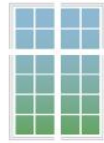


FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
———— Stockbridge, Massachusetts ————

Annual Report

Program Reports for 2019-2020

May 17, 2020



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Stockbridge, Massachusetts

CALL TO MEETING

To all members of the First Congregational Church
of the United Church of Christ
Stockbridge, Massachusetts

In accordance with the bylaws of the church, we hereby call the
Annual Meeting of the church for
Sunday, May 17, 2020, immediately following worship.

The business to be transacted is as follows:

- I. Call to Order
- II. Opening Prayer / Remembrance
- III. To act upon scheduled business:
 - A. Election of Boards and Offices of the Church
- IV. To act upon any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

Patricia Strauch, Clerk

Deborah McMenemy, Moderator

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF STOCKBRIDGE
4 MAIN STREET
STOCKBRIDGE, MA 01262**

ORDER OF BUSINESS

ANNUAL MEETING

MAY 17, 2020

Immediately Following Worship

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Quorum Check**
- III. Approval of Annual Meeting Minutes 2019 (by unanimous consent)**
- IV. Scheduled Business**
 - A. Remembering those we have lost**
 - Aleva Henderson
 - Lorinda Ackley Mazur
 - Jean Wilson
 - Jared Emery*
 - Barbara Jean Campbell*
 - Lucy Wordsworth Wilcox*
 - * Though technically not members of this church, a part of the church family.
 - B. Election of Boards and Officers of the Church (by unanimous consent)**
- V. Benediction**

First Congregational Church, UCC
Stockbridge, Massachusetts
ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES
May 19, 2019

Present: Brent Damrow, Pastor; Deb McMenemy, Moderator; Patricia Strauch, Clerk; and approximately 55 other members.

Call to Order: Noting a quorum present, Deb McMenemy, Moderator, welcomed us and called the meeting to order at 11:11am. Patricia Strauch, Clerk, read the Call for the Meeting.

Quorum Check: Patricia Strauch, Clerk, noted that there were 55 members present, which constitutes a quorum.

Previous Minutes: The minutes from the Annual Meeting of May 20, 2018, were reviewed and approved by Motion that was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Reports and Recognitions: Deb encouraged all members to read the program reports, and expressed her appreciation to all members of boards and committees, as well as officers and staff positions. Thank you! We will keep saying it again and again. Brent invited all board chairs and officers to step up front, and presented a gift of a plant to each.

Election of Boards and Officers: Deb asked everyone to review the Nominating Slate of Officers, Boards, and Committees of the Church. Note that the number in parentheses by each board name denotes available slots to be filled. If anyone felt called to serve, they could contact a member of the Connections Committee. The Nominating Slate as presented was approved by Motion that was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Celebrating the Past Year: Recognition was given to David Anderegg, for writing, producing, and starring in the Lake Mahkeenac Radio Hour, as a fundraiser for the church. Not only does it engage people from the outside community to see what we do here, but is greatly appreciated and supports our budget. Also, to Jon Geldert, for his efforts in overseeing the restoration project for our sanctuary windows and shutters. These windows are our symbol and logo - and reflect the history of the church building. They have been restored with the original glass. We were able to write a check for \$132,000 which did not come out of operating budget - but through grants and other funding. There have been some changes in our staff, and with the ebb and flow of life, we say goodbye to some and welcome others: Gina's passing, Nancy's retirement, and Patty Fox's calling to a new position. We welcome Paige and Will. Brent spoke of the Beatitudes, distinct, precise, and full of meaning. We were asked to take a time of silence to reflect and then speak aloud a word or two to reflect our own 'Beatitude of Gratitude'.

Other Business: With the completion of the *Lent Experiment*, everyone's input is requested for our ongoing evaluative process. Please complete the questionnaire. The *Norman Rockwell Museum* is still very committee to moving forward on the Proctor Hall building. The Stockbridge Zoning Board of Appeals in Fall 2018, granted NRM and the church the variances to go ahead with the plan as presented for NRM to develop that property as an education center. NRM estimates show a \$30,000,000 range to do the work for the renovation, and they are sharing this information to their donors for fundraising. Ronnie Cunningham questioned where proceeds would go in the church funds? Deb clarified that, as discussed at the 2017 Annual

Meeting, this is not a sale, more of a partnership. There will be no budget line item. Brent shared that the Memo of Understanding included work to the aesthetics and safety of the project, and the Church's building and grounds will benefit from this work. Madonna spoke on behalf of the *Personnel Committee*, to advise that questionnaires will be ready soon and distributed. Everyone is encouraged to complete and return this form.

Sending and Singing: Brent led the Sending Charge, from the Iona Community, and asked us all to go out and bear witness. We closed with a hymn, *They Did Not Build in Vain*, sung with gusto!

Adjournment: The meeting ended at 11:42am, with a Motion to adjourn that was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Strauch, Clerk

First Congregational Church, UCC
Stockbridge, Massachusetts
ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING Minutes
February 2, 2020

Present: Brent Damrow, Pastor; Chuck Gillett, Treasurer; Deb McMenemy, Moderator; Patricia Strauch, Clerk; and approximately 60 other members.

Welcome: Noting a quorum present, Deb McMenemy, Moderator, welcomed us and called the meeting to order at 11:05am, and asked Brent to lead us in prayer.

Opening Prayer and Moment of Silence: Brent Damrow, Pastor, noted that the altar candles would remain lit, as we continue our worship in this meeting. Brent led us in prayer and asked that we remember those who have gone before us and who still dance upon our hearts.

Reading of the Call: Patricia Strauch, Clerk, read the Call for the Meeting.

Previous Minutes: The minutes from the Annual Budget Meeting of January 27, 2019, and the Annual Meeting of May 19, 2019, were reviewed and approved by Motion that was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Chuck Gillett, Treasurer, expressed thanks for all on the Budget Committee (Deb McMenemy, Ross Jolly, Joe Nicolosi, Brent Damrow, Chuck Gillett). Chuck referred to the Pastor's Budget Message (on page 10) which highlights some of the key areas where we did and did not spend money in 2019; and also that we have weathered some significant transitions in our church life, with the departure of Patty Fox and Cathy Schane-Lydon.

Chuck presented a summary of the completed 2019 Budget Year, noting that it takes a lot of good planning, and a lot of luck, to plan a budget and have it come in on target. Some notable points of the 2019 budget were that: pledges came in on target; the golf tournament fundraiser was very successful (through the hard work of Jim & Deb McMenemy); yet the total income was \$2,400 lower than budgeted. Budgeted expenses that were not spent were \$6,400 for the Music Director position; and \$13,660 for the Pastoral Assistant position. A new position was created for the Sexton, with the money for this amount taken from other line items, so there was no increase in spending for this position. Will Garrison is performing the position extremely well. All Boards and Committees had spending in line with their budget, other than a higher expense for the Organ Substitute line item for Music Board. Year-end net surplus was \$7,330.94, which is only due to not spending the full amounts for the Music Director and Pastoral Assistant positions.

Chuck reviewed the Restricted Account, which is separate from the Operating Account. All dollars in the Restricted Account are outside of the operating budget.

Act Upon the Budget for FY2020: Chuck Gillett, Treasurer, presented the 2020 Budget proposal. Noted areas of the 2020 Budget review were: pledges are estimated at \$11,000 more than the previous year; the salary of our Minister has reached \$50,000 (started out in 2013 at \$40,000) and we should be proud that we have gotten to this number; although some Boards and Committees are up a little or down a little as their needs required, most are the same; we have

created a line item for Capital Reserve, which represents a fraction of our needs, but is a start to funding the substantial needs we have for the maintenance of our buildings. The new budget does set aside additional funding for the new Music Director to be hired, but we have no money set aside in the budget for additional pastoral support, which is critical to our future and will continue to be addressed. The 2020 Budget as presented is a balanced budget, and the church should be proud of that.

Questions from the congregation: (1) Ed Ivas - how did we accomplish such a good job with 2019 budget numbers? Chuck reminded us that this only happened because we did not spend the Pastoral Assistant salary in 2019. This position is not in the 2020 proposed budget, but we will need to address for 2021 budget. (2) Jo Ann Levitt - where are the funds for coverage for Brent during sabbatical? Chuck pointed out that there is a line item in the budget for Sabbatical Expense, where every month for the last 7 years we have taken \$175 per month and set this aside in the Restricted Account. That money, plus a gift received, gives us almost \$20,000 to cover this expense. (3) Jon Geldert - thank you for establishing the Capital Reserve line item to save for our future needs.

Deb McMenemy, Moderator, confirmed that there were no more questions, and asked for a motion to approve the budget as presented. The Budget for 2020 was approved as presented by Motion that was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Deb took a moment to thank Chuck Gillett for his 20 years of service as Treasurer of the church.

Deb invited Joe Nicolosi to speak on behalf of the Board of Trustees. Joe gave background and information regarding the building and maintenance issues. In 2019, Trustees engaged Historic Preservation Associates to conduct an independent study of catch-up issues, preventative recommendations, and opportunities for ensuring structural integrity. Trustees have gathered quotes for work to be completed over next 5 to 10 years. We have inherited a wonderful place for worship, which has served the congregation and community for 196 years. As current stewards, we are challenged to fund and address these issues and enable our church to continue its mission for the next 200 years. Full details are included in the Board of Trustees' report on page 16 and 17, and a copy of Joe's presentation is attached. Deb concluded by stating that we should be prepared for capital campaign fundraising in our future and that we will be working on forming a committee and moving forward.

Norman Rockwell Museum / Proctor Hall Update: Deb McMenemy reminded us that two years ago, we entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Norman Rockwell Museum regarding their use of Proctor Hall, that would allow NRM to move forward with reviewing costs, feasibility, fundraising - during which time we would not pursue other options for the building. NRM has asked if they can extend this MOU, and our committee (Chuck Gillett, Bronly Boyd, Margaret Hornick, Brent Damrow, Deb McMenemy) met with Laurie Norton Moffatt, and the committee would like to continue this partnership with NRM for another two years, and recommends that we extend this MOU with a 2-year expiration date from February 2, 2020.

Questions from the congregation: (1) Kinney Frelinghuysen - do we own the building? Deb responded that it is complicated, but we certainly own the land on which the building sits. (2) David Anderegg - will there be a deadline? If we extend this for another 2 years and they ask for more time, what will we do? Brent advised that NRM has been making great strides in moving

forward. There is a hope that Laurie Norton Moffatt will come to speak about this project. NRM has shared with us and with the town the dramatic efforts they have been taking, and the substantial work and dollars that have been spent on plans, reports, and studies, and working with their donors. NRM is taking this very seriously and we feel very good about the strength of the relationship between our two organizations.

A Motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously, to approve a 2-year extension of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Norman Rockwell Museum, to expire on February 2, 2022.

Other Business: None was brought forward.

Adjournment: After the Lord's Prayer, the meeting was duly adjourned at 11:30am.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Strauch, Clerk

Clerk's Report May 19, 2019 to May 16, 2020

Baptisms

None

Deaths

Barbara Jean Campbell*	June 8, 2019
Lucy Wordsworth Wilcox*	June 21, 2019
Aleva Henderson	August 21, 2019
Lorinda Ackley Mazur	November 13, 2019
Jared Emery*	November 29, 2019
Jean Wilson	January 21, 2020

* Though technically not members of this church, a part of the church family.

New Members

Corinne Burke	June 16, 2019
Brian Farrell	June 16, 2019
Susan Moor	June 16, 2019
Don & Charlotte Rodgers	June 16, 2019
Beth Rodgers	June 16, 2019
Eric & Kara Smith, Ella, Parker, Gianna	June 16, 2019
Ken Ward	June 16, 2019
Lorinda Ackley Mazur	November 11, 2019
Holland Brown	January 12, 2020
Don Eaton	January 12, 2020
Juliet Emery	January 12, 2020
Brian Hyatt	January 12, 2020
Barbara Moore	January 12, 2020
Cris Raymond	January 12, 2020
Paul Rix & Anna Duhon	January 12, 2020
Becky Smith	January 12, 2020

Transfers Out

This will be updated in next year's report.

Summary:

Child Baptisms	0
Adult Baptisms	0
New Members	21
Deaths	3
Transfers Out	0
Membership as of 5/2019	185
Net Added	<u>18</u>
Current Membership	203

MODERATOR'S REPORT

May 2020

To the Congregation,

Normally at this time of year it is easy to reflect on our Church life for the past year and review where we have been and where we would like to go, but right now, May 1, 2020, in the midst of an unprecedented pandemic, nothing feels quite normal. Who would ever have imagined our church doors being closed to the public and to us? Who would have thought we would have no opportunity to gather for Holy Week or that we would not be in our sanctuary filled with tulips and lilies on Easter morning to celebrate the most joyous of events? How could we possibly exist as a community of faith without being together in our church filled with families and visitors singing "Christ the Lord has Risen Today, Alleluia!"? How could we manage without seeing each other, sharing the peace, sharing our joys, offering comfort and sharing our love?

Hard to imagine, but...but...we have been managing, and may I suggest even thriving? When Brent and Jon first came to Stockbridge, we knew we had been blessed with a pastor of special gifts; we have been learning and growing and graced with his dynamic leadership for years. We also knew they were both self-proclaimed "Church Geeks" and had been advised that, with Jon, we were getting a two-fer: two for the price of one – and we are appreciating that more than ever right now. Jon's devotion to us and his extensive technical expertise has connected us in ways I could not have imagined. Zoom meetings are great, they allow us to be together when we cannot, and many churches are using them for worship and meetings. But not all churches are fortunate enough to have the ability to "live stream" worship and Jon has given us that great gift. We call in our presence during service and Jon gets the word to Brent in real time. We send Jon our joys and concerns and Brent offers them as prayers for us to share. We send in photos and he turns it into a slide show. Our worship service is truly interactive, and we can be together...who would have thought?

Jon has also created a beautiful, easy-to-navigate website that shares our church life with each other and so many others. Now he is setting up a live action website to help Brent revive the church's Open Table to help feed people during the quarantine...amazing! May I just say thanks be to Jon for his creativity, talent, energy, and love for us. We are so very blessed to have you here and I am most grateful.

Several years ago, Brent asked us all to "Imagine" what life could be for us as a family of faith and I promise, I never imagined anything like this. Normal is being redefined and in the framework that is being set up in this Church, normal feels good and right and sustainable. Thank you all for "Being Church".

Respectfully submitted,
Deb McMenemy, Moderator

PASTOR'S REPORT

When the vastness of God meets the restriction of our own humanity,
words can't hold it. The best we can do is find the moments that rhyme
with this expansive heart of God. *Father Greg Boyle*

Dear Friends,

This has been quite a year here at Four Main Street. There has been so much that we have done and experienced together. Through this report, I hope that you get a sense of its magnitude and depth. What we have done has been nothing short of beautiful. I am deeply grateful to so many people who have poured their heart and faith into our shared life, our worship, our service, our music making, fellowship sharing, building caring, and service.

This year what I want to focus on, though, is how we have gone about it. I had no doubt about the compassion, strength and commitment of this congregation going into this year. Yet, what I have seen in the last few months during this pandemic has been the stuff of inspiration.

I have seen people stepping forth to stay connected. I have seen our numbers in worship, study and service swelling. I have seen people turning outward not in fear, but in loving hope. I have seen people share both their experiences and their needs in humble truth. I have seen the staff of this church, lay leaders, and my husband step forth in truly sacrificial ways to ensure that we can lean into our mission. I have seen people eager to share food whether at the People's Pantry, at Open Table or through donations.

What I have been so grateful to witness has been the implementation of all the things we practice in worship coming to life as we offer Christ and his love to the world. I have witnessed peace giving, beauty making, life sharing, compassionate giving, and outward turning – not just on Sundays in the house of God, but every day in the various places we call home. This year I give thanks that we have not just gone to church but that we have become it both in the most tangible and spiritual ways.

As I write this, I am aware that this pandemic will continue to affect our lives and our shared lives for a good while yet to come. I have confidence that we will make it together as we find those moments that rhyme with God's expansive heart. I hope and pray that it offers us the chance to settle even deeper into being church and finding those "things" that really matter and are worth pursuing.

Council has approved a small group of leaders to begin contemplating what our path might look like in the months to come. We will start in prayer and then move first to the task of identifying our values and our philosophy of how we will reconnect. We will also start thinking about the ways to do so that are safe and that are true to worship and connection.

Please know that in the meantime, we want to stay connected and we want to hear from you both about your joys as well as those things that are challenging to you. We will emerge from this experience stronger and more connected if we continue to be church together.

Blessings to each of you and all of you together,

Brent

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

CE events: The Board of Christian Education and Sunday School teachers started the year off with a bang at Rally Day in September. We had watermelon seed spitting (of course), bible quizzes, face painting, and a tattoo parlor. The weather was perfect, and a fun time was had by all.

At Halloween we took part in Trick or Treat for UNICEF. The Advent Celebration was a flurry of crafting activities beginning with Kristingle construction at the end of service and continuing on to potato printing wrapping paper and cards, and making ornaments and beeswax candles. We gathered up our students to take part in the Christmas pageant as angels, shepherds, and sheep. At Mardi Gras we paraded to, and played in, The Saints band. And for Lent we shared the One Great Hour of Sharing calendar.

Sunday School: Of course, we also had Sunday School for the kids. Each week we brought Bible stories to life with readings, music, skits and art projects. But it's not all about Bible literacy, Sunday School is an important time for community building, and the discussion and modeling of Christian values. COVID19 quarantine has been lonely for us. The kids miss each other and the adults, and the adults miss the kids. We are trying some video presence on the website to keep the kids engaged.

A shout out to our teachers (Jill Wheat, Cindy Brown, Casey Jones, Jon Geldert, Elizabeth Evans, Diane Piraino, Ted Randolph, Ken Ward and Josh Hall) for their energy, joy, creativity and patience. They are a blessing to the kids, the parents and the congregation. A special thanks to Elizabeth for managing the teaching schedule and all the materials.

Youth Group: The Junior Youth Group began gathering again in the Fall. This wonderful group spent its first night brainstorming what was important to them over pizza and games. Included in their conversation was the desire to learn more about their faith, to serve the world, and equally importantly to have some fun! In December, the group gathered in the JE Room for some hot chocolate to talk about light in the Bible before heading out on a brisk night to take in the lights at Naumkeag. A subset of the group will be working with Patty Strauch to shepherd the church's funds through the Kiva organization that makes micro loans available to people around the world to improve their lives. We are trying to identify ways to stay connected and keep growing in these physically distanced times.

Adult Education: Adults of this congregation have engaged formation and learning in profound ways over the last year and are doing so right now too! Beginning in the summer of last year more than thirty of our congregation joined with folks from St. Paul's and Christ Trinity (Sheffield) to explore The Second Mountain by David Brooks. It would set a theme for the year of gathering in small groups to find meaning. In the fall, two different groups engaged the Gospel of Matthew using a curriculum from Kerygma. We choose this approach as Advent marked the beginning of the Lectionary year that features Matthew's perspective on the Good News. In addition, a group of five engaged the central aspects of Christianity in a small group using the Spark Animate Faith series. We looked at topics like God, cross, Bible, church and more. In the winter months two different small groups used the On Being podcast as a jumping off place for encountering interesting people like Father Greg Boyle, Poet Ross Gay, Pastor Shane Claiborne, and Muslim leader Omar Saif Ghobash. We lingered over food before jumping

into conversations about how and why the ideas of these leaders can matter for us in our own faith walks. Currently two more small groups are encountering Sabbath from four different perspectives while trying out practices that work for them. In these groups we are not only learning from the writers, we are sharing our own stories of Sabbath keeping and encouraging each other as we try to re-connect to this critical faith practice. Finally, this year we launched a new weekly Bible Study thanks to Linda Hoddy, Rick Floyd, and Jeremy Ridenour. Each week a group gathers to consider the text to be used in the sermon on Sunday as a way of exploration and preparation. The group has continued to meet on Fridays for the past couple o months.

Those who have participated have shared appreciation for many different things. People talk about the way these studies bring their faith to life. Just as importantly though, our new approach using smaller groups we have also discovered a great blessing of relationship building. If you have not take advantage of one of our many studies or small groups, consider the next ones that will come this summer. If you would like to speak with someone who has to get their perspective, just give the office a call. We can put you in touch with one of the approximately seventy-five different people who did.

~ Diane Piraino, Chair of Board of Christian Education
Rev. Brent Damrow

BOARD OF DEACONS

The Board of Deacons had a lively year! We began with new leadership, shared by Cathy Clark and Elizabeth Young—and with very helpful orientation and information from the outgoing Chair, Cindy Brown. We developed some individual diaconal areas of expertise and worked together to share the tasks of preparing the church for worship every week.

Under Cathy's direction, we formulated a budget for the year. Major outlay of the Deacons' budget for 2019-20 included money to support the purchase of summer songbooks and better equipment for livestreaming, as well as an additional line-item for a fund to support the pastor's housing during sabbatical.

We devoted ourselves to maintaining communication and shared participation with the congregation at large: for example, we sought volunteers to help prepare the church for Advent, with candlelight, wreaths, swags, window decorations, paraments--all the physical work that goes into the beauty of that season. We also welcomed both new and experienced liturgists to read throughout the year to get more voices in the worship service. With COVID restrictions, four current Deacons alternate with two other readers in serving as liturgist for the livestreamed worship services. In addition, the Deacons' report in the monthly newsletter was used to present discussion of some joys and challenges of living in engagement with the church.

The Deacons worked to support the pastor. At his request, we provided input (including feedback) on worship services, and helped identify needs for individual pastoral care. We have initiated or revived several means of providing connection during the pandemic, with a pen pal program, outreach calls, and greeting cards. A gratitude group is in the works.

In addition to our monthly board meetings, the Deacons actively participate in the life of the church: at the monthly Church Council meeting, at Morning Prayer, in small groups, Bible study and Sunday school. In doing so, we experience growth and development ourselves, and as Deacons learn more about the many ways to worship God.

The Board of Deacons is particularly aware of the blessing of having Will Garrison in his multiple roles at church. Will's organizational skills, attention to detail, and work ethic have made preparation for worship much simpler, and his kindness and patience are gifts to us all.

The Deacons feel deep gratitude for Jon Geldert, whose expertise and commitment to livestreaming the worship service every Sunday has ensured consistently beautiful and meaningful worship experiences, serving large numbers of people every week, and especially during Holy Week. The livestream provides access to worship for many visitors and friends of the church, as well as church members.

The Deacons also are deeply grateful for Pastor Brent's outstanding leadership in worship and pastoral care throughout the year. With input from the Deacons and building on the initial "Lenten Experiment," in 2019 he guided the development and implementation of intergenerational worship services on the third and fifth Sundays of each month. We also worked with him on the summer worship service, with children present with their parents or in crafts during the sermon; the use of the supplemental hymnals; and different ways for congregants to participate in the liturgy. In addition, Pastor Brent's initiation of new classes,

small groups, collaboration with other congregations, and a revival of Open Table, among other programs, continue to expand the opportunities for us all to worship God. The Deacons look forward to working with Pastor Brent as we continue to explore new ways to serve God and support our church family in this time of tribulation.

Finally, the Deacons will really miss Deacon Casey Jones as she and her family move to North Carolina, and we deeply appreciate all the skills, energy and time that Cathy Clark and Jeremy Ridenour have shared with the Board over their past three years of service.

~ Elizabeth Young, on behalf of the Board of Deacons

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Trustees are responsible for the care of our finances, buildings, and grounds. Our goal is to keep the church safe, functional, welcoming, aesthetically pleasing, and historically restored whenever possible. Some highlights of the past year:

Capital improvements: In February, carpenters and painters arrived to freshen and reconfigure several spaces in the office/classroom wing. Financial Secretary Ron Hanft's office was converted to an office for a new Minister of Music; the previous office of Minister of Music was converted to a small meeting room; the administration office was cleared, cleaned, and repainted; and the hallway by the restrooms received a much-needed paint job. Ron is now sharing the administration office with Will Garrison.

The Trustees agreed to hire the painting crew to return to paint the south gable of the Jonathan Edwards wing, we are just waiting for better weather. We continue to work to improve the insulation of the building, and to mitigate moisture coming up through the cellar floor. This has involved clearing out some of the accumulated odds-and-ends in the basement. Will topped off the construction crew's big dumpster with quite an assortment of trash.

As noted at the budget meeting in February, we have undertaken an extensive analysis of the deferred maintenance and capital improvements necessary for the Church and Manse. The resulting "Restoration Report" combines the efforts of knowledgeable members of our church with a study by Peter Hamm of Historic Preservation Associates. The report confirms the overall good condition of the church and manse; however, it cites very necessary short term (time critical) maintenance as well as long term improvement needs.

The Trustees are working with National Grid and Berkshire Gas to improve energy use and identify repair/replacement incentives for heating and insulation.

Maintenance: in the summer of 2019, the church hired Will Garrison for 10 hours a week (in addition to his hours as Administrator) to be the Sexton. Armed with a new vacuum cleaner and other tools of the trade, Will cleans the building on a regular basis. He is also responsible for setting up for meetings and other duties as assigned. Will has also completed a few small painting projects, some much needed small repair, deep cleaning, and spearheading repair/replacement of kitchen plumbing.

Last fall, the church and the Stockbridge Golf Club arranged to trade the use of the JE Room for wintertime meetings of the Golf Club's board for their crew completing a fall clean up of the grounds. They did a great job.

Stewardship and Finances: The Stewardship Subcommittee completed a successful "I Am The Way" campaign securing the financial support for the 2020 budget.

A team comprised of Treasurer Chuck Gillett, bookkeeper Joann Farrell, QuickBooks guru Patty Strauch, and Administrator Will Garrison converted the paper-based system for the operating budget to the QuickBooks financial management software. Will and Chuck can now provide more timely information to the Boards.

~ Joe Nicolosi, Chair of The Trustees

MISSION AND ACTION

Mission and Action had our usual busy year with a mix of hands-on community projects and donation decisions until March when the world and we tried to self-isolate. We have been working since with our funds and hands at the People's Pantry.

We will start with the pre-COVID work:

We organized and managed the Muddy Brook Food Backpack Project during the five weeks of summer school. We coordinated the donations of money and food from a variety of sources. The congregation donated at least \$500 worth of Cheerios and crackers.

In the fall we participated in two walks with our time and money. Jill Fleming and Casey Jones are the incredible cheerleaders and organizers for "The Walk Out of Darkness" for suicide prevention and Construct for housing support and homelessness prevention.

December (organizational work actually starts in November) brings the Giving Tree. We provided Christmas presents for more than 20 families referred by the Elizabeth Freeman Center, Berkshire Literacy Network, Construct and the Great Barrington Housing Authority. Each person received clothing, a book and toys (for children) and household items (for adults). Our congregation and friends really stepped up with more than 150 gifts. We also provided 50 lbs. of cat food and 150 lbs. of dog food for homeless pets. The organization of the lists and families is superbly handled by Judi Peyron (and her family).

Until March Jill Fleming headed up our People's Pantry team. We collected food and donations on communion Sundays and worked at the Pantry about every six weeks helping to distribute the food.

Last spring, we decided to highlight some of the local organizations to which we contribute funds. We provided breakfast, worship service, and fellowship with Gould Farm on Mother's Day. Other church services have included Jane Ralph from Construct and spokespersons from the Literacy Project.

For our response to the COVID pandemic, there has been a great deal of church support for the People's Pantry. A big boost has been toilet paper purchased from the church's supplier - 200 rolls per week.

We are now working on supporting the Berkshire Diaper Project. And we have provided funds to help support the food program for students and families of the Berkshire Hills School District. This program will continue through the summer.

~ Anne Hutchinson, Chair of the Board of Mission & Action

GROWTH AND FELLOWSHIP

The mission of the Growth and Fellowship Board is to develop, increase and preserve the bonds of community among members of the church. Although "Growth" is part of our name, we have not instituted special efforts to grow our membership in recent years, mostly because our excellent worship, music and mission work serve us well in attracting new members. That leaves our Board the room to focus on fellowship on Sundays after worship and also in the wider church family.

Our regular responsibilities include recruiting volunteer greeters and coffee-hour hosts for every Sunday of the year. Greeters welcome everyone to worship, standing outside in all weather; coffee hour hosts provide refreshments, set up coffee and clean up afterward. Our committee members organize and recruit and also train coffee hour hosts and back them up when there is an emergency absence. Although we sometimes despair of finding willing volunteers, we have a core of regulars who somehow always come through, and we continue to try to find creative ways of encouraging a wider volunteer roster.

Growth and Fellowship also hosts annual celebrations, including the All-Church Birthday Party, the Strawberry Social in June, and the All-Church Picnic in July. This year, we have had significant disruptions to our activities as a result of the pandemic. The All-Church Birthday Party was scheduled for February, but we had to postpone because of illness of a number of our members; and as of now the event is still in abeyance. We are hoping and praying to be able to celebrate in some way when the local strawberries come ripe at the end of June! Coffee hours are not happening, but we are looking to other ways to encourage fellowship as the pandemic continues. Stay tuned!

This year, we wish to thank retiring Board members Joyce Hovey and Mishel Kulibaba Epstein for their years of service.

Respectfully submitted,
David Anderegg, chair
Michael Deegan, Susan Moor, Vicky Cooper
Growth and Fellowship Board

MUSIC

The Board of Music works with the Minister of Music and Pastor Damrow to enhance the worship experience for our congregation and visitors through use of the adult and children's choirs, hand bells, organ, piano, and other special guest musicians and artists.

The 2019-2020 church year has been particularly interesting and dramatic for the music program. There was the sudden departure of Minister of Music Catherine Schane-Lydon in September, the shift in our worship services in March due to the unprecedented pandemic restrictions, and the selection of and excitement about a new Minister of Music, who will begin in the new church year beginning July 1.

At Cathy's departure, a search committee was quickly formed and worked tirelessly through the winter and spring, obtaining input from the congregation, posting a job description, interviewing several candidates, and finally selecting Sandor Szabo as our new director. He is an experienced, highly talented and engaging church musician, and we are all looking forward to his fresh musical leadership in the new church year. We owe a big thanks to search committee chair Miles Wheat and committee members Jean Stackhouse, Linda Hoddy, Michael Deegan, and Ronnie Cunningham.

We were blessed to have professional music leadership step up from within the membership of the congregation immediately after Cathy's September departure. Tracy Wilson and Ron Hanft played the organ most Sundays. David Anderegg and Jean Stackhouse jumped in with the piano on other weeks, and Jack Brown helped with regular Thursday night choir rehearsals until the choir ceased singing in March. We are particularly indebted to Tracy for pulling together some wonderful services for Christmas and Easter.

The children's choir, led by Jill Wheat, has grown and thrived this year, singing at least one a month for worship services. This dedicated group of young singers is always a joyful presence. The bell choir continued their regular excellence under the ongoing direction of Mary Jo Erickson Connor. With eight or more musicians gathering regularly they have been part of the worship service at least every month. They had a special quality to our worship when they make an appearance.

There has been a shift in the section leader/vocal soloists during the year. Monica Bliss and Nellie Rustick said goodbye to us in the fall. Mainstay John Demler was joined by a rotating soprano group consisting of Andrea Bargabos, Laura Danehower Whyte and Jolanta Lorenc. We received a real blow this year with the loss of tenor soloist Steve Hassmer, who is moving to North Carolina with Casey and the children. We have been fortunate to have so many professional quality voices as a part of our humble choir.

The Music on Main performance series was suspended this year with the lack of a regular music director to manage it. Hopefully this special series might resume in the future with Dr. Szabo's guidance.

Our church continues to attract a membership that values the quality of our music program. This has been a challenging year, and it has been remarkable that high standards have been presented every week in support of our worship.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Brown (chair), on behalf of committee members Joan Kopperl and Ronnie Cunningham

THE CHURCH GARDEN

Gardens always need gardeners. In 2019, Cary Quigley planted early crops, including kale and chard, which continued all season to be our signature crops. Stephanie Bradford, Sarah Boyd, Liz Murray, Lenore Sundberg, and Anna Smith cared for the garden. Vegetable and herbs were appreciated by some of our church members. Produce was also taken to the CHP in Great Barrington.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

“Two or more” gather once or twice a month in the Sunday School room to share our lives, news and concerns for others, a simple centering liturgy, and prayer as we work in silence. We first began meeting in 2010, and in that past decade we have created and given away 123 shawls as gifts of encouragement or celebration. We gave away seven prayer shawls in 2019, and one to date in 2020. We are honored, through the work of our hands, to show love and support to those in transitions of all kinds, whether loss or hardship or celebration.

Terry Wise
Jean Stackhouse
Mary Hoeltzel
Joyce Hovey
Mary Jane Dunlop
Barbara Kershner
Diane Piraino
Sibylle Baier

SERVICE LEAGUE

This has been another year of good works and successful fairs. We have supported college scholarships, the Muddy Brook backpack project, the Elizabeth Freeman Center, and the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, among others. I would like to thank all who helped us this year, as it couldn't have been done without you. We look forward to meeting in person again.

With your help, we purchased supplies for dozens of school, hygiene and clean-up kits; these are distributed by Church World Service to refugee camps. Once again, thank you!

Respectfully submitted,
Jackie Hawkins

LEADERS FINISHING THEIR TERMS

The following are folks who are finishing up their service. We are deeply grateful for their service and invite you to share your gratitude as well.

Moderator: Deb McMenemy
Clerk: Patty Strauch
Treasurer: Chuck Gillett
Historian: Linda Hoddy

Christian Education

Sarah Conly, Ted Randolph

Deacons

Cathy Clark, Casey Jones, Jeremy Ridenour

Growth and Fellowship

Joyce Hovey, Mishel Kulibaba Epstein

Mission and Action

Ivy Cote, Meryle Epstein, Jill Fleming, Anne Hutchinson, Christine Smith

Music

Margaret Hornick

Trustees

Ross Jolly, Ken LaBresh

Committee of Delegates

Donald Paine

Other Committees

Connections: Deb McMenemy

NOMINATING SLATE
OFFICERS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES OF THE CHURCH
May 17, 2020

This list includes confirmed nominations as of May 14, 2020. The Connections Committee will share any additional nominations up to and at the vote.

CHAIR OF CHURCH COUNCIL/MODERATOR	Cathy Clark
CLERK	Jeremy Ridenour
TREASURER	Patty Strauch
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Ron Hanft
HISTORIAN	Joshua Hall
LIBRARIAN	Terry Wise

Bold indicates those to be voted on by the congregation.

BOARD OF DEACONS

<u>CLASS OF 2021</u> Elizabeth Young Jim McMenamy Hal Brink	<u>CLASS OF 2022</u> Margo Bradley-Davis Joshua Hall Donna Jacobs	<u>CLASS OF 2023</u> Evelyn Battaglia Ted Randolph Anna Duhon
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BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

<u>CLASS OF 2021</u> Diane Piraino	<u>CLASS OF 2022</u> Elizabeth Evans Ken Ward Jill Wheat	<u>CLASS OF 2023</u> Barbara Kershner Anne Hutchinson Cris Raymond Paul Rix
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BOARD OF MISSION & ACTION

<u>CLASS OF 2021</u> Patty Strauch Sara Zanin Patty Fadding	<u>CLASS OF 2022</u> Charlotte Rodgers Sarah Conly	<u>CLASS OF 2023</u> Nick Pohl Bruce Wilkens
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BOARD OF GROWTH AND FELLOWSHIP

CLASS OF 2021

David Anderegg
Michael Deegan
Ann Brink

CLASS OF 2022

Vicky Cooper
Susan Moor

CLASS OF 2023

Holland Brown
Brian Hyatt

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CLASS OF 2021

Joe Nicolosi
Mary Hoeltzel
Alice Collins

CLASS OF 2022

Bronly Boyd
Christine Rasmussen
Kara Smith
Don Rodgers

CLASS OF 2023

Becky Smith

BOARD OF MUSIC

CLASS OF 2021

Joan Kopperl
Jack Brown

CLASS OF 2022

Gary Schieneman
Ronnie Cunningham

CLASS OF 2023

Robert Doerr

PASTORAL RELATIONS

Margaret Hornick, Ron Hanft, Miles Wheat, and Diane Piraino

CONNECTIONS

Margaret Hornick, Jo Ann Levitt, and David Anderegg

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Jeremy Ridenour, Carl Bradford, Hal Brink, Madonna Meagher, and Joan Kopperl

COMMITTEE OF DELEGATES

STATE CONFERENCE

Class of 2021:
Margaret Hornick
David Anderegg

BERKSHIRE ASSOCIATION

Class of 2021:
Margaret Hornick
David Anderegg