



2023 Annual Report

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First Congregational Church of Woodstock

Annual Meeting Agenda January 28, 2024

to commence immediately following worship at approximately 10:50 a.m.

1. Call to Order - Moderator, James Nowak
2. Reading of the Call and Declaration of Quorum - Clerk, Laura Boies
3. Convening Prayer - Reverend Dr. Kevin Downer
4. Minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting
5. Minutes of Special Congregational Meeting October 2023
6. Remembrance of Members Who Have Died in 2023 - Clerk, Laura Boies
7. Reports of the Pastor, Governing Board and Ministries
8. Treasurer's Report - Tom Duggan
9. Stewardship Report - Bob Kirk
10. Proposed Budget for 2024 - Finance Lead, Suzanne Cimochoowski
11. Proposed Bylaw Changes - Assistant Moderator, Bruce Staehle
12. Proposed Resolution to clarify that the Budget takes effect Jan 1, pending Congregational Approval - Finance Lead, Suzanne Cimochoowski
13. Report of the Nominating Committee - Moderator, James Nowak
14. Correspondence - Clerk, Laura Boies
15. Appreciation of Leaders - Reverend Dr. Kevin Downer
16. Other Business
17. Moderator's Comments
18. Adjournment
19. Closing Prayer - Reverend Dr. Kevin Downer

1 PASTOR'S REPORT

Let us then be children no longer, tossed here and there, carried about by every wind of doctrine, or by human trickery or crafty, deceitful schemes. Rather, let us speak the truth in love, and grow to the full maturity of Christ, the head. Through Christ, the whole body grows. With the proper functioning of each member, firmly joined together by each supporting ligament, the body builds itself up in love. – Ephesians 4:14-16

Peace and greetings,

As with every year since our founding 333 years ago, there have been joys, celebrations, challenges, losses, innovations, and changes.

We celebrated worship, explored faith and spirituality, and addressed the present and pressing needs of friends, neighbors, and strangers both near and far. We continued to faithfully witness to the compassion, hope, and love of God in Christ in many ways, including:

- Commemorated the 10th anniversary of the Sandy Hook shootings.
- Continued to support Ukrainian student refugees at the academy.
- Explored ways to address the epidemic of loneliness locally.
- Formed a discernment team in support of seminarian Noah Gourlie.
- Hosted the Middle School's Witness Stone Ceremony, SNEUCC lay delegate training, and weekly meals at Community Kitchen.
- Launched a new senior-focused ministry.
- Participated in the town's Memorial Day and Veteran's Day services.
- Worked with the Middle School to dedicate a Witness Stone that acknowledges Cuff Fellows, an enslaved person who was baptized and married at our church.
- Welcomed several guests to worship and second hour conversations.

We found that the single board and integrated team ministry model, which was unanimously approved in January, encouraged us to explore and use our gifts in places that more closely align with our passions. It also forced us to intentionally look beyond long-standing assumptions and think through how we make decisions. The decade-long conversation regarding selling the parsonage came to fruition as the congregation unanimously voted to sell the property in a special meeting in October. For the most part, we met these challenges with grace, kindness, and understanding.

In the year ahead we will engage the important, urgent questions of what it might be to the church today; what our purpose is; and what is God's vision for us as fewer people find meaning, spiritual nourishment, connection, and hope in a congregation such as ours.

In these times of fear and uncertainty, we have this opportunity to embody the love of God, compassion of Christ, and spirit of hope – if and as we trust in the goodness of God's love and in one another; build one another up in love; experience the wonder of God's call to make all things new; and express our hopes, questions, and concerns with respect and humility.

In the words of the Apostle Paul, "To God—whose power now at work in us can do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine - to God be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus through all generations, world without end! Amen."

In Christ, Pastor Kevin

2 ANNUAL STATISTICS

Number of members joining during 2023:

Number of active members lost during 2023:

By death	2
By request to withdraw	1
By Transfer	4
To inactive	10

Total active membership 113

Average weekly attendance: 45

Baptisms: 2

Aurora Stone	6/11/23	Maci Fox	6/25/23
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Weddings: 1 Alyssa McDonough & Evan Salvatore

Deaths:

Darlene Stubbe	1/06/23	Ian Scott	1/20/23	Kim Tavallaimola	10/22/23
Tony Felice, Jr.	11/19/2023	Earl Brazeal	12/11/23	Leo Campbell	1/14/24

3 MINUTES OF THE 98TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WOODSTOCK 29 JANUARY 2023

Call to Order: Moderator, Jim Nowak, called the meeting to order at 11:05 am.

Reading of the Call and Declaration of Quorum:

- Laura Boies, clerk, read the Call and declared the quorum (of 35) was met with 38 members in attendance.

Opening Prayer:

- Rev. Kevin Downer shared a reading from Thomas Burton.

Proposed Bylaws Change:

- Jim Nowak introduced the previously suggested MOTION to amend the current Bylaws to allow members who are joining the meeting remotely (i.e.: via the internet) to count as part of the quorum and the vote. Carl Davis/ 2nd Glenn Boies. 36 voted in favor, 2 opposed. Motion passed.

Minutes of the 2022 annual meeting:

- The minutes were previously posted in the Annual Report for the congregation. MOTION to accept, with appreciation, the minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting. Charlene Swanson/2nd Glenn Boies. Motion passed unanimously.

Remembrance of Members Who Have Passed:

- The clerk read the names of the members of our fold who died in the last year: Paul Stanton, Linda Chase, Jesse Wilkinson, and Ian Scott (Jan.2023).

Reports of the Pastor, Church Council, Boards, Committees, and Church Historian:

- These reports were previously posted in the Annual Report. MOTION to accept these reports with appreciation: Lisa Nowak /2nd Tom Chase. Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report:

- Tom Duggan noted appreciation for our volunteer bookkeeper, Tony Bishop.
- Net income was a surplus of \$5,000 without taking a budgeted \$10,000 withdrawal from the New Century (Endowment) Fund and without using \$35,000 of budgeted support from last year's surplus. We benefited from new pledges and increased previous pledges as well as \$32,000 netted from our fundraisers.
- Total expenses were \$215,000, which was \$11,000 lower than budgeted.
- MOTION to accept the Treasurer's Report for 2022: Glenn Boies/2nd Carl Davis. Motion passed unanimously.

Stewardship Report:

- Charlene Swanson reported that the current pledges amount to \$145,261.
- Charlene shared thanks from Bob Kirk and herself as the Stewardship team.
- MOTION to accept the Stewardship report: Bev Brazeal/2nd Jennifer Duggan. Motion passed unanimously.

Proposed Budget for 2023

- Charles Bottieri reviewed the proposed budget with \$254,539 in Income and Expenses of \$253,807, giving us a surplus of \$732.
- The budget details had been previously shared and discussed with the congregation on January 8th.
- We applied and have been approved for the Employee Retention Credit (ERC) from the government for \$21,734. These funds are expected sometime in the next 12 months.
- Expected income from Tiny Forrest Daycare starting in March of \$11,000.
- The accounts have been consolidated and reorganized to match our new structuring plan.
- Expenses include a \$10,000 withdrawal from the New Century Endowment Fund to be taken only if necessary.
- Plan a 5% COLA increase for all employees and a 5% merit increase for the pastor.
- MOTION to accept the proposed budget for 2023 as presented: Charles Bottieri/2nd Tom Singleton. Motion passed unanimously.

Proposed Restructuring

- Bruce Staehle presented for the Restructuring Team.
- The Team has done a great deal of research on how to be more effective, efficient and flexible with a smaller congregation. Many churches today are having similar issues.
- The recommendation is to form a governing board of 7 individuals (6 members plus the pastor) which basically combines the Council and the Board of Trustees. Members will serve a two-year term with three new members elected each year. The Governing Board's responsibilities would include:
 - Supporting the vision and values of the church through policy development, strategy and long-range planning.
 - Fiduciary oversight and budget development.
 - Delegating and overseeing spiritual programmatic and ministry work of the church.
 - Making policy and overseeing policy.
- 2023 will be a transition period.
- Our goal is to have less administration and more ministry.
- Ministry will have four categories: Worship, Faith Formation, Community Care and Faith in Action.
- Responding to Congregants questions:
 - The Governing Board expects to meet monthly with reports and notifications posted similarly to the current Council.
 - Concern raised that the Governing Board maintains transparency and gratitude.
- MOTION to adopt the single board governance model and in so doing adopt the proposed changes in our church bylaws as presented in the Annual Report: Charlene Swanson/2nd Carl Davis. Motion passed unanimously.

Nominating Committee

- Deb Kirk presented the slate of nominees which was prepared after asking the congregation to submit nominations for the Governing Board.
 - One year term: Jennifer Duggan, Ginny Moylan, and Jim Nowak
 - Two-year term: Charles Bottieri, Suzanne Cimoehowski, Bruce Staehle
 - Clerk: Laura Boies
- MOTION to accept the slate of nominees for the new Governing Board: Debby Kirk/2nd Glenn Boies. Motion passed unanimously.
- Noted by Bob Kirk that both the approval of the new governing model and the initial slate of governing board members were passed unanimously.

Correspondence

- The clerk, Laura Boies, confirmed there was no correspondence to report.

Appreciation of Church Leaders

- Appreciation for the congregation's generous giving of time and money.
- Gifts were presented to senior members "retiring" from church leadership roles:
 - Board of Deacons: Kathy Packard and Rick Ramadhsingh
 - Board of Outreach: Jennifer Duggan
 - Board of Trustees: Suzanne Cimoehowski and Charles Bottieri
 - Also, because the Board of Trustees is being dissolved: Bob Kirk, Paula Wilmot, and Kristen Kaiser.
 - The Restructuring Team: Charlene Swanson, Bruce Staehle, Debby Kirk, and Debbie Pallatto-Fontaine
- Moderator, Jim Nowak, expressed appreciation for Rev. Kevin; for the amazing amount of work he has done this year, for all that he has helped to put into motion, and for his faithfulness and his belief in us.

Moderator's Closing Comments

- Jim Nowak expressed gratitude "for each and every one of you" who have given their pledges of time, talent and monetary contributions, which make this church so much larger than its physical presence.

Meeting adjourned @ 12:01pm

Closing Prayer: Rev. Kevin shared from Ephesians 3 and 4 [Paul's letter to the church] (Inclusive Bible version). This was followed by the traditional closing of Sunday service where the congregation holds hands in a circle around the sanctuary and sings "Alleluia".

Respectfully submitted by Laura Boies, clerk

4 MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WOODSTOCK 22 October 2023

Call to Order: This Special Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Woodstock was opened at 11:03 am by Jim Nowak, Moderator.

The opening devotional: Bruce Lyman, Senior Deacon, shared a reading from Mary Moody, "We Believe the Day Is Coming".

Quorum: Confirmation of a quorum (35) by Laura Boies, Clerk.

- 32 members in person and 8 members online.

Statement of Purpose: The purpose of this meeting is to present, discuss and vote on a motion regarding the sale of the Parsonage.

- Jim Nowak presented the Motion from the Governing Board: MOTION to authorize the Governing Board to proceed with selling the parsonage. Toby Bishop seconded the motion.

Discussion of Motion:

- Plan for proceeds of the sale?
 - The Governing Board recommendation is to put the money into a fund similar to the New Century Fund and use the proceeds mainly for capital improvements.
- Will we be required to finish the well and septic prior to the sale?

