

2017-2018

Annual Reports

of the
First Congregational Church
Southington, Connecticut



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CALL FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING

JUNE 18th 2018

The Annual Meeting of the members of the First Congregational Church, Inc. of Southington, Connecticut, is hereby called for Monday, June 18, 2018 at 7:00pm in the Meetinghouse. All church members are urged to attend and act upon the business of the church, including Annual Reports, nomination and election of officers, our 2018-2019 Church Budgets, and any other business that may come before the members.

Dated: June 3, 2018
June 10, 2018
June 17, 2018



Signed: _____

Beth Barnes

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**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SOUTHLINGTON
ANNUAL MEETING – June 18, 2018**

Agenda

1. Call to Order Moderator, Joanne Kelleher
2. Opening Prayer Senior Pastor, The Rev. Dr. Ronald B. Brown
3. Reading of the Purpose of Our Church Moderator, Joanne Kelleher
4. Reading of our Covenant and our Open and Affirming Statement All
5. Opening Hymn #386 Director of Music Ministries, Lou Vollono
The Church's One Foundation
6. Moment of Silence to Remember Members Who Passed Away

**Barbara Andres *Mark Corcoran *Charles Davenport*Embert Dwelley*Thomas Feeney
*Tracey Gabree *Arthur Hansen *Patricia Johnson *Patricia Livingstone
*Maureen Lyon *George Moore *Diana Putnam *Rachel Seller*
7. Minister's Annual Report
 - Senior Pastor, The Rev. Dr. Ronald B. Brown
 - Associate Pastor, The Rev. Rachel J. Bahr
8. Moderator's Annual Report Moderator, Joanne Kelleher
9. Acceptance of Written Reports Moderator, Joanne Kelleher
10. Recognition of Last Year's Board and Committee Members
Moderator, Joanne Kelleher and Assistant Moderator, Ann McCarty
11. Election of Church Officers for 2018-2019 Moderator, Joanne Kelleher
12. Adoption of 2018-2019 Budget Chair of Trustees, Matthew LaBarron
13. Other Business and Announcements Moderator, Joanne Kelleher
14. Closing Hymn #306 Director of Music Ministries, Lou Vollono
The Church of Christ, In Every Age
15. Adjournment and Benediction Associate Pastor, The Rev. Rachel J. Bahr

Purpose of The First Congregational Church of Southington

The purpose of the First Congregational Church of Southington is to:

- Love and worship God
- Extend God's radically-inclusive love to all people, both here and around the globe.
- Make more and better disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Inspire people and society to become more just, loving, compassionate and Christ-like.

Covenant

We do now in the presence of God and each other, accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, solemnly dedicate ourselves and all that we are to the service of God. We do covenant that with the grace of God assisting us, we will love and serve God all our lives; that we will glorify God by following Jesus Christ in promoting the temporal and spiritual good of all people; that we will strive to obey the inward voice of the Holy Spirit, and speak and do whatever is right and good and holy so far as we perceive truth.

Open and Affirming Statement

We, the members of The First Congregational Church of Southington, Connecticut, hereby declare ourselves to be an open and affirming congregation. We accept the challenges and joys of Christian faith, a faith profound enough to embrace even uncertainty. We struggle with the difficult issues of our day, understanding that God's Word touches and guides us as a congregation and as individuals.

With God's grace, we welcome and affirm the total identity of all people as beloved children of God. We are a congregation that seeks to break down the barriers of prejudice, declaring respect for the worth and dignity of all persons, embracing differences in age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, ethnicity, nationality, socio-economic status, and physical, emotional and mental capability. We also recognize and affirm loving, committed and diverse families. We actively welcome all people to become members of our church and to share fully in our church's life and leadership, ministry and fellowship, worship and sacraments, and responsibilities and blessings.

Senior Pastor's Annual Report

June 2018

*I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you
will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.*

Philippians 1:6

Someday I would love to be able to begin my annual report (with apologies to Garrison Keillor), "It's been a quiet year at the First Congregational Church of Southington." That has never been the case in my seven and a half years as your senior pastor and, truth be known, I would never want that to be. Each year seems as active and vital as the last for our ministry. Each year brings new challenges and new opportunities.

This year has many highlights. Two come immediately to mind. I have been thrilled by the way our church has shown hospitality and love through Family Promise. We have opened our doors four times this year to homeless families. Volunteers have cooked, entertained children, and stayed in the building overnight. Our ministry of hospitality has made a difference. In fact, I just learned that one of our guests during several of our host weeks recently earned her GED.

The other was the first Milton and Katherine Chafee Memorial Lecture on the Future of the Church. The General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, the Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer, preached at a combined worship service and then offered the Chafee lecture in the afternoon on April 22. Dr. Dorhauer's words inspired us to think about what the church can become.

At the beginning of the program year, I completed the last two months of my sabbatical. I am more than grateful for this benefit our congregation offers its pastors. Not only did the sabbatical time give me much-appreciated opportunity for rest and renewal, it also enabled me to have conversations with church leaders, both in our congregation and across the United Church of Christ, about leadership needs for the church today. I came away from those conversations both encouraged and challenged to work collegially to form leaders for the church, both in our congregation and in the wider church. Pastor Rachel did a wonderful job making sure that the FCC's ministries continued without interruption during my time away.

It has been a joy to watch our church continue to become more environmentally friendly and economically efficient this year. I was very proud of the enthusiasm with which we voted at last year's Annual Meeting to install solar panels on the south-facing roof of our meetinghouse and to replace an aging boiler and water heater. The new boiler was installed in the fall and I am happy to report that for the first time in my ministry here there was no boiler malfunction that left the Barnes Memorial Chapel without heat on a Sunday morning. Installation of the solar panels is also complete and hopefully will be producing electricity soon. Our meetinghouse, which has watched over the Southington town green since 1830, is now a visible sign of our commitment to care for God's earth.

People are always moving in and out of our lives, and this year is no different in the church. In September, Louis (Lou) S. Vollono, Jr. joined our team as the Director of Music Ministries and Organist. Last December, we bid farewell to Lynn Bushnell, who had served devotedly as our sexton for more than 17 years. Lynn knew where everything was and how everything worked, and her presence is missed every day. This month, Dawn Gambacini will complete her ministry among us as our Technology and Communications Director. Dawn has been a wonderful presence on our ministry team and has brought

great skill and innovation to the way we get our message out to the congregation and community. We have almost completed our search for a Director of Communications and have outsourced our technology work to an outside vendor.

I am unceasingly grateful for all our church staff. They have been our foundation in the midst of transition:

- Pastor Rachel, whose gentle pastoral presence has touched many, who brings vitality and life to our youth ministry and challenges us to think in new ways.
- Carole Lantz and Karlene Archambeault who are helping us prepare the next generation of church leaders.
- Lou Vollono, Melissa Mirisola, and Steve Nyren whose ministry creates beautiful music for our worship services.
- Allison LeBarron and Ray Dischino who oversee the financial ministry of our church with integrity and skill.
- Mira Morel, whose skilled and hospitable presence in our office helps us live into our commitment that no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

What a gift it is to work alongside them.

Another thing that has marked this year is the extraordinary number of losses that our congregation has experienced. We have mourned the deaths of long time members and have wept at memorial services for loved ones lost much too young. We have been reminded how precious life is, and how important it is to have a foundation of faith in God and to be part of a community of faith, hope, and love like First Congregational Church.

So, where do we go from here?

First, we remember that the work of the church continues without interruption. We continue to celebrate baptisms and mourn losses. We worship, study the Bible, do God's mission in the world, and teach our children the basics of our Christian faith.

We will also face many challenges as we look to the future. At this year's Annual Meeting we will again take a hard look at our financial health. Patterns of church attendance and giving continue to change. Engaging volunteers who are the hands and feet of God's work here at FCC will require innovation and commitment. And we will continue to ask the question, "What is God calling us to do?"

