win-win-win since the caregivers enjoy spending time with the children and each other. If you are interested in being a volunteer, please let us know.

Small Groups: These happen both stand alone and in conjunction with church-wide Journey programs. A handful of couples meet weekly to create community, and work on their relationships. They sometimes last for six weeks, and other times two years.

Anniversaries: Couples who wish to announce their wedding anniversaries can be included in the *Bryn Athyn Post*. To honor couples, we also send out anniversary cards with a copy of a Caring for Marriage newsletter.

Mentoring: This is a program designed to match older couples with younger ones, with the hope that they will get together for coffee or a smoothie once a month. Some of these quartets have continued past the agreed expectation of six months, and their friendships have grown sweeter over time. It is a way to offer a listening ear, and a sense of longevity to young people who are in the trenches of raising young kids.

Prayer: We continue to pray for marriages, asking the Lord to bless people both in seasons of struggle and joy.

Library: We have a collection of books and movies for lending. Feel free to borrow something to bring fresh ideas to your relationship.

One on One: We continue to meet with couples on a personal basis, offering encouragement and compassion. If we can serve you in this way, please let us know.

**DIRECTOR OF MUSIC**

Dr. Graham T. Bier

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Bryn Athyn Church Music had a quieter year regarding new initiatives, but solid in terms of consolidating growth. The Sunset Organ Vespers (in its third year) added a fifth service. The first in the series was held in May with the Cathedral Choir concluding the service with a Bach Cantata (hopefully the start of a new tradition). Attendance for this event has been averaging 250 and for many of them, this is their first experience of a New Church service. The Choristers have grown in enrollment and interest to the point where we are able (and need) to split into two sections to cater to different experience levels and ages. Robin Bier and Nathan Odhner continue to do an excellent job preparing these kids to sing in services and teaching them music, discipline and teamwork. Behind the scenes, there is a project for a second printing of the 2005 Liturgy. Stocks are running low and the large-print edition particularly is in demand.

Last November we held a service to dedicate a new instrument to its use supporting worship. Perhaps you've noticed the "new" grand piano in the south side of the chancel. This instrument actually pre-dates the Cathedral. It was built in 1896 by the renowned Blüthner Pianos and was kept in excellent condition. It was donated to us by Aida Epstein. The dedication service featured preludes by many of our own pianists including a choir piece and a duet with the organ.

The Cathedral Choir's numbers have been up, as well as the Festival Chorus (Messiah and Bach Passion Choruses), but we continue to seek recruitment of the next generation of tenors and basses. Terry Schnarr and Kenneth Coy continue as our dedicated weekly organists, with assistance from Leah Martin when she is home visiting from graduate school. The regular volunteers for the Informal Service music team include Lori Odhner, Ariel Martin, Leanna Smith, Shawn Rose, Scott Russell, and Ben Rogers-Petro. We are sorry to lose Ellie Taylor as she moves on to her music studies in North Carolina. For several years, she has brought quality and reliability as the regular accompanist for the Young Children's Church services. We wish her much success.

SMALL GROUPS COORDINATOR

Bronwen M. Henry ((215-947-6225 x271,
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Where We've Been: Small Groups continue to be a vibrant offering at Bryn Athyn Church. This year we continued to create spaces for people to connect with each other, and be supported in engaging church teaching and spiritual living.

In the fall 2018, we offered the series "Love Over Ego," exploring the biblical story of Daniel and the struggle between ego and true, humble confidence. We kicked this off with Michelle Synnestvedt leading a yoga class at sunset on the Cathedral lawn, followed by a talk by Curtis Childs from OffTheLeftEye in the Social Hall of the Cathedral. More than 60 people attended this opening. There were over 200 people participating in more than 26 small groups.

For a January 2019 series, we collaborated with NewChurchLIVE on creating content for "Opening Up," a powerful series to explore in groups, individually and through sermon series. There were twelve groups who followed this series. For the kickoff event, we hosted a "Civil Conversation," an offering envisioned by Krista Tippet (of the podcast OnBeing). More than 50 people attended to engage in these civil conversations.

