



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF WOODSTOCK



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

2021 Annual Report

**First Congregational Church of Woodstock
Annual Meeting Agenda
January 23, 2022 at 11:00 a.m.
Via Zoom**

- 1. Call to Order – Moderator, Bob Kirk**
- 2. Reading of the Call – Clerk, Laura Bond**
- 3. Roll Call**
- 4. Convening Prayer – Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer**
- 5. Minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting**
- 6. Remembrance of Members Who Have Died in 2021—Laura Bond**
- 7. Reports of the Pastor, Church Council, Boards, Committees, and Church Historian**
- 8. Treasurer’s Report – Carl Davis**
- 9. Report of the Nominating Committee – Debby Kirk**
- 10. Stewardship Report – Paula Wilmot**
- 11. Proposed Budget for 2022 – Senior Trustee, Alexandra Lyman**
- 12. Proposed Amendment to Bylaws Regarding the Board of Deacons—Senior Deacon, Charlene Swanson**
- 13. Correspondence—Laura Bond**
- 14. Appreciation of Leaders**
- 15. Other Business**
- 16. Moderator’s Comments**
- 17. Adjournment**
- 18. Closing Prayer – Rev. Kevin**

Table of Contents

Report of the Pastor	4
Yearly Statistics	6
Report of the 96th Annual Meeting	7
Report of the Church Council	10
Report of the Trustees	13
Report of the Stewardship Committee	15
Report of the Faith Formation	16
Report of the Hospitality Committee	17
Report of Community Kitchen	18
Report of the Creative Worship Team	19
Report of the Board of Outreach	20
Report of the Diaconate	23
Report of the Nominating Committee	27
Report of the Treasurer	28
History of the Church	32

Report of the Pastor

For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says God, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me and I will restore you and bring you back. Jeremiah 29:11-14

Where do we begin and how might we summarize the year that has been and the challenges and opportunities that lie before us? In 2020 we were challenged as we continually adapted to the unique questions and - circumstances created by the global pandemic. As we entered 2021, promising vaccines offered a glimmer of hope for the return to “normalcy.” And yet as the year unfolded what we have seen and now realize is that long standing assumptions regarding what, how, when, and why of church have changed forever.

The good news is that we have demonstrated a capacity to learn and adapt, are using technology more effectively to connect despite the ups and downs of wave after wave of the virus, and we are opening ourselves to consider creative alternatives - we never hoped, dreamed, or imagined. - We are challenged to coordinate and collaborate with one another and the Spirit of the Living God in ways we have not seen in decades. It is fraught with - angst, is exhausting- and filled with uncertainty, and it requires us to think, rethink, and think again about how we connect, nurture relationships, support one another, and listen deeply to what God might be saying through these times, challenges, and creative opportunities.

For nearly half the year we were unable to meet in person in groups larger than three. Worship was pre-recorded and streamed online – and though such services will never be a replacement for in-person worship as a community, nevertheless our community came together to create meaningful, spiritually grounded, moving, hopeful, joyful services. Many of you offered musical gifts, readings, and shared prayers from where - you were emphasizing that we are all ministers accompanying one another wherever we are on our journey.

Although the year marks my first full year as Pastor, we all experienced the odd reality that the first time we were able to worship together in the sanctuary occurred eight months after my arrival in early June and shortly before we began our annual Union services with East Woodstock.

As with any leadership change, it takes time to build trust, foster relationships, and learn how we honor the past and work together to embrace the future. The compound challenges of making such a transition in the middle of the pandemic, clarification of expectations, and a shift in individual and congregational priorities resulted in several staff transitions through the year. In each instance, the congregation expressed gratitude and thanksgiving for the ministry and gifts of our much-loved staff, grace with respect to the challenges their departures posed, and hopeful anticipation of how God might be working in, with and through each transition to prepare us to be a vibrant community, congregation and church today and into the future.

Priorities for the coming year include the following:

- Learning from our recent experiences navigating the pandemic and resulting challenges.
- Engaging in intentional conversations to clarify our values, vision and mission.
- Exploring ways to simplify our ministry structure.
- Supporting spiritual development of our children, youth and families.
- Deepening our commitment to spiritually-grounded, joyful, intergenerational and experiential worship.
- Continuing to care relationally for our community.
- And seeking ways through and beyond Sunday worship to connect, companion, nourish, and heal people in our congregation, community and area who experience unloving ways of the world and/or have been made to feel outside God's story.

I am confident that as a Beloved Congregation of Friends in Christ we can together take on these priorities with enthusiasm and joy and know in the process that God is leading us.

Submitted with much gratitude for each leader, congregant and member of this loving, spirit-filled, hopeful community;

Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer, Pastor



**Minutes of the 96th Annual Meeting of
The First Congregational Church of Woodstock
31 January 2021
via Zoom during the pandemic
Not yet approved by vote of the Congregation**

1. Moderator Robert Kirk convened the meeting at 11:02 a.m., following online worship and “coffee hour,” all conducted via Zoom. A quorum of 35 persons was established by count, and 46 persons attended (44 members, two friends), all told.

2. **Reading of the Call:** Clerk Alexandra Lyman read the call to the meeting.

3. **Roll Call:** The clerk took the roll by headcount of the images of persons displayed on the computer screen, with member list as reference.

Bob welcomed all attendees and introduced the format for the meeting - that each person would raise a hand to the computer screen to be recognized, that the right hand would be raised to enter a vote, and that only members would be allowed to vote on motions brought before the meeting.

4. **Convening Prayer:** Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer, our new settled minister, offered a prayer, saying that we can see beyond convention and familiarity, with God’s help, and can move forward in a sense of healing and resurrection hope.

5. **Minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting:** Minutes of the annual meeting of 26 January 2020 were accepted as published in the annual report.

MOTION to accept: Charles Bottieri/2nd Susan McKechnie, passed unanimously, no abstentions.

6. **Reports of the Pastor, Director of Family Ministries, Church Council, Boards,**

Committees, and Church Historian: Bob noted that the annual report contained an interesting record of the church in the year 2020.

MOTION to accept with appreciation the reports entered in the annual report: Bruce Lyman/2nd Carl Davis.

Discussion of some length followed after comment by Frank Olah, who expressed concern about the report of the music committee, where cuts to the music budget were cited, along with the resignation of music director Ted Bradley. Frank’s question rested on the lack of full information to make sense of these two factors, and the possibility of a violation of labor law. Elsewhere the trustees reported that a PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) loan of \$19K was granted to the church to maintain staff salaries. Moderator Bob counseled that the motion was entered to “accept with appreciation” the reports, not to approve them or comment on their content. A motion to amend the motion on the floor was offered. MOTION to accept the reports with appreciation, with the exception of the report of the music committee: Lynn Davis/2nd Tom Singleton.

Discussion on the amendment consisted of comment on need for more information from the trustees about supervision of staff, during the time when we did not have a settled pastor; the

record of handbell activity in the year 2020; and a path to resolution of the concerns. The motion to amend passed with one abstention. The original motion to accept reports with appreciation passed as amended with no abstentions.

7. Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Carl Davis noted that it was “A pretty good year,” all things considered. The COTH fair raised almost \$10K, an amazing outcome given the outdoor and online nature of the event under pandemic restrictions of masking, social distancing, and sanitizing. The PPP grant brought \$19K to support staff salaries. A generous gift from a church member, with matching donations from others, supported replacement of some shed roofs on portions of the church. (The roof on the sanctuary was replaced in the year 2019 under a Maintenance & Repair grant from Preservation Connecticut.) With conservative budgeting for the year 2020 and no settled minister in place until mid-October, we ended the year with a surplus. All off-budget funds have been restored in full after the borrowing of the years 2002 and 2010. Line items under 320.000 contain funds to support capital expenses, an essential measure for caring for old buildings like the church and parsonage. Carl noted the “exceptional generosity” of the congregation during difficult times. A conservative, cautious approach will serve us well as we move forward. MOTION to accept the report: Charles Bottieri/2nd Tom Chase, passed with one abstention. Bruce Lyman offered thanks to Carl for his investment of many hours and his expertise in maintaining the accounts. Frank Olah voiced kudos for the restoration of the off- budget accounts, a satisfying measure that was a long time in coming. Carl noted further that the New Century Fund for investment began at \$217,600 at the start of the year 2020 and ended at \$232,133, even with the withdrawal of \$10,300 to support the budget.

8. Report of the Nominating Committee: Debby and Bob Kirk served as the nominating committee for the 2021 slate. Debby displayed progress thus far with most board positions filled. Deb and Bob have not worked on the committees as yet, because several groups are on hiatus during the pandemic. Bob requested a show of hands to accept the report.

9. Stewardship Report: Carl Wisnosky, chairman of the stewardship committee, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to do the work of this body, and gave thanks to his cohort, Paula Wilmot and Glenn Boies. Conducting a successful campaign despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the committee gathered 47 pledges, down from 59 in 2020, continuing the trend over the past few years. The good news is that three new pledges were received, and half of those pledging raised their gifts, some quite substantially. A median pledge of \$1200 in 2020 grew to a median of \$1800 for 2021, with the ultimate result of \$140,500 to support the work of the church.

MOTION to accept the report with appreciation: Laura Bond/2nd Lisa Nowak, passed unanimously. Bob Kirk offered thanks to the committee for their devotion and diligence.

10. Proposed Budget for 2021: John Cimoehowski, senior trustee, presented the budget draft. Because most of the attendees at the meeting had been present for the Lunch & Crunch discussion in early January, John limited his comments to a brief review of his power point presentation at that time. One difference is that \$412 was added to line item 510.100 to bring the

church's donation to the SNEUCC conference to a full 6% of pledged funds, for a total of \$8412. The trustees drew on the 2020 surplus to balance this budget, assigning the remainder to the non-restricted capital reserve account. We can expect fundraising to be diminished again in the year 2021. John broke down the items in the professional services line item

504.111 at \$5K for a bookkeeper, \$1 to 2K for an audit of the church books, \$2200 for the appraisal underway of church property and assets, and funding for Vanco and MinistryWorks services.

He noted also that three payments of property tax (or 150% of amount due) were made to the town of Woodstock in 2020, so only one (50%) will be due in 2021. The year 2022 will include full payment of tax in the budget draft.

MOTION to approve the budget proposal: Board of trustees/2nd church council, passed with one abstention. Bob Kirk commended the board of trustees and Carl Davis for prodigious effort in the budget process.

11. Correspondence: Alexandra Lyman exchanged notes with the family of Eleanor Adams, who died on November 22nd.

12. Appreciation of Leaders: Rev. Kevin gave thanks to the board members who have completed their terms, for their passion, commitment, and adaptability. It is obvious that hearts are in the work. Kathryn Tanner, professor theology at Yale, has written that “community is messy,” but it is worth the effort to create a foundation for the future.

Remember to breathe. A gift awaits each person who has completed service on a board, courtesy of Rev. Kevin – a book of reflections of Brother Lawrence, leaning into the idea that God is with us, wherever we go. The departing leaders are John Cimochoowski and Lisa Nowak from the board of trustees, Laura Bond and Noah Gourlie from the board of deacons, and Deborah Kirk and Paula Wilmot from the board of outreach. Bob Kirk expressed gratitude to retiring clerk Alexandra Lyman; our transitional pastor, Rev. Debra Pallatto-Fontaine; and our new settled minister, Rev. Kevin. Each has been presented with a gift as a gesture of our appreciation.

13. Other business: The clerk read the list of those within the fold who died in the year 2020:

February 2	Gladys Westerberg
February 18	Lois Siegmund
April 9	Linda Wilmot
April 26	Elizabeth Putnam
May 20	John Miller Sr.
November 22	Eleanor Adams
December 12	Barbara Rosen
December 17	Edna Hansen (friend)
December 17	Kimberly Wilcox

Paula Wilmot expressed her profound thanks to the chairmen of the search committee –Charlene Swanson and Jim Nowak – and to Carl Wisnosky for his leadership of the stewardship

committee. All three were models of grace and efficacy for Paula, who was a member of both bodies.

Tom Chase noted that music was given prominence in the survey of 2019 and that we need to pay attention to reviving that facet of church life. Charlene said that it was wonderful to see Earl Brazeal in attendance at the meeting, and Frank Olah gave thanks for prayers and cards after the death of Karen's mother, Jane Johnson, and for Rev. Kevin's comforting visit to Jane.

14. Moderator's Comments: Bob Kirk noted that it has been a difficult year. The good news is that our beloved community of friends in Christ is intact. His word for 2021 is loving-kindness. "May it radiate from us and out into the hurting world." Bob led the meeting in a brief Buddhist-style meditation on that thought. Kevin requested a summary of that meditation for the February issue of SHARE.

15. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m., followed by Rev. Kevin's closing prayer.

Compiled 2 February 2021 by Alexandra Lyman, Clerk

Report of the Church Council for the Year 2021

When the year 2021 began, the coronavirus pandemic was getting worse. Some of us were feeling fatigued and perhaps a bit apprehensive. The competence and cheerfulness of our fairly new pastor, Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer, were certainly welcome.

Our moderator, Bob Kirk, began the year by welcoming the new board and committee members and expanding the list of invitations for Council meetings to include a wider group of church members and friends. He reminded us that everyone is welcome at Council meetings.

In February Council appointed an ad hoc committee consisting of Rev. Kevin, Jim Nowak (Assistant Moderator), Jeff Perkins (Music Committee), and Noah Gourlie (Trustee) to address concerns raised at the Annual Meeting regarding the Music Committee Report. This ad hoc committee was tasked with researching and making recommendations to Council for responding to the Music Committee's Annual Report, and to prepare a communication to the congregation to address the decisions that culminated in the resignation of the Music Director. With input from the Trustees and Ted Bradley, as well as Ellen Bradley as the composer of the original report, the ad hoc committee was able to assemble a timeline of events. A revised Music Committee 2020

Annual Report was submitted to Council, which was accepted with appreciation at the May meeting.

Thanks to Rev. Kevin, the Council meeting minutes and other reports have been added to our webpage, which has made this information more available and transparent. Rev. Kevin also began open conversations on Wednesday evenings in Lent (via Zoom) to examine our values and beliefs in order to help us clarify our vision and mission. He encouraged us to review our current structures and consider whether they work well for us today. Our current board, committee, and meeting structures can sometimes hinder more inclusive conversations about the overarching issues. Rev. Kevin reviewed the Lenten conversations and also outlined his “Vision and Values Initiative” in his April Pastor’s report. The report is available on our website and is worth reviewing as we enter into the new year.

At the request of the Deacons, we opened the sanctuary (with appropriate COVID restrictions) for our traditional Good Friday Vigil. The Deacons arranged an online sign-up to limit the number of participants in the sanctuary at any given time.

In April, the Council weighed decisions about in-person gatherings. We resumed in-person services on the lawn behind the parsonage on May 23rd, Pentecost Sunday. We gathered with the precautions of continued social distancing, wearing masks, etc. and the service was posted to Facebook, YouTube, and our Website later in the day. We are grateful to our minister and deacons, and our newly formed “Tech Team” led by Bruce Staehle, for their continued work to improve the process of presenting church services, both in-person and online.