I often say to the Church Council and other church leadership that my vision is that our church will be the center of progressive worship and theology in central Connecticut. That vision is simpler than it sounds. It simply means that I envision our church being the place where all people find a spiritual home, a welcoming presence, and a place where their service to God's world matters.

We are not there yet, but as Paul wrote to the church in Philippi, "I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ."

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Dr. Ronald B. Brown, Senior Pastor

2017-18 Associate Pastor Annual Report

Serving at First Congregational Church these past two years has been a blessing. I've had the honor of walking alongside folks through the ups and downs of life, weddings and funerals, joys and losses of all kinds. I've provided ongoing pastoral care across our congregation, making an average of 5-10 pastoral care visits weekly.

I've thoroughly loved getting to know the different personalities of our three very different worship services. Preaching at all three worship services has really developed my preaching stamina! I've thoroughly enjoyed sermon preparation- thinking deeply, writing, rewriting, and delivering sermons grounded in scripture as well as relevant, provocative, and prominent issues/themes within our world. I've also enjoyed preaching multiple Sundays in a row during the summers, during vacations as well as Pastor Ron's Sabbatical (January, July, August 2017).

I have also has the opportunity to serve the local community through community leadership with the students involved in the Multicultural Student Union. Our church also hosted a Racial Justice Training in January 2018, drawing over 40 youth and adults from Southington High Schools Multicultural Student Union.

I've been a staff presence at Deacons and Church Council monthly meetings, as well as leadership retreats, and served as the staff liaison for the Christian Education Board, as well as Steeple Players Ministry.

In November of 2017, I co-directed with Nora Matthews the Steeple Players production of James Still's stage play, *And Then They Came For Me: Remembering the World of Anne Frank*. Rehearsing twice a week, during our two month rehearsal window, with our cast of 9 talented youth and adults, and 20 volunteers in other roles, including musicians, youth and adult stage and production crew. It was well attended by the community, with over 100 attendees at each of the three performances.

Bringing Broadway to the church, in August 2017 with the help of our talented church members, we produced a Broadway Sermon Series featuring musical selections from musicals exploring themes of faith, including *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Floyd Collins*, *Groundhog Day*, *Violet*, and *Wicked*. Thanks to all those who came together to make this a meaningful experience, Stephen Casillas, Katrina Lacombe, Melissa Mirisola, Mikalyn Mirisola, Steve Nyren, Ben Rossi, Connie Scavone, Keegan Smith, Shannon Sullivan, Tory Szulczewski, Rich Szulczewski, Sarah Zimmerman.

In a similar vein, in preparation for the celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, I researched Reformation history and theology and wrote and produced a series of monologues beginning on Rally Day which went through the end of October. Our congregation learned about the following Reformation Leaders, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Marguerite de Navarre, John Knox, Ulrich Zwingli, Argula von Grumbach, and John Wesley. I have also produced our annual FCC's Got Talent production for the last 2 years, holding space for our children and young adults to share a variety of talents- poetry, song, and dance- you name it! I also directed about thirty children and youth in our Christmas Eve pageant. Our children in preschool and older all had the opportunity to participate and learn about the birth of Jesus during teaching rehearsals throughout December.

Faith Formation

Through conversations with stakeholders we formed a Youth & Parent Council that offers a collaborative space for developing new youth ministry ideas and learning where we could make improvements. From this thoughtful group emerged the idea for the formation of a monthly Elementary Youth Group, which we've had enormous success with since February.

Developing a united youth ministry team has also been a focus, both supporting existing volunteers as well as adding new volunteers was necessary, especially with the transition of leadership from former ministers, and a few leaders moving on.

EYG-Elementary Youth Group

The formation of a monthly Elementary Youth Group has proven to be a very successful venture. We've had over 20 youth attend, who ask for a weekly gathering. The age groups spans kindergarten through fifth grade.

MSYG- Middle School Youth Group

Highlights of our year included Youth Groups Worship Service on friendship, a Winter and a Spring lock-in, as well as twice monthly gatherings on Sunday nights, including an Iron Chef, game nights, bowling, Feed My Starving Children Mobile Pack, Christmas Cookie baking extravaganza, participation in Hospitality Night. We give thanks for our Middle School Youth Group Leaders, including new leader Judy Orofino and returning leaders, Brian Bradshaw, Dave Wendt, Dan Green. We also had the help of other parent volunteers, including Elizabeth & Dave Hagan, and Linda Glovna. Our youth group volunteers are always willing to have fun or buddy up if a young person is needing support. No matter what the activity for the night, we broke bread together, played fun games, and we took time for circling up and listening to one another at the end of the night and taking turns praying. Over the last twelve months we've seen our middle school youth group numbers increase, through encouraging youth to bring their friends. This year we've had over 25 active unique youth involved, with an average night of 15 youth. Moving our group meetings from 2x a month on Friday nights to 2x a month on Sunday evening was a wise decision, with less competing activities.

YG- High School Youth Group

Highlights of the year included Youth Group Worship Service on friendship in May, Solidarity Sleepout in April, our Holy Week Lock-in during the Easter Vigil. We also had twice a month Sunday night gatherings included discussion on various topics related to faith and what is happening in the world. Average attendance varied widely from 6-20. Youth Group Leaders included Joe DePaolo, Judy Orofino, and Cristy Shamus. We so appreciate the time and dedication these folks provide our young people.

Confirmation

Highlights of the Confirmation year included the Crop Walk, preparing and serving a meal in North Hampton, MA with Cathedral in the Night, serving at Family Promise, Confirmation lock-in at church, our retreat to Silver Lake, and our visit to Geishrei Shalom Shabbat Service. Our mentors were involved throughout the confirmation year, attending class 3-4 times, meeting with their youth regularly. We had 8 youth choosing to affirm their baptism.

20/30's Group- A weekly group of FCC young adults gather for a meal together weekly on Tuesday nights at 6pm. The group is a space for sharing joys and concerns, discussing current events, and offering support to one another.

2017 – 2018 Annual Report of the Church Council

This year the Church Council continued working towards the vision to be the center of progressive worship and theology in Central Connecticut. The Council activities focused on the three areas which were identified at the 2014 retreat:

- Staffing for this change/Structure
- Welcoming community
- Refresh our worship

Staffing for this change/Structure

Lou Vollono was hired as Music Minister and Shannon Knudson was hired as the director of Village Green Nursery School. Dawn Gambacini stepped down as the Communication Chair in the spring, a search committee was formed and recruiting efforts are underway.

The Trustees and Council spent a lot of time looking at finances and the church building and grounds. On the positive side, a new cell phone tower lease is currently being negotiated, the solar panels have been installed on the roof and are undergoing regulatory approval, the solar and boiler project will result in savings to future utility bills, and operational expenses remained level for the past year. On the negative side, the total number of people making financial pledges, the total pledged amount and the collection rate has declined to a level that is much less than the expected future revenue and this has made budgeting for the 2018-2019 year difficult. A sub-committee has organized the Capital Campaign that was approved at the June 2017 Annual Meeting but has not announced its kick-off due to concerns about conflicting with the pledge campaign.

Welcoming community

The Council recognizes that one way to increase pledges is to add new members and that starts by being a welcoming community. The leadership worked on several activities that are open to the public including the Apple Harvest festival, White Christmas in the Community downtown event and offering free beverages during the Music on the Green concerts.

The support of Family Promise, a program to support homeless families, continues to grow through volunteers and donations. The Council had a healthy conversation, but came to no conclusion, about what would happen if we were approached to be a “Sanctuary Church” by a community member facing deportation.

Refresh our worship

There is a concern that the Church members are feeling divided based on which service they attend. The Council discussed ways to make the congregation feel as it was one church and will continue to look at workshop times, the coffee hour schedule and other activities that can bring people together. The Deacons published the results of the Congregational Self-Study and hosted sessions to share the results. The Deacons are also implementing a name tag project.