- There are three septic systems, one behind the parsonage that the church is connected to, one directly behind the church and one near the cemetery. It is possible to have an easement to use the parsonage septic system. Regarding the well, the intention is to drill a new well for the church prior to the sale or set a specific timetable for after the sale.
- We have a fiduciary responsibility, but do we have a responsibility to choose a good neighbor for the church?
 - Determining who would or would not be a good neighbor would be extremely difficult. We do understand that the best offer may not be the highest monetary bid. The Governing Board intends to follow the principles and guidelines of our core values, including to be fair, just, caring, respectful and transparent in this process.
- Is there a monetary guideline beyond which the Governing Board needs to come before the Congregation for approval? Can the Governing Board take the responsibility for deciding on the buyer? Does the process of handling the proceeds of the sale belong solely to the Governing Board or should that come before the Congregation as well?
 - The current bylaws prevent the Governing Board from selling property of the church without express permission from the Congregation. This is why this meeting was called. If the church were to call a meeting (requiring at least 2 week's notice) for every offer on the parsonage it would severely inhibit the process of the sale. Therefore, the Governing Board is asking the Congregation to authorize them to proceed with the sale.
 - The Governing Board was elected and entrusted by the Congregation to make the best decisions for the church. Going forward, the Financial Team would include any possible plans for use of funds in their Annual Budget proposal which would be voted on by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting.
- Concerns for Ginny and Bill as the current tenants:
 - They have been an important consideration throughout this process, and they are in support of the sale.

Vote on the Motion to authorize the Governing Board to proceed with selling the parsonage.

- 32 members attending in person and 8 members attending online voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Closing Comments: Bob Kirk offered thanks to the Governing Board for continuing the work to address the sale of the Parsonage, which has been in discussion for several years, and bringing the issue to fruition at this meeting.

Closing Prayer: Debby Kirk offered the closing prayer.

Motion to adjourn: John Cimoichowski, seconded by Glenn Boies. Motion approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:29 am.

Respectfully submitted by Laura Boies, clerk

5 GOVERNING BOARD

The very first Governing Board of the First Congregational Church of Woodstock was established in January at the 2023 Annual Meeting. The first official meeting of this newly formed board was held in February. Being new territory, the members started by establishing their roles and their guiding principles and expectations. The first expectation was that this new form of governance would evolve as we progress. By combining some pre-established materials on guiding principles with our Core Values from the Vision & Values work, the board established the Governing Board Guiding Principles and Shared Expectations which are now part of the document "20230215 GB Teaming Principles" in the Governing Board Drive.

It was agreed that communication with the congregation would be a priority. Meeting minutes would be posted as we had done in the past with Council. Other information for the congregation could be shared through the weekly emails, the Sunday bulletins, the Share and the Governing Board page on our website. To further help disseminate information, Suzanne created a binder of GB meeting documents to be kept in the library for anyone who wants to access hard copies.

Periodic "Town Hall" type meetings (Second Hours) were planned in order to share brief overviews of the board's work and get feedback in an open forum. The first such meeting was held on April 23rd. In July those meetings were increased to monthly "Governing Board Spotlight" Second Hours to feature specific areas of ministry, so congregants could have a better understanding of what we're working on and how to help out.

Protocols for internal communications needed to be established with this new governing model. Governing Board members took on "@firstchurchwoodstock.org" email addresses. By using church email addresses, documents saved in these google drives can be easily passed to future officers, thus automatically preserving records of the church. This also enables a route for people to communicate with church leaders. Any issues or concerns could be addressed to the team or ministry area relating to that matter. When necessary, the Moderator would help determine which ministry area or team should respond.

Having assumed the duties of the former Board of Trustees, the Governing Board named a Facilities team leader, Charles Bottieri, and a financial team leader, Suzanne Cimochofski.

On the financial side, the financial leader would meet monthly with the financial team for detailed discussions and then review relevant items at the Governing Board meetings. The Governing Board established guidelines for things like approval of reimbursements for non-recurring purchases of our various ministry groups. One item that needed attention this year was the cost of the tree lighting at Christmas time, which in 2022 was about \$800. In the fall, the Governing Board reviewed the Richardson Fund which is used to pay for the lighting of the tree each year. The GB reviewed the original endowment documents and confirmed that Mrs. Richardson expected that the *income* from the endowment would be used to pay for this. Unfortunately, that account does not earn any substantial interest at this point. It was decided that we would decorate a smaller tree, but we still need to build up the fund.

On the Facilities side, a subdivision was created with Jen Duggan taking over Facility Use requests and Charles continuing with Property Maintenance. In the fall the Governing Board began addressing the fact that the Property Maintenance team was dwindling. Charles, who has been handling a vast array of duties on his own, defined a list of categories and subcategories for us, enumerating the duties under Facilities/Property Management. It was clear that further subdivision should be created for the many tasks that fall under this department. Jim Nowak volunteered to take the lead for the Grounds category. Rev. Kevin volunteered to be the daycare liaison and handle the daily communications and issues that come up (mainly because he is consistently on site). Billing and financial issues will still remain the purview of the Financial Team. The Governing Board is currently seeking other members to assist with the variety of tasks that come with maintaining our church building and grounds.

Due to the fact that the Labyrinth had become a safety issue and a liability, finding a solution became an ongoing discussion which started in the spring. The Governing Board tried to find a volunteer group to rework the Labyrinth in a manner that would be amenable. After contacting the Boy Scouts and staff at Woodstock Academy, with no success, in September it was agreed that we should remove the stones before winter and make plans in the future for a replacement.

It is the Governing Board's duty to set policy, so of course, several policies were reviewed and created throughout the year. At the March meeting it was decided that when hiring personnel, the ministry team in the area where personnel will work, will form any necessary search team for hiring. Then the Governing Board will act on the hiring recommendations of such search teams and extend the offer; presenting the offer letter and processing the paperwork.

In June, a Computer Use policy written by Bruce Staehle was approved. The board also reviewed and approved best practice guidelines for our "Communications Policies" at the October meeting. Also, thanks to Bruce, parts of our Image and Video Use Policy regarding images of children and vulnerable persons was updated in December.

The Governing Board also assumed the duties of the former nominating committee and found new members for the Stewardship team. When delegates were needed for the SNEUCC and the Windham Association meetings, two Governing Board members volunteered. In August, the Governing Board voted to approve Bill Moylan as the Assistant Treasurer for the remainder of the year 2023, with the intention that he will become Treasurer after the Annual Meeting in January 2024.

In other areas of our ministries, the Governing Board helped facilitate a meeting regarding kitchen use and the problem with the grease trap. Governing Board members helped out during our summer services by making the call for the offerings in July. In August the Governing Board unanimously approved the recommendation of the Music Director Search Team to extend an offer to Gretchen D'Andrea.

The sale of our parsonage is something that has been discussed for several years by our boards and committees, but this year we were finally able to work through the issues and bring it to fruition. This involved finding and retrieving all the appropriate information and having many conversations with people within and beyond our church. On Sept. 10th the Governing Board held a Second Hour meeting to establish an open conversation with the congregation regarding the proposed sale. In taking on responsibility for this project, the Governing Board defined objectives for the process of selling the parsonage in order to be fair, loving, respectful and just while being aware of the fiduciary responsibilities. The board was careful to be considerate of our tenants and our congregants in all the steps that needed to be taken. Once the board had worked through and gathered all the information and considerations to go forward, a Special Congregational Meeting was called for October 22nd to ask for approval from the congregation for the Governing Board to proceed with handling the sale of the parsonage. The motion presented at this meeting was passed unanimously.

At the Governing Board's November meeting, motions to hire Stephanie Gosselin as our realtor and Attorney Ed Higgins to represent the church in the sale of the parsonage, were passed unanimously. An easement for use of the well (until we have our own) would be added to the sale agreement. Arrangements were made for the necessary survey of the church and parsonage properties in order for the attorney to write the easement. We also contracted LaFramboise for our new well.

Review of our bylaws was ongoing throughout the year. Bruce Staehle was key in organizing information and areas of responsibility from previous bylaws that the Governing Board would need to process and refine in this first year. Throughout the year, the board members reviewed the current bylaws and discussed recommendations for changes.

A few of the more significant proposed changes include adding our Bedrock Belief statement from the Vision and Values work, reducing the quorum for congregational meetings to fit our current size, and changing the terms of the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and the Clerk with the addition that these will be renewable terms. On December 3rd, these and other possible changes were discussed at a Second Hour meeting to share and get feedback from church members.

The Governing Board decided to hold an additional board meeting on December 7th to review the proposed 2024 budget so that the time spent on that matter would not take away from other agenda items at the regular December meeting. Then when the regular meeting was held, the board was ready to pass a motion to accept the proposed budget for presentation at the 2024 Annual meeting.

Also at the December Governing Board meeting, the latest comments and suggestions regarding the bylaws were addressed, including the suggestion to “*Move the Annual Meeting to November*”. This is because currently, having the meeting in January means we operate in January on an unapproved budget. This causes unnecessary complexity in the way we deal with our finances in our budget, especially with respect to salaries and taxes. Therefore, three possible solutions were discussed: 1) Move the Annual Meeting to November. 2) Give the Governing Board clear authority (via the bylaws) to be able to allow the budget to take effect on January 1st in good faith, knowing that adjustments might be made at the Annual Meeting. 3) Split the Annual Meeting into two meetings, with just a budget meeting in early December and the rest of the meeting issues in January. It was decided that the preferred solution at this time is to ask approval from the congregation to entrust the Governing Board to operate on the new budget in January prior to the vote. Of course, this would need to be brought to a vote at the 2024 Annual Meeting, thus fixing the issue for 2025.

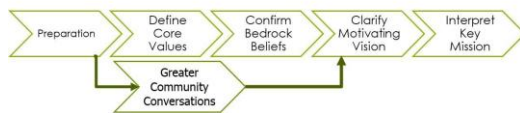
Due to the importance of further discussion of the bylaws revisions, the board decided to combine the Annual Budget Crunch with discussion of the proposed bylaws changes. In preparation for the Annual Meeting, a “Bylaws and Budget Review” was scheduled for Jan. 14, 2024, after the church service.

In the midst of all this, the Governing Board is keeping an eye on the future of our church. It is clear that strategic planning conversations need to take place. The Governing Board knows that we need to clarify the possibilities for our future and has enlisted the support of Rev. Carol Steinbrecher, SNEUCC Area Conference Minister to explore possible paths for our future. The Vision process from the Vision & Values Team will help us determine which direction we want to go and aid us in engaging the questions that will lead us on our way.

6 VISION AND VALUES

Having identified our congregation’s *Core Values* in 2022, the Vision & Values Team continued its work

How is God is calling us to be the
“church” today?



into 2023. We first put together a statement of *Competing Priorities* that were identified during the core value process. These competing priorities hold us back individually and collectively from living our identified Core Values. The statement was distributed to the congregation in early May and an addendum titled “How Can We Do Better?” was added in November.

FCCW Statement of Competing Priorities

In seeking to practice our Core Values, we confront a number of Competing Priorities. These are attitudes and habits that hold us back, that keep us from being the church we feel called to be. Chief among these Competing Priorities are the following:

Our High Standards/Perfectionism

We are a well-educated, moderately affluent congregation. We take pride in ourselves as individuals and in our church as a “flagship” of our association. We want things done just so; we can be critical when they do not meet our high standards. Our tendency to judge manifests itself as criticisms of church music, of one another’s performance of church responsibilities, of ideas for new programs, and so forth. While high standards can be admirable, perfectionism is harmful. As Richard Rohr reminds us, “The demand for the perfect is the enemy of the good.”

