# INTERPRETATION

Sewickley Presbyterian Church Newsletter Summer 2021



## OFFICE

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If you would like to make submissions to the newsletter, or if you have any questions contact Jennifer Johnson at jjohnson@sewickleypresby.org.

## VISITATION

If you or a member of your family are in the hospital or are in need of prayer, please call the church office to let us know.

### SOCIAL MEDIA





## SPC STAFF

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JOEY TOMALES NICK THOMPSON Custodial Staff

### THANK YOU By Rev. Kevin J. Long

Dear SPC Church Family,

What a whirlwind these past couple months have been. It's hard to believe that this is my last Interpretation article. I confess that I've been living in a bit of denial that this day would ever come. But moving and change are a part of life. As Billy Joel once sang, "Life is a series of hellos and goodbyes. I'm afraid it's time for goodbye again" ("Say Goodbye to Hollywood"). Fortunately, when it comes to family, it's really just "So long until next time." And we know that we will be back to visit and that many of our paths will cross again in God's future, if not on this earth, then certainly in the Kingdom as we feast together with joy at the Great Banquet.

Regardless of when that might happen, I just want you to know how much we are going to miss you. As I have said before, being your pastor has been the greatest privilege and blessing of my life. We have loved our time in Sewickley, and the Longs are all so incredibly grateful to God for this wonderful church family. You have done your job well.

So thank you, Sewickley Presbyterian Church. Thank you for your friendship. Thank you for your faithfulness. Thank you for being willing to take some chances and even make some changes for the sake of the gospel. Thank you for following Jesus. Thank you for your encouragement and affirmation and support. Thank you for your incredible generosity. Thank you for all of your notes and gifts and hugs. Thank you for being a church family to the Long family. We wish we could thank each of you individually. But know that we love you and want the absolute best for all of you, and we can't wait to discover all the holy mischief that the risen Savior will be doing among you in the years ahead.

Perhaps the words of the Apostle Paul to his beloved church in Philippi say it best:

"I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me... For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God" (Phil 1:3-11).

May it be so!

With deep appreciation and gratitude in Christ,

Kevin

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

By Laura Mikush, Business Administrator

After many years of discussion and planning there is now a new outside door to the Flower Room. Thanks goes to Tim Bingman, Keith Boyer, and Rich Gratton for their time and effort to install the new door and for the many hours of painting and staining.



#### CHANCEL CHOIR RETURNS! By Craig Dobbins, Director of Music Ministries

Members of the Chancel Choir were thrilled when informed recently that they could resume their role as leaders in worship! They met for a rehearsal on Thursday, June 3 to get their voices moving and back in shape prior to singing for the first time since March 15, 2020 at the 10 AM service on Sunday, June 6. They look forward to sharing their gifts with the congregation and community in worship for a long time to come.



### **SPRING CLEAN-UP**

By Mark Gensheimer, SPC Member

We had a glorious day on May 1 sprucing up our beautiful church grounds. Over 40 people showed up in force to edge, prune, weed, trim and spread over 75 yards of mulch. We finished everything in less than three hours!

We now have such an experienced group that gets to work quickly and just knows what to do. It was a wonderful morning of very hard work and very good fellowship. We can't thank everyone enough for showing up, working so hard and doing such an amazing job.

Blessings and thanks to everyone!



#### **RETURN TO MONTREAT** By Craig Dobbins, Director of Music Ministries

Following last year's virtual-only conference, a group of eleven members of our congregation (plus retired Associate Pastor Rev. Dr. Jean Henderson) returned to our denomination's conference center in Montreat in the mountains of southwestern North Carolina June 20–26. In addition to stimulating and awe-filled worship services, interesting seminars and lectures, exciting vocal, handbell, and instrumental ensembles, a number of members of the group spent time in the center's craft building creating pottery Trinity bowls (Look for them at next year's Lenten Soup Suppers!), unique glass swizzle sticks, and other handmade items, and one went for an overnight hike to Greybeard Mountain. There were many "God moments" experienced during the week.