In the summer of 2017 the worship schedule was adjusted so there was a combined 10 am service that alternated styles and a summer-long sermon series. The same format will happen in the summer of 2018. For Christmas Eve, the combination of a morning Children’s service, 5 pm contemporary service and 10 pm traditional service was well received.

Looking ahead

A Council Retreat was held in February 2018 and the next areas of focus were identified:

- Welcoming – How can everyone the Church interacts with be made to feel welcomed and how can we attract and retain new members?
- Engagement – How can we encourage members and visitors to participate in the life and ministry of the Church?
- Governance – Is our current Council structure, where each Board or Committee sends a representative, the most effective way to organize the leadership, especially for issues around strategic planning and mission?

Sub committees were formed to continue this work.

The first Milton and Katherine Chaffee Lecture on the Future of the Church was held on Sunday, April 22, 2018. The lecturer, the Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, inspired Council members to look at how the FCC fits in with the wider church trends and how we can continue to be a progressive spiritual leader in the greater Southington community.

We are thankful for the continued efforts of the Board of Generosity and for all of those who made pledges and donations to support the mission and ministry of First Congregational Church of Southington.

Respectively submitted,
Joanne Kelleher, Moderator

Board of Generosity

In the past the Generosity Board has come to you with upbeat news about our time, talent and treasure. We would love to do the same again this year but recent developments have made it clear that we're staring at troubling future. Our church has reached a new inflection point in terms of time, talent and treasure. A brief summary of where we stand as we approach the final 2 months of the fiscal year would be helpful to provide perspective.

Year to date pledge receipts for the current fiscal year are \$266,000 vs a plan of \$320,000. Estimated total receipts for the fiscal year are \$290,000 vs a budget of \$350,000. The discussions at our team meetings have focused on what can we do to change the trajectory of our financial situation? An additional cell tower lease was negotiated that will bring in \$37,000+ per year starting in the fall. The Lord heard our prayers and graced Southington with some stunning weather for the Apple Harvest Festival. The record turnout resulted in record revenue for FCC! Both of those developments mitigate some of the trends we see in our finances. Bringing the solar panels online will help mitigate expenses going forward but they won't bridge the expense gap.

On the time and talent front it's been difficult to get church school teachers and we haven't had any volunteers step up to fill some holes on different leadership teams within the church. At the root of all of these issues are two simple facts. Older members are leaving faster than newer members are coming in. It takes time for new members to find a place where they can give their time and talent.

Given recent pledge receipt trends we are likely look at receipts for the next fiscal year in the neighborhood of \$250,000 ... a fiscal year over year decrease of \$40,000. Clearly, the developments on the time, talent and treasure front are concerning. We'll need to become more proactive helping others find Christ and ways to use their time and talent to reverse this trend. If we're successful the time, talent and treasure will take care of itself. If not, some very difficult decisions will need to be made by the beginning of 2019.

CO-DIRECTORS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION'S
2017/2018 ANNUAL REPORT



It's been a fun year of varied activities that began with our Summer Church School program, which was such a success that we've decided to have two classes this coming July! Our Jr. High level children want to use their summer class to delve deeper into applying the Bible to their lives, so we're splitting the children into 2 levels to relate more to their age groups.

Our September kick off featured a lot of LEGOs and Lego prayers. We also celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation and we supplied the teachers with supplemental information about the early church leaders. In late September we attended a national Children's Ministry Conference in Chicago where we were fortunate to meet leaders from around the world, hear famous Children's Ministry workers and authors, and network with about 2000 Church Educators. Running between workshops and worship, we were able to glean many new ideas for Children's Chapel, programs, technology, music, and classroom activities. During the year, we also met with other CT Christian Education Directors as well as Children's Ministers to share ideas and programs.

We provided the congregation with an Advent Booklet, a Lenten Booklet, the Lenten Vigil stations, and the Walk Thru Israel, featuring the Jerusalem Prayer Wall, the Sea of Galilee, the Jericho Bakery, the Bethany Bazaar, and the Dead Sea Spa. The children decided to give the \$300 they collected to the CT Children's Hospital, where a few of our church children have been treated.

Recently, we've met with the VGNS director to coordinate a space sharing project in our Nursery so that they can accommodate more children in the VGNS program. It should be an easy transition since we are already sharing space in the present Pres – VGNS room, and we are looking forward to the changes that will take place in our nursery.

The children have had lively discussions, made gifts for Family Promise, performed in the Christmas pageant, led Children's Chapel services, led worship for Youth Sunday, and Children's Sunday, donated baby gifts to Southington Social Services, created care packages for the ministers and office staff during the busy Holy Week, and saran wrapped Pastor Ron's car, (without our knowledge!) The children's enthusiasm is contagious and we are blessed to work with a wonderful group of children and teachers.

Blessings,

Handwritten signature of Karlene Archambeault in black ink.

Karlene Archambeault

Handwritten signature of Carole Lantz in black ink.

Carole Lantz

Annual Report of the Board of Deacons 2017-2018

The Board of Deacons consists of twelve (12) members (6 men and 6 women) elected for three year terms. The 2017-2018 Board of Deacon members are as follows: Linda Accuosti (Chair of Deacons), Cynthia Enright (Chaplain), Stephen Nichols (Supplies), Dan Daigle, Greg Little, Clare Lindsey (Scheduling), Anne Sharnick (Secretary), Dan Budnick, Jennifer Stroop, DJ Lavoie, Dan Gabree, and John Zimmerman (Treasurer).

Through the coordination provided by Pastor Ron Brown, Pastor Rachel Bahr, and Deacon Clare Lindsey building meaningful relationships with our Junior Deacons continues to be a joyful ministry. The Junior Deacons include: Connor Brush, Alyssa Aulbach, Keegan Smith, Adam LaBarre, Katarina Aulbach, Emma Brush, Alexa Chaltas, Sophia Chaltas, Tara Brock, and Kayla Byrne. These young adults are a wonderful addition to the worship team and add to the spiritual growth of our church. We appreciate all that they do and thank them for their faithful service.

We would also like to thank and acknowledge our Fellowship Deacons for their continued dedication and support at our 8:00 AM Sunday morning service. Our Fellowship Deacons include: Bill Adams, Allan Camp, Ed Sauer, Sue Aulbach, Sharon Vocke, and Scott Garver.

The Board of Deacons typically meets on the 2nd Monday of each month. The meeting agenda centers on prayerful consideration of the spiritual needs of our church. At our monthly meetings we begin our meetings by sharing our experiences of where we have seen or witnessed God speaking in our lives and among the lives of our congregation. We work closely in support of the Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor in the spiritual life of our church and joyfully assist in the planning of services, church ministries and special occasions.

This year we took a look at how we were welcoming new visitors and members into our church and how we could enhance the spiritual life for the church family as a whole. We conducted a Congregational self-study survey to ask the congregation how they felt we were doing as a church. We also updated our welcome pew cards and created permanent name tags for everyone.

The use of Deacon Funds and Memorial funds are used in support of the needs of our church and members of our congregation. They are administered under the direction of our Senior Pastor Ron Brown, with input from our Associate Pastor Rachel Bahr and continued communication with the Deacons and our Church Treasurer.

Serving communion to the members of our congregation comes with great honor and we do this with love and respect of our church family. The Deacons are happy to offer anointing as needed and assist with liturgy whenever we are able to do so. It is our blessing to be part of the creation of a meaningful worship experience every Sunday. Deacons willingly assist with the yearly Confirmation program, the New Member Installations, Baptisms, Funerals and Commissioning.

The Board of Deacons attended their annual retreat at Silver Lake this year on September 23rd and 24th. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to gather together so that we are able to refresh our ministry and share in community with one another. We look forward to another retreat in 2018 at the Wisdom House!

A special thank you to our dedicated Pastors, Stephen Ministers, Caring Ministry team, Communion Bread Bakers, Faithful Friday Folders, Ushers, and the volunteers who help maintain our wonderful church! It takes all of us working together! God Bless you all!