Care and Maintenance of the Church Facility

We are blessed with an iconic New England church situated on scenic Woodstock Hill. Our sanctuary is tasteful and understated; Harrison Hall is large and functional; our downstairs open area is ideal for church dinners and Scouts and our Community Kitchen, and our kitchen is commercial grade; our library, downstairs classrooms, nursery, and church offices are all nicely appointed. The problem is that our church facility, expanded in 1991, was designed for a larger congregation. Maintaining it is a drain on the resources of our present small congregation. We expend much of our finances and energy on upkeep rather than on outreach, on repairs and maintenance and cleaning rather than on ministries and faith formation.

Yankee Pragmatism

We are task-driven, more Martha than Mary. We are oriented toward immediate physical needs, toward personal and institutional responsibilities. This practical orientation often takes priority over more interpersonal and spiritual concerns. Sometimes we are not as welcoming as we might be; sometimes in fulfilling our various responsibilities we unintentionally neglect the feelings of others.

Difficulty Assuming Frames of Reference other than our Own

Like people everywhere, churched and unchurched, we experience life as separate human beings. Each of us is consumed with our own concerns, our own perceptions and thoughts, our own individual points of view and opinions, shaped as they are by our own personal histories. While we should not blame ourselves for our inherent subjectivity—it comes with the territory, so to speak—we do need to balance it with the awareness of a larger reality full of other human beings and living creatures and nature and Spirit. We need to be able to see things from other points of view, to be able to walk in someone else’s shoes. If we are to be peacemakers in our community and the world, we will need to meet others who disagree with us and engage them in meaningful dialogue. Such dialogue requires that we be able to imaginatively project ourselves into frames of reference other than our own.

How Can We Do Better?

Naming these “competing priorities” is a first step in mitigating their ill effects. Naming and recognizing them in ourselves, individually and collectively, is a path forward. These tendencies run deep, however. From time to time, we will need to remind ourselves of them, gently and lovingly. When our pursuit of perfection causes harm, for example, we will want to remind ourselves of the good that is happening among us. When we forget that our point of view is not the only one, we should remind ourselves that others may see things differently, and so temper our words and our emails accordingly. This is the work of peacemakers. It can be done by all of us—from the pulpit, during congregational meetings, at board and committee meetings and other gatherings.

The team then began work on identifying our congregation's **Bedrock Beliefs**. Again, loosely following a process described in "Moving Off the Map" by Thomas Bandy, we engaged the congregation in discussion in May and June during a Second Hour and in small group conversations. During a Congregational Gathering in October, the congregation reviewed the identified beliefs, and provided valuable insights and comments. Based on this review, our team presented our congregation's **Bedrock Belief Statement**:

First Congregational Church of Woodstock - Bedrock Belief Statement

God's Presence/Being

We believe in the living God. God is always working in our lives; in everything and everywhere. There is no place that God is not. Nothing can separate us from the unconditional love of God.

God Reveals God's Self

We believe the God of love and forgiveness reveals God's self in infinite ways (the beauty of nature, service to others, prayer, music, sacred spaces to name just a few). God is revealed most fully in Jesus Christ, who gives us the vision of what God is calling us to do. Jesus is our role model and teacher who is in all of us and is one of us.

Our Being

We believe that each of us is a beautiful creation, a vessel of God's spirit. We have each been given gifts and are asked to use our gifts to reflect God's love out into the world. We are called to be intentionally aware of the divine presence in our lives.

Relationship / Connection with others (in and out of church)

We believe that Jesus showed us what a life full of God looks like and we are called to create and develop authentic relationships with others; to see the eyes of God in others. Community encourages and challenges us to grow beyond our limited experiences and understandings as we listen, learn, and serve in ways that we cannot do on our own.

Church Community / Purpose

We believe that our church community renews and restores us. As Jesus taught us, our community of faith cares for one another, looks out for one another, and is a place where we can see the face of God in others.

Inclusivity and Openness

We believe that God is too big for only one way. We understand and are accepting of the ways, ideas, and experiences of others.

In the coming year we will explore our congregation's Vision.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jennifer Duggan, Bob Kirk, Susan McKechnie, and Pastor Kevin



7 MINISTRY TEAMS

Following the January 29, 2023, Congregational Meeting, we began the process of transitioning from the former committee structure to the new team-based ministry model. This included clarifying roles and responsibilities, forming new teams and subteams, and inviting congregants to participate in ministry in ways that align with their interests and passions, e.g., in late February we held a ministry fair.

Current Ministry Areas include Worship, Faith Formation, Community Care, and Faith In Action.

Throughout the year we worked in the various ministries to identify leaders, describe the purpose and vision for each ministry, make opportunities more visible, and - as needed - offer training and form subteams.

Each month a ministry update charted our progress, questions, ideas, and challenges. The ministry updates were shared at monthly meetings of the Governing Board and posted on our website.



7.1 Care

Throughout the year the deacons coordinated the care ministry activities, including the prayer chain, prayer shawl ministry, greeting card ministry, visits, and volunteers who help with food, visits, transportation, etc. Countless cards were sent, visits occurred, and food was delivered in support of people in our congregation and community.

A survey of the congregation indicated that communication, confidentiality, and identification of needs are the chief concerns related to community care. The survey and ministry fair also helped identify who is willing to assist on an as needed basis by offering transportation, yard work, food, visits, etc.

In the coming year we will continue to work toward a vision of creating a network of care that will provide a) periodic visits to congregants who are unable to make it to church regularly and/or going through a challenging season; b) continue sending cards of encouragement to congregants; c) nurture the prayer team; d) organize volunteers and share care needs for things such as rides, food, and other practical things; and e) ensure pastor and deacons are aware of those experiencing difficult challenges who could benefit from a conversation, visit, etc.

7.2 Faith Formation/Lifelong Learning

Faith Formation / Lifelong Learning includes all activities related to exploring spiritual growth, e.g. Sunday School, Adult Bible Study, Small Groups, Book Studies, Intergenerational experiences, Spiritual Practices, Finding Meaning in the Message, etc.

We welcomed a new Family Coordinator in April, Mitra Sarshuri, who began organizing Sunday School and youth related activities. She coordinated with East Woodstock to collaborate on a weekly summer program as a Vacation Bible School Alternative, and planned fall themes connected to our Sunday morning worship. Unfortunately, Mitra resigned in October due to health reasons.

Through occasional programs and conversations, we engage the congregation you and old to explore our personal and collective beliefs, as well as a six-week Lenten program about prayer. While our worship ministry coordinated activities throughout the year with an eye toward offering more intergenerational, experiential activities in and after worship. Experiences included an intergenerational Ministry Fair to explore our gifts and passions, an Earth Day service that included various “stations,” and two brunch church opportunities to engage one another in small group conversations.

The Tuesday morning Adult Bible Study continues to meet through the coordination of Sam Lyman and the facilitation/leadership of all of the members of the group.

Unfortunately, we have temporarily removed our labyrinth from the rear of the building as the uneven ground and stones had been identified by our insurer as a “trip hazard.” We are actively seeking a small team from within the congregation and beyond to identify ways to re-establish a labyrinth.

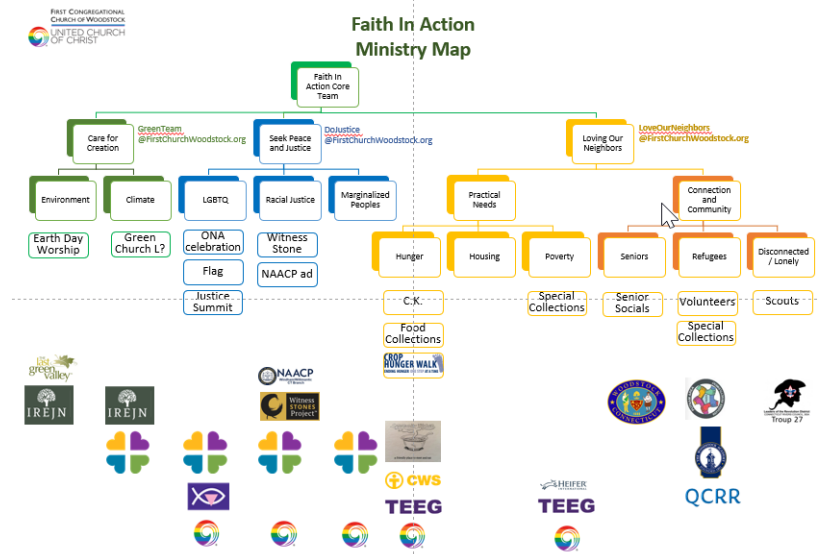
The Children and Family ministry team met following Mitra’s departure. We agreed that we not only need a reset for this ministry, but we also need to rethink our approach. For this reason, we will adopt the following approach through 2024:

- Hold off seeking to hire a coordinator through the first quarter of 2024.
- Acquire and begin offering the UCC version of the Confirm Not Conform curriculum to support our youth.
- Acquire curriculum to have available to send to our families, e.g., SALT and Holy Moments.
- Organize a Youth and/or family event at least once a quarter.
- Acquire and have materials available for youth and children each Sunday, update the pray space based on the season, e.g., advent, lent, easter, etc.

In addition, we will continue to plan intergenerational activities including Brunch Church, Earth Day worship, service activities, the Pet Blessing, etc. to the extent that these relate to worship, they will be planned and budgeted there.

7.3 Faith In Action

Faith in Action Ministry Map Creation- This year the Faith in Action Core Team worked to create a Ministry Map. This map helped us to gain a better understanding of the work we are currently doing with existing partners. It also helped us to identify 3 key initiatives that are important to our congregation. Our goal was to encourage members of the congregation with similar interests and passions to engage in conversations, share resources, and explore opportunities to serve both in our church and in the wider community. We created the **Green Team**, “**Do Justice**,” and **Loving Our Neighbors**. Each of these groups was introduced to the congregation during fall.



Collections for Community Partners

- **Squash Hunger** – October 2023. Faith in Action collected pasta for The Daily Break Food Bank in Putnam.

- **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** – December. The congregation was extremely generous in supporting TEEG’s gift tag program. 50 Gift Tags were distributed. Gifts were collected, blessed, and brought to TEEG on December 12th.

Benevolences and Disbursements of Funds

Church World Services	\$750	Various Programs
CT Farmland Trust	\$500	Sustainable Farm Programs
TEEG	\$500	Food security programs
NAACP Windham County	\$500	Racial Justice Education/Programs
Southern Poverty Law Center	\$500	The SPLC is a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements, and advance the human rights of all people.
Paws Cat Shelter	\$400	Sponsor a Crate Program
Last Green Valley	\$200	Educational Program for Elementary Students
Jim Collins Foundation	\$500	Fund for Gender Confirming Surgeries
Interreligious Eco-Justice Network	\$200	IREJN Annual Membership
\$4050		

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

Faith in Action participated in several programs and encouraged initiatives by members to put faith in action in 2023.

- **Senior Ministry-** Proceeds from the offering collected on Christmas Eve of 2022 were used to start a new Senior Ministry. Social events were held monthly both in the spring and fall. Gatherings included presentations from the Last Green Valley, a talk on internet safety and scams, the benefits of mindful coloring, and trivia.
- **Open and Affirming Service-** January 22, 2023-Faith in Action planned and sponsored a special service celebrating the 20-year anniversary of FCCW being an open and affirming church.
- **Book Group- February- Love is the Way-**
- **Woodstock Town Wide Tag Sale** – June
- **Second Hour-Church World Services** – Sept 26th. Ginny Moylan presented the Stone Soup story and Outreach had a table asking the congregation for *disbursement of funds* ideas.

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,

Carolina Ahearn, Ginny Moylan, Mitra Sarshuri, Ryan Sarshuri, and Paula Wilmot

7.3.1 Community Kitchen

Our Community Kitchen, now in its ninth year, is a blessing to everyone associated with it—our guests, certainly, but also our many wonderful volunteers and chefs, our partner churches and Center of Hope folks, and our local bakeries and fresh produce providers. Our mission is twofold: first, to provide a nutritious hot noontime meal every Monday to everyone who walks through our doors and, second, to create a welcoming and supportive community for our guests and volunteers.

This past year we were open 48 days and served 3,722 meals. Our guests arrive by carload, each Monday morning. They find seats at one of the tables and partake of the coffee, tea, and donated breakfast items we have laid out for them. Mostly they visit with one another and with us; some play cards. Before the meal, we convene to tell jokes and sing songs, share stories and make announcements, celebrate birthdays and say grace. We call our guests to the kitchen by table to be served their meals. When they have finished eating, we offer them an assortment of desserts. As they prepare to leave, they select donated baked goods and produce to take home with them. In addition to our in-person guests, we also package about a dozen take-out meals each week that we deliver to homebound folks in our congregation and the wider community. After our guests have departed, and tables and chairs have been put away and the kitchen given an initial straightening, we volunteers sit down together to enjoy a meal and conversation. Working side by side to provide this meal every Monday has bound us together; we have become close friends.

During our nine years of operation, our Community Kitchen has provided 38,479 meals. Our church could not have done this alone. The key has always been collaboration. We have been making an ecumenical and collaborative effort right from the start. We are thankful for our great friends in faith from East Woodstock Congregational Church, South Woodstock Baptist Church, and Christ Church of Pomfret. We are thankful for donated baked goods from Soleil & Sons Bakery, Stop & Shop, and Price Chopper, and fresh produce from Big Y in Danielson. We are thankful for our association with Community Kitchens of Northeastern Connecticut, Inc. and CT Foodshare, and we applaud their efforts to address food insecurity in our region.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Kirk and Bruce Lyman, Site Coordinators

7.3.2 Senior Ministry

The pandemic increased isolation and stress among many in our community, young and old. Loneliness and isolation affect seniors in particular, especially in rural communities such as Woodstock. We recognize the limited resources available to seniors in our community where social interaction can regularly occur. Hence, our Senior Ministries were initiated.

Early in the year, we conducted surveys to help understand the wants and needs of our seniors. We connected with the Town of Woodstock's Agent for the Elderly and visited surrounding senior centers to guide us in establishing a meaningful program.

At the conclusion of our information gathering, we developed the following mission statement:

Our Mission is to Improve the lives of older adults through opportunities for social interaction, recreation and interconnection within the community. The center welcomes all who wish to attend regardless of age, residency or other affiliation, providing the guests can function independently or are accompanied by a companion.

In April we launched the Senior Social program for the wider community. The program offers opportunities for social interaction, recreation, and interconnection within the community through activities such as games, crafts, informational presentations, and more. The activities are free and open to anyone who wishes to attend, regardless of age, residency, or other affiliation. In May of this year, our mission was bolstered by the US Surgeon General’s advisory calling attention to the public health crisis of loneliness, isolation, and lack of connection in our country.

The program has been well received. Attendees were a good mix of church members, friends and members of the surrounding community. Attendees are often reminded to bring a friend.

Past Calendar of Events:

- April - Music Bingo, Featuring hit songs of the 50s & 60s.
- May - Woodstock Jeopardy.
- June - Scenic Roads of the Last Green Valley.
- Sept. - Game Day!
- Oct. - Crime Prevention & Safety Awareness (CTSP)
- Nov.- Adult Coloring for Mind & Body
- Dec. - Holiday Party.

Upcoming Calendar of Events:

- Jan. - The Nine Lives of No. 9.
- Feb. - Love Song Jeopardy
- Mar. - Day Kimball Healthcare Presentation.

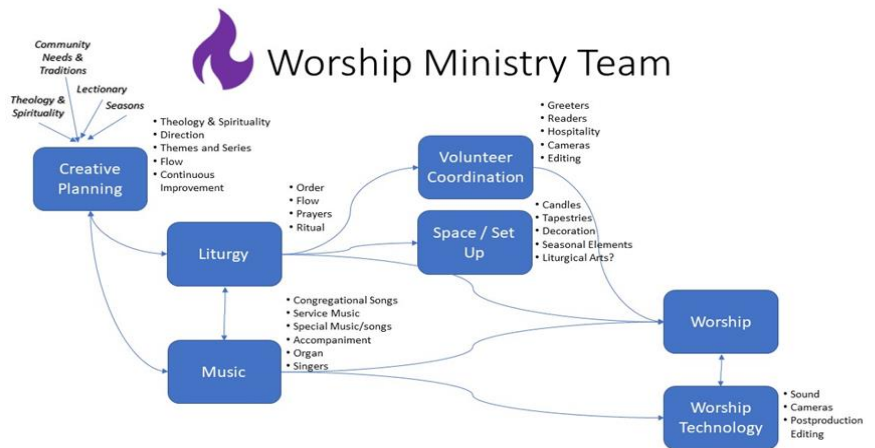
Refreshments and pleasant conversations are always included beyond the designated programs of our senior social events. Come, join us!

Respectfully Submitted,
Charles Bottieri

7.4 Worship

As a ministry, our purpose is to facilitate meaningful, spiritually grounded worship that invites and inspires people wherever they are on their journey.

In the past year, we worked to clarify the vision for the Worship Ministry and held a retreat to explore our vision, purpose, guiding principles, music, and ideas. We are using new resources to enhance worship, including Music that Makes Community and Worship Design Studio, an online multi-denominational



community with many resources for planning worship and training worship leaders. We explored themes including what it means to be a “beloved community,” our beliefs, the Living God, how our gifts impact lives for good, and the “Gift of Being Present.”

We also welcomed Executive Conference Ministry Rev. Darrel Goodwin, our new Area Conference Minister Rev. Carol Steinbrecher, Queer Justice Advocate Michael Streib, as well as worship and second hour conversations with Church World Services, NAACP, and the Witness Stones Project.

Throughout the year, many from the congregation and the greater community have shared how moved they have been by both our in-person and online worship offerings, especially Christmas Eve, Advent, Pet Blessing, memorial services, and a wedding for a couple who was not part of the community. The intentional process of planning themes and working to connect all the elements to the core message, which itself is guided by the scriptures – has had a tremendous, positive impact.

We are thankful and truly blessed by everyone who share your gifts and talents to make ministry happen Sundays and during our special services - from the deacons who arrange the space, to our greeters and ushers, readers, families and children, camera operators, video editors, musicians, people who bring snacks for hospitality, and all who have shared their faith story.

We are particularly grateful to Maria Sangiolo, who brought a fresh perspective to our ministry and introduced us to various kinds of music, stepped down as Music Director in May. We are ever grateful for her spirit and contributions. We are also grateful to Rick Lamarre who stepped in to help coordinate music while we were seeking a new Music Director. And we are joyful that Gretchen D’Andrea listened deeply to God’s still small voice and said “here I am.”

As a ministry and as a congregation we do struggle to incorporate and blend different ideas, collaborate, explore differing ideas with openness, and evolve choices beyond personal preferences. Early in the New Year, in conjunction with our conversations about our Vision and our Future, we will engage in intentional conversations regarding the purpose, vision, and direction of Worship.

Respectfully submitted,

The Worship Ministry

7.5 The Diaconate

Deacons: Aimee Ahearn, Debby Kirk, Bruce Lyman, Christina Manuilow

Introduction:

Through 2023, the Deacons have been exploring what the role of deacon will look like in our new church organizational structure. For this reason, two new deacons were not selected, and the Board of Deacons consisted of four deacons for 2023. Rather than having two ‘deacons on duty’ assigned for each Sunday, we had one ‘deacon on duty,’ except for Communion Sundays. Working as a team, we continued to greet, serve communion, assist in baptism and memorial services, and any other need that depended on deacons’ assistance.

Highlights of 2023:

- **Restructuring:** The deacons held monthly conversations to define what the role of deacons will be like in our new structure. This is an ongoing process as we look at the many specific tasks and

responsibilities and determine the appropriate ministry area. This will continue into 2024 as we further refine the structure and expectations.

- **Prayer Chain:** The prayer chain was moved from a weekly email format to a Google Group. This has allowed us to be more responsive to receiving and sharing prayer request needs.
- **Care Ministry:** Several volunteers signed up to help with different aspects of care in the congregation during the Ministry Fair in February 2023. This created a list of people we can reach out to for help in times of need. Kathy Packard and Christina Manuilow met several times with Rev. Doe West in the first half of the year to explore setting up a Care Ministry.
- **Deacons' Fund:** We continued to administer the Deacons' Fund, offering financial assistance in 7 situations, to meet the care and support needs of members and friends of the congregation, and those in the surrounding community as well.

Special events:

- The deacons sponsored Carra, along with her mom Kim Mitchell, in hosting a lemonade stand the first weekend of August at FCCW and EWCC. Carra raised over \$350, and she chose to have the church donate to TEEG to support their ongoing help of those in need in the surrounding area. Carra would like to make this an annual event.
- Our third annual Cocoa, Candles, and Carols was held in the sanctuary due to the rain. We had 25 people attend, which is consistent with the last two years.

Worship Highlights and Guest Preachers:

- January: We celebrated our Open and Affirming (ONA) 20th Anniversary, welcoming Rev Michael Streib, SNEUCC Queer Justice Advocate, as our guest preacher.
- February: We held a Ministry Fair to share the many ways people can support the church by sharing their talents and skills.
- April: We welcomed the Witness Stone speakers, held an intergenerational service in celebration of Earth Day, and welcomed Peter Mayer as a guest musician and speaker.
- May: We welcomed Rev Darrell Goodwin, the SNEUCC Executive Conference Minister, as our guest preacher.
- Summer: We hosted summer union services with the East Woodstock Congregational Church in July, and they reciprocated in August. We welcomed MID Noah Gourlie as preacher on July 16.
- October: We welcomed Rev Carol Steinbrecher, SNEUCC Area Conference Minister, and Rev Sarah Sund-Lussier as guest preachers
- November: We welcomed Adam Smedberg, CWS Congregational and Community Events Specialist, as a guest speaker; and Kingsley Kaiser as a liturgical dancer and Kate Ritzau as cellist
- We also hosted potluck "Brunch Church" worship in October and December

Respectfully submitted,
Christina Manuilow

8 FACILITIES

Several upgrades were made to the nursery room in preparation for the opening of the childcare center, many were made by Tiny Forest. The room and entry hall have been painted, new flooring installed,

and the utility sink has been replaced by a new vanity. Tiny Forest, LLC signed a rental lease and opened for business in July of this year.

The church office was painted by Tim and Lisa Morelli. The pastor's study has been repainted. The trim work of the entrance to the offices has been painted, new heating register covers and new kick plates on the doors have been installed. (Action items from 2021-22 Trustee's 5-year capital maintenance plan.)

The church has been re-keyed to improve security. At the request of the Fire Dept, a master key now opens all of the locks about the church. The master key resides in the Fire Dept key box

Annual testing of fire alarms and emergency lighting was conducted. The Fire Marshal conducted an inspection of the facilities in November with minimal observations and recommendations. Corrective action has been taken.

In October, one (of the four) inverters of the solar panel system were replaced because it had failed. The system ran at 75% efficiency, reducing our electricity generation for much of 2023. The system is now operating at full capacity.

A catch basin was installed by the Town of Woodstock and a portion of the parking lot has been regraded and paved to alleviate the puddles that formed in the parking lot. Excavation work at the rear parking lot has improved drainage and relieved the water pooling in the rear parking lot. (Both parking lot issues were action items identified in the 2021-22 Trustee's 5-year capital maintenance plan.)

The palladium window has been replaced on the east side of Harrison Hall. Compromised wood features about the building have been replaced with vinyl lumber. Several of the rotted windowsills and frames have been replaced. The exterior of the lower level of the north and east sides of the building has been primed and painted. New vent hoods have been installed, replacing those that were broken or otherwise damaged.

The commercial dishwasher in the kitchen failed and was replaced with a refurbished dishwasher.

The carpet in Harrison Hall has been cleaned.

The furnace controls were replaced after they were damaged from a significant pipe leak in the furnace room.

At the recommendation of our insurance carrier, the rocks forming the labyrinth were removed. Exploration of an alternative design is considered to allow the area to be used for multiple uses.

An energy audit was conducted as part of the Energize CT program. The report is pending to determine eligibility for grant rebates and discounts.

The front lawn of the parsonage was hydroseeded to repair the lawn following the stump grinding of the trees that were cut down. The parsonage was prepared for sale. The septic system was inspected and repaired, exposed wiring has been upgraded and smoke detectors were installed. The property was placed under contract for sale in November. The renovation or sale of the parsonage property was part of the 2021-22 Trustee's 5-year capital campaign.

The flower bed along the rear parking lot fence has been removed to reduce future ground maintenance.

The lawn is regularly mowed, and snow plowing is accomplished by the donation of time and equipment.

The congregation is blessed with several members and friends who donate their time, energy, talents and materials to maintain our facilities and systems. Tasks are often completed so stealth-like, we may not always notice. We are all proud of our church facilities and we truly appreciate those efforts to maintain them.

It is in deep gratitude that we acknowledge the members and associates of our Property Management Team:

Toby Bishop	Glenn Boies (Deep 6 Plumbing & Heating)
Charles Bottieri	John Cimochoowski
Carl Davis (Technology)	Bruce Lyman*
Sam Lyman*	Bruce Staehle (Technology)
Stan Swanson*	Leslie Sweatnam

*Retiring 2023

Respectfully Submitted,
Charles Bottieri

8.1 2023 Technology Report

Office Computers 1

A new Dell XPS 8950 computer was purchased and installed in February as the main office computer for running Church Windows and Office.

The Dell Optiplex 960 computer that was replaced has been upgraded and refurbished as much as possible and all old data removed. This computer is currently not being used. It is suitable for basic computer functions such as word processing, checking emails and accessing the internet. It runs on Windows 10 and cannot be upgraded to Windows 11.

The HP All-in-One computer was upgraded as much as possible. It has been set up in the church office and can be used for basic office functions and internet access. This computer runs Windows 11 Home edition.

All three computers have Microsoft Office and Bitdefender Antivirus installed.

A document on Google Drive, Office PCs Information, contains basic configuration data on all three computers. The document is in the Technology/Office Technology folder.

Computer maintenance

A document has been created providing step by step procedures for updating and backing up critical software on all the computers. The document, PC Maintenance Instructions, is located on Google Drive in the Technology/Office Technology folder.

A spreadsheet documenting the routine maintenance on each computer has been created and placed in the Technology/Office Technology/Software & Information folder on Google Drive. Each computer has a separate spreadsheet.

An FCCW Computer Use Policy was written and was approved by the Governing Board in June. A Copy of the policy has been placed in the Policy Repository/Property Policies folder on Google Drive.

Carl Davis has agreed to help with computer maintenance and he and I will take turns performing the specified computer maintenance.

1 The Treasurer's laptop is not covered in this report.

Internet and Wi-Fi

The WIFI system was completely reconfigured in September. The old Spectrum and older Netgear routers were replaced with a Netgear Nighthawk router which is on long-term loan.

A document, Office WIFI Router Information, has been created and placed in the Technology/Office Technology folder on Google Drive to record configuration, settings, and passwords for the system.

Sanctuary Audio/Video

The old Crate mixer has occasionally been unreliable for the audio stream used for our worship service recordings. Rick LaMarre has loaned us a mixer and two microphones that we use for audio recording the piano and singers.

Looking Ahead

We are hoping to replace the borrowed WIFI router with a mesh system in 2024 to be financed by Angel donations.

We are hoping to get a new mixer with wireless controls and new microphones for the singers in 2024 to be financed by Angel donations

Submitted by Bruce Staehle

9 FINANCE TEAM

With the change to a Governing Board model in 2023, managing the finances of the church needed to be redefined. Finance management had been overseen by the Trustees, but now falls to the Governing Board. One position of the Governing Board is allocated as Finance Lead. Suzanne Cimochofski was assigned this position as she was a Senior Trustee in 2022. It was a process to get to where we are today. Suzanne and Tom Duggan, Treasurer, started with monthly meetings to review the Treasurer's report. It soon became obvious that we also needed to include Charles Bottieri, Facilities Lead for the Governing Board, and Toby Bishop, our bookkeeper and Reverend Kevin. In September, we also added Bill Moylan as Asst. Treasurer. The Finance Team reports monthly to the Governing Board.

Our monthly meetings not only included reviewing the Treasurer's report, but reviewing capital needs, planning for our future, putting and managing restricted funds in interest bearing accounts, and developing a draft budget for 2024. The 2024 proposed budget puts more of our donor-restricted funds to work in our ministry.

We have had lively and thoughtful conversations about our church's financial strengths, risks and challenges as our smaller membership works to continue our ministry and to maintain our large facilities that require costly maintenance. We recognize that these challenges will accelerate with an aging congregation and fundraising activities will become more demanding for our volunteers. We have encouraged the Governing Board to focus on this issue.

We also discussed the current term structure for the Treasurer and Asst. Treasurer position and asked the Governing Board to look at changing them in the by-laws as the current model is not sustainable. We thank Tom Duggan for his years as Asst. Treasurer and Treasurer. We have been actively recruiting an asst. treasurer and look forward to continuing our work in 2024.

Thank you for the time, talents and treasure you give to support our church's ministry. We greatly appreciate your gifts and will do our utmost to steward them responsibly in Christ's service.

Suzanne Cimochofski for the Finance Team

9.1 Treasurer's Report

2023 Financial Overview

Operating Fund

2023 was a good year for FCCW financially. Contributions income exceeded budget by \$1k and Fundraising beat budget by \$4k. The \$22k Employee Retention Credit we had applied for from the federal government arrived with an unexpected \$2k interest payment. Our income from investing in CDs etc. was double our \$1k budget. We drew \$4k more than budgeted from restricted funds to support our youth ministry, following an evaluation by the Finance Team of the optimal use of these funds. The four-months delay in the opening of the daycare facility put our rental income \$4k under budget, but \$2k from a vendor to settle a dispute and \$1k higher income from facilities use reduced the impact.

Expenses were lower than budget in most areas thanks to creative solutions and frugal spending. In December we released \$8k from the Pastor Sabbatical Reserve Fund after an analysis indicated it was overfunded. This led to an \$8k budget underspend reported for Pastor expenses.

As a result of all this we had a budget surplus of \$18k, of which the Finance Team proposes that the \$9k surplus in Ministry-related areas be contributed to the Ministry Reserve Fund and the remaining \$9k be contributed to the Capital Improvements Reserve Fund. These entries have been made in the accounts, subject to the congregation's approval. Adjustments for invoices arriving after year end resulted in reported Operating Fund net expenses of \$127.25 for 2023.

Congregation-Designated Reserve Funds

- The **Ministry Reserve Fund** received an \$8k budgeted contribution funded by the Employee Retention Credit and a \$9k contribution funded by the 2023 budget surplus in Ministry areas. The proposed 2024 budget is supported by this fund.
- The **Contingency Reserve Fund** received a \$5k budgeted contribution funded by the Employee Retention Credit, a \$7k budgeted contribution from general funds, an \$8k contribution funded by the release of the excess Pastor Sabbatical Reserve Fund, and a \$10k contribution funded by a withdrawal from the Endowment (New Century) Fund. The proposed 2024 budget is supported by this fund to enable us to make energy-efficiency investments in our facilities that will be assisted by government grants while reducing operating costs and mitigating climate change.
- The **Capital Improvement Reserve Fund** received an \$8k budgeted contribution funded by the Employee Retention Credit and a \$9k contribution funded by the budget surplus in non-ministry

areas. This fund paid for \$16k of paving in the parking lot, \$6k of the cost of replacing the Palladian window in Harrison Hall and a \$2k deposit for a new well.

- The **Special Purpose Reserve Fund** established to cover costs of preparing the parsonage for sale has funded a home inspection, septic and electrical repairs and a \$1k deposit on a boundary survey.
- The Finance Team analyzed the **Pastor Sabbatical Reserve Fund** and found it to be substantially overfunded compared to the cost of hiring ministerial coverage for a two-month period of a pastor's sabbatical after seven years of employment. The excess funds were released as of 12/31/23 and contributed to the Contingency Reserve Fund, enabling them to be put to work in 2024 helping to fund energy efficiency improvements.

Endowment (New Century) Fund

- We received \$602 in memorial gifts that have been contributed to the Endowment Fund. For the year through December 31st the market value of the fund's investments was up by \$26k, compared to a \$40k fall in 2022.

Donor-Designated Restricted Funds

- The balance of funds raised for the ministry to seniors has been moved from the Community Care Ministry Fund to the Faith in Action Fund to reflect a reorganization of ministries. As of 12/31/23 the seniors ministry is part of Faith in Action.
- The balance in the Faith Formation Ministry Fund was used in 2023 to support adult faith formation. This fund is now retired.
- The Community Kitchen Fund provided \$5k to enable the purchase and installation of a replacement commercial dishwasher.
- The Music Fund supported purchases of additional sheet music, licensing of special music and a guest musician.
- The Angel Fund paid \$8k toward the replacement for Harrison Hall's Palladian window.
- The William Cuff Youth Ministry Fund provided \$4k budgeted support for youth ministry and a further \$3k of unbudgeted support following an evaluation by the Finance Team of the optimal use of this fund to support our ministry.
- The Williams Summer Camp/Conference Fund provided funding that enabled us to offer Vacation Bible School this summer.
- Other Designated Funds were used to support Ukrainian students at the Woodstock Academy, the Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ, Community Kitchen of Northeastern Connecticut, and Witness Stone Project.

We continue to warmly welcome gifts to our main ministry, Angel and Endowment (New Century) funds while we work to reduce the number of funds for which extra administrative work is required.

Thank you for your generosity, which makes all our ministry possible.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Duggan, Treasurer

**First Congregational Church of Woodstock
Summary of Operating Income & Expenses**

Data as of 1/3/24

	Actual	Budget		
	Year-to-Date	Year-to-Date		
	<u>12/31/2023</u>	<u>12/31/2023</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Income				
Pledges	\$146,202	\$145,000	\$1,202	
Rites (Baptisms etc.)	1,350	1,800	(450)	
Other Contributions	7,548	7,500	48	
Total Contributions	155,100	154,300	800	
Fundraising	31,609	28,000	3,609	
Faith Formation	8,436	4,805	3,631	(1)
Community Care	285	2,000	(1,715)	(2)
Faith in Action	2,351	3,400	(1,049)	
Facilities Income	27,576	29,100	(1,524)	(3)
Operating Grant Income	24,115	21,734	2,381	(4)
Net Investment Inc/(Exp)	2,433	1,200	1,233	(5)
Endowment Fund Withdrawal	10,000	10,000	0	
	261,905	254,539	7,366	
Expenses				
Worship	10,523	14,255	(3,732)	(6)
Faith Formation	8,597	8,360	237	
Community Care	351	2,500	(2,149)	(2)
Faith in Action	15,477	16,792	(1,315)	
Pastor	84,569	92,740	(8,171)	(7)
Office	21,099	24,463	(3,364)	(8)
Facilities	56,636	55,550	1,086	
Contributions to Reserve Funds	64,780	39,147	25,633	(9)
	262,032	253,807	8,225	
Capital Improvements				
Major Repairs	36,551	0	36,551	(12)
Less: Contributions from Restricted & Designated Funds	(36,551)	0	(36,551)	(12)
	0	0	0	
Unrestricted Net Income/(Expenses)	(\$127)	\$732	(\$859)	

First Congregational Church of Woodstock
Notes to Summary of Operating Income & Expenses:
Year to December 31, 2023

Line items with actual/budget year-to-date activity are shown. Rounding differences may arise due to cents not shown. Operating income & expenses exclude Congregation-Designated, Endowment and Donor-Restricted Fund items. These are reported separately.

(1) Faith Formation support from restricted funds includes an unbudgeted contribution from the Williams Summer Camp/Conf Fund to cover the cost of providing Vacation Bible School, as well as \$3k additional contribution from the Wm Cuff Youth Ministry Fund on top of the \$5k budgeted from Wm. Cuff Fund and Faith Formation Fund. The extra contributions were made following a re-evaluation by the Finance Team of the optimal use of donor-restricted funds to support our ministry.

(2) Community Care drew less in income from its restricted fund because its expenses were modest due to creative programming and working with community partners.

(3) Facilities income was impacted by a delay in Tiny Forest LLC's startup of a daycare facility in our nursery. Budgeted to open March 1st, they actually opened July 5th, with a shortfall in budgeted rental income of \$4,542. The impact was partly offset by \$2k contributed by a vendor to resolve a dispute and by higher facilities use income.

(4) In June we received \$24k from the government's Employee Retention Credit for 2020 and 2021, including \$2k of unbudgeted interest. \$22k has been contributed to several reserve funds per the 2023 budget.

(5) A gain on the sale of the parsonage will be recognized in our accounts in early 2024 when the sale closes.

(6) Worship expenses were \$4k lower than budget due to the Music Director position being vacant for June through August and due to underspend on worship technology.

(7) We released \$8k of the Pastor Sabbatical Reserve Fund as being surplus as of 12/31/23. It was contributed to the Contingency Reserve Fund.

(8) Office expenses were \$4k less than budget due to an unanticipated \$700 refund from our workers compensation insurer, a change from cash to accrual basis accounting for this policy, \$500 in employer payroll taxes for our Children & Family Coordinator being moved to Faith Formation expenses, and frugal use of office supplies (\$1K).

(9) Contributions to Reserve Funds include approximately \$18k of additional contributions from the 2023 year-end budget surplus: \$9k from ministry areas to the Ministry Reserve Fund and \$9,000 from other areas to the Capital Improvements Reserve Fund, subject to Congregational approval at the annual meeting.

**First Congregational Church of Woodstock
Detail of Operating Income & Expenses**

Data as of 1/3/24

	Actual Year-to-Date <u>12/31/2023</u>	Budget Year-to-Date <u>12/31/2023</u>	Difference	Notes
Unrestricted Investment Income				
440.01 Interest/Dividend Inc on Unrestricted Invs	2,471	1,200	1,271	
440.02 Realized gain/(loss) on Unrestricted invs	(38)	0	(38)	(5)
	<u>2,433</u>	<u>1,200</u>	<u>1,233</u>	
Income Withdrawn from Endowment Fund				
	<u>10,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>0</u>	
Total Operating Income	<u>261,905</u>	<u>254,539</u>	<u>7,366</u>	
Expenses				
Worship				
503.01 Music Director	7,424	8,925	(1,501)	(6)
503.02 Worship Licenses & Technology	226	1,500	(1,274)	(6)
503.03 Guest Contributors	755	1,000	(245)	
503.04 Guest Preachers	275	500	(225)	
503.05 Other Worship Resources	1,407	2,000	(593)	
503.06 Hospitality/Catering	436	330	106	
	<u>10,523</u>	<u>14,255</u>	<u>(3,732)</u>	
Faith Formation				
504.01 Children & Family Coordinator	7,051	7,360	(309)	
504.02 Faith Formation materials/ministry	1,546	1,000	546	
	<u>8,597</u>	<u>8,360</u>	<u>237</u>	
Community Care				
505.01 Community Care Program	285	2,000	(1,715)	(2)
505.02 Congregational Care	66	500	(434)	
	<u>351</u>	<u>2,500</u>	<u>(2,149)</u>	
Faith in Action				
506.01 Faith in Action Missions	5,187	5,200	(13)	
506.02 Faith in Action Program	234	500	(266)	
506.03 Community Kitchen Local Expenses	1,213	2,200	(987)	
506.04 Windham Association UCC Dues	251	300	(49)	
506.05 SNEUCC Contribution	8,592	8,592	0	
	<u>15,477</u>	<u>16,792</u>	<u>(1,315)</u>	
Pastor				
507.01 Pastor Salary	46,041	46,500	(459)	(7)
507.02 Pastor Housing Allowance	20,412	20,140	272	(7)
507.03 Pastor Annuity	23,500	24,000	(500)	(7)
507.04 Pastor Expense Reimbursement	1,473	1,100	373	
507.05 Pastor Continuing Education	1,000	1,000	0	
507.06 Pastor Sabbatical	(7,857)	0	(7,857)	
	<u>84,569</u>	<u>92,740</u>	<u>(8,171)</u>	

**First Congregational Church of Woodstock
Detail of Operating Income & Expenses**

Data as of 1/3/24

	Actual	Budget		
	Year-to-Date	Year-to-Date	Difference	Notes
	12/31/2023	12/31/2023		
Office				
508.01 Communications Coordinator	10,823	10,500	323	
508.02 Payroll Taxes	1,396	2,305	(909)	(8)
508.03 Workers' Comp Insurance	(563)	623	(1,186)	(8)
508.04 Staff Professional Development	75	250	(175)	
508.05 Copier	2,789	2,850	(61)	
508.06 Telephone/Internet	2,435	2,596	(161)	
508.07 Office Supplies	1,596	2,382	(786)	
508.08 Professional Services	2,192	2,057	135	
508.09 Tech Equip, Licenses, Services	311	600	(289)	
508.10 Publicity	45	300	(255)	
	<u>21,099</u>	<u>24,463</u>	<u>(3,364)</u>	
Facilities				
509.01 Property Insurance	14,315	14,690	(375)	
509.02 Fuel Expense	8,594	15,000	(6,406)	(9)
509.03 Electricity Expense	2,707	3,000	(293)	
509.04 Property Taxes	5,462	6,500	(1,038)	
509.05 Repairs	11,218	6,000	5,218	
509.06 Contract Cleaning	6,535	6,360	175	
509.07 Other Recurring Maintenance	7,805	4,000	3,805	(9)
	<u>56,636</u>	<u>55,550</u>	<u>1,086</u>	
Contributions to Reserve Funds				
550.01 Contrib. to Ministry Reserve Fund	16,955	8,355	8,600	(10)
550.02 Contrib. to Contingency Reserve Fund	30,294	22,437	7,857	(11)
550.03 Contrib. to Capital Improvements Reserve Fund	17,531	8,355	9,176	(12)
	<u>64,780</u>	<u>39,147</u>	<u>25,633</u>	
Total Operating Expenses	<u>262,032</u>	<u>253,807</u>	<u>8,225</u>	
Capital Improvements				
510.01 Major Repairs	36,551	0	36,551	(13)
510.02 Less: Contributions from Restricted & Designated Funds	(36,551)	0	(36,551)	(13)
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	
Net Operating Income/(Expense)	<u>(\$127)</u>	<u>\$732</u>	<u>(\$859)</u>	

First Congregational Church of Woodstock
Notes to Detail of Operating Income & Expenses

Data as of 1/3/24

Operating income & expenses exclude Congregation-Designated, Endowment and Donor-Restricted Fund items. These are reported separately.

(1) Faith Formation support from restricted funds includes an unbudgeted contribution from the Williams Summer Camp/Conf Fund to cover the cost of providing Vacation Bible School, as well as \$3k additional contribution from the Wm Cuff Youth Ministry Fund, on top of the \$5k budgeted funding from Wm. Cuff Fund and Faith Formation Fund. The extra contributions were made following an evaluation by the Finance Team of the optimal use of donor-restricted funds to support our ministry.

(2) Community Care drew less in income from its restricted fund because its expenses for the seniors ministry were modest due to creative programming and working with community partners.

(3) Facilities income was impacted by a delay in Tiny Forest LLC's startup of a daycare facility in our nursery. Budgeted to open March 1st, they actually opened July 5th, with a shortfall in budgeted rental income of \$4,542. The impact was partly offset by \$2k contributed by a vendor to resolve a dispute and by higher facilities use income.

(4) In June we received \$24k from the government's Employee Retention Credit for 2020 and 2021, including \$2k of unbudgeted interest. \$22k has been contributed to several reserve funds per the 2023 budget.

(5) We will recognize a gain on the sale of the parsonage early in 2024 when the sale closes.

(6) Worship expenses were \$4k lower than budget due to the Music Director position being vacant for June through August and due to underspend on worship technology.

(7) Some differences are due to use of 2022 pay rates and salary/benefits mix for January as the 2023 budget was not approved by the congregation until January 29th. All pay complied with the congregation's budgets. We released \$8k of the Pastor Sabbatical Reserve Fund as being surplus as of 12/31/23. It was contributed to the Contingency Reserve Fund.

(8) Office expenses were \$4k less than budget due to an unanticipated \$700 refund from our workers compensation insurer, a change from cash to accrual basis accounting for this policy, \$500 in employer payroll taxes for our Children & Family Coordinator being moved to Faith Formation expenses, and frugal use of office supplies (\$1K).

(9) We budgeted 2023 fuel expense very pessimistically when oil prices were soaring in 2022. Prices have come down significantly resulting in considerable savings that enabled us to fund additional repairs and maintenance.

(10) Contributions to the Ministry Reserve Fund were funded: \$8k from our Employee Retention Credit and \$9k from the 2023 year-end budget surplus for ministry areas.

(11) Contributions to the Contingency Reserve Fund were funded: \$5k from our Employee Retention Credit, \$10k by a withdrawal from our Endowment (New Century) Fund, \$8k from a release of excess Pastor Sabbatical Fund and \$7k from a budgeted contribution from general funds.

(12) Contributions to the Capital Improvements Reserve Fund were funded: \$8k from our Employee Retention Credit and \$9k from the 2023 year-end budget surplus for non-ministry areas.

(13) Major Repairs were \$16k for paving part of the parking lot, \$13k for part of the \$16k cost of replacing the Palladian window for Harrison Hall, \$5k for a replacement commercial dishwasher and \$2k for a deposit on a new church well. Funding came from the Angel Fund for the window (\$8k), the Community Kitchen Fund for the dishwasher (\$5k) and from the Capital Improvements Fund.

First Congregational Church of Woodstock
Congregation-Designated, Endowment & Donor-Restricted Funds
Year to December 31, 2023

Data as of 1/22/24

	Balance as of <u>12/31/2022</u>	Income Year-to-Date <u>12/31/2023</u>	Expenses Year-to-Date <u>12/31/2023</u>	Transfers Year-to-Date <u>12/31/2023</u>	Balance as of <u>12/31/2023</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Congregation-Designated Reserve Funds						
310.01 Ministry Reserve Fund	\$0	17,074	\$0		\$17,074	
310.02 Contingency Reserve Fund	3,918	30,511	0		34,429	
310.03 Capital Improvements Reserve Fund	29,588	17,985	(23,600)		23,974	(1)
310.04 Special Purpose Reserve Fund [Parsonage Sale]	9,000	153	(5,813)		3,340	(2)
310.05 Pastor Sabbatical Reserve Fund	9,485	362	(7,857)		1,989	(3)
	<u>\$51,991</u>	<u>\$66,085</u>	<u>(\$37,269)</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$80,807</u>	
Endowment (New Century) Fund						
180.11 Endowment - Cost	\$217,546	\$6,025	(\$10,000)	\$9,902	\$223,472	(4)
180.12 Endowment - Market Value Adj.	23,937	26,158			50,095	
330.02 Endowment - Held at Inv. Managers	241,483	32,183	(10,000)	9,902	273,568	
330.02 Endowment - Cash Held at FCCW	9,400	602		(9,902)	100	
	<u>\$250,883</u>	<u>\$32,784</u>	<u>(\$10,000)</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$273,668</u>	
Donor-Restricted Funds						
340.01 Deacons Charitable Giving Fund	\$13,522	\$1,490	(\$3,194)		\$11,817	
340.02 Community Care Ministry Fund	2,001	347	(285)	(2,062)	(0)	(5)
340.03 Faith Formation Ministry Fund	805	3	(807)		0	
340.04 Faith in Action Ministry Fund	0	827	25	2,062	2,914	(5)
340.05 Community Kitchen Fund	5,019	1,955	(6,126)		848	
340.06 Music Fund	2,476	72	(1,070)		1,479	
340.07 Angel Fund	7,800	2,526	(7,826)		2,500	
340.08 William Cuff Youth Ministry Fund	15,842	427	(7,057)		9,212	(6)
340.09 Williams Summer Camp/Conf Fund	1,568	48	(538)		1,078	
340.10 Mavis Hescocock Flowers Fund	961	36	(171)		826	
340.11 Richardson Tree Lighting Fund	10,860	447	(1,000)		10,306	
340.15 Other Designated Funds	1,050	3,995	(4,938)		107	
	<u>\$61,904</u>	<u>\$12,172</u>	<u>(\$32,988)</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$41,087</u>	

Notes:

Line items without year-to-date activity or balances may not be shown. Rounding differences may arise due to cents not shown.

(1) Expenses comprise \$16k for paving part of the parking lot, \$5k toward the replacement Palladian window for Harrison Hall and \$2k for a deposit on a new well for the church.

(2) Expenses include septic system repairs \$3k, boundary survey deposit \$1k and home inspection \$1k.

(3) \$8k was released from the Pastor Sabbatical Fund as excess as of 12/31/23 and was contributed to the Contingency Reserve Fund.

(4) Cost figures represent the balance as of 12/31/15 plus contributions and dividends less withdrawals since then.

(5) The balance of funds raised for the seniors ministry has been moved from the Community Care Fund to the Faith in Action Fund to reflect a reorganization of ministry areas. As of 12/31/23, the seniors ministry now falls within Faith in Action.

(6) We drew \$3k more than the \$4k originally budgeted from the Wm. Cuff Youth Ministry Fund. This change resulted from an updated evaluation by the Finance Team of the optimal use of this fund to support our youth ministry.

First Congregational Church of Woodstock
Statement of Financial Position
As of December 31, 2023

Data as of 1/22/24

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Assets:		
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Operating Checking	\$44,977	(1)
Restricted Checking:		
Donor-Restricted Funds	2,546	
Congregation-Designated Funds:		
Endowment (New Century) Funds	100	
Congregation-Designated Reserve Funds	41,890	
	44,536	(1)
Chicken BBQ Checking	5,361	
PayPal	0	
	94,874	
Prepayments	5,230	
Short-term Investments (CDs & Money Funds):		
Unrestricted Funds	62,876	
Congregation-Designated Funds	38,916	
Donor-Restricted Funds	38,541	
	140,333	
Total Current Assets	240,437	
Noncurrent Assets		
Long-term Investments		
Endowment (New Century) Fund		
Assets Held by Investment Managers	273,568	
Land, buildings & equipment (Not included)	0	(2)
Total Noncurrent Assets	273,568	
Total Assets	\$514,005	
Liabilities:		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	2,249	
Daycare - Security Deposit	1,100	
Deferred Income - Prepaid Pledges	38,400	(3)
Total Liabilities	41,749	
Net Assets		
Unrestricted Funds	76,694	
Congregation-Designated Funds:		
Endowment (New Century) Fund	273,668	(4)
Reserve Funds	80,807	(4)
Donor-Restricted Funds	41,087	(4)
Total Net Assets	472,256	
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$514,005	

Notes:

Rounding differences may arise due to cents not shown.

(1) Checking account balances are temporarily high due to deposits close to year end. Excess cash will be invested shortly.

(2) In November the Governing Board approved the sale of the parsonage for \$375k. This will be reflected in the accounts when the closing takes place in 2024.

(3) Prepaid pledges are recognized in income over the months to which they apply.

(4) For details see the Congregation-Designated, Endowment & Donor-Restricted Funds report.

9.2 Stewardship Committee

Our theme for this year's Fall Stewardship Campaign was Because of you, our church changes lives.

In our stewardship cover letter to members and friends of our congregation, we asked, does our church 'change lives'? How so? In what ways? Where have you seen our church have a positive impact? What ministries have you personally been involved in? How has participation in the life of our congregation changed your life and, through you, the lives of your family members, friends, and co-workers?

Our congregation responded positively to our appeal, for which we are extremely grateful.

Stewardship is about generosity; it is also about numbers.

Pledging represents approximately two-thirds of our church's income. This fall we received 51 pledges totaling \$136,210.

In sum, we are a small congregation of committed members and friends who give generously of their time, talents, and treasure.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Kaiser, Bob Kirk, Kathy Packard, and Ruth Trahan

Your Stewardship Committee

9.3 Proposed 2024 Budget

First Congregational Church of Woodstock				
2024 Budget Summary				
DRAFT 1/10/24				
				Orange highlight = Significant assumption/question
				Yellow highlight = Critical assumption/question
	Actual	Proposed		
	2023	Budget		
		2024	Difference	Notes
Income Areas:				
Pledges	\$146,202	\$137,000	(\$9,202)	\$136k pledged plus \$1k anticipated, as of 12/21/23
Rites (Baptisms etc.)	1,350	900	(450)	Similar to 2023 excluding \$0.5k special appreciation contribution after wedding
Other Contributions	7,548	6,220	(1,328)	Similar to 2023 excluding \$1k Community Kitchen local team special contribution
Total Contributions	155,100	144,120	(10,980)	
Fundraising	31,609	35,150	3,541	Aim to raise net income by inflation % +
Operating Grant Income	24,115	0	(24,115)	No grant income applied for/secured
Net Investment Inc/(Exp)	2,433	18,000	15,567	Incl. \$16k investment income on \$316k of invested parsonage sale proceeds
Endowment Fund Withdrawal	10,000	10,000	0	\$10k withdrawal for Major Repairs - Energy-Saving Improvements
Subtotal of Income Items	223,257	207,270	(15,987)	
Net Expense Areas:				
Worship	10,522	11,700	1,178	Net of \$10k support from restricted/reserve funds
Faith Formation	161	300	139	Net of \$9k support from restricted/reserve funds
Community Care	66	350	284	
Faith in Action	13,126	12,933	(194)	Net of \$4k support from restricted/reserve funds
Pastor	92,426	96,128	3,702	COLA + \$680 exp reimb increase
Office	21,099	25,796	4,697	Adds \$2k for church management software & \$1k for Gov Bd initiatives
Facilities	29,060	46,900	17,840	Incl. \$40k Major Repairs/Refurbishment to save energy & increase rentals
Subtotal of Net Expense Items	166,460	194,107	27,646	
Net Income Before Contributions to Reserve Funds	56,797	13,163	(43,634)	
Contributions to Reserve Funds:				
- Ministry Reserve	16,955	0	(16,955)	
- Contingency Reserve	30,294	12,563	(17,731)	Contrib to be reduced/eliminated in the event income falls short
- Capital Improvements Reserve	17,531	0	(17,531)	
- Pastor Sabbatical Reserve	(7,857)	600	8,457	
	56,923	13,163	(43,760)	
Operating Net Income/(Expenses)	(\$126)	\$0	\$126	
Extraordinary Items				
690 Extraordinary Income: Gain on Sale of Parsonage	0	346,250	346,250	\$375k proceeds less 5% realtor fees and ESTIMATED closing costs
790 Extraordinary Expenses: New Well for the Church	0	(25,000)	(25,000)	ESTIMATED cost - could vary significantly.
	0	321,250	321,250	
Net Income	(\$126)	\$321,250	\$321,376	

First Congregational Church of Woodstock 2024 Budget Detail DRAFT 1/10/24		Orange highlight = Significant assumption		Yellow highlight = Critical assumption	
		2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Proposed Budget	Budget Notes
Income Areas:					
Contributions					
401.01 Pledges	145,000	146,202	137,000	\$136k pledged plus \$1k anticipated, as of 12/21/23	
401.02 Rites	1,800	1,350	900	Similar to 2023 excluding \$0.5k special appreciation contribution after wedding	
401.03 Other Contributions	7,500	7,548	6,220	Similar to 2023 excluding \$1k Community Kitchen local team special contribution	
	154,300	155,100	144,120		
Fundraising					
402.01 Chicken Barbeque Income	21,000	22,980	25,000		
402.01EXPS Expenses for Chicken BBQ	(10,000)	(10,188)	(11,000)		
Total 402.01 Chicken Barbeque Income	11,000	12,792	14,000	Aim to raise net income by more than inflation	
402.02 Christmas on the Hill Income	14,000	15,427	16,000		
402.02EXPS Expenses on the Hill	(2,000)	(1,983)	(2,500)		
Total 402.02 Christmas on the Hill Income	12,000	13,444	13,500	Aim to raise net income by more than inflation	
402.03 Arts Festival Income	5,000	5,021	7,000	Expand food offering/revenue from \$1k to \$2k? Encourage dine-in? Reinstate B&B?	
402.03EXPS Expenses for Arts Festival	(1,500)	(1,519)	(1,600)	Does not include potential port-a-potties cost.	
Total 402.03 Arts Festival Income	3,500	3,502	5,400	Aim to raise net income by more than inflation.	
402.04 Italian Dinner	2,000	2,586	3,000		
402.04EXPS Expenses for Italian Dinner	(500)	(715)	(750)		
Total 402.04 Italian Dinner	1,500	1,871	2,250	Aim to raise net income by more than inflation.	
Gift Cards Net Income	0	0	0		
	28,000	31,609	35,150		
Operating Grant Income	21,734	24,115	0	No Operating grant income applied for/secured yet.	
Unrestricted Investment Inc					
440.01 Interest/Dividend Inc on Unrestricted Invs	1,200	2,471	18,000	Incl. \$16k int on \$316k of parsonage proceeds	
440.02 Realized gain/(loss) on unrestricted investments	0	(38)	0	Not needed to be budgeted	
	1,200	2,433	18,000		
Withdrawal from Endowment Fund	10,000	10,000	10,000	\$10k 2024 withdrawal allocated to Major Repairs - Energy Saving Imprvts	
Subtotal of Income Items	215,234	223,257	207,270		
Net Expense Areas:					
Worship					
403.02 Worship Support from Restricted/Reserve Funds	0	0	(10,090)	\$4k for Music Dir & \$4,440 Accompanist fr Ministry Reserve Fd + \$1,650 Angel gifts AV upgrades	
503.01 Music Director salary	8,925	7,424	11,600	\$11,600 (\$4K funded from Ministry Reserve Fund)	
503.02 Worship Licenses & Technology	1,500	226	2,550	INCLUDES \$1,650 AV UPGRADES TO BE FUNDED BY ANGEL GIFT SOLICITATION	
503.03 Guest Contributors	1,000	755	850	5 accompanists @ \$120 = \$600 + 2 musicians/dancers @ \$125	
503.04 Guest Preachers	500	275	600		
503.05 Other Worship Resources	2,000	1,407	1,300	\$500 tuning/repair, \$500 supplies, publicity \$300 (hold retreat in pastor's garden avoiding \$500 spe	
503.06 Hospitality/Catering	330	435	450		
503.07 Accompanist Salary	0	0	4,440	37 weeks @ \$120/week (funded 100% by Ministry Reserve Fund)	
	14,255	10,522	11,700		

	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Proposed Budget	Budget Notes
Faith Formation				
404.01 Faith Formation Contributions	0	(34)	0	
404.02 FF Support from Restricted/Reserve Funds	(4,805)	(8,402)	(9,100)	\$8,200 Wm Cuff Fund & Williams Fund for Youth Ministry portion only + Labyrinth \$900 Min Rsvr Fd
504.01 Children & Family Coordinator	7,360	7,051	6,700	31 wks x 8 hrs/wk @ \$25 = \$6200 + \$500 payroll taxes [Funded by Wm Cuff Fd]
504.02 Faith Formation materials/ministry	1,000	1,546	2,700	Labyrinth design \$900 [Min Rsv Fd] Adult Ministry \$300, Youth Ministry \$1,500 [Wm Cuff & Williams]
	3,555	161	300	
Community Care				
405.02 Com. Care - Support from Restricted/Reserve Funds	(2,000)	(285)	0	Christmas Eve Offering is within Faith in Action for 2024 & treated as contrib to restricted fund
505.01 Community Care Program	2,000	285	0	Senior Ministry moved to Faith in Action for 2024
505.02 Congregational Care	500	66	350	
	500	66	350	
Faith in Action				
406.01 Faith in Action Contributions	(1,200)	(1,138)	(1,200)	Tag sale proceeds EST. \$1,200
406.02 Faith in Action - Support from Restricted/Reserve Funds	(0)	0	(4,000)	EST. \$2K restr. funds for Loneliness & EST. \$2K for Srs Ministry (previously the Comm. Care Restr. Fd)
406.03 Community Kitchen Local Income	(2,200)	(1,213)	(1,800)	Same as budgeted CK exps - no net budget impact
506.01 Faith in Action Missions	5,200	5,187	4,968	2.75% of Pledge budget + tag sale proceeds [est. total 3.5% of pledge budget]
506.02 Faith in Action Program	500	234	0	See individual ministries below
506.03 Community Kitchen Local	2,200	1,213	1,800	Same as budgeted CK inc. - no net budget impact
506.04 Windham Association UCC Dues	300	251	260	
506.05 SNEUCC Contribution	8,592	8,592	8,905	6.5% of Pledge budget (new FCCW definition to clarify commitment)
506.06 Seniors Ministry	(0)	0	2,000	Funded by restricted fund from 2023 Christmas offering
506.07 Loneliness Ministry	(0)	0	2,000	Funded by restricted fund from 2023 Christmas offering (currently \$867, goal \$2,000)
	13,392	13,126	12,933	
Pastor				
507.01 Pastor Salary	46,500	46,041	47,666	See below
507.02 Pastor Housing Allowance	20,140	20,412	20,928	See below
507.03 Pastor Annuity	24,000	23,500	24,704	See below
	90,640	89,953	93,299	2023 Budgeted amount + COLA from 2/1/24 [split per agreement w/pastor]
507.04 Pastor Expense Reimbursement	1,100	1,473	1,800	\$15/month increase cellphone stipend + \$500 other increase re: mileage etc.
507.05 Pastor Continuing Education	1,000	1,000	1,029	2023 Budgeted amount + COLA from 2/1/24
	92,740	92,426	96,128	
Office				
408.02 Office - Support from Restricted/Reserve Funds	0	0	(800)	Proposed Angel funding for Orbi mesh WiFi upgrade
508.01 Communications Coord. salary	10,500	10,823	10,809	50 wks x 8 hrs x (\$26.25 + COLA from 2/1/24)
508.02 Payroll taxes	2,305	1,396	1,727	7.65% of pay excl. pastor less \$500 included in Children & Family Coordinator line item
508.03 Workers' Comp Insurance	623	(563)	600	\$569 annualized thru 10/31 then slight incr.
508.04 Staff Professional Development	250	75	240	
508.05 Copier	2,850	2,789	3,000	
508.06 Telephone/Internet	2,596	2,435	2,640	
508.07 Office Supplies	2,382	1,596	1,600	
508.08 Professional services	2,057	2,192	1,800	2023 included \$600 ERC fees (nonrecurring)
508.09 Tech Equip, Licenses, Services	600	311	3,280	Orbi mesh WiFi \$800, Church Mgt Software \$2,000 to replace Church Windows plus new features
508.10 Publicity	300	45	0	Worship & other "event" publicity now budgeted in ministry areas
508.11 Governing Board Initiatives	0	0	900	Creating Our Future
	24,463	21,099	25,796	

	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Proposed Budget	Budget Notes
Facilities				
409.01 Parsonage Rental Income	(16,800)	(16,800)	(700)	Rented through 1/15/24
409.02 Daycare Rental Income	(11,000)	(6,458)	(13,200)	\$1,100/month [pot. increase in space/rent is NOT included in budget as timing is uncertain]
409.03 Room & Equip. Use Income	(1,300)	(2,350)	(4,800)	Rent out at least one small office to a nonprofit, adding say \$300 x 8 months = \$2,400
409.05 Facilities Contributions Income	(0)	(1,968)	(5,000)	New solicitation of funds from community to support community facilities
509.01 Property Insurance	14,690	14,315	16,000	\$14,151 P&C + \$1750 umbrella 11/1/23-11/1/24 [Less parsonage savings after sale]
509.02 Fuel Expense	15,000	8,594	10,500	Difficult to predict - huge price & usage volatility
509.03 Electricity Expense	3,000	2,707	3,200	Difficult to predict - price & usage volatility
509.04 Property Taxes	6,500	5,462	800	Assumes taxes on parsonage for only 18 days plus space used by daycare
509.05 Repairs	6,000	11,218	15,000	Increase in repairs to enhance attractiveness of facilities
509.06 Contract Cleaning	6,360	6,535	6,600	
509.07 Other Recurring Maintenance	4,000	7,805	8,500	Underbudgeted in 2023.
510.01 Major Repair Expenses	0	36,551	40,000	\$40k Energy saving imprvts + targeted refurbishment to increase rentals
510.02 Major Repairs Support from Restricted/Desig. Funds	0	(36,551)	(30,000)	\$15k Cap Imprvt Fd, \$15k Contingency Fd (2023 New C. w/d + \$5k) [+-\$10k 2024 Endowment w/d]
	26,450	29,060	46,900	
Subtotal of Net Expenses	175,355	166,460	194,107	
Net Income Before Contributions to Reserves	39,879	56,797	13,163	
Contributions to Reserve Funds				
550.01 Contribution to Ministry Reserve Fund	8,355	16,955	0	2023 Contrib = budgeted share of ERC + unspent 2023 ministry budget
550.02 Contribution to Contingency Reserve Fund	22,437	30,294	12,563	2024 Contrib to be reduced/eliminated if income falls short of budget
550.03 Contribution to Capital Improvements Reserve Fund	8,355	17,531	0	2023 Contrib = budgeted share of ERC + "nonministry" surplus
550.04 Contribution to Special Purpose Reserve Fund	0	0	0	
550.05 Contribution to Pastor Sabbatical Reserve Fund	0	(7,857)	600	2 months of substitute preachers + emergency support = 8 wks x \$500/wk = \$4k/7 yrs, apprx \$600/y
Total 550 Contributions to Reserve Funds	39,147	56,923	13,163	
Net Operating Income	\$732	(\$126)	\$0	
Extraordinary Items				
690 Extraordinary Income - Gain on Sale of Parsonage	0	0	346,250	\$375k proceeds less 5% realtor fees and ESTIMATED closing costs
790 Extraordinary Expenses - New Well for the Church	0	0	(25,000)	ESTIMATED cost - could vary significantly.
	0	0	321,250	
Net Income	\$732	(\$126)	\$321,250	

Congregation-Designated Reserve Funds Providing Support for 2024 Budget				
	Ministry	Contingency	Cap Imprvts	
	Reserve Fd	Reserve Fd	Reserve Fd	
Fund balance at 12/31/23	\$17,074	\$34,429	\$23,974	
Proposed Support for 2024 Budget:				
- Worship - Music Director	(4,000)			
- Worship - Accompanist	(4,440)			
- Faith Formation - Labyrinth Design Fee	(900)			
- Major Repairs - Energy Saving & Targeted Refurbishment				
- 2023 Endowment withdrawal, in Contingency Res. Fd.		(10,000)		
- Other withdrawal from Contingency Res. Fd.		(5,000)		
- Withdrawal from Capital Improvements Res. Fd.			(15,000)	
[2024 Endowment withdrawal \$10k used from Operating Fd.]				
Projected remaining available fund balance	\$7,734	\$19,429	\$8,974	

10 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

In keeping with the new structure and bylaws adopted by the Congregation at last year's Annual Congregational Meeting, the terms of three Governing Board members are expiring. They are that of Jennifer Duggan, Ginny Moylan, and James Nowak.

From mid-October through mid-December, through Sunday announcements, the bulletins, and weekly emails; congregants were asked to nominate candidates for the Governing Board. Nominations could be made verbally to a Governing Board member, or through both paper and electronic forms.

Seven nominations were received, all of whom were well received by the Governing Board. All nominees were contacted to gage their interest in serving on the Governing Board. We are pleased to present the following candidates with our appreciation for their willingness to serve and confidence in their abilities, for election to the Governing Board.

We respectfully bring before the congregation, the following three people to stand for election to a two-year term on your Governing Board:

- Carl Davis
- Jennifer Duggan
- Ginny Moylan

11 CURRENT ORGANIZATION