In the spring, we offered the fourth Finding Hope 2019 at Bryn Athyn College, featuring a keynote by Dr. Sandra Bloom. More than 100 people attended. We partnered with Abington Jefferson Health, Gloria Dei Church, Growth Opportunity Center, and NewChurchLIVE. This event has at its heart showing up for people navigating hard times, expanding our capacity to be present with one another in hard times, and talking about things we don't usually talk about. In the weeks following the event, some attendees continued the discussion in small groups. We see Finding Hope as a vital part of Bryn Athyn Church showing up for the breadth and depth of the challenges in life. See below for information on the future of this initiative.

In the summer of 2019 based on increased interest from newcomers (especially viewers of OffTheLeftEye) we offered "New Church 101," a small group series with six participants. We hope to have more of regular offerings for newcomers who are interested in learning about our church.

This fall we will be exploring a five-week series about angels. The content will highlight the beautiful teachings about angels and their presence in our lives. The winter series will focus on listening. The spring series will feature new content produced by General Church Outreach based on the bible story of Gideon.

As I pursue each of these thematic offerings, I have especially in mind how to welcome/engage/empower young adults, how to keep connecting newcomers, and how to link people to service through the Pay It Forward Crew (I am part of the PIFC planning team).

We have a vibrant planning team for Finding Hope 2020. The team is looking to have an innovated approach on organizing more frequent and simple/accessible offerings on these important topics--mental illness, domestic violence, suicide, addiction and sexual abuse.

New Fall Series "Angels:" The kick-off event will feature a one-man show by Tony Lawton of C.S. Lewis' book entitled *The Great Divorce*. The show is on Sunday, September 29, at 7:30 pm at the Mitchell Performing Arts Center.

Join us! There are many ways to get involved including hosting or joining a group, helping spread the word, or helping plan these powerful events. Please get involved and help us continue to create opportunities for more people to feel the nurturing presence of community, the comfort of a loving Creator, guidance from the Word and the fulfillment of serving. Thank you!

**GIANT CASH FOR CAUSES PROGRAM**

The Pastors Office continues to participate in the Giant Food Stores Cash for Causes program. This has been quite a successful fundraiser for our church and school. For each gift card sold, Giant Foods donates 5% of the face value to our organization.

For the period of July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019, **this program raised \$7,325!** This is an easy way for everyone who shops at Giant to donate to our church and school without spending extra money.

If you are interested in purchasing gift cards, please stop by the Pastors Office at 600 Tomlinson Road, Bryn Athyn or contact Liza Hyatt at 215-947-6225, x200.

NOTE: This program is different from the A+ Rewards Program. These gift cards do not expire. They are acceptable payments for groceries or for gas at Giant Foods gas stations. **You still earn and keep your Bonus points.**



BRYN ATHYN CHURCH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**Greg D. Henderson**(215-947-4086 x267, Greg.Henderson@bacs.org)

Bryn Athyn Church School's 2018-19 school year began on August 28 when we welcomed 277 students to their new classrooms. Of these students, 39 of them were joining us for the first time, many of whom represented new families to our school community.

We also welcomed one new staff member this year. Linnea Heinrichs is now serving as a teachers' assistant, working largely in the primary unit. Linnea came to us after teaching for a year in the Pittsburgh New Church School. She has provided essential support for the teachers she has worked with and for the students in her care. Another change this year was Rev. Solomon Keal officially assuming the position of school pastor. This is a role he had been transitioning into over the past few years. Solomon is a natural fit in this position, connecting with students, parents and teachers, and thoughtfully leading our religion program. Sadly, the 2018-19 school year was Carol Nash's 25th and final year at BACS. Carol spent more than two decades teaching our seventh grade girls. In that time she strove to build relationships with her students, reducing their anxiety and guiding them through the interpersonal complexities of adolescence. She will be missed, but we wish her all the best in her retirement.

Each year our faculty looks to enhance the aspects of our program which are still successfully meeting the needs of today's students by implementing new activities, lessons and units. New initiatives could be found at each grade level this year. These included new class trips and units of study as well as new lessons and activities. One addition across grade levels was the implementation of a series of sequential lessons focused on Swedenborg in conjunction with his birthday. Another addition to the school this year was our participation in the Montgomery County Reading Olympics. For the first time two BACS teams participated in this event which included teams from 32 other schools. It was a great celebration of reading.