## LORD, HELP ME TO SEE By Shirley Stevens, SPC Member

Daniel Hill, a Christian leader who is the founder and senior pastor of a multi-ethnic church in the Chicago area, challenges us in his book White Awake to examine white privilege. He shares his story, admits his own mistakes, and asks us to examine our perceptions. Like the blind man in the Bible, we need to pray, "Lord, help me to see." In our study group, we shared parts of our past as individuals and as members of a community. Hill says we have to examine our cultural identity answering the questions: "Who am I?" and "How do I fit into the world?" He examines seven stages that mark the cultural identity process of a white person seeking transformation from blindness to sight. He reminds us that white privilege allows white people to walk away. Hill says that human beings are God's treasured possession. When we dehumanize another person, we demean those who are valuable according to God. Instead of focusing on Christ in us, the author says we need to focus on being "in Christ." Then and only then can we work on reconciliation and justice. Hill reminds us that we need to lament the way we have treated people of color. We cannot look for quick fixes and ask, "What can I do?" We cannot avoid the full weight of suffering. He also warns us about self-righteousness since we place too much confidence in our own sense of rightness. We need to develop humility and stop putting ourselves in the center. In his final chapter, Hill says we need to educate ourselves, which is why our church has study groups. We need to find a place like the Center for Hope where we can serve consistently. If we listen, wait to be invited in, and are sensitive to the pain people of color have experienced, we may grow. It will not be an easy process. We have to acknowledge our utter blindness and realize how badly we need to see. Hill tells us Jesus is the pioneer in our faith journey. He says that if we follow Jesus, one step at a time, He will guide us into a deeper awakening. Yet it will involve a long, demanding process.



## **CARYN DOEGE GRADUATES**

Church member, Caryn Doege, officially graduated from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary on Friday, May 28th! Over the past three years, Caryn has enjoyed learning and growing both outside and inside the classroom (even the virtual classroom). Continuing to work towards ordination, Caryn is currently a Candidate in the PC(USA) ordination process. Through these experiences, Caryn feels a call to the work of a counselor. Starting at Duguesne University this fall, she will begin the two-year Master of Science in Marriage, Couple, & Family Counseling program and work towards preparing for licensure as a Licensed Professional Counselor. Caryn is hopeful for the ways in which this next degree, her Master of Divinity degree from PTS, and her Bachelor of Science in Marketing and Business from Saint Francis University will blend together. The discernment process is always on-going, and Caryn is humbled and eager to pursue these next steps in her journey of faith and professional career.



## **ADOPT A PLOT!**

to be weeded a couple of times a month and given some TLC. This is a great job for people of all ages with a small time commitment attached PLUS a great way to serve!

complished. Please contact Lisa Edelman if you have any questions and need further direction: lisa@notarytravels. com.



#### CONGREGATIONAL CARE By Rev. Rebecca Reeder, Associate Pastor

A special word of thanks to all our elders, deacons, and committee members who graciously participated in our COVID Congregational Care initiative over the past nine months, making phone calls and sending cards and emails to the wider congregation. These efforts helped to keep our church family connected during a time when we were unable to gather physically for worship and fellowship. I heard from leaders reaching out as well as congregants receiving messages how joyful and comforting this form of congregational care was during the pandemic. It's a reminder that we truly are the Body of Christ, and God needs and uses all of us to care for one another. While the COVID Congregational Care initiative may be ending, this is an experience we will take with us as we move forward with jumping back into creating improved continuous congregational care for the long haul. As many of you will recall, our church hosted Rev. Karen Lampe back in the fall of 2019 to conduct a day-long workshop on the topic of congregational care ministry. We had 41 members of our church participate and we left invigorated by the possibilities and opportunities for our church family to expand our care for one another. I look forward to sharing more with you all as we work together to build a flourishing SPC Congregational Care ministry that equips us to faithfully live as the Body of Christ!

If you are interested in getting more involved with congregational care moving forward, please reach out to me at <u>rreeder@sewickleypresby.org</u>.