The question of reopening the building for outside groups was another issue and would be decided on a case-by-case basis. We asked the ad hoc Committee on Reopening to develop recommendations for various requests for use of the building. This turned out to be quite challenging in that everyone (including the experts) had different opinions, and the guidelines were constantly changing. The committee determined they were comfortable at that time with individuals and adult groups of less than 20 people using the building, following specific guidelines. During the May meeting, Council members voted on a number of requests for use of the building. The first of these was to allow the AA group to resume weekly meetings here. The group returned on June 14th, using the current pandemic protocols including documenting attendees for COVID contact tracing purposes. Approval was also given to an individual who asked to use our organ for practice purposes.

Unfortunately, Council did not feel comfortable allowing Scout Troop 27 to resume use of the building for Tuesday evening meetings, based on the ad hoc committee’s recommendations. We did approve adult only, monthly leadership meetings for the Scout group. Additionally, the Scouts requested to use our sanctuary for their annual Court of Honor ceremony on June 6th in case of inclement weather. Clearly, we did not feel ready to hold a public function of this size when we were not ourselves holding Sunday services in our sanctuary, and we had to turn them down. In June, however, as pandemic issues seemed to be moving in a positive direction, Council voted unanimously to welcome Troop 27 to return to regular use of our downstairs rooms, with the provision that a change in the status of the pandemic might require us to make a revision.

Feeling confident about the improving state of the pandemic, we began plans for the Arts & Crafts Fair on Oct. 16th & 17th, as well as our Chicken BBQ booth at the Woodstock Fair on Labor Day weekend. We also agreed to hold an outdoor tag sale on the front lawn on June 5th to coincide with the Woodstock Town-Wide Tag Sale. We were delighted to be able to hold Sunday service in our sanctuary again on June 6th. We remained masked and maintained social distance, closing off alternate pews. Guidance from the CDC and UCC recommended limiting singing and spoken responses at that time, asking people to sing quietly or hum.

As is our tradition, Council did not meet in July, and our congregation joined with the East Woodstock Congregational Church for July and August services. As we came back together in September, conversation continued regarding the visioning effort and our outdated church structure. Council moved to form a task force to help us continue the conversation about changes to our church structure which would include scheduling a 2nd Hour.

The more contagious Delta Variant of COVID-19 became prevalent in September. Due to the fact that vaccinated persons were experiencing “breakthrough” cases and children under age 12 could not yet be vaccinated, Council recommended wearing masks inside the building regardless of vaccination status. When we gathered at the Woodstock Fair for the Chicken BBQ booth, Lynn Davis supplied us with specially made Chicken BBQ masks to greet the public. It felt good to be back at the Fair for Labor Day Weekend and we netted over \$9,000!

In October we gratefully reflected on the occasion of Rev. Kevin’s one year anniversary. After the flurry of events in this past year of the pandemic, Rev. Kevin thoughtfully offered us a re-introduction of himself in his October Pastor’s Report. Of note is the fact that his doctoral thesis was on transforming community by focusing on conversations. Soon a Vision and Values Team and a Restructuring Team were formed. November 7th was chosen for a 2nd Hour to facilitate conversation on restructuring as well as to clarify the vision and values processes. At this 2nd Hour we looked at our Hopes, Concerns and Questions. The outcome was quite positive, and attendees felt this led to a better understanding of the issues.

The Arts & Crafts Fair came together on Oct. 16th & 17th under the management of Karen Olah. Forty-five artists and crafters took part. Jim Nowak organized take-out meals. Once the Craft Fair was over, focus shifted to Christmas on the Hill where our coordinator, Debby Kirk, skillfully organized everything again this year. Rev. Kevin set up e-commerce. Jim Nowak organized the food and take-out service. Silent Auction was again offered online. The booths were organized both outside and in the dining hall downstairs, with masks being required indoors. Debby and Rev. Kevin gave our publicity a boost with an interview at WINY that had over 800 Facebook views. As always it was a great opportunity to greet and meet with our community.

During the November Council meeting, the Board of Deacons proposed amendments to the church bylaws regarding the current regulations on the structure of the Diaconate. Council affirmed the proposed changes to be brought before the congregation for a vote at the Annual Meeting in January.

In December, the Board of Trustees requested, and were granted, permission to move forward in researching the feasibility of selling the parsonage.

For our final Council meeting of 2021, moderator Bob Kirk asked us to reflect on our life together over the past year. We agreed that we are exceedingly grateful for Rev. Kevin. We've found that our recorded services, although challenging at first, have led us to new ways to interact (i.e., comment bubbles on Facebook and visiting one another's homes "virtually"). Our personal growth and our relationships have been enhanced through Bible Study and Christina Manuilow's wonderful "Finding Meaning in the Message" sessions. We have felt the great joy of being able to join together in our sanctuary, looking in each other's eyes as we (quietly) sing our Alleluia. Through another year of this pandemic, our spirits have persevered and we have found resilience through love and faith and hope. In the words of our moderator, "We Are a Beloved Community of Friends in Christ."

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Bond, Clerk

Report of the Board of Trustees for the year 2021

The trustees started the year as a group of five and decreased to three upon the resignation of Carl Wisnosky in June and the departure of Noah Gourlie for Princeton Theological Seminary in August. The remaining trio encountered several major challenges and dealt with them effectively with excellent support from the newly designated Property Management Team.

That team, consisting of five men within the church – John Cimochoowski, Glenn Boies, Bruce Lyman, Stan Swanson, and G. Leslie Sweetnam – performed many maintenance tasks during the year. John served as the hub of the wheel. We kept a log of work accomplished, and it is impressive.

Grounds maintenance jobs, including mowing of lawns, fell to John and Bruce. Glenn engineered several major plumbing repairs, often in late hours after his workday. Stan and John replaced the railing on the back entry stairs of the parsonage. Leslie patched crumbling cement on the office entry stairs and in the pathway near the kitchen. In short, this team has taken on the management of buildings and grounds and has done a terrific job, communicating well with the trustees along the way. A full listing of completed tasks is available on request from the trustees.

The efforts of the board of trustees resulted in these achievements during the year 2021:

- Hiring of Squeaky Clean service for cleaning of building - Denis Collette, principal, Chris Lewis, on-site cleaner;
- Establishment of Property Management Team, including description of duties, responsibilities, and lines of communication;
- Successful application for grant of \$15,000 from Maintenance and Repair program of Preservation Connecticut to support painting of exterior of sanctuary (thanks to Suzanne);
- Receipt of second PPP draw (\$12,000) from Federal government to underwrite staff salaries (thanks to Carl Davis);
- Receipt of grant (\$4000) from Neighbors in Need program to replace failed Avanco refrigerator in main kitchen (Suzanne, with research on appliance purchase by Charles);
- Purchase of new light strings for Christmas tree, paid from Richardson restricted fund;
- Purchase of new tech equipment to support virtual worship preparation (partially covered by Angel Fund donation);
- Raising of funds for painting of exterior of sanctuary (~ \$45,000, inclusive of the grant); hiring of Painters Pride of Framingham, Mass., Bud Killam, principal, to begin work in spring 2022.
- Raising of well head in lawn south of church building, to satisfy state health department regulations (Glenn Boies, attended by John);
- Repair of water main in utility room off nursery, the cause of leaking at bottom of front stairway (Glenn with John in emergency maneuver after hours);
- Felling of two old maple trees in front of parsonage, a task that involved lengthy and complex negotiations among the State and Pomfret DOT offices, town highway foreman John Navarro, Eversource, Frontier, and the office of State Representative Pat Boyd; work done by Asplundh through Eversource and by Roy's Tree Service of Woodstock. Removal of wood involved the town crew, our church crew, Paul Miller, Eversource, Jon Roy, John and Matt Cimochofski, and Charles Bottieri. The entire process took four months. Stump grinding is deferred until spring.