Our faculty began the school year by studying the topic of empathy. We looked at ways to purposefully support this important trait as it appears to not be naturally nurtured in today's culture as it once was. Research argues that empathy can help rebalance some of the trends we are seeing in the newest generations of learners. BACS also dedicated attention to the rise of anxiety in young people, providing different presentations for faculty, parents and our older students. Teachers continued to work on aspects of our curriculum this year as well. The faculty examined how we teach grammar at BACS and teams of teachers worked with General Church Education on redesigning their science curriculum. Other professional development work this past

year included groups studying new strategies in teaching language arts, the relationship between digital media and the brain, the beneficial aspects of responsibility based discipline, the differences between achievement and development based growth models, and current brain scan research as it relates to learning disabilities. Two of our teachers have also enrolled in Bryn Athyn College's Master of Special Education program. In March, the faculty attended a joint set of in-service meetings with the Academy of the New Church, Kempton New Church School and Washington New Church School. The meeting focused on how we can re-energize ourselves in terms of our use. These meetings offered us a rare opportunity to be part of a gathering of more than a hundred New Church educators.

BACS and Bryn Athyn Church continued working with Amie Leighton of Space Strategies to thoroughly study the condition and the needs of our facilities. Amie met with many different groups and studied the various structural studies done on the buildings to prepare a report on our facilities. Her report indicates that there are parts of our buildings that do not support our program as well as they should, that there are parts of our buildings that hold less value than others, and that there is a large variety of maintenance needs which require addressing over the coming years. The facilities committee, led by Reuben Mergen, is moving forward in developing a master plan that will address the maintenance needs while also better supporting our program, increasing the safety of our students and improving the effectiveness of our school. To this end, the firm Metcalfe Architecture & Design was brought on board in May to begin designing that plan. It is exciting to think about the ways we could create a space that will better support our teaching and it also feels right to get to a place where we can properly care for the buildings that have served so many students over the past 60 years.

Our school theme for the 2018-19 school year was "I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you" from Genesis. As teachers, we make covenants each year with our students and their parents, pledging to do what is necessary to guide them, educate them and prepare them for their future. We are also keenly aware of the covenant we make with the Lord. He is ultimately our students' true Teacher. We strive to be agents of His providence so that the young people in our care can grow into adults with beautifully useful lives and ultimately become loving and wise citizens of heaven. It is a use we are each drawn to and feel privileged to be able to serve.

INFORMAL FAMILY SERVICE/ BACS PASTOR

Rev. Solomon J. Keal
(215-947-6225 x209,

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I really enjoy my role as the pastor for the Informal Service in Heilman Hall, a role I've had for six years now. This is a worship service with a focus on affectional life application, relaxed ritual, congregational informal singing, pageants, and an interactive worship experience. Our intergenerational community ranges in age from newborn to 90. We continue to have many volunteers contributing their talents to music, acting, altar-building, audio recording, lay-reading, testimonials, and ushering.

We continue to have quarterly brunches and community meetings after church, in which people are invited to stay and participate in planning the direction of the Informal Service worship experience and community. There is also a weekly planning meeting for each Sunday's service held every Tuesday at 10:00 am in the Pastor's Office.

In addition to the preachers on the Bryn Athyn Church pastoral staff, we've been fortunate to have several guest preachers at the Informal Service, including the Rt. Revs. Tom Kline and David Lindrooth, as well as the Revs. Coleman Glenn and Jeff Smith.

We have quarterly Holy Supper services in a variety of formats. This year Rev. John Odhner introduced a new format called "Feast of Charity," in which the whole worship service was structured around a shared meal.

We held a special Christmas service on December 23, which was centered around readings, a Christmas pageant, and extra Christmas carols. Additionally, instead of "Mother's Day" and "Father's Day" services this year, we had a "Parents' Day" service on May 26, focusing on the fourth commandment to honor father and mother.

Informal services with the largest attendance continue to be Palm Sunday (with a live donkey) and Easter. For the Easter service, people are invited to walk through the sepulcher as they bring their flowers to the altar. Regular attendance for other Sundays at the Informal Service continue to average nearly a hundred people.

Audio recordings for the Informal Services are available at www.NewChurchAudio.org, under "Location: Bryn Athyn Heilman Hall." The weekly sermon reviews are also included in the *Bryn Athyn Post*.

In addition to being the pastor for the Informal Service, this year I officially took on a new role as the pastor for Bryn Athyn Church School. Over the last few years I have been learning the job from my predecessor, Rev. Phil Schnarr.

As school pastor, I am the head of the Religion Team which oversees the school's spiritual mission, and determines the school theme each year. I create the chapel schedule for the year, and oversee the religion curriculum for the school. I also participate in special worship services in the primary grades.

Our theme for the 2018-2019 school year was about covenants, using the quote: "I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you" (Genesis 9:15). The theme for the 2019-2020 school year is about journeys, using the quote: "Arise, begin your journey" (Deuteronomy 10:11).

Over the last few years we've been working on updating the translations of the recitations we use in the school, to better reflect the gender-inclusive meaning that is present in the original language and the internal sense. The hope is that our students not only memorize the words of these recitations, but that the language is accessible enough that the meaning and application settles into their hearts as well.

I really enjoy getting to work with the faculty, staff, students, and parents in bringing the Lord's teachings to life for the children in our school. I'm looking forward to the journey of the year ahead.



BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION PROGRAM

Thank you to those who have loyally collected and submitted boxtops labels for many years. For the 2018-19 school year, BACS earned **\$716**. These labels can be found on selected items from the following brands:



Papermate, Nestle, Annie's, Pillsbury, Totino's, Lysol, General Mills cereals, Old El Paso, Hefty and many more. Collection jars are located at the Pastors Office, Bryn Athyn Post Office, Benade Hall and Cairncrest. They can also be sent by mail to Liza Hyatt, Box 277, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009.

GIANT A+ SCHOOL REWARDS PROGRAM

The A+ School Rewards are points that supporters earn with each purchase made using their Giant BonusCard. At the end of each month, the points earned are used in a calculation to determine your school's cash total, which is then automatically credited to your school's account. **BACS earned \$2,857 for the 2018-19 school year.**



NOTE: This is a separate program from Cash for Causes and Bonus points (you continue to earn Bonus points).

**YOUNG CHILDREN’S CHURCH/
CATHEDRAL MOMS AND TOTS/
CATHEDRAL SUMMER CAMP**

Rev. Phil B. Schnarr

(215-947-6225 x226, Phil.Schnarr@brynathynchurch.org)



As the pastor for the Cathedral Summer Camp, I am happy to say that this past June we once again had a very full set of campers (ages 3-7). This was our 7th year in operation with another terrific staff under the excellent leadership of Joanne Kiel. Our theme was “With God all things are possible.”

For next year’s camp, we hope to include the children of families attending the 2020 General Church Retreat.

The Young Children’s Church continues to flourish with near-record turnouts for festival services. Our congregation is always growing up so we are pleased to see a consistent new crop coming along. Revs. Jeremy Simons and John Odhner are regular guest pastors for this service. There is also a very helpful and dedicated planning team consisting of Kelleen Butler, Carol Buss, Kim Alden and myself.

This past year, my wife Terry and I cohosted a new Cathedral Reading and Discussion Group that meets on alternate Tuesday evenings. Groups consisting of ten to 15 people have gathered for lively exchange from readings in *Spiritual Life and the Word of God* followed by *Earths in the Universe*. Please consider joining us as we reflect upon the Lord’s truths and share in their application to our lives. We have a delightful time together.

Cathedral Moms and Tots continue to meet regularly on Monday mornings from 10:00 to 11:30 am. The wee ones do projects and play under the care of Robin Morey and her staff. The moms then gather in the nearby Ezekiel tower to spend time talking (and snacking!) with other moms. Nina Dewees is the lead facilitator of the discussion. Pastor Phil leads a gentle worship circle and singalong for all of the children. It is so much fun and deeply rewarding. This program continues to evolve as we actively investigate how other churches do this type of outreach.