We keep the First Congregational of Southington and all of its members in our prayers.

Respectfully submitted by,

Linda Accuosti, Chairperson

Board of Christian Education

The Christian Education program at the first Congregational Church of Southington continues to focus on teaching church youth members about Christ and our faith. The 2017-2018 school year was filled with opportunities to learn, serve and gain a better understanding of what it means to be a Christian. This was mostly through Sunday School and special events throughout the year. Here are the highlights from this year.

- Sunday School once again used Seasons of the Spirit as the basis for the weekly lessons. This provides consistency of message across the age groups as well as ideas for creative activities or crafts for the children to reinforce the message. Teachers often add their own ideas to further relate the lessons to the children and their lives.
- We were once again blessed to be led by Co-Directors of Christian Education Karlene Archambeault and Carole Lantz. They provide so much creative guidance and help to both the teachers and the students.
- Pastor Rachel Bahr continued to lead the junior and senior high youth groups. She also works with young adults and was instrumental in helping to start a grade school youth program this year. Rachel led the confirmation class throughout the year which resulted in 8 youth being confirmed. You can read her update to get many more details of the great youth work this year.
- This year we had 162 registered students, of which 111 attended at least once. Like other churches we continue to compete against an ever-growing list of other activities and events that take place on Sundays.
- Following a successful summer school program, the school year kicked off with a Lego theme for the first day of Sunday School. This was meant to symbolize the foundational stories and learning blocks of our faith that they learn through church school.
- We had 65 dedicated Sunday School teachers, helpers and nursery workers throughout the school year. Without their commitment and help we wouldn't be able to offer the age appropriate content and ministry to the children.
- Carole and Karlene created short biographies of the teachers and nursery workers and placed them outside the classroom doors so the parents can get a better understanding of who is working with their children. Each week one bio was also chosen to be included in the email to parents.
- Activities for the year included: all-church birthday party, Christmas hospitality night cookie sale, Christmas pageant, care packages for new moms, creation of Lenten and Advent booklets, walk-through of Israel, children participating in service with the UCC president and leading Children's Day.
- This year's walk-through of Israel raised \$300 which was donated to the Children's Hospital accompanied by quilts from the Grateful Threads Quilt Group.
- Board members for the 2017-2018 year included: Jen Thomas, Kristine Cassan, Katie Kern, Judy Miller, Dan Green and David Hagen.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Hagen, Chairperson

Annual Report for Stephen Ministry 2017-2018

Jesus declared, "I will always be with you." Matthew 28:20

With the above message our Stephen Ministers continue to care for those they are assigned, carry out Stephen Ministry responsibilities as well in their everyday life.

Seventeen Care-receivers had a Stephen Minister volunteered 613 hours and 592 contacts. Primary reasons for caring relationship included: loneliness, support, grief, divorce, everyday life changes, terminal diagnosis, and disabilities. Other, responsibilities of continued education, training new Stephen Ministers, special events, supervision meetings, and administration functions totaled 2907 hours.

- Inter-church coordinating committee met October 2017 with representation of five churches which planned functions for 2017-2018 year.
- Supervision continued bi-monthly for Stephen Ministers throughout entire year.
- Jan Pinto provided continued education: Prayer; What Really Matters at End of Life; Maintaining Boundries; Process vs Oriented Goals; and Assertiveness.
- Stephen Ministry Recruiting Sunday, November 12, 2017. Steve Palmieri spoke at all three services. Information provided after all services by Stephen Ministers.
- Training for new Stephen Ministers started January 4, 2018. Sam H. oversaw Steve P. who provided the training for six individuals from three churches. Twelve Stephen Ministers participated in teaching modules for the class.
- Memorial Plaque updated for three Stephen Ministers who went to Heaven, Corby Coperthwaite, Anita Mandeville, and Joan LaRose. Plaque on wall outside Chapel.
- Special Events were four during the year; Caring Wings, Kick-off Dinner, Christmas Gathering, Celebration of new Stephen Ministers and Recognition Dinner when certificates distributed. Each supervision group did one event.
- Facilitator Training: Ken and Karen King provided training for six Stephen Ministers.
- Retreat was held at Bread for Life on Saturday April 14, 2018 attended by thirteen Stephen Ministers. Detailed information of community involvement and history was provided to Stephen Ministers in detail.
- Business wallet identification cards provided to new Stephen Ministers.
- Stephen Minister Ledger completed by Irene H. with all trained Stephen Ministers names, and home church names. Ledger includes: 17 churches were recorded since 1997 and 206 names. a large frame outside of the Stephen Ministers Office.
- Extensive Public Relations, and Devotional openings for supervision continued to be provided by Karlene A., and Carole L.
- Leadership Training Conference (LTC), of one week, to be attended by Steve and Jessica Palmieri in August 2018.
- Commissioning Sunday will Sunday, May 13, 2018 at 9:30 a.m. service for four FCC individuals: Jane Viviano, Derrick C. Gray, Carrie DiProspero, and Jessie Palmieri.

Submitted by: Irene Hendrickson

BOARD OF MUSIC & ARTS

2017-2018

God is still speaking through our vibrant music! This year we started a new chapter in our Music Ministry. We welcomed Louis S. Vollono, Jr. in September. Certainly, the upcoming months will be a time for learning, adjustment, and coming together as Lou assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the music program before implementing changes for the benefit of our vibrant church family.

Gallery Singers - The Gallery Singers continue to provide choral anthems in a variety of music styles at the 9:30 A.M. worship and during blended services throughout the year. Though more traditional in nature, the group has begun to explore the music of more contemporary composers and execute attainable music for the group's present size. An open invitation for singers is ongoing without the need for a formal audition, though the ability to follow a melody line is desirable. Gallery Singers practice on Thursday evenings from 7:00 – 8:30 P.M. in the Choir Room September through June.

Branches – Our Music Ministry is unique in its offering a soul-connecting and upbeat praise-band style music for the 11:15 A.M. contemporary service. Come, now is truly the time to worship AND sing or play with us! No formal audition is required, just a desire to make a joyful noise. Branches practices every Tuesday, September through June from 7:00 - 8:30 P.M. and extends an open invitation to both singers and instrumentalists to join us!

Roots – Roots, our Youth Choir for children in Grades 2 to 8 currently has 12 youth members. They are a cherished addition to Sunday services with their angelic voices. With instruction augmented by the Royal Academy of Sacred Music, this year Roots has sung once to twice per month including during Christmas, Holy Week, intergenerational services, and the Town of Southington's annual ecumenical Thanksgiving worship service. No formal audition is required to join Roots, but children whose parents identify a special interest in music for their children are especially encouraged to embrace this ministry. Roots rehearsals are Tuesday evening from 6:00 – 7:00 P.M. in the Choir Room mid-September to June.

Celebration Ringers – “If you can't sing, RING!” Celebration Ringers continue to practice on Monday evenings from 7:00 – 8:00 P.M. in the Choir Room. The Ringers enhance our liturgy with their playing of handbells at least once per month and are always on the lookout for new members! Rehearsals are September through June. No auditions are necessary, though it would be helpful to be able to follow music to participate.

Peace Cafe - This year, Peace Café again hosted old friend, Gordon Ellis, in concert, for which the proceeds were donated to the Fundacion Sor Dominga Boca – a fun evening for a great cause. In the Spring, Blackberry Pines graced the stage, and an Art Show was also held in Memorial Hall. We continue to provide a welcoming space for people of all ages to enjoy fellowship, refreshments, good music, and other forms of artistic expression; all of which is in keeping with our church's commitment to extend God's radically inclusive love to all people.

Steeple Players - The Steeple Player's November show *And Then They Came For Me* was co-directed by Nora Mathews and Rachel Bahr. The play was poignant and thought-provoking. FCC's Got Talent was also sponsored in May, raising over \$700 for the mission trip. New shows are in the works for the upcoming year.