Engaging Eversource in the work saved the church \$3500. The Asplundh scheduler, Len Lander, made a gift to the church of the labor of his crews.

- Change in insurance carriers for property and liability coverage, a move that saved the church ~ \$8000 per annum at current rates. New carrier is Church Mutual.
- Replacement of toilet in main floor bathroom, cost covered by Jen and Tom Duggan, installation done gratis by Glenn Boies,

- Replacement of air conditioning units in pastor’s office, main office, and library (Carl Wisnosky, with John C.’s help in installation);
- Ongoing revisions to fire safety system, following early-morning false alarm on 13 October 2021;
- Hiring of two new personnel – Jessica Weaver Boose as interim communications coordinator and Maria Sangiolo as music director.
- Budget draft preparation for 2022 (with leadership of Carl Davis).

The trustees are grateful to Rev. Kevin Downer for his support, considered advice, and attendance at our meetings. We also acknowledge the fine work of our treasurer, Carl Davis, and his assistant, Tom Duggan. Without their many hours of labor and their counsel, we would not be able to function successfully.

Respectfully submitted,
 Alexandra Lyman,
 for trustees Charles Bottieri and Suzanne Cimoichowski

Report of the Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship committee consisted of Jim Nowak, Charles Botteiri and Paula Wilmot. The committee held a preliminary meeting in May and then began meeting regularly in the summer to determine a strategy and a theme. We agreed upon a theme of “On the Rock of What has Been We Are Building What is to Be.”

This theme allowed the committee the opportunity to look at the history of FCCW by taking trips to the church’s archives, talking with Bruce Lyman and sharing our findings with the congregation.

We kicked off the campaign through a variety of means to reach people where they were. We used articles in Share and in the weekly mailchimp email. We asked for faith stories for in-person service. We created timelines and activities to go with the intergenerational service of this theme which took place in October. We created an interactive timeline for folks to place their life activities as they relate to the life of the church where people could indicate when they joined the church, leadership roles they took on, baptisms etc. Jim created a slideshow of the history that celebrated historical highlights from the church’s inception to present.

We regularly announced updates and activities and mailed the packet out so that people could fill out their pledge forms on paper. Rev. Kev also provided access to vanco on our website so that folks could pledge. We discovered that there was no way in Vanco to track people's intent for recurring gifts so a goal would be to add to the infrastructure so that this piece is clear from the start. The pdf could be there from the start or an electronic form that could be emailed to the office.

The committee wrote thank you notes and conducted follow ups throughout November and December and the campaign yielded 46 pledges totalling 140,140 as of 1.10.22.

- Submitted by Paula Wilmot

Report of the Faith Formation

In January of 2021, Christina Manuilow began hosting Finding Meaning in the Message - a Second Hour conversation held approximately twice a month. FMM met for a total of 20 times throughout the year. These meetings were held over Zoom for the first few months of the year, and then gathered in the library when we were able to return to in-person worship in the spring. Meeting attendance has been around 4-8 people. Discussions are rich and heartfelt, with folks sharing what inspired, encouraged and even challenged them from that Sunday's sermon, as well as reflecting upon how they see themselves applying the insights from the message in their daily lives. Finding Meaning in the Message has been a meaningful way of exploring Rev Kev's sermons in a more personal way, as well as deepening connection and relationships in our FCCW community.

For much of the beginning of the year 2021 we were remote as a church. Thus, Lisa Haupt led the online learning and community events for young people with love, consideration, and lots of imagination!

During the summer, movies on the front lawn were offered to the community.

In September we had a marvelous intergenerational, intergenerational worship. It was organized in part by Lisa and it served as her send off event. Some of the activities created for the service, such as Care Cards, were so well received that people are continuing them.

September saw the return of a weekly bible study, which is regularly attended by ten or more people. The study is offered in a hybrid fashion with some meeting in the library and others joining the group by zoom. The study uses the Lectio Divina process to create space to listen for God's Spirit speaking through the text. Topics have included an introduction to the Psalms, the Sermon on the Mount, and Kingdom of God/Heaven.

Looking forward, a salary for a part time coordinator position has been designated within the annual budget. For now, Pastor Kevin has planned out meeting twice a month with the young people of the church and a monthly family activity is planned for the rest of the academic year.

Report of the Hospitality Committee

Charlene Swanson and Kathy Packard took the responsibility of hospitality in 2021.

Coffee hour was successful by using a sign up sheet.

Memorial service receptions were kept simple during the pandemic.

Messages or phone calls were sent to congregants to volunteer and to provide refreshments.

The response from volunteers was good.

We will need someone new to manage hospitality for 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Packard.

Community Kitchen Report

Our Community Kitchen is a blessing to all—to our guests, certainly, but also to our cooks and volunteers, our partner churches and food providers. In the giving and receiving, magic happens.

In 2021 we distributed a total of 7,002 meals.

In addition, we distributed approximately 50 bags of assorted groceries and donated baked goods each week, one bag per family. On occasion we were also able to distribute fresh produce.

Our numbers have increased steadily since we transitioned to a drive-thru only operation on March 16, 2020 in response to the pandemic. During November of this past year--before the cold set in--we were distributing around 170 meals every Monday.

We are so very grateful to those who join with us in this important ministry of alleviating food insecurity in our area:

- Our partner churches—East Woodstock Congregational Church, South Woodstock Baptist Church, Christ Church in Pomfret, and Pomfret Congregational Church—who share with us the costs and labor of preparing free delicious and nutritious meals. We are truly a joyful ecumenical endeavor!
- Soleil & Suns Bakery, Price Chopper and Stop & Shop in Putnam who have been with us right from the start donating baked goods.
- CT Foodshare, which provides us with food for meals and distribution.
- Our umbrella nonprofit, Community Kitchen of Northeastern Connecticut, Inc., which supports us in so many ways and coordinates our efforts and those of the other CK meal sites.
- And most importantly, our own cooks and volunteers. What a privilege it is to work beside such wonderful people each week!

Having almost completed our seventh year of operation, our Community Kitchen has become a visible manifestation of our church's putting into practice Jesus' admonition to love and serve one another. "Feed my lambs," Jesus tells us. We do what we can every Monday.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Kirk and Bruce Lyman, Site Coordinators

Report of the Creative Worship Team

*Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth. Worship God with gladness;
come into God's presence with singing. Psalm 100:1-2*

Although the virus has presented many challenges for our congregation, our worship and music teams have found ways to navigate challenges, celebrate the diverse gifts of many on our congregation and look to the future with courage and hope.

Many thanks to Jeff Perkins who remained the sole member of the Music Support Committee for the first part of the year, and thanks to Jeff, Jim Nowak, Noah Gourlie, and Rev. Kev who delicately and lovingly addressed questions raised about last year's Music Support Committee Report.

The first part of the year was focused on addressing the week to week needs for pre-recorded worship. We are grateful for the leadership and coordination provided by Leilani through the year, the creative virtual choir, inclusion of offerings from SNEUCC conference, Take Note, members of East Woodstock Congregational Church, the Lyman Family Singers, as well as the many musical gifts of more than a dozen congregants.

In the summer, Rev. Kev formed the Creative Worship Team to recruit a new music director, give voice to congregant hopes for music and worship, and collaboratively plan meaningful, spiritually grounded, intergenerational worship. The Creative Worship Team met regularly during the last half of the year to clarify their purpose, organize and shepherd the search for a music director, survey the congregation, and support worship planning.