Lastly, I also teach 5th grade religion and I wish to convey how enjoyable this work is. The Word is full of adventure, excitement, villains and heroes. Throughout our studies we marvel at the Lord’s patience, His leading, and how an open and faithful heart will carry all of us through whatever struggles life puts before us.

*Spiritual love is such that it wishes to give what it has to another.
Divine Providence 127*

**STATISTICS
ATTENDANCE AND MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES**

	2017-2018		2018-2019	
	#svcs	Avg.	#svcs	Avg.
Informal Family	51	95	52	90
Young Children's	44	43	42	40
Family Cathedral: Nave Livestream	49	115	52	85 23
Adult Cathedral: Nave Livestream	52	158	52	159 76
Baptisms (Cathedral)				22*
Betrothals (Cathedral)				3*
Weddings (Cathedral)				43*
Cathedral Tours				1879*
Cathedral Visitors (walk-ins)				6952*
SPECIAL SERVICES	#svcs	Total	#svcs	Total
Palm Sunday Livestream	3	485	3	447 88
Maundy Thursday	2	96	1	67
Good Friday Vespers Livestream	1	291	1	227 37
Easter Livestream	3	895*	3	930* 120
BACS Worship Service Livestream	1	315*	1	271 7
ANC Sr. Blessing Livestream		175	1	149 6
New Church Day	1	1300*	2	470*
Summer Organ Vespers Livestream	4	227	5	1240* 40
Charter Day Livestream	1	610	1	569 25
BAC Athletic Commissioning	1	190*	1	115*
Thanksgiving - AFH	1	950	1	564**
Cathedral Tableaux Livestream	4	1681*	4	1601* 149
Christmas Vespers	1	434*	1	493*
Young Children’s Christmas Eve	1	165	1	173
Family Christmas Eve Livestream	3	1242*	3	1509* 61
Christmas Day Livestream	1	124*	1	146 31

*Represents total attendance

**Incomplete count

**VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR/
COMMUNITY CONNECTOR**

Nina C. Dewees (215-947-6225 x206,
Nina.Dewees@BrynAthynChurch.org)



Fiscal Year 2018-19 was another year full of connecting people through service and supporting people through difficult times.

While I am generally an optimist -- a glass-half-full kind of girl -- I also have sensitivity to the prevalence and reality of life's challenging times. My role as Volunteer Coordinator and Community Connector allows me to see some of the needs that may be among our friends in the community, and figure out how the people and programs of Bryn Athyn Church can serve.

Bryn Athyn Church has been increasing our efforts to reach out to people during difficult times. This past year, our pastors, staff members and key support volunteers gathered several times to discuss how to best provide care in this community. Pastoral care combined with lay support programs can touch many more people. Working as a *team* with the pastors, staff members, Stephen Ministry and Pay-It-Forward Crew planning teams, we keep an eye out for people who may be struggling with some of life's many challenges, and find ways that we can support them.

In what ways does Bryn Athyn Church support people, in addition to sharing the beautiful teachings of the New Church? The need may be for some practical help while navigating a newly diagnosed disease. Perhaps the need is one-on-one confidential listening while working through a troubled relationship. Maybe an overwhelmed mother of small children needs help in finding a supportive peer community. The need could be for companionship when our ability to "get out and about" becomes limited. Perhaps the need is for support as we walk the first year after a loss. Bryn Athyn Church has people and programs to support all those needs.

Another way to offer support is inviting people into *participation*. People can participate in many ways -- as a volunteer, joining groups or classes, attending worship services, leading small groups, or making use of Bryn Athyn Church's support programs. There are so many ways to get involved in this vibrant community.

If you are looking for some support yourself, or avenues to support others, please contact me to explore ways you could be actively involved in our church community.

BRYN ATHYN THRIFT SHOP (BATS)

Nina G. Finkeldey, Manager
(215-947-7646, Nglebef@gmail.com)



Another successful year! We surpassed our budgeted goal -- a huge thanks to all our staff and 140 volunteers -- the very base of the organization.

I compiled a list of the volunteer jobs at BATS: 52 jobs accomplished on a weekly basis, four larger group activities (some massive -- think Christmas!) and eleven jobs done on an occasional basis. We have five part-time paid staff who do a first level sort before it even comes through the doors. Here are some fun facts:

- Donations received this year: 2028 18-gallon bins of miscellaneous household items; 1719 bags of clothing; and 315 bags of linens.
- Items sold this year: 5,439 jewelry items; 21,363 books; 15,269 toys; 11,792 Christmas items; 2,273 furniture items; 46,054 articles of clothing; 1,385 Halloween costumes; and 131,932 miscellaneous household items.

Many hearts and hands at work!

We have grown the number of volunteers who are cross-trained to do certain jobs. We are developing new ways of organizing in order to streamline the jobs to do as a united group for a more consistent order and improve the shopping experience for customers, as well as better manage the flow of inventory. We have received plenty of positive feedback from customers. Another fun fact is that we may have reached 85 countries represented by customers.

We will continue to examine and develop simpler systems to track, measure and account for it all so that we can make the experiences more manageable for those who are working, to better serve our customers, and to understand the operations more clearly. Knowledge helps!

How we do our work matters -- the intention is to be a place that acts with kindness and respect -- to do the work honestly, justly, and faithfully -- to work as a team. People comment on the obvious care that is evident in the physical presentation of the items, and the care and friendliness the customers feel when they shop at BATS. We have met and made many friends over the years -- new and old, customers, volunteers, and staff.

Congratulations and thanks to all who have contributed so generously.

ANNUAL GIVING COORDINATOR REPORT

Diana M. Mergen
 (215-947-6225 x202, Diana.Mergen@brynathynchurch.org)



It is a pleasure to work with a variety of people in our congregation and to see how each person contributes, in their way, to make up our supportive community. During our recent Pastors Office staff retreat, each staff member shared something about their job that is important to them. When it was my

turn, my answer was simple--without contributions, none of this would be possible. Bryn Athyn Church is full with so much talent, energy, and love. When you read this report, you can see how financial contributions are used in so many loving and useful ways.

Database: We rely on a good database to do things such as send emails to groups, register for events, track important life events, send donation acknowledgments, and so much more. Last year, Bryn Athyn Church began switching to a new database software, Seraphim, as the former program we were using was not meeting our needs. The transition to the new software had some bumps but we managed to work our way through it. However, a larger company bought out the original company and the transition was placed on hold. We are excited and hopeful that when this new database is in place, likely by the end of this year, we will be able to communicate with our congregation with ease. Stay tuned for updates on how this change may affect the way you communicate with us. If you make a recurring contribution, I will notify you by phone and mail with instructions on how to update your information.

Make-a-Difference Campaign: We continue to build awareness as to why it is so important to give through our Make-a-Difference campaign. Tuition alone is not enough to operate our school. The average cost to educate a student in our school is approximately \$14,000. A family pays at most roughly \$9,735 per child. We successfully met this year's annual goal due in part to an increase in the number of first-time donors! Thank you all for your support!

Fundraisers: We have ongoing fundraisers throughout the year such as the Craft Café, BACS Uniform Sale, BACS Annual Roller Skating Party, and Restaurant Week. Please visit our website, www.brynathynchurch.org, for a list of other ways you can support. Feel free to contact me if you would like to coordinate a fundraising program.

BRYN ATHYN CONGREGATION STATISTICS

Members	:	708
Friends of Bryn Athyn Church (age 20 and up)		1870
Young people (ages 15-19):		267
Children (ages 0-14):		303
Total Congregation:		3,148

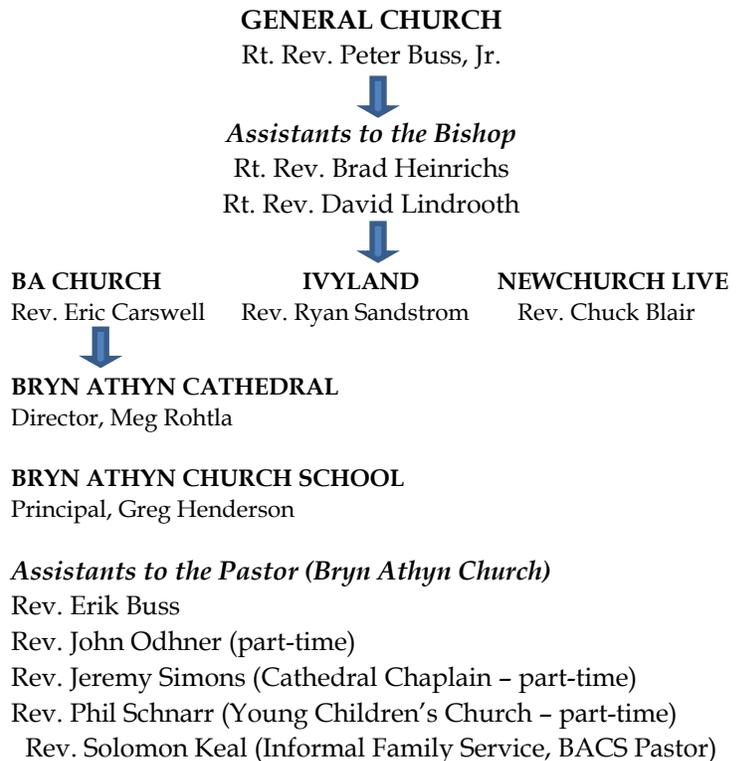
**MEMBERS AND FRIENDS
 who passed into the Spiritual World
 from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019**

Alfred Acton II	Greg Bails
Herbert Brandstater	Carol B. Brannon
Charlotte D. Cole	Joan D. Dunlap
Janet B. Kendig	Christopher E. Knight
Marcia H. Pendleton	Cameron C. Pitcairn
Laren Pitcairn	Justin D. Reuter
James F. Weaber	

**NEW MEMBERS
 from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019**

Arif Yaqub	Veronica Arif
Erin Connelly	Robert L. Eastwood, Jr.
Rosemary Fuller	Derek Glunz
Rod Hee	Gwynne Haladay
Calvin Heinrichs	Liza J. Heinrichs
Jenna Lee Henderson	Mary Jane Jungé
Rachel Keith	Linus King
Grace R. McMackin	Matthew Posey
Barbara J. Weaver	

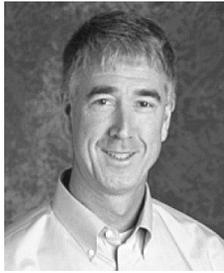
Below is useful information for our community members to see how all the organizations in our church community are connected.



TREASURER'S REPORT

Stewart L. Asplundh
(215-947-6225 x210)

Stewart.Asplundh@brynathynchurch.org



We finished Fiscal Year 2018-19 a bit over budget on both the expense and income sides, and ended basically at a break even with a small surplus of \$504. The Annual Fund contributions were up from last year and higher than budgeted. School contributions were above budget, but lower compared to last year (the reduction compared to last year was due to lower Student Financial Aid contributions but otherwise school contributions were higher than last year). Special (earmarked) contributions were lower compared to the past year.

Contributions overall were down \$32,427 or 2.4%. However, this was due to the decrease in Special (earmarked) and Student Financial Aid contributions. After adjusting these, we saw increases in contributions for both the School and Annual Funds. The Offertory Basket contributions were down a bit (\$2,500, compared to last year) and just under budget goals. Giving for the year moved back to more unrestricted and school giving. Overall, this was a good year for contributions. Thank you to all who participated in making this happen!

Tuition income was similar to last year and we continue to see an increase for the student financial aid. Combining these two showed a decrease in overall tuition income of approximately \$3,000 compared to the previous year. Preschool tuition income increased compared to the previous year. Other notable items are: BATS income was up (a big thank you to all those connected to BATS!); Cathedral rental income has moved to the Cathedral budget and showed a slight decrease compared to last year. Other Income, including fees and registration for afterschool programs, was also up.

On the expense side, we saw an increase of 1.2%, with total expenses up from \$5,480,736 to \$5,544,756, approximately \$64,000 higher than the previous year. Total instructional salaries and benefits were up only just under 4%. Maintenance fund decreased due to lower grounds costs (less snow removal) and fewer "Improvement" projects.

Looking forward to FY 2019-20 we are budgeting for a salary increase of 3.41%. We expect the following: school budget up about 5%; society budget down 3%; and maintenance costs to be lower. This brings us to \$5,545,422, just a \$665 increase compared to FY 2018-19.

CONTRIBUTIONS COMMITTEE

Stewart L. Asplundh

Fiscal Year 2018-19 was an interesting year for contributions. We received a large estate gift that helped us with the increase over the previous year in direct contributions.

In relation to this gift, the board approved a resolution that "any unrestricted bequests or estate gifts to Bryn Athyn Church of \$25,000 and above shall be allocated 25% to current year income and 75% to board-designated endowment." This allocation reflects the current percentages of income from annual giving (25%) and church endowment (75%), and recognizes these lifetime gifts for current uses as well as uses into the future.

Direct contributions, not including the estate gift mentioned, were up compared to the previous year but a bit under budget. Basket offerings were a bit under budget and down from last year, and both special and school contributions were down. However, the reduction in these seems to be a reduction from higher than anticipated giving in prior years with 2018-19 closer to what we expected and budgeted.

Although overall giving was lower by about \$32,000 than the previous year, we exceeded our budget goals in all of the giving funds except in basket giving, but this was still a positive contribution year.

CONTRIB.	2017-18	2018-19	CHANGE	% CH.
Annual Fund	585,290	810,863	225,573	38.5%
Basket	150,400	147,887	2,513	-1.7%
Special	266,990	132,000	-134,990	-50.6%
School	360,639	240,142	-120,497	-33.4%
	1,363,319	1,330,892	32,427	-2.4%

This year, we continue to report on giving by households. For the annual and school funds, the number of households giving decreased from 439 in 2017-18 to 410 in 2018-19. The average giving per household during 2017-18 was \$1,988 and for 2018-19, it was \$2,335.

Thanks to all who contribute to the many uses of the church. We appreciate your continued financial support of Bryn Athyn Church and School.

Return to:

Pastors Office

P.O. Box 277
Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania 19009
Phone: 215-947-6225

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BRYN ATHYN CHURCH STAFF

Pastor Rev. Eric H. Carswell
Assistant Pastor..... Rev. Erik J. Buss
Assistants to the Pastor
Rev. Solomon Keal Rev. John Odhner
Rev. Phil Schnarr Rev. Jeremy F. Simons

Cathedral Director Meg Rohtla
BACS Principal Greg D. Henderson
BACS Pastor..... Rev. Solomon Keal

Officers of the Corporation

Eric H. Carswell President
Erik J. Buss Vice-President
Rachel Glenn Secretary
Stewart L. Asplundh..... Treasurer

Printing and mailing done by *Bryn Athyn Church*

SUNDAY SERVICES

9:20 am Informal Family (Heilman Hall)
9:30 am Family Cathedral (Cathedral Nave)
9:45 am Young Children's Church
 (Cathedral Council Chamber)
10:45 am Godly Play (Cathedral Undercroft)
11:00 am Adult Cathedral (Cathedral Nave)

BRYN ATHYN CHURCH SUPPORT RESOURCES

There are many ways in which Bryn Athyn Church supports people--through church services, small groups, classes, the Bryn Athyn Church School, the Journey programs, etc. The following are other resources we encourage you to remember when needed:

Pastoral Visits: One-on-one visits with any pastor, at your home or at the Pastors Office.

Caring for Marriage: Providing help in person, mentoring and daily emails. Contact Lori@caringformarriage.org.

Stephen Ministry: Ongoing, one-on-one, confidential lay spiritual care for people facing life challenges.

Pay-It-Forward Crew: Supporting people in times of need with volunteers willing to help in practical ways.

Visiting Friends: Informal, occasional visits offered by volunteers in the church community.

Emergency Financial Aid: Short-term financial assistance for those currently associated with Bryn Athyn Church.

To learn more or to get involved, contact Nina Dewees at 215-947-6225 x206 or Nina.Dewees@BrynAthynChurch.org.