#### A FRESH START FOR FALL By Erin Leghorn, FriendShip Preschool Director

Although summer has just barely arrived, fall feels like it's just around the corner. After more than a year of empty classrooms and quiet hallways, the preparations for the new school year have begun! In addition to sorting through closets, putting up new bulletin boards, and even power washing the playground shed (Thank you, Gretchen and Bob Burnham!) to bring new life into our little school, we've also been working on some exciting things happening this summer to get ready for the new year. Here are a few:

#### New Children's Corner class

Our initial plan for reopening this year reduced Children's Corner from 2 classes to 1. However, during the registration and enrollment process, there was overwhelming interest for Children's Corner. In our area, a class for 2-year-olds is unique to our school. It quickly became clear that we needed to be able to welcome more children into this very special program, so in May, we decided to add a second class! Children's Corner meets two days a week – M/W or T/Th – from 9:00 – 11:30 AM. If you are interested in registering your 2-year-old, there are still a few spots open! Contact Erin Leghorn, or visit the FriendShip page on the church website, for more information.

#### New flooring

FriendShip Preschool is blessed with bright and cheerful classrooms on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the church. Parents often comment on how much they love the space when they visit for the first time. Over the years, our classrooms have become well-loved and well-worn (as they should), but we are so excited to be able to have new carpet and tile flooring installed in our classrooms and hallways this summer! What a great way to welcome our students and teachers back to school!

#### New staff?!

Okay, okay, this one hasn't happened yet, but we do have a few openings on our staff! We are looking for qualified individuals who are loving, creative, and have a background in teaching to fill openings in Pre-K and Children's Corner. We are also looking for additions to our substitute list. If you are interested, please contact Erin Leghorn.

Thank you to everyone – preschool subcommittee, church staff, preschool staff, my family - who has helped and shown support over the past six months to give Friend-Ship Preschool a fresh start for fall! There is still much to be done this summer, but we will be ready and waiting with open arms when September arrives!

## CHOOSING GRATITUDE OVER TIME TRAVEL

By Rev. Derek Davenport, Parish Associate

It's an odd notion, but today more of us than usual are contemplating time travel. There are seven words that give it away.

If I could do it over again...

I've had several conversations with friends and colleagues over the last few weeks that began with some form of that phrase. Maybe you've said the same thing. As we anticipate the opportunity to move forward into a more natural way of interacting with each other, we reflect on our past year and lament the things we could have done differently. We ponder this phrase as individuals, families, employers and employees, teachers and students, and even as a church. We get lost in our hypothetical time-travel. If we could go back and do it again...

Let's not.

Luckily we can't – but even pondering the question comes at a cost. The more time we spend regretting what was, the less time we have to spend on more important things. As an example, let's just consider our church.

Over the past year, we have taken enormous leaps forward in streaming our worship services. We have learned about lighting, camera angles, color saturation and capturing sound.

In terms of the service itself, we've integrated various musical styles and instruments in surprising and unexpected ways. I don't think I have ever been as excited for the music of worship as I am right now. In our programming, we held small groups, streamed education programs, and had remote business meetings.

As we look back over this past year in the life of our congregation, we could get lost lamenting our hypothetical time travel. Or we could be thankful.

As if he had visited 2021, a Methodist theologian expressed our situation perfectly in the 1850's. "Instead, therefore, of lamenting over our deficiency - although God knows we have faults enough to humble us in the dust - we have abundant cause of gratitude to the great Head of the Church for the merciful manner in which he has favoured our feeble, though I trust sincere, endeavours to advance his cause upon the earth." <sup>1</sup>

Instead of lamenting over our deficiency, we have abundant cause of gratitude – for our congregation, for our staff, for our sincere endeavours to proclaim the gospel in the midst of crisis. We can mourn what we've lost, but we can't lament what could have been. We have too much cause for gratitude. As individuals, families, employers and employees, teachers and students, and even as a congregation, we have abundant cause to choose gratitude over time travel.

And once we choose gratitude, we can get excited for what lies ahead.

1 Bangs, Nathan. The Present State, Prospects, and Responsibilities of the Methodist Episcopal Church... New York, Lane & Scott, 1850. P20

## SUMMER ADULT FELLOWSHIP & STUDY GROUPS

Many of our groups are continuing to meet this summer. Consider trying one out! Visit our website for meeting and contact information.





WOMEN'S BOOK STUDY Frequency: Bi-Monthly Leader: Rita Hoepp

**Book:** Finding Hope in Hard Times: A Positive Take on Suffering, by Pierce Taylor Hibbs



MEN'S HUDDLE Frequency: Weekly Leader: Rich Weber Study: The Bible Project



KOINONIA

Frequency: Weekly This group is open to all women.



#### JOURNEYMEN

**Frequency:** 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays | 8 AM **Leader:** Dale Allerton A book study for men of all ages.

Current study: Quiet Strength by Tony Dungy





## GOOD THINGS COME IN SMALL PACKAGES

By Sara Hoagland, Director of Children's Ministries

This has been a long road, perhaps especially for some of our youngest friends. Many spent long days in front of computer screens. They went long stretches without seeing friends or loved ones. I am so proud of them all for finishing this year strong. We all can learn a lot from our kids at SPC. Here's what they have taught me:

**KINDNESS and GRACE:** They show each other an abundance of grace and kindness. It didn't matter which school district they went to, if they went online or in person, or how the person looked, they were always kind, welcoming, and gracious. I would listen as they shared stories of being bullied, or of someone they loved falling ill. They would support one another by sharing similar experiences, or by offering words of encouragement and support. Without judgment they respected one another's boundaries and comforts. For some this was the first time being with other kids, while others showed confidence and boldness.

**RESILIENCE:** These kids are so adaptable. Sometimes we met virtually with activity boxes, and other times we had outdoor, in person gatherings wearing masks. Snacks were enjoyed while sitting in hula hoops. They were just excited to be together any way that we could! We were blessed with a beautiful rain to accompany our parachute game on our last day of Club 345. They did not complain, they danced.

They are the HELPERS. They are the computer experts for one another (and me!) when Sunday school glitches. They welcomed and showed the way for 10 new kids to our online Sunday school and Club 345. They pray for each other, for you and me, for COVID to go away, and for all kinds of pets!

Our kids at SPC are truly special. They are our FUTURE. It's up to us to provide this space. A space where our children feel welcomed, loved, safe, and important. A space where they can both grow in Faith, share, and have fun. I'm reminded of the quote, "One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade..."

Let's keep planting!

AUGUST

2-6

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL** 

Register Today! sewickleypresby.org



LSUS' POWER PULLS US THROUGH

## YOUTH MINISTRY

## **CONFIRMATION 2021**

By Mike Creamer, Director of Youth Ministries

We were so excited to see a class of 11 students come together to confirm their faith after a year of meeting to learn more about their faith (in person and on Zoom). Confirmation Sunday was exciting for a lot of reasons, one being that two of those students got baptized that morning. Not only that, but we also got to take communion together.

### **CHANGING SEASONS**

Over a year has gone by as we have adjusted to so many changes in our lives and once again the seasons are changing. We have learned new ways of being together, new ways of caring for each other, and new ways of planning for the future. And now as we get ready to change from spring to summer, we are also getting ready for change in the life of our church as well. With Rev. Long transitioning, we will be saying "see ya later" to a family that has been part of our church's DNA for a decade. Seasons are changing, and that can be scary. But as we look ahead to what comes next, our hope should always be that God is doing something here and now. God is working in our lives, long before we know what He has been doing all along. So as we move into this new season at SPC and experience change, let us come together even more to see what God is already doing!

### WHAT'S COMING UP?

July 10 | 9 AM - 3 PM Open Hands Service Day July 10 | 4-5:30 PM All Youth Pool Party July 18 | 8-10 PM All-Youth Movie Night With all those festivities going on it was a packed day, and it was great to have everyone together in the sanctuary again. We are excited to see what is next for these students and where God is leading them in their lives and the life of the Church!

(Confirmands pictured above)

## **HIGH SCHOOL ARCHERY**

Something we did a lot more of during the pandemic was take advantage of the many outdoor adventure options there are around Pittsburgh. In the fall, we did a few activities with LL Bean (kayaking, hiking) but this spring we took a shot at archery, yes...pun-intended. Let's just say we weren't necessarily Olympic level, but we did better than I thought we would. At the end of the day, there was plenty of laughter and friendly competition and that is always a good way to spend a Saturday.



## BOOK COLLECTION

Wow! Thank you so much for your wonderful book donations. I am so grateful to the church community for helping me in my endeavor to provide more children with access to books. I received 740 books, which was more than I had ever imagined. I have organized all of the books into categories by age and have also designed a bookmark for each of them. I will be donating the books to the organizations this week. I can't wait to give each of your books a new home and a happy ending. Thank you again for all of your contributions!



## **BACKPACKS** in JULY

It's that time of year again! In July, we will be collecting backpacks filled with school supplies for students at the Center for Hope in Ambridge. This year, the CFH has asked us to provide 50 backpacks for kids in grades K–5 and 50 backpacks for grades 6–12.

We are going to stick with what we did last year and have all backpacks dropped-off at Gretchen McAdams' house along with signing up online to claim a backpack to fill. Here are the steps for you to follow:



Print off the supply list provided on our website. This list will be attached to the backpack you donate.



Deliver the filled backpack, by July 31, to:

320 Shields Lane Sewickley, PA 15143 Backpacks can be placed on the front porch

If you are unable to shop, you may also make a monetary donation. Please designate that you wish the funds to be used for Backpacks in July and mail them to the church office. The Deacons thank you for your generous support and for your faithfulness to this mission.

## **BLANKET SUNDAY**

In May of each year, we celebrate Mother's Day. We also take this time to support Church World Service by donating blankets to their organization. These blankets are given in honor and in memory of our loved ones. Below is a list of those who were honored this past May:

Eleanor MW Johnson Edith Moody Jill Ellison Edie Pennoyer Vassamillet Edith Simmons Pennoyer Laura Wyatt Vassamillet Emilie Rubin Madeleine Leland Mary Nauman Eileen Muir Mary Catherine Eberhart Mary Wardrop Carolyn Coyle Sue Booth Marjorie Cook Edith Allerton Eleanor Hackbarth Pat Watkins Carolyn Burnham Meyer Anna Beck Vandervort Ginny Canan Myralin Miller Doris Charles Beth Loeser Tia Flint Janet Holding Ella Watkins Scull Isobel Sheppard Haines Deborah Stoessel Joan Heres Catherine Hoepp Edna Bradley Debbie Bruce Patton Karen Safran Jean McClester John McClester Doris Schuyler Calwood Schuyler Catherine Goodwin Roger Goodwin Grace Tirk Strong Peggy Kirk Bell Lois McCutcheon Patricia Szuba Tina Schober Phyllis Thomas Aina Anderson Josephine Schober Louan Diehle Art Ticknor Agnes Gribbon Dausy Marlin Esther Stevens Priscilla Damon Reed



By Nancy Merrill, SPC Member

During our Neighbors in Need May drive, we were able to provide more than 900 personal care items to our mission partners: Sewickley Community Center, the Center for Hope, The Ladle, and the YMCA Little Free Pantries. Your purchases and financial contributions made this possible. Thank you!

We are happy to receive contributions at any time and will continue to distribute them to our partners.

Drop off locations are: 315 Quaker Road, Edgeworth (Stephanie O'Kane) 113 Scottsdale Drive, Moon Twp (Pam and Ron Charles) At the church: drop-off in the office

## SPC HUNGER RESPONSE

March 2020 - April 2021 Mission Giving	\$81,000
Monthly Hunger Offering	\$9,224
• Meals Served at Center for Hope, the Ladle, Bethlehem Haven	3,235
<ul> <li>Mini-Pantries built &amp; stocked by Neighbors in Need</li> </ul>	5
<ul> <li>Organizations Supported with Hunger Offering:</li> </ul>	10

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Greater PGH Community Food Bank Center for Hope | The Ladle & The Hearth Sewickley Community Center | PGH Presbytery Hunger Fund Sewickley YMCA | Meals on Wheels North Boros Bethlehem Haven | Northside Common Ministries Faith in Action





FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT® FOR HEALTHY LIVING FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



March 30, 2021

Mr. Ron Charles, Benevolence Giving Sewickley Presbyterian Church 1115 Beaver Road Sewickley, PA 15143

Dear Mr. Ron Charles,

Thank you for the donation of \$5,000 on behalf of the Sewickley Presbyterian Church Benevolence Giving Committee that benefits the YMCA's hunger relief efforts. Your support allows the Y to carry out our mission and continue our crucial community work by providing food for children, families and individuals in need. On behalf of our Board of Directors, staff and community, I thank you for your kindness.

Since January, over 500 nutritious food boxes have been delivered bi-weekly throughout the Quaker Valley School District and 12,480 pounds of food distributed in Ambridge to adults and families in need. Food boxes in Quaker Valley and Ambridge include fresh fruits and vegetables, milk, eggs, bread, meat and pantry staples to help reduce food insecurity for local families and children. Additionally, seven free mini pantries have been installed to help fight food insecurity by increasing food access providing immediate support to those in need. The pantries are open and available at any time for someone to access hearty non-perishable foods. Since January, the seven free mini pantries have been restocked with 1,669 pounds of food.

To provide you with account records for tax purposes, this confirms that the Sewickley Valley YMCA has not provided goods or services in exchange for this gift. Therefore, the gift of \$5,000 is deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please retain this acknowledgment for federal tax purposes.

Sincerely,

Trish Hooper ' Chief Executive Officer Sewickley Valley YMCA

Amy Richardson immediate impact Director of Development & Communications on our communi-Sewickley Valley YMCA The Ladle and The Hearth Nourishing the Bodies and Souls of the Hungry

Sewickley Presbyterian Church c/o Mission Committee 414 Grant Street Sewickley, PA 15143

April 6, 2021

Dear Friends:

"The openness of our hearts and minds can be measured by how wide we draw the circle of what we call family."

-Mother Teresa-

During this time of CoVid19, the Ladle has continued to be essential to the people of Ambridge and its surrounding areas, adapting its operation to meet the increasing demands created by this global health crisis. Over the past year the number of meals served on Mondays has grown from 80 to 180. Surprisingly, most participating churches/organizations have joyfully accepted the additional burden of increased meals and cost; they have been eager to find ways to help those who are struggling.

Throughout this period the *Ladle* has responded to rising numbers of requests of those with food insecurity, distributing food items and personal hygiene products from our pantry and offering Shop & Save gift cards for non-perishables. In addition, the *Ladle* continues to offer assistance to those who are facing eviction and/or discontinuation of utilities; provides bus passes to those who rely on public transportation for job interviews, first week or two or employment, doctor's appointments etc.

Over its fifteen years of operation the *Ladle* has evolved, responding to the needs of those it serves. 2020 was no different in that respect, although the degree of need within this past year has grown beyond any of our expectations. Thank you for your generous monetary gift of \$2500. As always, the *Ladle* is grateful to *Sewickley Presbyterian Church* for its commitment to mission. Through your gifts and those of others, the *Ladle* will continue to be a resource to those who struggle to meet basic needs. It is a privilege to partner with you as we serve God and His people in the Ambridge community!

May God continue to bless you and the work that you do in His name! Be safe, my friends!

SSION MAANTRA

Sincerely, fondly,

and The Duga

Aida King Dugan, Director The Ladle and the Hearth



414 Grant Street Sewickley, PA 15143 www.sewickleypresby.org

Dated Material PLEASE EXPEDITE



DONATION DROP-OFF DAYS 9 AM – Noon Saturday, July 17 Saturday, August 7 Saturday, August 21

DAY OF SALE Saturday, September 11 9 AM - 3 PM

Saturday, September 4



Day on the Lawn is the biggest rummage sale you've ever seen! All proceeds from the sale go directly to missions we support both locally and world-wide. It's our biggest event of the year and it takes many months of planning to make it all happen.

As we approach the September sale date, won't you consider volunteering to help with a donation drop-off day? Volunteering is easy -- just show up the day of the drop-off and help to receive donations, sort through them, and then take the items to various storage sites around the church building. We also need help with picking up furniture items through the next two months. If you are able and willing to volunteer, please visit our website to sign-up and/or to find contact information for helping with furniture pick-ups. We need all the help we can get! Thank you!