We are delighted that Maria Sangiolo felt called to our congregation and began serving as our part-time Music Director at the end of the year. She brings a great deal of experience, creative ideas, organization, and a passion to minister to people in our congregation and community through music.

As we look forward to the coming year, we will explore a more intentional use of intergenerational, experiential forms of worship; how to engage congregants of all ages in celebration of the love of the living God; and ways to incorporate and learn a broader blend of music that speaks to our hearts, feeds our spirits, and heals our souls.

Respectfully submitted the members of Creative Worship Team

FCCW Board of Outreach 2021 Annual Report

Purpose

The Board of Outreach seeks to follow the FCCW vision to build relationships, engage with the community, and provide members with opportunities to put faith in action. The focus is to nurture connections with local partners, exercise prudent disbursements of the budgeted funds, and honor our covenants with the wider church.

Survey

In 2021, Outreach created and distributed a survey asking the congregation to prioritize what they would like our committee to focus on throughout the year. Amid a pandemic, the survey indicated that local initiatives are the highest priority. First choice was “Food Insecurity” and the partnerships we have with Community Kitchen, Daily Bread and TEEG. Second choice was “Elder Care”. Third choice was “Addiction and Recovery”. These priorities drove our decision making throughout the year.

Collections for Community Partners

- Souper Bowl - March 2021 - Outreach coordinated a soup collection for our community partner Daily Breed food pantry in Putnam in February (postponed until March due to inclement weather).
- SWAP – May 23rd. Outreach collected healthy food items for Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group’s (TEEG) new SWAP (Supporting Wellness at Pantries) program.
- Back to School Items Collection – July – Sept. A generous amount of “Back to School” items were collected during the summer months and brought over to (TEEG) in early September.
- Christmas Gift Tags – Dec 12th. The congregation was extremely generous in supporting TEEG’s gift tag program. 75 Gift Tags were distributed. Gifts were collected, blessed, and brought to TEEG on December 12th and 13th.

Benevolences and Disbursements of Funds

Church World Services	\$1,135.00	Quiet Corner Crop Walk
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Town Wide Tag Sale	\$700.00	TEEG Thanksgiving Baskets
TEEG	\$500.00	Food security programs
Quiet Corner Cares	\$1,000.00	Sober house in Putnam (Kasia's Hope)
Quiet Corner Refugee Resettlement	\$1,000.00	Support for Refugee Families
The Last Green Valley	\$500.00	Educational Programs
Northeast Opportunities for Wellness - NOW	\$500.00	Nutrition Education
Putnam Area Refugee Resettlement	\$500.00	Support for Refugee Families

\$5,835.00

Administration Costs

Purchase of unclaimed TEEG gift tags	\$59.54
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Community Kitchens

FCCW continues to serve as the site for the Monday meal. Church members cook on the second Monday and other partner churches provide meals on the remaining weeks. Drive-thru service continued throughout 2021. The numbers of guests continued to increase to a high of 173 by the end of the year and distribution of 55 bags of groceries. The program is coordinated by Bruce Lyman and Bob Kirk and supported by numerous partners and a team of dedicated volunteers (see separate report for more details).

Special Events / Activities

The Board of Outreach participated in several programs and encouraged initiatives by members to put faith in action in 2021.

- Plant a Row - The Lions Club of Woodstock began a “Plant a Row” initiative asking local gardeners to plant an extra row and drop off their produce at produce collection locations around town including one at FCCW. The Lions Club collected all the drop off bins and brought it to two local food donation centers: Community Kitchens and TEEG.
- Outdoor Worship Service – May 23rd. TEEG’s Executive Director, Anne Miler and TEEG’s Youth Program Manager, Jill Bourbeau, spoke to the congregation about TEEG’s mission and work during the pandemic. In 2022, Outreach wishes to involve more community partners to speak at our worship services.
- Woodstock Town Wide Tag Sale – June 5th. Proceeds from the FCCW tag sale (\$700) were donated to TEEG to help with their annual Thanksgiving food baskets.
- Intergenerational Service – Sept 26th. Ginny Moylan presented the Stone Soup story and Outreach had a table asking the congregation for *disbursement of funds* ideas.
- Crop Walk – October 3rd. FCCW had a good number of participants who joined with other area churches at the Putnam River Walk. FCCW alone raised \$1,135.
- Faith in Action articles in bi-monthly Share. Outreach committee asked members of the congregation to submit “Faith in Action” articles detailing causes that they volunteer their time to and are passionate about.

Wider Church

We continue to be in covenant with the Windham Association, the Southern New England Conference, UCC, and the national offices of the United Church of Christ. We support SNEUCC at a rate of 6% of our pledge amount (see line 510.100). Members have taken advantage of a variety of SNEUCC training webinars as well as the Super Saturday workshops in the fall.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Duggan for the Board of Outreach
(Lynn Davis, Ginny Moylan, and Susan McKechnie)

REPORT OF THE DIACONATE

The 2021 members of the Board of Deacons are Charlene Swanson, Bruce Staehle, Debbie Pallatto-Fontaine*, Jacob Vicente, Kathleen Packard, Rick Singh, Christina Manuilow and Bruce Lyman.

*Rev. Debbie Pallatto-Fontaine stepped up to be our transitional minister during the search for a new minister and therefore attended meetings but in the capacity of church minister. In December of 2020 she took a position as Interim Minister at Storrs Congregational Church and stepped off the Board.

During this past year the Diaconate continued to meet and work in an entirely different format, as did the other boards and committees of the church. Because of the Covid Pandemic our meetings and services were primarily conducted virtually. Our first Zoom meeting was in May of 2020 and we continued in this format until June of 2021 when we were finally able to meet in-person, under restrictions of masks and distancing. Meetings were held the first Tuesday of each month, with the exception of July when a formal meeting was not held.

At our February meeting, we said farewell to senior deacons Laura Bond and Noah Gourlie and welcomed two new deacons: Christina Manuilow and Bruce Lyman. Because of the absence of Debbie Pallatto-Fontaine on the board, Charlene Swanson was appointed as a senior deacon to serve along with Bruce Staehle as the other senior deacon, which left the Board one member short of the requirement of 8 under the church's bylaws. It was decided that we could easily handle responsibilities with only 7 deacons since our tasks were reduced since we were not meeting in person.

To say that we have an organized minister is a gross understatement. Rev Kevin has been remarkable to work with and is always prepared well in advance of any service. Early in the year he suggested that we share our information on a common drive in Google and it has been immensely helpful. We were able to look at his sermon preparations and know where a deacon was needed for recorded readings and make our assignments accordingly. His technological abilities have enhanced our services, our website and our communications (such as SHARE) and have made responsibilities and tasks much easier for us as a Board.

Early in the year we began looking at Parish Care – or Community Care, as we prefer to call it - and have made this one of our priorities this year, especially due to the isolation so many have felt because of the continued pandemic. Gathering and dissemination of prayer requests was moved from the front office to the deacons as an important community care component. Additionally in January Christina Manuilow started holding a second hour conversation entitled “Finding Meaning in the Message”, which she leads twice monthly. This has been a tremendous addition in our faith formation and we are so thankful for this ministry.

March started out with a new experience as well when we had a virtual party to say thank you to the retiring senior deacons and welcome to our new deacons. Charlene hosted the event with conversational 'games' and quizzes. Of course, we had to supply our own snacks but we got to know each other better and there was laughter in abundance.

March and April also brought Lent and Holy week which was done beautifully by our pastor in the virtual format. As deacons we decided to try to keep some of our traditions alive by ordering and supplying Palm branches and Easter Lilies. Bruce S and Rick S took on a good portion of helping Rev Kevin with recording and editing our virtual services, making each one more professional than the last. Christina assumed a big task of providing us with numerous models of Community Care.

In May the congregation began meeting 'in person' by first holding coffee hour on our church lawn, after the Sunday live recorded service. It was such a welcoming and warm experience to once again see our Beloved Friends in Christ even if we were socially distanced and behind face masks. The Deacons readied the sanctuary for our first in-sanctuary service set for June 6, by removing all hymnals and Bibles and roping off every other pew and putting out supplies of hand sanitizer and cleaning products. June 6th was an especially joyful time because not only did it represent the first time we had been in the sanctuary for services in over a year but it was the first time that Reverend Downer stood before our congregation in the sanctuary and the first time he had the opportunity to meet some of our congregants.

July and August were again joint services with East Congregational Church. Danielle Arnett Keller led services for East, since Rev Sue Foster was on sabbatical, and held them in our sanctuary, with the deacons assisting her for each service. Pastor Kevin took the first two weeks off in July and then he led services at East in August.

Together with Rev Kevin the deacons decided to postpone communion on the first Sunday in September to September 12, which was Homecoming Sunday. Our theme for Homecoming Sunday was Radical Hospitality and it was so good to be in the sanctuary again with Pastor at the lectern. The Deacons provided ice cream sundaes outside after the service. Also in September we held an Intergenerational Service in Harrison Hall with many new ways of learning to worship. As part of that service the Deacons put out a table with note cards for individuals to write notes to whomever they wish and then they are mailed out from the church. It was so well received that you can now find this table in Harrison Hall each week.

In September and October Bruce Lyman volunteered to work with Reverend Kevin, Laura Bond, and Ellen to update our much need membership rolls. Kathy Packard worked on updating the Memorial Book that is kept in Harrison Hall. We also looked at our budgetary needs for the following year and submitted our request to keep the Deacon budget unchanged from 2021.

In the fall we also reviewed the Church Bylaws as it relates to the Diaconate. Subsequently we developed a proposal to change some of the requirements and after discussion with Council submitted them to the church Clerk to be voted on during this Annual Meeting. The

recommended changes include reducing the Diaconate to six members from eight and having the deacons select the two Senior Deacons by election rather than by seniority.

We developed personal biographies of each Deacon in October and had them posted on the website to help individuals know who we are and who they can contact in time of need.

As a board we discussed the need to have a listing of individuals who could be called to assist in time of emergency need and in November Charlene had developed a listing of 20 individuals who would be willing to be called upon. The listing was given to each Deacon, to the Pastor, to the Communications Coordinator and to the Board of Trustees. It is our intention to keep this list updated regularly.

Together with Rev Kevin we instituted “Pie with the Pastor” as a social way for people to gather in a small group to get to know one another. It has met with great success and will continue.

In November the Deacons assisted the pastor in the second hour session of ‘Reimagine’, which was the introduction to the congregation of new ways to structure our church boards and committees. We are solidly behind Reverend Kevin’s idea of needing to do this, primarily because of our diminishing size of congregation and as a way of discovering what it is that God wants us as a congregation to be and do in our community.

As deacons, we are aware that there are still several members of our congregation who have not yet come back to church since the pandemic started. To that end, we have taken on the task of contacting these people by cards, letters, phone calls or personal visits.

December is always a busy but a joyful time for the congregation and one of the most joyful experiences was an outdoor Carol Sing on December 12th, organized by Christina Manuilow. We were so grateful to celebrate in the sanctuary this year and to once again have our Christmas Eve service. Kathy Packard did an amazing job of ordering poinsettias, which made a beautiful backdrop to our services and then were distributed to many among our congregation. All of the deacons were present at this service and assisted in more than one capacity. We again held an offering to go to the Deacons Fund and were so grateful to see that more than \$2500 was received for this valuable fund.

The Deacons Fund is specifically set aside to assist people who are in need, whether a congregant of FCCW or not. This past year we were able to assist seven recipients with various needs as well as several others who received gift cards to help with groceries. In total we expended more than \$3000 to help people in need.

One of the other duties of the Deacon Board, as specified by the bylaws, is to conduct the annual review of the Pastor. Under the terms of Reverend Kevin’s Call Agreement it was agreed that a review would take place every six months for the first 18 months of his service. The Call Agreement specified that the Senior Deacons would be included in that review group and Charlene and Bruce headed two of these reviews (March and December). Members of our

congregation were asked to complete questionnaires and the results were summarized to Pastor Kevin. Both reviews revealed overwhelming positive comments and support of our Pastor.

The 2021 Diaconate is grateful for this congregation's patience and support during a time that none of us could have imagined would last this long. You have revealed how adaptable and strong you are and how committed you are to this Beloved Community of Friends in Christ and we thank you.

Bruce and Charlene also thank this incredible Board of Deacons that they have had the privilege of serving and working with this past year. Every single member has stepped up in ways that we could not have envisioned, and we are so grateful for them. Thank you dear friends!

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Swanson and Bruce Staehle, Senior Deacons

Report of the Nominating Committee

*new to the position in 2022
() denotes first year of service

POSITIONS

Moderator * Jim Nowak (2022)
Asst. Moderator _____
Clerk Laura Bond (2021)
Treasurer * Tom Duggan (2022)
Asst. Treasurer _____
Historian _____
Archivist Bruce Lyman (2020)
Troop 27 Coord. * Mark van der Voort (22)

BOARD OF DEACONS

2023 _____
2023 _____
2024 Kathy Packard
2024 Rick Ramdathsingh
2025 Christina Manuilow
2025 Bruce Lyman
2026 Debby Kirk
2026 Aimee Ahearn

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

2023 Suzanne Cimoichowski
2023 Charles Bottieri
2024 Kristen Kaiser
2024 Bob Kirk
2025 Paula Wilmot
2025 _____

BOARD OF OUTREACH

2023 Jen Duggan
2023 _____
2024 Ginny Moylan
2024 Susan McKechnie
2025 Leslie Sweetnam
2025 Lisa Nowak

COUNCIL MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Tom Singleton (2020)
Debbie Pallatto-Fontaine (2022)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Bob Kirk (2020)
Debby Kirk (2020)

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

2022 Charlene Swanson
2022 Jacob Vicente
2022 _____ (Assist. Mod.)
2022 Bob Kirk (Trustee Rep.)

RESTRUCTURING TASK FORCE

(Committee formed by Council)
Debbie Pallatto-Fontaine
Bruce Staehle
Charlene Swanson
Debby Kirk

VISIONS & VALUES TASK FORCE

(Committee formed by Council)
Donna Dufresne
Bob Kirk
Jen Duggan
Kristen Kaiser

CREATIVE WORSHIP COMMITTEE

CATERING COMMITTEE

COUNTING TEAM

FAMILY MINISTRIES

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT TEAM

Endorsed by Council on January 11, 2022

Report of the Treasurer

2021 Financial Overview

Summary

During the operating year 2021, revenues (\$249,753) exceeded budgeted expectations while expenses (\$196,959) were below budgeted allowances. This has resulted in a positive cash balance, allowing for the recommended designation by the Trustees of an addition of \$17,795 to the off-budget capital reserve account and a carry-over of \$35,000 for use in the 2022 operating budget.

The most significant impacts on revenues were:

Pledge receipts exceeded budgeted amounts by over \$8,600.

The receipt of a \$12,745 PPT loan/grant from the federal government to use for stabilizing personnel and certain allowable operating costs.

Fantastic results from Italian Dinner, Chicken BBQ, Arts Festival and Christmas on the Hill fundraising efforts. Despite another challenging year of COVID restrictions which canceled the normal Rummage Sale, Pick-A-Party and Bed & Breakfast fundraisers, the efforts of the few and the many still resulted in fundraising revenue in excess of budget expectations by \$11,583!

Operating expenditures were impacted by a mix of drivers:

Personnel costs were down due to the unanticipated departure of former employees and the decision to not immediately fill the positions until reorganization plans were completed. A communications coordinator and music director were hired, but not until December so the 2021 budget was not affected. An outside cleaning service was engaged, rather than an in-house sexton, resulting in a shift of expense from personnel to maintenance but at a lower overall cost.

A general reduction in expenditures was realized throughout many operating areas such as supplies, heating fuel and electricity due to the extensive period during which worship service and general meetings were not held within the church facilities.

Off-Budget and Restricted Fund activity for the year was limited. We were able to replace a commercial refrigerator unit in the kitchen thanks to a grant from The Community Foundation of Eastern CT. The biggest highlight in Restricted Fund activity was the incredible response to the "Angel Fund" request for help in repainting the sanctuary. Over \$26,000 was donated by members of the congregation. These funds will be used to match grant funds and the repainting project will take place in 2022!

We have completed a challenging year but are moving forward with the church in sound financial condition.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl Davis, Treasurer

First Congregational Church of Woodstock			
DRAFT Budget vs. Actuals: FCCW Operating Budget 2021 - FY21 P&L			
January - December 2021			
	Total		
	Actual	Budget	over Budget
Income			
400.000 Local Income			0.00
400.100 Pledges	149,165.94	140,500.00	8,665.94
400.101 Other Local Income	25,312.55	10,000.00	15,312.55
400.104 Community Kitchen Local	3,328.00	1,500.00	1,828.00
400.108 Special Fundraising			0.00
400.301 Chicken Barbeque Income	9,384.24	1,000.00	8,384.24
400.304 Christmas on the Hill Income	11,781.78	8,000.00	3,781.78
400.305 Rummage Sale Income		1,000.00	-1,000.00
400.307 Bed & Breakfast Income		1,000.00	-1,000.00
400.308 Arts Festival Income	3,448.84	2,000.00	1,448.84
400.309 Pick a Party		2,000.00	-2,000.00
400.310 Other	2,967.88	1,000.00	1,967.88
Total 400.108 Special Fundraising	\$ 27,582.74	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 11,582.74
400.120 Parsonage Rental	15,600.00	15,600.00	0.00
400.160 New Century Fund Withdrawal	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00
Surplus from prior year	22,214.00	22,214.00	0.00
Total 400.000 Local Income	\$ 253,203.23	\$ 215,814.00	\$ 37,389.23
Total Income	\$ 253,203.23	\$ 215,814.00	\$ 37,389.23
Gross Profit	\$ 253,203.23	\$ 215,814.00	\$ 37,389.23
Expenses			
500.000 Minister Expenses			0.00
500.101 Minister Salary	38,000.00	44,400.00	-6,400.00
500.102 Minister Annuity	18,000.00	18,000.00	0.00
500.103 Minister Housing Allowance	24,000.00	17,600.00	6,400.00
500.104 Minister Mileage Reimbursement		500.00	-500.00
500.105 Minister Continuing Ed	250.00	1,000.00	-750.00
500.106 Minister Professional Expenses		500.00	-500.00
500.107 Substitute Ministers	200.00	600.00	-400.00
500.113 Minister Sabbatical Fund	500.00	500.00	0.00
Total 500.000 Minister Expenses	\$ 80,950.00	\$ 83,100.00	-\$ 2,150.00
502.000 Music Program			0.00
502.101 Sr. Choir Dir salary	0.00	1,614.00	-1,614.00
502.102 Organist salary	8,762.08	7,762.00	1,000.08
502.103 Organist substitutes		500.00	-500.00

	Actual	Budget	over Budget
502.104 Music Misc. Expenses	226.73	300.00	-73.27
502.107 Instrument Repair	35.80	400.00	-364.20
Total 502.000 Music Program	\$ 9,024.61	\$ 10,576.00	-\$ 1,551.39
503.000 Faith Formation			0.00
503.101 Faith Formation Director salary	8,838.24	14,250.00	-5,411.76
503.103 Faith Formation materials/ministry	321.98	1,000.00	-678.02
Total 503.000 Faith Formation	\$ 9,160.22	\$ 15,250.00	-\$ 6,089.78
504.000 Operations			0.00
504.101 Clerk stipend	300.00	300.00	0.00
504.102 Treasurer stipend	400.00	400.00	0.00
504.104 Communications Coord. salary	15,388.55	18,843.00	-3,454.45
504.106 Sexton salary	467.46	7,480.00	-7,012.54
504.107 Payroll taxes	2,559.44	4,750.00	-2,190.56
504.108 Workers' Comp Insurance	1,471.00	2,000.00	-529.00
504.109 Office Supplies	1,513.46	2,500.00	-986.54
504.110 Telephone/Internet	2,051.40	1,980.00	71.40
504.111 Professional services	2,993.44	9,000.00	-6,006.56
504.112 Staff Professional Development	270.00	500.00	-230.00
504.114 Outreach Program Expenses	55.98	200.00	-144.02
504.115 Publicity	131.00	500.00	-369.00
504.116 Mileage Reimbursement	184.56	400.00	-215.44
504.117 Tech Equip, Licenses and Services	704.00	0.00	704.00
Total 504.000 Operations	\$ 28,490.29	\$ 48,453.00	-\$ 19,962.71
505.000 Property Expenses			0.00
505.101 Property Insurance	21,821.25	14,423.00	7,398.25
505.102 Fuel Expense	5,945.09	7,300.00	-1,354.91
505.103 Electricity Expense	2,476.60	3,200.00	-723.40
505.104 Maintenance	11,142.32	7,500.00	3,642.32
505.105 Grounds maint.		1,000.00	-1,000.00
505.107 Copier Lease	2,811.48	3,100.00	-288.52
505.108 Parsonage Maint.	600.00	2,000.00	-1,400.00
505.109 Parsonage Property Tax	2,293.73	2,500.00	-206.27
505.111 Water System Maint.	1,232.49	1,000.00	232.49
Total 505.000 Property Expenses	\$ 48,322.96	\$ 42,023.00	\$ 6,299.96
506.000 Other Expenses			0.00
506.100 Hospitality/Catering	191.25	300.00	-108.75
506.101 Diaconate expenses	626.54	1,000.00	-373.46
506.103 Windham dues	270.50	300.00	-29.50

	Actual	Budget	over Budget
506.104 Community Kitchen	3,328.00	1,500.00	1,828.00
506.106 Outreach Missions	4,000.00	4,000.00	0.00
Total 506.000 Other Expenses	\$ 8,416.29	\$ 7,100.00	\$ 1,316.29
510.000 Wider Expenses			0.00
510.100 CT UCC Contribution	8,412.00	8,412.00	0.00
Total 510.000 Wider Expenses	\$ 8,412.00	\$ 8,412.00	\$ 0.00
520.000 Capital Expenses			0.00
520.100 Plant, Property & Equip. Exp.	0.00	1,000.00	-1,000.00
Total 520.000 Capital Expenses	\$ 0.00	\$ 1,000.00	-\$ 1,000.00
Total Expenses	\$ 192,776.37	\$ 215,914.00	-\$ 23,137.63
Net Operating Income	\$ 60,426.86	-\$ 100.00	\$ 60,526.86
Net Income	\$ 60,426.86	-\$ 100.00	\$ 60,526.86
Monday, Jan 10, 2022 02:21:03 PM GMT-8 - Accrual Basis			

Highlighted Fund Balances (unaudited-draft)

Investment accounts

UCC Consolidated Trust Fund	\$251,164.79
TD Ameritrade (stocks)	\$ 15,079.74

Restricted accounts

Sabbatical Fund	\$ 10,645
Ministerial Contingency Fund	\$ 2,971
Angel Fund	\$ 26,061
Music Fund	\$ 3,560
Richardson Fund	\$ 11,969
William Cuff Youth Fund	\$ 16,087
Williams Summer Conf. Fund	\$ 2,465
Mavis/Hescock Fund	\$ 1,636
Carroll Fund for the poor	\$ 1,266

**HISTORY of the CHURCH
for the year 2021**

*Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in
the heart of the sea. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God.
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved.*

Psalm 46:2-5 (NRSV)

As an old curse reads, “May you live in interesting times.” (Often attributed to the Chinese, it is probably English in origin.) The year 2021 was just that: interesting. Requirements for passage included flexibility, wariness, good humor, patience, labor, and a certain amount of genius. We passed with most flags intact.

The year ended with as much Christmas tradition as we could lay in under the circumstances. Holly swags were hung from sconces, the candle standards put in place for the Christmas Eve candlelight service, our last in-person worship for a while. Rev. Kevin and the deacons made Lessons and Carols as normal as possible. Just before, on December 19th, the Atwater-Donnelly duo gave a lift to the 25 people in attendance at their Winter Solstice concert, organized by Maria Sangiolo and Barry Jessurun. Aubrey and Elwood lent agile voices in songs by Jean Ritchie and others, and in play on dulcimer, guitar and harmonica, with limberjack dancers and flat foot clogging.

The morn upon the fallow field doth silver shine, they sang.

Back in January we knew that the COVID pandemic would not roll out of sight or mind easily. The length of the haul was real, no end in sight, as reported daily in the national and world news. In February the reported deaths of Americans numbered more than 460,000, and now rank at nearly twice that count at year’s end. Added to the ground of distress was the January 6th assault on the Capitol building and the realization of the depth of damage done to our national regard for the rule of law and for democracy itself. We took those truths to be self-evident, but they are not to everyone who inhabits our soil. The divisions in our nation were further amplified by the trial of the murderer of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

No fields did silver shine in those days, but we continued to find joy and connection in our small part of the globe, to be “a people of hope and light,” as Rev. Kevin Downer urged in virtual worship. The new year brought the Meaning in the Message second hours with Christina Manuilow, who proved to be a quietly inspired leader of discussion among the small groups who assembled after worship.

We commemorated our commitment to our O & A status on January 10th. Through the winter, online music was created out of thin air by talented people in our midst – Jan and Rick Lamarre, Jen Beck, Kathy Packard, Ellen Chase, Donna Dufresne, Glenn Boies and Laura Bond, Holly Ware, Jeff Perkins, Noah Gourlie, Leslie Sweetnam, Eva Hulme, Carolina Ahearn on piano,

Rachel Solomon of EWCC, and others. One of the few benefits of online worship was this gathering of song and performance on pre-recorded tracks, sometimes from sources far-flung.. Readers of scripture recorded themselves outdoors in their yards or against evocative backgrounds.

“Become the co-authors of a new story,” Kevin charged. Family Ministries Director Lisa Haupt contributed her talents in rendering the Early Word for children, using props in creative ways to convey an Old Testament story each week. The Italian dinner on March 6th was redesigned as a take-out affair, once again orchestrated by Charles Bottieri and his able crew. Shepherd Sunday on April 25th brought Paul Lynn to sing his old favorite, “Master of the Sheepfold,” a recording he loaned to his home church, Good Shepherd, the next week.

Also in April, Seana Weaver ran a marathon on her birthday, the 24th, raising over \$8000 for Community Kitchen. We were encouraged to get our “anxious selves” out of the way to allow us to move within crisis, to relax into the work at hand, and in a later sermon, to prune back our fears, regrets, and anger to allow ourselves to grow into vibrant new life.

On Pentecost, May 23rd, we began outdoor worship, made possible by the immense effort of the crew who strung cables and wires and moved equipment to amplify music and spoken word.. First located on the front lawn, worship moved to the area behind the parsonage to trade road noise for birdsong. We acknowledged the fruitful lives of Josephine Bottieri, who died on May 18th, and Ann Moran on May 15th. Rev. Kevin recorded his sermon outdoors with the American flag in the background for Memorial Day Sunday, May 30th, when veteran Glenn Boies sang memorably in his rich bass voice.

On June 6th we returned to the sanctuary for the first time in a long time, all wearing masks and sitting in alternate pews. The Westerberg family gathered on the 19th to remember Gladys, a longtime church member who died in February 2020. In July we welcomed East Woodstock church members to worship with us, as has been our tradition for decades. Divinity student Danielle Arnett Keller preached on July 4th, traveling from her home in Brunswick, Maine, to serve EWCC for the month. A memorial service was held on July 10th for Linda Wilmot, a member who died in April 2020, with her four sons in attendance. The pandemic has delayed such celebrations of life for families, including Mary Larson Seney’s, whose memorial service in late August drew many members of her large extended family, and Cheryl Wakely’s on December 18th, attended by over 90 friends and family members.

Services at EWCC picked up in August, with Rev. Kevin preaching at our sister church. Tropical storm Henri caused cancellation of worship on August 22nd and left in its wake great damage to the two venerable maple trees in front of our parsonage. Eventually, in a months-long process, those trees had to come down, desolate as the decision was. At our homecoming on September 12th, we enjoyed Sunday sundaes on the front lawn in a safe format devised by the deacons. Two weeks later we bade goodbye to Lisa Haupt, who decided to concentrate her work in Storrs, and enjoyed a meal of soups and bread, again on the lawn. Morning Bible study began on September 14th in the church library, with Rev. Kevin leading in his quiet, inclusive, and non-didactic way that made the time enjoyable and rewarding.

In October, Rev. Kevin began baking pies, inviting congregants to join him in afternoon and evening gatherings for casual conversation and connection. Fall also ushered in the Stewardship campaign, mounted ably by Paula Wilmot, Charles Bottieri, and Jim Nowak. Our longtime office manager, Ellen Bradley, resigned from her position on October 13th. Modified versions of the Craft Fair on our front lawn, organized by Karen Olah, and the accompanying lunch by Jim Nowak and crew, and the Christmas on the Hill Fair under Debby Kirk's leadership in November, brought fundraising revenues in highly successful ventures. With the inclusion of the Woodstock Fair on Labor Day weekend, shepherded once again by John Cimochoowski, we were in pretty good shape financially.

Dressed in his kilt, Tom Duggan played bagpipes on October 17th, a treat for all. In early November, Kevin asked us to keep hope alive in the small places, a path we have followed through the year.

Circling back to the December just past, we were required to move our services online again right after Christmas Eve. Deacon Christina Manuilow gathered an ensemble of pioneers of all ages to sing carols on the front steps of the church, with cocoa and cookies to follow outdoors. So we continue, awaiting the abatement of the newest Omicron strain of COVID. The word is that, by summer of the new year, we may move to an endemic state from the pandemic, with control of the virus stronger but not absolute. Angst in the national sphere continues, with dire warnings of loss of our democracy. Each of us can decide what role to play in countering the forces that loom over us.

In her inaugural poem of 2021, *The Hill We Climb*, the young and dazzling Amanda Gorman spoke these words:

But while democracy can be periodically delayed, it can never be permanently defeated. In this truth, in this faith we trust for while we have our eyes on the future, history has its eyes on us. This is the era of just redemption. We feared it at its inception. We did not feel prepared to be the heirs of such a terrifying hour, but within it, we found the power to author a new chapter, to offer hope and laughter to ourselves so while once we asked, how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe? Now we assert, how could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?
... The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light. If only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it.

May we be so brave.

Alexandra Lyman, Historian
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