BOMA also sponsored the Southington High School Jazz Band, held multiple Book and Bake (and other delicious food) Sales to raise funds for music and equipment, and offered a Lenten Luncheon. We were also blessed to invite Ms. Heather O'Conner for a Concert of Hope and Reflection with her glorious soprano voice. She has agreed to come back for a second concert later this year. We are blessed with

the talent of our church, and look forward to providing music and art to our congregation and community as part of continued outreach and stewardship.

I want to thank the Board as my time as Chair is ending. Our Music Ministry is near and dear to my heart and I am so grateful to be of service.

Respectfully submitted,

Merrily S. Lacombe

Chair

2017 ANNUAL REPORT OF CHICKEN PIE DINNER

Our 23rd Annual Chicken Pie Dinner was a great one!

We held it on November 11th with two seating's offered, one at 5:00 and the other at 7:00. The 5:00 was a complete sell out with many meals made to go! We lost count at 32! The "to go" meals seem to be a big hit! The second seating at 7PM had a great attendance and the people were able to head down to see Gordon Ellis perform right after!

We were blessed with great servers again this year and plenty of volunteers to donate the food items, bake pies, wash dishes, and prepare the food! There is something about sitting around the table peeling potatoes and squash that creates camaraderie!! We love and appreciate you all!

Without all of this, we would not be able to make the funds to award the scholarships that we do each year.

With the proceeds from the dinner and a generous donation we were able to award the Chicken Pie Dinner Scholarship to three high school seniors who wrote wonderful essays and demonstrated a great level of participation in our church and in our community.

The 2018 dinner will be held on Saturday, November 10th. If you can't make it to one of the two different seating's, no worries, just let us know and you can get a, "to go" meal.

Please watch for the sign- up sheets and the ticket sales or feel free to reach out to Linda Accuosti or to the Church office if you would like to volunteer and help us make this another successful dinner! It is also a great way for making friends!!

Respectively submitted,

Linda Accuosti

Chairperson

Annual Report for Apple Harvest 2017

The Apple Harvest was held over two weekends in October. We did encounter some rain during both week ends which caused us to have less revenue on those particular days.

The undertaking of the AHF is a great one, and it requires the help of our church family, as well as, the help of the Jewish Congregation who help us on the two Sundays. In order for us to be successful it is important that every church family volunteer for at least one shift during the two weekends, and/or for apple peeling or baking during the week days leading up to the weekends of the AHF. If you ever wondered how many hours it takes to run the Apple Harvest, it takes from 1100 –1200 man hours for us to have this successful fundraising event over the course of two weeks! That is a lot of hours but is made easier if everyone pitches in!

It is an opportunity for our church to shine since we are right in the epicenter of the Apple Harvest! We need to seize this opportunity and showcase our church and be that beacon on the green!!!

Our profits from this fantastic year were upward of \$20,000! This was for both food sales and rental spots.

Let me know if you would like to help out or if you have any ideas for the Apple Harvest this year! I hope that we have as many helpers as we did last year and we continue to grow each year. It is our biggest fund raiser after all!

Pray for no rain!!!

Respectfully submitted by,

Linda Accuosti, Chairperson

The Board of the Ecuador Foundation Fund

2017-2018 Annual Report

It was a miraculous year for The Board of The Ecuador Foundation Fund (EFF). We exceeded our fundraising dreams and also organized an inspirational trip to visit the girls of Fundación Sor Dominga Bocca, the foundation for girls who have been horrifically abused or neglected during their young lives. Additionally, the EFF board was strengthened by the addition of new members who have shown their commitment to working for the benefit of the girls.

A group of three members of the Board as well as Pastor Ron Brown traveled to Guayaquil to visit Fundación Sor Dominga Bocca in August, 2017. We were pleased to see how well the foundation has adjusted to the departure of its long-time director, Rosa Jiménez. Many new ideas and much energy are being generated by the staff and the board of directors, and these innovations are contributing to a renewed sense of hope within the organization. Many of these changes (such as expansion of the educational services being provided, additional sources of donations for food and a related focus on enhancing the nutrition of the girls) were well in process when we visited, so our main question to the FSDB Board of Directors was “In addition to the money we provide for the purchase of food, how can we help?”

The FSDB Board of Directors identified the need for an additional teacher as its top priority because of the significant educational needs of the girls who are now arriving at the foundation. As “luck” (or the Spirit) would have it, upon arrival back to the United States, EFF received news that a very generous anonymous donor was planning to donate \$10,000 to support the food needs of the girls of Fundación Sor Dominga Bocca. Given this donation, EFF was able to free up some funds to pay the salary and benefits for an additional teacher for the next two years! God is good!!!!

In addition to this generous donation, additional monies were brought in through regular monthly donations (for which we are extremely grateful), generous one-time donations, as well and a number of fundraisers. These fundraisers included a dinner-dance, a concert by Gordon Ellis, a direct-sales candle home-party, and a pancake breakfast. We are deeply grateful to all donors, no matter what way of donating they chose! We are also proud to say that 100% of donations and profit from these fundraisers goes to the girls of FSDB. During the 2017-2018 fiscal year, EFF has raised \$33,949.18 for the girls of Fundación Sor Dominga Bocca in total! Adjusting for the large donation, the Board of the Ecuador Foundation Fund raised approximately \$4,500 more for FSDB than it did during the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Once again, God is good!

As a result of the generosity of our church members, we were able to send \$20,242 to Fundación Sor Dominga Bocca. This money was designated for food, the purchase of a new gas stove to replace a very dangerous old stove, the payment of one-year’s salary for the new teacher (out of the two year’s pledged), and repairs to the aging building.

The success of this year does not mean our job is done. The girls continue to depend on us to eat, and we have now committed to supporting their educational needs for the next two years. This means that EFF needs to continue to raise funds. Will you consider being a donor? One-time donations are fantastic, and monthly donations are so helpful in assuring the girls have a steady source of funds for food. No donation amount is too large or too small. If you are interested in donating, please contact Clare Lindsey at MLCBL58@hotmail.com or 203-592-2918.

The members of the Board of the Ecuador Foundation Fund would like to thank its many sponsors and volunteers without whom our successful and “fun” fundraisers would not be possible. We would also like to thank the entire First Congregational Church of Southington family for its continuing support of the girls of Fundación Sor Dominga Bocca. Not only do the girls benefit from the financial resources we share with them, but they also benefit by knowing that people who are so far away deeply care about them. When I think of our church family, I remember the words of Paul in his letter to the Galatians:

“They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do.”
Galatians 2:10 (NSRV)

Respectfully submitted with love and thanks,

Clare Lindsey

Chairperson

Board of The Ecuador Foundation Fund

Members-at-Large Annual Report **July 2017- June 2018**

Congregational members are represented on the Church Council by the **Members-at-Large**. Each worship service has a **Member-at-Large** representative(s) who can bring your praise, comments, concerns, or ideas about *ALL* things involving you and your relationship to, and concerns about, the life of our community here at First Congregational Church, to the right individual or board.

Sometimes, comments are general, like praise for an event. Sometimes, concerns are specific, as in feedback about sermons, activities or specific events. You are always welcomed – as a matter of fact, encouraged – to share this feedback directly with your Pastors, Board Members and staff leaders. However, sometimes, you don’t know to whom to address an issue, or you would rather speak more indirectly – so, the best way to make your thoughts known is to reach out to one of the “At-Large” Members, and share your valuable input.

Have a suggestion on a better way? An idea you would like to see implemented? Have input as to how our congregation is run? Please, **SHARE** your thoughts and/or comments with your **Member-at-Large**, or any **Member-at-Large**, and we will make sure that your thoughts are brought to Church Council, to an appropriate Board or Committee, or refer you to the right person to address any concerns. You can do this confidentially or anonymously, if you prefer.

The 2017-2018 Members-at-Large, who served a full one year term, are:

8:00 Bill Adams and Danielle Adams

9:30 Meredith Mann

11:15 Lynn Grenier

2017-2018 was a busy year– Our joys and concerns included:

Welcoming our New Director of Music, which has meant a new vitality and some; readjusting in our music ministries;
Roots shining in their first performances under their new Director;
Chicken Pie Supper kudos;
Solar Panels and the ongoing ministerings of our Trustees as they struggle between keeping our facility in good running order and budget restraints;
the success of our Family Promise ministry;
new Youth Groups;
continued Joy in the welcoming of new members and their families at services;
and the continued blessing of this vibrant and loving church community which wraps us all in its loving embrace, and shows up when we most need it.

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Please let us know what you think in person or via email - [mal@fccsouthington.org](mailto:mal@fccsouthington.org)  
We can also be contacted via the "Contact" page at [www.fccsouthington.org](http://www.fccsouthington.org)

Respectively submitted by Lynn Grenier, Meredith Mann, and Dawn Adams & Bill Adams.



**2017-2018**  
**Grateful Threads**  
**"Quilts for Children & Folk in Need"**

We celebrated our 17<sup>th</sup> year by making a total of 38 quilts. We donated quilts to be used as fundraisers for Manes & Motions Therapeutic Riding Center and Fundacion Sor Dominga Bocca, 5 quilts were donated to church family members who had need of a comforting quilt, and we also donated quilts to Ecuador and to the Hospital of Special Care

Our core members this past year were Willa Babkirk, Dick Burrell, Rita Burrell, Judy Cutler, Lois Dwelley, Danielle Farley-Adams, Carol Fisher, Clair Gissas, Candace Hall, Carole Lantz, Doris Larese, Linda Lawrence, Carolyn Mansolf, Nancy Mastrianni, Sue Parsons, Ruth Smith, Joan Tardif, Peggy Thibodeau, and Kathy Williams.

Are you crafty, creative? Do you like working with color & texture? How about spirited conversations? You are invited to come to a quilt meeting where quilters & non-quilters enjoy fun & fellowship. We meet every other Wednesday from 10:00 am – noon.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carole Lantz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**2017-2018**

**Annual Report of the Leadership Development Board**

Our main function for 2016-2017 was to assist various boards with their membership needs for the coming year. While this is still our main focus, in 2017-2018 we have been looking at a number of new ways of matching our church member’s talents and passions to our ever growing ministry teams.

Simply put, at FCC our volunteers are Amazing!!!

We thank each and every member of our church because each and every one of you volunteer in some way, shape or form. Your time and talents are truly appreciated.

This fall, we look forward to a productive year, we will be looking at various ways of engaging our new members and making sure that our current volunteers get the support they need to keep showing God’s Love through their ministry.

Respectfully submitted

Steve Palmieri- Leadership Development Board

**Leadership Development Board**

**Key:**

- Italics* newly assigned
- (unexpired) filling unexpired term
- (n) terms served thus far
- Year year appointment expires

**Officers (1 year terms)**

|                            |                                   |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Moderator</b>           | Joanne Kelleher (3)               |
| <b>Assistant Moderator</b> | Ann McCarty (2)                   |
| <b>Members-at-Large</b>    | Bill and Danielle Adams           |
|                            | Meredith Mann                     |
|                            | Lynn Grenier (Church Council Rep) |
| <b>Treasurer</b>           | <i>vacant</i>                     |
| <b>Collector</b>           | Ray Dischino                      |
| <b>Clerk</b>               | Beth Barnes                       |

**Apple Harvest Festival Committee (2 year terms)**

|  |                                                |
|--|------------------------------------------------|
|  | Linda Accousti – 2019                          |
|  | Beth Barnes – 2019                             |
|  | Brian Bradshaw – 2019                          |
|  | Karen Bradshaw – 2019                          |
|  | Elizabeth Hagen- 2020<br>Volunteer Coordinator |
|  | Cynthia Enright – 2020 (2)                     |
|  | Ray Dischino – 2020 (2)                        |
|  |                                                |

**Christian Education (2 year terms)**

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
|  | Dave Hagen – 2020 (3) chair       |
|  | Kristine Cassan – 2020 (2)        |
|  | Dan Green – 2020 (4)              |
|  | <i>Judy Miller – 2019 (1)</i>     |
|  | <i>Jennifer Thomas – 2019 (1)</i> |
|  | <i>Katie Kern – 2019 (1)</i>      |

**Deacons (3 year terms)**

|  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
|  | Dan Daigle – 2019 (2)       |
|  | <i>DJ Lavoie – 2019 (1)</i> |
|  | Anne Sharnick – 2019 (2)    |
|  | Jennifer Stroop – 2019 (1)  |
|  | Cynthia Enright – 2021(1)   |
|  | Dan Budnik- 2021 (1)        |
|  | John Zimmerman – 2021 (3)   |
|  | Linda Accuosti – 2020 (3)   |
|  | Dan Gabree – 2020 (1)       |
|  | Clare Lindsay – 2020 (3)    |
|  | Stephen Nichols – 2020 (1)  |
|  | Vacant                      |

**Junior Deacons**

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
|  | Bethany Andrews- 2019 |
|  | Jonathan Stroop- 2019 |
|  |                       |
|  |                       |
|  |                       |

| <b>Ecuador Foundation Fund Board (2 year)</b> |  |
|-----------------------------------------------|--|
| Jan Calabro – 2020 (2)                        |  |
| Todd Cardillo – 2020 (2)                      |  |
| Tori Hickerson – 2020 (2)                     |  |
| Sue Krassler – 2020(2)                        |  |
| Lorraine Craig – 2020 (2)                     |  |
| Clare Lindsey – 2020 (2)                      |  |
| Sally Thielman – 2020 (2)                     |  |
| <i>Mary Carter – 2019 (1)</i>                 |  |
| <i>Doreen Morris – 2019 (1)</i>               |  |
| <i>Betsy Casey – 2019 (1)</i>                 |  |
| <i>Sue Meissner – 2019 (1)</i>                |  |

| <b>Fellowship and Hospitality (2 year terms)</b> |  |
|--------------------------------------------------|--|
| Merrily LaCombe – 2019 (3)                       |  |
| Linda Lawrence – 2019 (3)                        |  |
| Bev Huber – 2019 (4)                             |  |
| Sally Thielman – 2019 (3)                        |  |
| Kati Valenti – 2019 (3)                          |  |
| <i>Kelly Saucier – 2019 (1)</i>                  |  |
| <i>John Simonson – 2019 (1)</i>                  |  |
| <i>Debby Reed – 2019 (1)</i>                     |  |
| <i>Coral Lord – 2019 (1)</i>                     |  |
| <i>Elizabeth Hagen – 2019 (1)</i>                |  |
| <i>Rosemary Garnett – 2019 (1)</i>               |  |

| <b>Board of Generosity (2 year terms)</b> |  |
|-------------------------------------------|--|
| Rich Enright – 2019 (4)                   |  |
| Joe Brock – 2019 (2)                      |  |
| Ray Dischino – 2019 (3)                   |  |
| Missy Udicious – 2019 (2)                 |  |
| Julie Wendt – 2019 (2)                    |  |
| Tina Jenkins – 2019 (1)                   |  |

| <b>Leadership Development (2 year terms)</b> |  |
|----------------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Steve Palmieri – 2019 (1)</i>             |  |
| Karlene Archambeault – 2019 (3)              |  |
| Greg Cook – 2019 (3)                         |  |
| Hope Roecker – 2019(2)                       |  |
| Scott Garver – 2019 (2)                      |  |
| <i>Matthew Stroop – 2019 (1)</i>             |  |

| <b>Library (2 year terms)</b> |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Sandy DiStefano – 2020 (2)    |  |
| Julie Wendt – 2020 (3)        |  |

| <b>Missions &amp; Social Action (2 year terms)</b> |  |
|----------------------------------------------------|--|
| Barbara Nati – 2020 (4)                            |  |
| Nancy Veronneau – 2020 (4)                         |  |
| Kathy Williams – 2020 (2)                          |  |
| Beth Barnes – 2020 (4)                             |  |
| Kim Lovley-Casarella – 2019 (4)                    |  |
| Kay Dickson – 2020 (4)                             |  |
| Lisa Hasko – 2019 (4)                              |  |

| <b>Board of Music &amp; Arts (2 year terms)</b> |  |
|-------------------------------------------------|--|
| Judy Orofino- 2020 (4)                          |  |
| Patty Nichols – 2019 (2)                        |  |
| <i>Rich Szulczewski – 2019 (1)</i>              |  |
| <i>Brian Davis – 2019 (1)</i>                   |  |
| <i>Carol Flugrad – 2019 (1)</i>                 |  |
| <i>Christine Dzierlatka – 2019 (1)</i>          |  |

| <b>Trustees (2 year terms)</b>  |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Matt LeBarron – 2020 (4)        |  |
| Judy Lees – 2020 (2)            |  |
| <i>Amber Sarno – 2019 (1)</i>   |  |
| Rich Enright – 2020 (3)         |  |
| Greg Hasko – 2019 (3)           |  |
| <i>Tracy Chaltas – 2019 (1)</i> |  |
| <i>Deb Simonson – 2019 (1)</i>  |  |

| <b>Village Green Nursery School (2 year terms)</b> |  |
|----------------------------------------------------|--|
| Cynthia Barley – 2020 (3)                          |  |
| Doreen LaForge – 2019 (2)                          |  |
| Alyson Lindsay – 2019 (2)                          |  |
| Elyssa Getz- 2019 (1)                              |  |
| Jennifer Proffitt- 2019 (1)                        |  |
| Lauren Armack- 2019 (1)                            |  |
| Tracey Chaltis-2019 (1)                            |  |
| Lou Vollano- 2019 (1)                              |  |

| <b>Connecticut Conference Delegates (1 year terms)</b> |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Meghan Montana– 2019 (2)                               |  |
| Jason Montana – 2019 (2)                               |  |
| Lynn Grenier – 2019 (3)                                |  |
| open                                                   |  |

| <b>Central Association Delegates (1 year terms)</b> |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--|
| Jessica Palmieri- 2019 (1)                          |  |
| Judy Lees – 2019 (3)                                |  |
| Steve Palmieri- 2019 (1)                            |  |


**2017 - 2018 ANNUAL REPORT**

Safe Conduct Board

|                                       | <b>2017 – 2018</b>                                             | <b>2018 – 2019 (term ends)</b>                                              |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Director                              | Carole Lantz                                                   | Carole Lantz                                                                |
| Christian Education representative    | Dave Hagen                                                     | Dave Hagen (2019)                                                           |
| Deacon representative                 | Dan Gabree                                                     | Dan Gabree (2019)                                                           |
| Board of Music & Arts representatives |                                                                |                                                                             |
| Trustee representative                | Rich Enright                                                   | Rich Enright (2019)                                                         |
| Members at Large                      | Scott Garver<br>Nora Matthews<br>John Mulrooney<br>Julie Wendt | Scott Garver, (2019)<br><br>Nora Matthews, (2020)<br><br>Julie Wendt (2019) |

From July 2017 – June 2018, we trained 11 people in 2 Safe Conduct training sessions for a total of 734 trained since 2004! New & refresher training sessions will resume in August; in addition to those who work with our youth, classes are open to anyone in the congregation who wishes to see what Safe Conduct is all about.

We are also continuing to do background checks on all Family Promise volunteers who work with the clients.

In October we held our annual fire drill and evacuated the Meeting House and church school classes at the 9:30 & 11:15 services (it took 4 minutes and 5 seconds at 9:30 and 3 minutes and 17 seconds at 11:15). Again, based on the feedback that we received we've identified the problem areas, which we are working on in partnership with the Board of Trustees. One aspect we are working on is to establish an area of refuge for those with mobility issues. Besides this issue, the main concern we have about our evacuations is people trying to drive away from the parking lots while the church is being evacuated, which is very dangerous. PLEASE DO NOT DRIVE AWAY FROM THE PARKING LOTS until you have received the all clear.

Thank you for all of your cooperation in helping the Safe Conduct Board keep our church family safe.

Respectfully submitted,



Carole Lantz

Director, Safe Conduct Board



## **Technology/Communications Committee Annual Report for 2017-2018**

### **This Year in Technology/Communications:**

2018 is a year of change for the Technology/Communications areas as we say farewell to Keegan Smith who is leaving for college soon, and as I pass the baton to our new Communications Director.

A tremendous “thank you” to Scott Smith who installed our new firewall unit and has been available for troubleshooting hardware issues throughout the year.

Thank you also to Keegan Smith, Kevin Gabree, Dan Gabree, Scott Smith, Rachel Wendt and Matt Mirisola who have provided technology support by running the projection system at Sunday worship. Matt Mirisola will provide most of the worship support beginning June 24, but we are still looking for a couple more folks to assist. Programming of the slides will be the responsibility of the new Communications Director, but again, we would welcome assistance from anyone in the congregation who feels this may be their ministry.

We have replaced the church’s nearly 30-year-old phone system with a VOIP, cloud-based solution that allows calls to an extension to be forwarded to another phone line, sends emails when voice messages are received, and allows our staff to pick up their messages remotely. You may have noticed when calling the church office that all extensions are now three digits instead of two.

We have enlisted the help of Falco Computer Consulting for our future urgent technology needs. They are in the process of installing new wireless access points in Memorial Hall, Peace Café, and the hallway outside the second floor classrooms. These are being funded by generous church members who felt it was important that the church have reliable internet service available.

It has been a joy and a privilege to serve my church in this capacity over the past 8 years, and I will miss working with you all to get the word out about this Loving, Open, Vibrant and Encouraging church.

Peace and joy to you all,

Dawn Gambacini

Technology/Communications Coordinator



## Village Green Nursery School

2017-2018

Village Green Nursery School (VGNS) operates as a self-sufficient non-secular school located on the first floor within the church and is dedicated to providing a caring and supportive environment for children. Our goal is to help each child grow toward their potential and enjoy a rewarding pre-school experience.

2016-2017 marks the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of VGNS being in operation. During this program year VGNS offered a morning 3-year old program on Tuesdays and Thursdays and a morning 4-year old program, with the option of a regular day schedule (2½ hours) or an extended day schedule (4 hours), on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The VGNS population is comprised of church affiliates, Southington and surrounding town residents. The school is marketed through Open Houses, The Southington Public Library Nursery School Showcase, our website [www.vgns.org](http://www.vgns.org), local papers, and other venues.

VGNS' revenue for 2016-2017 was approximately \$60,000 which pays for salaries, occupancy, classroom expenses, licensing requirements, and other operating expenses. The 3 year old class tuition is \$135.50 per month and the 4 year old class tuition is \$169.25 per month for the regular day program while the extended day schedule was offered at \$276.75 per month. Fundraisers held throughout the school year cover costs for special programs, fieldtrips and supplies for the classroom. Two extraordinary programs we were able to offer this year were a visit from Critter Caravan and Mystic Aquarium.

Enrollment numbers for the 2017-2018 school year are at full capacity, which has been increased from 32 to 36 children for each program. Also, the regular day has been increased from 2½ to 3 hours. Our plan is to operate a morning 3 year old program and a morning 4 year old program with the option of an extended day schedule (an additional 1½ hours per day) for the 4-year old students. The VGNS Board and Director have established a budget supporting these programs and related expenses.

Of note during the year our Director, Nan Sheridan, has announced her retirement effective the end of the 2016-2017 year. VGNS has been extremely blessed with Nan's dedication and service since the inception of VGNS, 20 years as its director. The Board has worked diligently searching, interviewing, and ultimately hiring Shannon Knudsen, who will take over as Director for the 2017-2018 school year.

VGNS is also blessed with an amazing staff dedicated to the school's mission and the children. Diane Pisko, our Head Teacher for the 4-year old class, has been with the school for 17 years. Shannon Fitzsimons has been with the school for 3 years as the Head Teacher for our 3-year old class. Nan, Diane, and Shannon have degrees in Early Childhood Education and are state certified Head Teachers. Assistant Teachers, Linda Poirier and Laura Stack, have been with the school for 5 years. Dee Niland, our Administrative Assistant has been with the school for 14 years. Our staff actively participates in the Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington as well as the Early Childhood Professional Educator's Consortium to incorporate educational trends into the curriculum.

Thank you to all of our Board Members for the long hours they donated this year. This wonderful group consists of VGNS Parents and Church Members: Alyson Lindsay and Amie Miron (co-chairpersons), Cynthia Barley (Secretary), Angela Cirillo (Treasurer), Doreen LaForge, Caitlin Canner-O'Mealy, Amber Sarno, and Rachele Mukai.

Respectfully submitted,

Alyson Lindsay, Co-Chairperson

Amie Miron, Co-Chairperson

**2017 – 18**  
**Annual Report of Missions**

**Prudence Crandall Center** – We continued weekly deliveries of perishable food items to this women’s shelter in New Britain. We are the only source they have for fresh fruit, vegetables, and other foods. We thank our faithful food deliverers, Barbara Nati, Kay Dickson, Lisa Hasko, Nancy Veronneau, Kim Casarella, and Kathy Williams.

**Bread for Life** – Volunteers were provided for our weeks to serve. Kay also delivers a \$75 gift certificate for food the weeks we serve.

**Southington Social Services** - Weekly donations of and food provided by our congregants were delivered. Additional Thanksgiving donations were collected and donated. We collected baskets, Easter grass, and small toys to contribute for Southington families for Easter. We also concentrated on providing Christmas gifts for Southington families this year through Southington community Services.

**Crop Walk** – Nancy stepped up to coordinate our involvement. It turned out to be a beautiful day and everything went as planned.

**Salvation Army** – Our church volunteers stood outside Stop & Shop to collect money to be used for Southington residents.

**Family Promise** – We’ve been involved for over a year now, supported by the Gishrei Shalom Jewish and Plantsville Congregational congregations. This has proved to be a very successful program, thanks to our many, many volunteers who have provided meals, slept overnight, and just stayed to be with our guests.

Thanks to the Family Promise coordinators, Lisa & Becca Hasko, Justin Krom, Barbara Nati, DJ Lavoie, Patty Nichols, and Dawn Gambacini.

Thanks to all current Missions Board members, Kay Dickson, Nancy Veronneau, Kim Casarella, Lisa Hasko, Kathy Williams, Becca Hasko & Barbara Nati for all their hard work this year. And special thanks to Simone.

Respectfully submitted by Beth Barnes, Chair, Board of Missions

## **CARING MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2018**

God's Love in Action is shown by twenty-one Caring Ministers who visit their Caring Friend (s) each month. That amounts to over 200 visits per year. A hand made Prayer Pillow has been supplied to each Friend so a Prayer Card, given to them at each visit, can be placed in the pocket of the pillow.

Our **Transportaion Ministry** is very active. It's headed by Diana Sheard and provides transportation to church and medical appointments. Volunteer drivers are always needed. Please contact Diana at 860-793-2765.

Lita and Fred Nyren deliver Sunday's pulpit flowers when they are donated to Caring Ministry

**Flower Ministry.** Often one arrangement is divided to provide joy to several people. A volunteer from the 11:15 service would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Carolyn Mansolf at 860-621-5082.

Many wonderful members of our church family have provided meals for our **Meal Ministry** when asked. We inform our chefs of the food likes, dislikes, special requirements and allergies of the recipient. The meals are very appreciated. This is a terrific way to participate with no definite time commitment.

**Greeting Card Ministry** is one more way we reach out to our church family. Four hundred and thirty-three cards, expressing sentiments of sympathy, get well, congratulations and encouragement, were mailed. Over 100 cards were hand delivered to our Caring Ministry Friends.

A new **Phone Buddy Ministry** is looking for volunteers to make a friendly phone call once every two weeks. You will be supplied with the name and contact information for a willing participant. Contact Carolyn at 860-621-5082.

Please inform Ron, Rachel or me, if you become aware of a situation that may benefit from a service Caring Ministry provides.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn J. Mansolf

## **2017 TAG SALE REPORT**

The 2017 Tag Sale generated a profit of \$5,021! A HUGE Thank You to the dedicated Tag Sale Committee for all their hard work. Thank you to all who donated, worked and purchased the items. The event was successful because of YOU!

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Mansolf

**The Annual Report of the Board of Trustees**  
**to the Members of the First Congregational Church of Southington**

**2017 – 2018**

The Board of Trustees meets monthly to handle various fiduciary, administrative, and facilities maintenance matters of the church. The Board has three sub-committees to handle matters of Administration (including Personnel), Finance, and Building & Grounds, respectively.

Financially, this past year was stable yet challenging. Traditional sources of income, primarily pledges continue to trend downward but our basket was filled from other sources. What would have been significant budgetary shortfalls were made up with income from a tremendous Apple Harvest Festival, renting space on the front lawn to AT&T for a temporary cell tower truck, and some very generous contributions.

We continue to be in a solid position with our long-term investments and General Fund, which performed well in the last year adding to the strong financial position of the church. Even though we withdrew funds to pay for the energy improvements approved by congregation last year, market gains offset much of the withdraws.

Below is a summary of some accomplishments and projects executed throughout the year, as well as select financial and budget highlights that are more fully detailed in the financial reports themselves.

**2017- 2018 Accomplishments and Key Initiatives**

- Energy Upgrade Program- The energy upgrade program approved by the congregation at last year's meeting to reduce energy cost/consumption and support our green initiatives was implemented. New high efficiency boiler and hot water heater is installed and operational for which savings are already being realized. The meeting house roof was re-roofed and solar panels are installed. The approval process for the operation of the solar panels is in progress. This was funded out of the general investment fund with the goal of raising 50% of the funds through a capital campaign.
- Temporary Cell Tower Rental – We agreed to rent space on the front lawn and to run power and phone lines through the building to AT&T for a temporary cell service truck for the Apple Harvest Festival. This resulted in an interest from AT&T in securing a long-term lease for the vacant space in the steeple.
- Cell Tower Lease – We have reached an agreement to lease the vacant cell tower space in the steeple and the associated equipment room to AT&T which will be operational in September 2018. Last year, AT&T approached us for permission to set up a temporary cell tower on the front lawn for Apple Harvest which the trustees approved. Shortly afterward, AT&T approached us again regarding leasing the vacant space. We successfully negotiated a 20 year lease.
- Upgraded phone system – Installed new upgraded phone system to improve functionality and service.
- Fire code upgrades – Numerous minor upgrades were made required by the Southington Fire Marshal including adding signage at various locations, removing stored material in stair, reconfiguring and removing existing exit signage, and adding emergency lighting in the meeting house and narthex.

- Upgrade electrical Service for AHF – Installed dedicated electrical service to the spaces on the front lawn which has been an issue with power outages and building access.
- Revised Policies and Procedures including job description for the Sextant, Office Coordinator, and Events Sextant. Entered into cleaning contract to backfill vacant Sextant position.

### **2017-2018 Financial Highlights**

A detailed report of the various funds, income and expenses for 2017-2018 are included in the Treasurer’s report (Financial Addendum). Some highlights include:

- While realizing some gains from investment, overall the Investment Accounts, are down over \$80k over the fiscal year reflecting the funding of the energy upgrades, operating shortfall and overall state of the stock market.
- On an operating basis, based on the data at the time of this report, the church is meeting our expectations. