

1st UU Buildings & Grounds Chronicle, 2017.

New info added at bottom of document. To find particular topics, use Search or Find function. Please advise B&G Chair (Martin Berger, meberger@ysu.edu) of omissions and other errata.

*This document includes occasional observations on **Trash & Recycling** and **Security** matters, since the committees that ought to deal with those functions do not formally exist and activities are apt to go unrecorded unless they are included with B&G.*

B&G annals for previous years may be accessible on the Church website; if not, interested persons should inquire of the B&G Chair as above. Anyone wishing to receive this Chronicle via e-mail should do likewise.

[Infrequently-Asked Question: Why are B&G activities recorded in such detail? Response: Especially in an organization that runs on volunteer efforts, there is a lot of turnover in who does what, so the collective memory as to what was previously done and why tends to be weak. We have had many substantial projects undertaken by one individual who took care of business and then threw away all records. In many instances questions like Where does this wire go? or the recurrent historian's query What were they thinking? have no ready answer. If we write stuff down in a searchable format, future generations can determine what we did and why it seemed like a good idea, or the least of the available evils, at the time. Also, my own memory, even for stuff that I did not so long ago, is increasingly unreliable.]

Landscaping-Drainage. January 6, 2017. On Wednesday 4 January I decided to deal with the drain in the newly-landscaped low area on the South side of the building, where junipers were planted in the Fall and river pebbles deployed in the lowest section, against the Channing Hall windows. The gravel was small enough to fall through the slots in the cast-iron cover of the drain, and I intended to attach a wire-mesh covering over that cover. Falling temperatures were threatened for the following day, so Wednesday was the last opportunity to do the fairly simple job.

Unfortunately, the pebbles had been laid in so thickly that as I scooped them away from the drain and pitched them out of the way, ever more pebbles slid down the steep incline to fall into the drain. The slick black plastic that we had laid down in the Fall encouraged the gravel to descend into the cavity. I got the big Sears wet/dry vacuum from the 1st-floor RE Hall closet and used it to catch a great many pebbles and dump them far enough away to prevent them from sliding down the slope. River pebbles are heavy. The vacuum then sucked up two loads of dirty water, which is also heavy, and I dumped it out onto the lawn. I also removed 2-3 inches of black slime from the bottom of the drain pit, along with the last of the pebbles. The drain had not been blocked by pebbles, as I had feared; the outlet that allows collected groundwater to escape is not at the bottom.

I spent some time in the Kitchen attaching galvanized gutter-guard to the cast-iron cover (which is also heavy) and reinstalled it. The 2x2 box that I had built in a hurry during landscaping, only

to have it rejected by the landscaping guy, was placed around the drain, with bricks arranged to keep gravel out of low spots to keep out further gravel attacks. Sometime after warm weather returns, I'll find or construct a round shield that will let water but not gravel into the hole.

Observations: (1) It's a good thing that we own a big wet/dry vac; (2) this sort of effort is not the most suitable activity to be done by one person in his seventies, with an iffy back; (3) it's surprising that the bright, hard-working landscape expert is apparently a gravity-denialist; and (4) at least we no longer need to mow that sloped area.

Security. January 24, 2017. On Tuesday 17 January, c. 4:30 PM, I got a call from ADT reporting a motion-detector alert in the 2d-floor RE hallway. Susan Miracle and a member of the dance class were just getting out of a car, had not approached the Church, and were unaware of the alarm. I entered the hall, Mace in hand, but expected nobody except a bat or other small creature; a human would have set off a door alarm. The bat duly appeared--c. 6-inch wingspan--and fled down the North stairwell. I followed it into the 1st-floor RE hallway and called to Susan to close the door at the South end of the hall, but before she could do that the bat had moved on into the small hall North of the kitchen. Susan had closed the door to Channing Hall, I pulled down the window at the Kitchen pass-through window, and the bat and I were confined to the small space of the hall.

Eventually the bat decided to squeeze itself under the door and move into Channing to amuse the dancers; at that point I was able to grab it, wrap it in my handkerchief, and release it into the dusk. When I grabbed it the little beast bit my finger, failing to break the skin but holding on with some determination.

Conclusions: (1) Some of the dancers are not fond of bats; (2) we have bats, at least occasionally, even though we no longer have a belfry; (3) bats are elegant creatures, and anyone who may eat a mosquito sometime is a friend and ally.

Security, Sump Pumps. January 24, 2017. Yesterday ADT called c. 6 PM to report a water alarm. Lowell Satre and I donned our boots and went to the Church, fearing that both pumps had somehow failed and that we would face deep water in the Boiler Room and budget-busting damage to the boiler. We found the Boiler-Room floor wet but not submerged; hideous brown water was spewing from the sump well. After a couple of minutes the spewing ceased (enough water having been expelled up and out to lower the level in the sump well and lower the float) and we were able to reach the outlets and unplug both pumps.

The hose clamp securing the flexible tubing to the secondary pump's outlet had corroded and fallen apart. We used one of the spare hose clamps in the pump-parts box and reassembled the pump connection, then drained the boiler to send more water into the sump well for a test, and determined that the system was again working normally. We spent some time wiping brown slime off the top of the boiler and departed.

Conclusions: (1) Now we know that the water alarm works, and that it does not need to be inundated to be set off--the spray from the failed clamp sufficed to generate the signal to ADT. (2) It is a great deal easier to deal with this sort of problem with two people. Hauling the pump

out of the sump well involves maneuvering a 7-foot partially-flexible assemblage of rigid and flexible pipe around the several obstacles in the Boiler Room, and assembling stuff is of course easier with someone holding things in place.

B&G Organization and Tactics. January 24, 2017. Bob Seibold has suggested that B&G ought to run a **monthly Work Party** to address specific, doable tasks. People who have been around the Church a long time and still have functioning memories will recall that for many years we used to have monthly Work Parties (initiated by my predecessor as B&G Chair, Joe Kengor), and that we gave up two or three years ago when participation declined to the vanishing point. I'm all for reviving the effort; let's discuss **when** we should do them (10 AM Saturday was the old custom--maybe another time would work better), maybe we should provide child-care, better donuts, etc. **Suggestions welcome!**

Another approach has occurred to me, and I can try this with less consultation and preparation: I'll post **small, defined projects** (such as scraping and priming, or painting, one smallish area) to be done whenever one or two volunteers and I can meet and spend an hour--no more than two hours. I'll send out some suggestions soon. We might even have some ad-hoc special-project efforts without the B&G Chair's personal participation, some day.

Any other ideas as to how we might generate more participation? Anyone?

Plumbing/Toilets. February 9, 2017. On 7 February our Office Administrator, Heather Best, reported that the 2d-floor restroom toilet had failed to flush; she had determined that the chain had disconnected itself from the flapper valve, so she had reattached it. I tightened the wire hook and thought that the fix was complete until I noted that refill water was not flowing out of the hose from the flush valve but seeping in slowly from somewhere else. Office files indicated that the mineral-coated flush valve had been installed in November 2005. I visited Lowe's and purchased a new Fluidmaster flush valve. (Lowe's no longer carried the Korcky Quietfill that I was replacing--I'd have bought a new one of those, since the dead one had lasted 11 years.) Perhaps the new Fluidmaster will last longer, as Youngstown is said to have reduced the amount of mineral crud in the water.

Fire Alarm. March 11, 2017. Earlier this week I accompanied the Fire Foe inspector on his rounds as he determined that all is well with the Simplex fire-alarm system. Unfortunately this system produces loud noise inside the building but **does not link to the Fire Department or anybody else outside the building.** I inquired about connectivity and received a quote for a cell-phone-type hookup @ \$1720 plus \$48 monthly for monitoring. I've alerted the Board and the B&G list to this problem, appealing for somebody to look into other options for monitoring

Electrical. March 11, 2017. Yesterday Jim Stone and I worked on the outlets above the sinks in the Nursery and the adjacent RE room. Some months ago we had a building inspector make the rounds, and learned that current Code requires that outlets near a sink must have GFI production (GFI: Ground Fault Interrupter, which greatly reduces the chance of electrocution). At the moment the outlet in the Nursery is GFI-protected but the outlets over the sink next door

and on the outside wall of that room are dead. We'll need to spend some more time messing with the wires, and may end up installing a GFI breaker in the relevant circuit box.

[Subsequent investigation revealed that wires had come out inside the crowded opening in the wall, and the GFI function is now in operation in the two outlets next to sinks, as well as in the exterior wall of the non-Nursery room, which is downstream from the outlets where we installed the GFI. Still need to make proper labels for the affected outlets. April 11, 2017.]

Sanitation. March 11, 2017. The above electrical efforts required us to move a good deal of miscellaneous stuff that was piled on the sink-counters, and beneath the piles we found a good deal of mouse manure, which I shall sweep up today. It has almost certainly been there for a long time, and we saw no indication of poor crumb-disposal by recent RE teachers. (There has been more mouse pollution in the Kitchen, where food has been left unprotected and packages gnawed. (No, a plastic bag is not secure against rodent fangs.)

Work Party. 8 April 2017. Bob Seibold, who has taken part in several B&G efforts, proposed reviving our **monthly Work Parties**. We had given up on them because of lack of participation a year or two previously, hoping to generate better attendance by means of less-frequent, more ambitious rallies. This time there was extensive publicity, and child care was to be offered in order to attract more of our younger members. (Becky Harker agreed to summon a child-watcher if anyone proposed to attend with children; that didn't happen, but we'll try it again next time. Thanks to Becky.

We had planned to have Bob parcel out assignments to the throngs of volunteers who would appear, freeing me up to operate my chipper-shredder in an effort to reduce the great masses of limbs, twigs, etc., that have accumulated on the East side of the RE Wing. I had prepared a list of necessary tasks, most of which have been on our to-do list for years.

Participation. Louisa Berger, Martin Berger, Cathy Kajut, Bob Seibold, Anita Wesler. The actual cast of characters was smaller than we had hoped for, but more than we had a few years ago. Anita and I ran the **chipper**, which started without much difficulty, and ground up two bags of mulch, reducing the amount of woody material piled across the sidewalk next to the hemlock trees but making no dent in the big pile of unshredded material (a.k.a. Much Mountain) against the building. Two stoppages were caused by the fresh, flexible material. Quite a lot of the branches were trimmed with my lopper to facilitate feeding them into the machine, and a neat pile of branches was made. (I ground some of that pile the next morning, before Church began.) I've left the chipper in the back RE stairwell, since it requires considerable time and effort to get it in or out of a vehicle. Branches too thick to grind were cut up with my chainsaw and taken home.

Louisa and Cathy worked on the **kitchen**, cleaning and organizing. Louisa took photos of crud left in the sink and of the more spectacular mold in four Wedgewood pizza boxes that had been secreted under the table in the Fall Room. She has used some of those images to make a Downton Abbey-themed document that might encourage more rational sanitation practices.

Bob **weeded** the lawn on the Elm Street, or front, side of the building and dug out massive accumulations of sodden leaves from the street **gutter**.

Anita and I straightened and moved two items from the East side of the building: a roll of **outdoor carpet** (found and saved during a neighborhood cleanup some time ago) and a big roll of **black plastic** (left over from landscaping outside Channing South wall). Both items have been put in the fenced corridor between our North RE wall and the Rodef Sholom fence. The combination lock on the gate to that corridor opened easily; evidently the penetrating oil and profanity employed several months ago have eventually had some effect.

A useful Work Party. The most conspicuous still-undone task is dealing with the three or four bags of **trash** in the back corner of our new **Parking Lot**. These need to be loaded into a wheelbarrow, sorted to separate recyclables from garbage, and disposed of. Bags have been torn apart by critters and are more disgusting than they would be if intact.

Trash. May 4, 2017. Since the Work Party I have dealt with the two largest **bags from the new parking lot**. It seems to take about 45 minutes to sort contents, put garbage in trash, and clean and recycle the salvageable items. A fair-weather task, perhaps to be finished up at the 13 May Work Party.

Mulch. May 4, 2017. After the April Work Party I left my chipper-shredder at Church (in the vestibule of the Northeast RE door (nearest the synagogue) and returned several times to work on **Mulch Mountain**. Anita came in twice to assist, making the job significantly shorter. Heather took a call from an unidentified neighbor who complained about incessant noise endured while walking his dog (on 6 different days, which means that he noticed most of the grinding sessions). Noise from the grinder is slightly more than from an average lawnmower, in my estimate, and much less than that from a chainsaw; in any case, the call came during the last day's effort, shortly before I loaded up machine, ramps, etc., and hauled it all home. A few branches have since accumulated, but the **mountain of branches is gone**, replaced by a much-enlarged heap of ground-up mulch. Next step is to deploy the mulch somewhere.

Downspout. May 4, 2017. About a week ago I was notified that the **downspout on the South side of the old building, nearest to the Porch**, had fallen. I succeeded in getting it stuck back on the wall, but the upper anchoring device that is supposed to attach the spout to the brick is beyond my reach. **Need one or two people to assist with ladder.** [Done 14 May; see below.]

Toilet. May 11. On Sunday 7 May, while checking out a reported toilet-paper shortage, I found that the right-hand toilet in the Women's Restroom had its **lid broken off**. I purchased a replacement seat and installed it on the 11th. Old toilet-seat is available to anyone wishing to make it into a picture frame. [Nobody seemed to want it, so it has been converted into BTUs in my woodstove.]

Lids for Outdoor Recycling Containers. Early June. After many delays, I finished making metal lids for the yellow plastic recycling containers. Matt had donated these 2 lidless plastic

cans (c. 40-gallon) long ago, and I had made lids from on-hand chipboard, which disintegrated in the weather despite many layers of protective coating. The new ones are made from part of the metal door that was removed from the Fall Room emergency exit. (More of that metal is stored in the former Sound Room.)

Work Party 13 May, 10 AM. Bob Seibold has scheduled this effort, and a Rain Day a week later if necessary. I'll be there on the 13th, rain or shine, since there's a lot of indoor work that needs doing.

Ibid. 14 May. Work-Party participants: Matt Alspaugh; Louisa and Martin Berger; Andy, Gillian, and Melissa Crabb; Marguerite Felice, Clayton Henderson, Roger LaFontaine, Tim Raridon, Bob Seibold, Jim Stone, Trudy Weatherby. I'm not sure who did what. Bob worked on leaves and weeds in the Elm Street greenery, Andy mowed; Tim, Andy, Clayton, and I secured the above-mentioned **downspout**, Crabbs **re-stripped the Parking Lot** and dealt with the 3 remaining bags of trash in the lot; I sprayed poison ivy and other weeds in the lot and replaced a ceiling-light bulb and an exit-sign bulb; Matt and Jim worked on the **organ**; Louisa brought food and worked in Kitchen and Fall Room. The folding tables from the Channing Chair Closet had their adjustable feet secured with threadlock on the screws and glue on the intersection between leg-ends and feet. ((Feet have been removed and left in various odd places from time to time, causing wobbling of tables and potential damager to floor.) Quite a useful Work Party.

Kitchen. Late May. Hot faucet in big sink was reported dribbling; turned out to shut off properly if carefully handled, but to drip if handle was pushed all the way back. Rick from Faison Plumbing replaced the faucet kit, but that didn't correct the problem completely, and a new handle had to be ordered. This part arrived after about a week and a half and was successfully installed.

Tree. 6 June. Anita Wesler and I trimmed the leaning tree outside the Illinois entrance. This tree was planted in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the church's founding and dedicated to the (then) youth of the congregation. When the tree was tilted by the soil-compressing weight of a machine during one of the unsuccessful efforts to repair the steeple, we deployed an arrangement of steel cables to drag the tree back to its proper upright position, This effort failed, at least in part because we didn't tighten the cables often enough. (The failure to tighten cables was at least partially due to our inability to assemble people to do what was at least a 2-person job.) As the 125th anniversary approached, there was some sentiment for removing the tree and replacing it, and other sentiment for removing some of the branches on the low (street) side of the tree in the hope that new growth would go vertical and the tree would eventually straighten up above the still-tilted low portion.

There was no systematic polling or voting, but we referred the matter to our tree authority, Frank Bishop (who had devised the cabling system). Frank leaned toward modifying the existing tree, pointing out that we could always cut it down and start over if the result of the trimming was deemed unsatisfactory in the future. So Anita and I removed some branches, with the result thus far that very few have noticed the change. (There was a Board meeting about 3 hours after we

finished up, and despite bright sunshine, none of the members noticed that anything had been done to the tree.) The trimming resulted in a pile of branches, which I hoped to convert to mulch at the Work Party of 10 June.

Work Party, 10 June. Present: Matt Alspaugh, Clayton Henderson, Alex McC , Ralph Malmer, Bob Seibold, Anita Wesler, MB.

I arrived c. 9:30 AM and made **coffee**, using the airpot machine. This created a mess on the counter and floor; the hole at the bottom of the machine's basket was blocked by a wad of grounds. (Probably someone had attempted to make coffee without using a filter; I'll omit reflections on the reluctance of people to read instructions, etc.) I then made coffee and went to open the door from the first RE stairway to the outdoors, and the **crashbar handle** came off in my hand; someone had removed the oddball bolt (presumably using an Allen wrench) and disposed of the part. (Matt thinks it more likely that the bolt somehow worked loose on its own, whereupon whoever had the bar come off in his or her hand quietly set the thing back in place.) Alex arrived as I was failing to repair the crashbar with profanity, and he and I sorted through all the miscellaneous bolts in the B&G Closet, finding one bolt/nut pair that works as a temporary repair.

Alex helped me unload the **chipper-shredder** from my car, and he used the church's circular saw to **slice up the ugly pieces of plywood** that have stood against the East RE wall since they were used in attempts to keep steeple-fixing machinery from sinking into mud.

Medical Emergency. As I finished putting the chipper together, Anita said that she felt a bit of vertigo, and thought that she would go home. She then fell to the ground without extending an arm to break the fall, and struck either sidewalk or hard dirt with her face. Alex responded expertly (he turns out to have a Master's in Sports Medicine and has a great deal of experience) and the 911 call brought an ambulance very promptly. Anita was admitted to Emergency at St. Elizabeth's and remained there till the following afternoon.

After the ambulance and Anita departed, the chipper transformed the large pile of branches into **mulch**, loaded by Alex, Clayton, Ralph and me. We **set plywood on the ground** outside the East RE wall and along the fenced area between our building and the synagogue. (Clayton was able to read the tarnished numbers on the padlock, which opened easily.) Mulch was spread over some of the plywood, producing what we all considered to be a considerable improvement in appearance. Some poison ivy has reemerged in the fenced area and will require spraying.

Bob and Clayton dug out a great many **weeds**.

I had provided 2 dozen donuts, of which 2 or 3 were left in the fridge for Coffee Hour.

On the whole a **quite successful Work Party**, apart from Anita's alarming fall. There remains plenty of stuff to be done--we've neglected indoor items that have been on the to-do list for years, so if it rains on future Work-Party days, don't stay home because of weather. Thanks to

Bob for pressing for the revival of our monthly Work Parties. [June 23, 2017. Anita went home from St. Elizabeth Sunday afternoon, and she and Linda Mohn retrieved Anita's car on Tuesday. Anita is ok except for some facial abrasions, which are said to be a temporary issue.]

Office. June 23, 2017. Changes have been made in the **Office**, as per requests from our Office Manager Heather Best and Treasurer Louisa Berger. Matt donated a large two-part wood **desk**, which has been assembled and placed into service, enabling Heather (or anyone else who is using the computer) to see the computer screen and also the Office door. The old metal desk has been repositioned and a good deal of clutter has been eliminated or moved out of the way. No expense involved yet, save for a bit of computer cable and a connector to accommodate the repositioning of the computer.

Water Meter. June 23, 2017. The Youngstown Water Department announced that we needed to replace the not-very-old meter with a new one that is said to be more efficiently monitored. I picked up the new city-provided meter, per instructions from Marita Emmert, who works for the Water Department, plus a flange adapter kit (last one in stock at C&V, \$103), and met the plumber at 9 AM for installation. He was able to do the installation without disconnecting the sump pipes that create an access problem. The City inspector arrived in the afternoon and connected the existing wire cable to the new exterior readout (next to the Cave doors) despite drenching rain; plumber returned to reconnect a copper line that he had cut (using an impressive new coupling system). Water is running again, so we'll not face a Sunday unable to run the dishwasher or flush toilets.

Water Intrusion. June 23, 2017. While looking for tools to aid in the meter project, I discovered a rapid drip in the Buildings & Grounds closet. **Water is coming through the wall**, and we need to check the downspout at the NW corner of the old building, as well as the drain at the bottom of the window-well outside the B&G Closet. This job requires two people.

Furniture (Chairs, Board Room). 3 July 2017 Louisa noted that she found chairs hard to move on the carpet. The legs' ends, which lacked sliders, had 1/4" holes drilled in them, so in order to use nail-type round sliders from Home Depot, it was necessary to cut dowels and glue them into the existing holes, then drill starter holes in the dowel inserts, and then drive in the 40 new sliders.

Paint, Office. 3 July 2017. Rearranging of furniture in the Office revealed more clearly the grimy condition of the East wall, which had accumulated black residue above the HVAC floor vents. Cleaning the wall made very little visible difference, so I have painted that wall with 2 coats of the same pale yellow Sherwin-Williams paint used on the walls of the 1st-floor RE hallway. Since the rest of the room is painted in a vague pale pinkish tan, it will be necessary to

paint the rest of the room so it will match the East wall. I hope to do this during the next couple of weeks; I'll do everything except the areas covered by the new desk, which will have to wait till I can get help to move the desk and deal with the computer wiring, etc.

Work Party 8 July. (Sent out 4 July.) Plenty of things to do, indoor and out. (Spray poison ivy in Parking Lot and elsewhere, move mulch, prime peeled-paint areas, check the window-well as per 23 June note, above, clean other window-wells, check roof gutters, and lots of perennial favorites that have been on the B&G agenda for years, aging to perfection in their undoneness.

Work Party, 8 July. Present: Matt Alspaugh, Joseph Boyd; Andy, Melissa, Alison, Jillian, and Gwendolyn Crabb; Clayton Henderson, Bob Seibold, Trudee Weatherby, Martin Berger.

I arrived c. 9 AM, put away the Kitchen broom and dustpan and the extension cord left on the floor of the closet across from the Kitchen, made coffee, and emptied the moldy compost. Several people arrived c. 10 AM; Trudee kept track of workers and showed people the list of tasks to be done. Since we had enough people to raise the big ladder, we **checked the rain gutters** on the RE Wing, something that had not been done for a long time. Securing the gutter-guard panels with screws, which we did whenever we were last able to get to the roof, seems to have kept the gutters clear, and there was no muck to remove. Matt and Joseph spent most of their time in ministerial-transition discussions, but were on hand for the ladder-raising.

The **window-well outside the B&G Closet** was determined to be clog-free; evidently the water that entered the closet during or shortly after the heavy downpour a couple of weeks ago was not the fault of the drain. We labeled the plywood cover of the window-well to facilitate the next reinstallation.

Andy noted problems with **lights in the Kitchen ceiling**. We replaced three T-8 fluorescent tubes, and Andy determined that the small one-square ceiling light uses two U-shaped bulbs. He made a pilgrimage to Home Depot for replacement U-bulbs, which were installed. (Andy delivered dead fluorescents to Home Depot for disposal; now that we know that the store takes dead fluorescents, we can avoid some of the traffic jams and long waits at the infrequent hazmat collections.)

Poison ivy and other weeds in the Parking Lot and along the tree line East of the RE Wing were blasted with poison poison. Andy was certain that the large unidentified plant at the corner where the Illinois entrance meets the Sanctuary exterior wall was a weed, and he pulled it. Much of the remaining **mulch** was deployed along the East side of the building, covering the plywood that we laid out last month and making room for more mulch when we grind up more branches. Bob hacked and dug at other **weeds**, and was still at it when the Crabbs and I departed c. 2 PM.

The **window wells** outside the big 1st-floor RE room were cleaned out. One had a lot of dry crud, which was removed with the smaller wet/dry vacuum; the other (where the dehumidifier drains) was wet with brown slime, about half an inch deep. After emptying the vacuum and

removing the filters, we slurped up the crud with the vacuum. I feared that the drain was clogged, but wire-brushing the drain cover and poking hardened crud out of the holes allowed the drain to work. [**Note: Exterior windowsills need priming, painting, and some hardware.**]

The **Patio** was in a gross state from leaves and trash accumulated during the Winter. Three push-brooms and the vacuum were used to remove most of the crud, despite a lively breeze. The nozzle on the Patio hose required two cleanings to clear its filter of brownish gunk, evidently from inside the hose. The nozzle works fine now, and was used to clean out the wet/dry vacuum.

This was a very productive Work Party; thanks to all who took part. This is the way that the Work Party is supposed to operate.

Next Work Party. This will take place on 12 August. Bob intends to work on **bushes** at the Patio fence, so we'll hope for dry weather. There are numerous spots inside the building where **paint** has flaked off; these can be scraped, primed, and painted. Both bushes and paint are multi-person jobs, involving ladders that need to be held, crud that needs to be cleaned up, etc. Someone needs to run a small rake through the three compost bins to search for a stainless-steel gizmo from the air-pot coffeemaker, which may have been dumped along with coffee grounds. The usual picking up of random trash, checking of exit-sign bulbs, etc., is also needed.

Office Painting. 31 July 2017. I've been working on this (see above, 3 July). A slow process because of stuff that must be moved out of the way, and the need to avoid getting in the way of frenzied office work necessitated by the ministerial change, etc. Jim Rak will help move the monstrously heavy file cabinet to allow access to the wall, when there's an opportunity to work.

Kitchen and Coffee. 1 August 2017. We've had needless hassles with coffeemakers, which are vital to our church's primary ritual of Coffee Hour. After the Airpot worked fine for a year or two, it began pouring coffee out over the top of the machine instead of into the Airpot, causing waste of costly coffee, shortages of available coffee, and general consternation. After about three weeks of disaster, we determined that the wire device in the grounds basket had disappeared, allowing the paper filter to sit directly on the drain-hole and clog it. Two new wire screens were ordered; the first one vanished after a week. (It seems to have been rediscovered, buried in the silverware drawer, this past Sunday.) I have failed to find stainless-steel wire to make replacements, save for a 1-mm spool that is far too thin to work. (Since some believe aluminum wire to be toxic, we have to find stainless steel.) There's stainless mesh at Star Supply, but only in 4x8-foot pieces that cost \$399. We'll probably order some stainless mesh online, despite the shipping charge, so we can cut circles to make replacement filter-holders. Suggestions welcome.

On Sunday the Hospitality Committee could not find the stem for the percolator; it later turned up in the silverware drawer. If we could get people to put coffeemaker parts in the relevant coffeemakers, we would save a great deal of frustration as well as unwelcome unnecessary expense. Suggestions welcome as to how to do that. 10 Aug. 2017. I have received a roll of

stainless mesh, and will cut a couple of 5-inch circles in an attempt to provide spare filter-holders. [Mesh is pretty stiff, hard to work, nasty around edges; we'll see how it's received.]

Bushes. 10 Aug. 2017. Jim Morgan and I trimmed the bushes along the Patio fence. This was much easier than it was a year ago, when the bushes had been allowed to expand for several years. My electric hedge-clippers and Little Giant ladder were useful, and the Church's newish self-propelled mower made it possible to clear the steep bank below the hedges, making it easier to climb up and reach the inside of the bushes without undue hazard.

Work Party 12 August 2017. (To-Do List.) In addition to the usual cleanup, bulb-checking, etc., there are some particular tasks that ought to be done.

Someone needs to use a claw to go through the top few inches of **compost** in all 3 bins, seeking the 2 missing wire filter-holders. (If they were thrown into trash, they're gone, but if someone inadvertently dumped them into compost, where coffee grounds are supposed to go, they may be retrievable.) [Done, unproductively.]

There are piles of **mixed trimmings from hedges**, which Jim Morgan and I trimmed Tuesday morning (10 Aug.). These need to be separated into shreddable and too-big categories and the shreddables put in the Grind Pile. Wheelbarrow is temporarily stored in the Patio. Shreddables need some surgery to eliminate branching bits that will make them hard to stuff into the shredder. Larger pieces need to modification so that they can be carried away for eventual conversion to BTUs. (Any woodburners are welcome to the larger bits—I have more firewood than room at home.) [Undone.]

I'll bring claw, lopper, and small electric chainsaw.

Some of the **lower branches on the berry-bearing tree** outside the Illinois door need trimming so that whoever mows the lawn (most likely Jim Rak) won't be bothered by branches in the face. [Done.]

The big metal **sign** facing Elm St. is obscured by a fine crop of **daisies**, which need to be shortened. Jim suggests transplanting the ones directly in front of the sign, moving them to a jungly corner of the Patio (North side, right at the NE corner of the upper level), but for now we should just trim them pending a Horticultural Subcommittee review. [Undone.]

Indoors, we have small **labels** indicating which electrical breaker boxes are where. These labels need to be installed near light switches in all rooms. (We have several boxes, and it is not always clear where to look for the breaker when a room goes dark.) All outlets are supposed to have been labeled as to which breaker-box should be checked; someone should check around the building for stray unlabeled outlets. [Undone.]

Another indoor task is identifying **damaged or chipping paint**. We need a list of target areas.

Some areas are already primed; others need scraping and priming. If we have a lot of workers, perhaps we can bring the big ladder into the Sanctuary and get at the nasty bit on the ceiling. We have lots of dropcloths, as well as cardboard sheets, and can do painting if we have people to help move stuff, delegate brushwork to those who have some non-disastrous experience with paint, etc. Any chips, dust, etc., must be cleaned up, and all this done as quietly as possible because there will be an activity in progress in Channing Hall. [Undone.]

Work Party 12 Aug. 2017. Present: Martn Berger, Jim Morgan, Richard Palmer. Jim Rak, Bob Seibold, Trudee Weatherby.

Since we had enough sturdy people to raise and maneuver the big ladder, we concentrated on the **overhanging tree branches** that were in contact with the porch roof and roof on the Elm Street end of the old building. Jim Rak was atop the ladder, wielding my electric polesaw. The Church's manual lopper/saw also came into use, mostly on the smaller tree outside the Illinois door. Some substantial limbs came down; most were trimmed of small branches with loppers and some of the larger pieces were cut into woodstove-size sections. Most of the small stuff was moved to the East side of the building, where--a week after the Work Party--most still needs to be trimmed into mulchable form. Some of the larger sections remain on the Elm Street lawn, awaiting cutting-up and removal.

Some small bits were removed from the **berry-bearing tree** outside the Illinois door, and numerous sprouts removed around the trunk of one of the small trees. Trudee worked in the Office, assembling **Orders of Service** for the following day's service. Bob refined the previous trimming of the **Patio bushes**. Jim Morgan dug out a weedy area at the North end of the brick retaining wall in the Patio, with the intention of transplanting some of the daisies that interfere with visibility of our Wayside Pulpit sign.

I raked through the Compost bins, without finding the **missing screens from the airport coffeemaker**. I also trimmed branches for mulching, but my efforts (after the Work Party dispersed and through the subsequent week) were slowed by my injured foot.

A dozen donuts were consumed. A productive Work Party; undone items from the agenda should be manageable in small-group campaigns before the next monthly effort. [Didn't happen.]

Work Party 9 Sept. 2017. (Out of chronological order, but this Work Party was a sequel to the August one.) Present: Alison and Andy Crabb, Korey Gall, Ralph Malmer, Bob Seibold, Trudee Weatherby, Martin Berger.

Trudee stayed in the Kitchen to keep track of attendance and direct volunteers to the donuts.

Most of the pieces of tree-branches, etc., from the August trimming were still piled in various places. The medium-sized branches left on the Elm Street lawn had been dragged to the north corner of Church property and left in front of the Patio fence, the rest hauled to the East side of

the RE Wing. I hauled my chipper-shredder to Church on Friday 8 Sept., and was disappointed to find that all the Church gas-cans had been emptied. Andy went off to refill them, and while we awaited his return, work began on the branches in the Elm Street yard, using my electric saw.

I went home and got my gas saw plus lots of gloves and ear-protectors; the Elm Street wood was curt up and loaded onto Ralph's truck. Korey, Ralph, Andy, and I ran the chipper, reducing the mountain of twigs and branches to mulch (4 or 5 chipper-bags). Because the stuff going into the machine was trimmed and nobody crammed in too much material at once, we were able to work for two to three hours without the need to stop and unclog the chipper. About half of the stuff to be ground awaits processing; this should be done before Winter sets in.

Bob dealt with a great many weeds.

A productive Work Party.

Sanctuary Lights, Exit Lights. C. 13 Sept. Heather Best steadied the big stepladder as I used the extendable grabber to remove and replace five bulbs in the arch above the chancel. There is still one gap in the lights, as one of the sockets has been bad for years and is out of reach for repair. New bulbs are 9w LEDs, replacing incandescents that would draw 60w had they not burned out. I bought replacement exit-light bulbs, since one of the principal types was out of stock; these draw 20w or 15w, burn 24/7, and require frequent replacement. LED replacements are not yet available. Replacing the signs will cost \$20+ and ought to be considered seriously.

Patio Safety Issues. September 10, 2017. During this morning's Coffee Hour, I shooed small children off the plywood cover of the Patio window well (SW corner of the Patio). De-jungling efforts with bushes, vines, etc., may have made that area more accessible attractive. The brick wall that separates the upper and lower levels of the Patio is unlikely to go suddenly from leaning to collapsing, but under-supervised small children are in some peril when they run along the top of the wall, risking a 5-foot drop onto concrete. I shall purchase 8 stakes and some plastic mesh to make it more difficult for the youngest members of our congregation to learn the hard way about the power of gravity. [Decided to economize on stakes; will use broomsticks, etc. September 20, 2017.]

Paper-Towel Holder, Kitchen Island. C. 12 Sept. 2017. The wooden spindle-gizmo was dropped and the wooden base broke in two. It has been re-glued, reinforced, and repainted.

Folding Chairs, Channing Hall. After the Roger Jones memorial service, I noted that we had fewer chairs available in Channing, and wondered if someone had borrowed or stolen some of them. There were 57 in Channing (no record of how many we bought a few years ago, thanks to the custom of discarding all manner of records). Al Pierce reported on Sunday (17 Sept.) that there were some in the Sanctuary, where I had previously looked; Al had indeed spotted them, and I have returned all nine from Sanctuary to Channing. After the memorial service, for which many chairs had been assembled from various locations to increase Sanctuary seating, someone had folded up most of the nine and stashed them behind things. The impression that we had lost

a lot of chairs had been furthered by rearrangement in Channing which had crammed chairs so tightly together as to eliminate leg-room and to cramp East-West lanes uncomfortably tight for anyone walking and impassable for wheelchairs. This is an issue that will go away for a while as we move services upstairs to the Sanctuary. **[Note: Need to clean and repaint chair-caddies.]**

ADT Alarm, 11 PM Tuesday 19 Sept. 2017. *[Note to new readers: Security issues aren't part of Buildings & Grounds' responsibilities, but for some years we have had no Security Committee, and I expect that we'll remain unable to recruit and organize one until we have some nasty incident that will get people's attention. In the meantime, I include such incidents as I know of in the B&G Chronicle so that they'll be recorded somewhere.]* I got the call, which indicated that a door alarm had gone off--therefore not a bat setting off the motion detectors. I searched the building, Mace canister in hand, and found no intruders. The Elm Street main door, as indicated by the display on the keypad (Zone 11), was the problem. The crashbar was properly set to lock, but the tongue that emerges from the crashbar to fit into the recess in the latch was gummed up and had not stuck itself out when the crashbar was set to lock. I've sprayed the appropriate bits of the crashbar and it seemed to be working normally. [Working fine 23 Sept.]

Sanctuary Windows. September 23, 2017. During preparations for our first Fall service upstairs, Rev. Joseph noted the lack of air conditioning or ventilation in the Sanctuary. Because this service (plus the dinner in Channing afterward) will initiate a series of events commemorating our 125th anniversary as a congregation, a large attendance is expected. So is a temperature of about 90 degrees. Joseph asked me to assess the possibility of opening windows. As I recalled, we had opened windows on diagonally opposite corners in the past, so I worked on the NW and SE corner windows. On the NW window, half of the screws on the window-handles were missing. (I also found a lot of other screws incompletely screwed in and one missing.) With scraping tool and hammer, I dug out some paint and did what I could to loosen the windows, but could not budge either one. I'll bring in a dent-removing kit, which is driven by a small hydraulic jack (like a bottle jack), and hope to find some help tomorrow morning.

Inspection of the windows reveals that **caulking, wood, and paint on the exterior frames are in terrible condition.** (This is not the fault of the painters who recently did the hardest and most conspicuous parts of the exterior--porch, South side eaves, main doors, etc.--in an expeditious, cooperative manner, with attractive results. They did what they had contracted to do.) Some of the exterior sills on the South side of the Sanctuary are also in need of attention, as is a smallish triangular bit on the roof above the Minister's Office, visible from the Illinois sidewalk steps. We can't afford to hire this work done, and since much of it requires the big ladder that takes multiple persons to wrangle into position, it is unlikely that B&G will be able to get to it soon. **The longer we wait to deal with it, the more likely it is that we'll have to spend far more on woodwork than it will take to scrape and paint.**

[September 25, 2017--The generic Porta-Power device was tried Sunday morning--thanks to Jim Rogers for holding it in place--and proved unable to open the NW window. I quit before blowing the window frame apart with the full 4 tons of push available. The window may have been painted shut on the exterior, though I don't know when that might have been done; I'll need help deploying the ladder to work on it. Failure to open the window did not make the service more unbearably hot, since by 11 AM it was hotter outdoors than in the building.]

Child-Preserving Barrier, Patio. C. 30 Sept. 2017. Uneasiness at the prospect of young children playing on the Patio's brick wall led to installation of a series of vertical rods supporting a 24-inch plastic mesh reminder that the wall is off-limits. Orange plastic-fiber rope has been woven through the top of the mesh as a visual reminder. Thanks to Diana Palardy for pointing out the problem, and Jims Stone and Morgan and Alk Pierce for help with installation.

Work Party 14 Oct. 2017. Present: Ralph Malmer, Jim Morgan, Jim Rak, Bob Seibold, MB, plus Cathy Kajut.

As per recommendations from the City's Fire Marshal, Jim Morgan and I removed the **exit sign from the Patio Room**. This measure eliminates the legal requirement that the room's exterior doors must be unlocked whenever anyone is in the building, as must the Patio gate. A new box is to be installed in place of the sign.

Bob attacked **weeds**, restoring to visibility our vandalized ADT warning sign. Whether the sturdy, fast-growing vegetation with small blue flowers is a weed or a bit of decorative greenery (and bluary) remains unresolved. Jim Morgan trimmed the daisies obscuring the bottom of the big white metal sign facing Elm Street. Ralph raked **leaves**, and hauled away several bags of them.

Jim Morgan and I got out the big ladder and I scraped and painted the **triangular wooden piece in the roof** above the Minister's Office. This bit was conspicuously flaked and grayed, particularly after the recent repainting of other painted surfaces facing Elm and Illinois. **The triangular piece is rotten and needs replacement.**

JIM MORGAN FIGURED OUT A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN THE PROCEDURE FOR WRANGLING THE LADDER AND GAINING ACCESS TO THE RE WING ROOF. Instead of setting the ladder against the gutter on the East side of the building, we set the ladder's foot against the brick enclosure for the Fall Room exterior stairs. This produces a position leaned against the building so that both the flat side and the edge are braced against solid structure, and the ladder is much safer to use as well as easier to put up. We've been doing it wrong for decades!

Jim Rak cleaned the **Fall Room floor**, including the especially grubby part from which the chest freezer was recently removed. We had intended to move a heavy metal cabinet from the Board Room, but the small dolly had been borrowed and the cabinet will have to wait.

We **bled the boiler**, a process that had not been done for too long. I also **de-glaciated the Kitchen freezer**, which had last been done about three weeks ago by Anita Wesler, Linda Mohn, and Louisa Berger. **We're going to need a service call to figure out why the ice-maker has quit working, and to consult on whether the defrosting system ought to be working.**

Cathy Kajut worked on the seasonal decoration of the window in the **window of the Elm Street staircase**, a project that used to be done by the late Joan Bushey.

A productive Work Party; thanks to all who helped.

Kitchen Refrigerator. (Late October.) The failure of the **icemaker** led to the summoning of an actual refrigerator-repair person, who replaced the broken icemaker with a used one from his collection (the same icemaker fits several different brands). He also fixed the **freezer's defroster**, which for years we've assumed was just absent from the design. The constant accumulation of ice, which had to be removed about once a month, seems to have ceased.

Floor, second-floor hallway in front of mailboxes. (Late October.) The gray vinyl floor tiles have begun to come loose. I've put a warning label on colorful duct tape around the one that had escaped from its place, and until we can redo some or all of the 2d-floor RE hall, will replace broken tiles with some left over from an RE classroom upgrade that don't match but aren't conspicuously different in appearance.

Floor, second-floor Restroom. (5 November 2017.) The floor, composed of small square ceramic tiles, had been disintegrating for years; I've been saving escaped tiles in the cabinet above the toilet in the hope of sometime gluing them all back in. A few that had been reattached were irregular in height, in part because of dampness and deformation in the underlying layer of waffly material. (Jon Locketti has deduced that the tile floor was originally attached to the supporting mat in a flooring format common in the late 1960s.) Recently the tiles had been coming loose at an increased rate, and Louisa Berger, our Treasurer and the spouse of our Buildings & Grounds chair, had slipped on an unattached, loose tile and fallen.

That episode increased the urgency of Doing Something About the Floor, a project that Jon Locketti and I had for some time been discussing and intending to do. We intended to use a fairly fast-setting goop to fill in the low spots left by missing tiles and hold the remaining tiles in place, but as I prepared for the job far more tiles came loose, many of them being picked up by the crumb-seeking canister vacuum; so we removed the rest of the tiles. Those closest to the restroom doorway were firmly fastened, being attached to the concrete floor of the 1960s-built RE Wing; most of the restroom is in the 1920s original Church building, with wood flooring.

The new flooring, installed during and after the Sunday service, is a woodish-looking material that fits together tightly (when skillfully installed) and looks a great deal better than the old floor. Jim Rak did the reinstalling of the toilet.

Plumbing--Sink in second-floor Nursery. (5 November 2017.) The spigot for the small sink had been allowing ever-smaller amounts of water to emerge for some time. I had removed and cleaned the screen at the end of the spout without increasing the flow, and had decided that we would need to spend pledge dollars on a plumber's visit. Jim Rak looked into the problem during a period when nobody but Jon could get into the restroom, and succeeded in removing crud from the nursery-sink pipes; so the Nursery now has a modest but adequate flow. The ability to deal with such problems ourselves, instead of hiring out the work, is a species of stewardship that is as useful as increasing pledging or fundraising.

Work Party 11 Nov. 2017. Present: Jan Grigsby, Clayton Henderson, Cathy Kajut, Ralph Malmer, Mike Mastropietro, Jim Rak, Tim Raridon, Bob Seibold, Trudy Weatherbee, Anita Wesler, Lisbet White, Martin Berger.

I arrived c. 9:05 AM. Kitchen-sink drained was full of crockery which I put away; 2d-floor hallway light near mailboxes was left on.

Clayton was first to arrive, and he and I separated the sections of the big aluminum ladder and carried one of its segments into the Sanctuary. We moved a pew and with Mike's and Jim's aid positioned the ladder against the wall. The **peeling paint near the organ console** was scraped off, and the area primed and painted. We have matching paint for the ceiling, but no record of what was used on the cornice below it. (That was done by professionals some years ago, and no record survives as to what was used.) Eventually the cornice should be repainted with the same white used on all the exterior doors.

Tim brought in the wire mesh for repairing the **wall outside the Illinois Closet** and returned to work on the missing plaster. He and Jim were working on the wall repair when I left c. 1:40 PM.

Ralph and Lisbet cleaned the area above the **Illinois Door**. Removal of cobwebs, etc., made cracks in the wood more visible, and I caulked them. The area may have been primed. (There was so much going on that I lost track of some operations.)

The **Kitchen Fridge** smelled nasty, and Cathy and Anita removed the contents and disinfected the inside. The sources of the odor turned out to be a partially liquefied bag of salad and a month-old container of milk. (Freezer compartment had not developed the customary glacier, so the repair of its defrosting system and icemaker seem to have been effective.) Cathy and Anita also cleaned and imposed some order in Kitchen cabinets under the main counter.

Lisbet and Ralph installed the **location charts for circuit-breakers** that were printed more than a month ago and have sat in the B&G mailbox until now. These charts indicate where the several breaker-boxes are located, and should reduce the confusion and waste of time that have accompanied electrical interruptions. Lisbet identified 16 electrical outlets and switches that are not yet labeled as to which breaker controls them. A few years ago we had a complete census of these switches and outlets, but it appears to have been less complete than we had thought. Now

we can get labels made and installed. **These electrical labelings are noteworthy because they've been on the to-do list for a very long time, and at last received some attention. We've had to focus on issues that were significant functional emergencies or conspicuous esthetic horrors; it's good to deal with some of the persistent, nagging problems.**

The **table in the 2d-floor hallway** has been moved to the Fall Room and is in the space where the Commonwealth chest freezer used to be. (Thanks to Jim Converse for getting the freezer moved.) The table used to be in the Office and was moved into the hallway when Matt Alspaugh donated new office furniture. It's a printer table from the era when printer paper was continuous-feed and required a slot for feeding paper to the printer. In the Fall Room it represents a significant increase in usable surface space.

Bob, Clayton, and Mike worked outdoors dealing with **leaves and cleaning up in the Patio**. Mike pointed out that the Patio contains a good deal of unsightly and useless junk, which we'll put on the agenda for the next Work Party unless there's a Patio cleanup before then.

Another item to be dealt with is the two **hoses**, which are frozen and useless--no more outdoor rinsing of the compost container till Spring. Hoses need to be carried indoors and set in the Boiler Room to thaw. [This was later done, but we still need to coil them properly and put them away. 12 Dec.]

Donuts were consumed (16--good thing I bought two dozen).

This was an **exceptionally successful Work Party**. Turnout was remarkable (only a few years ago we had Work Parties of one or fewer volunteers in addition to the B&G Chair), and those who took part concentrated on actually doing stuff that was on the agenda. A fine assemblage of abilities and energy; we should do it this way all the time. Thanks to all.

Work Party 9 Dec. 2017. Present: Gary Davenport, Jim Rak, Ellen and Lowell Satre, Bob Seibold, MB.

I arrived c. 9:15. Started coffee, dumped compost, took dirty towels and rags to car, carried last twigs from this year's cleanup of branches to car. Looked in vain for missing **Kitchen first-aid kit**. [Bought new kit 11 Dec.]

When Bob arrived, we began working on **leaves**, since this was probably our last opportunity to do so before Winter would shut down all possibility of leaf-management. The bag for the mower had been buried in the Cave, covered by cardboard and ladders, but was eventually found. Satres arrived and assisted. Using mower and rake, we collected several bags of leaves, which Gary hauled to his house. Jim followed up by reducing stray leaves to crumbs, using the mower without the bag. He and Bob were still at it when Satres and I went home.

I had hoped to follow up on the Lisbeth List from the November Work Party, and finish labeling electrical outlets and switches, but the leaves took priority. All that this Work Party did, apart from eating donuts, was deal with leaves, but we did move a whole lot of leaves.

Exit Signs. 11 Dec. I bought half a dozen exit bulbs (screw-type) from Yesco. Cost was \$33, or \$5.50 per wasteful incandescent bulb. There are still no LED bulbs that fit.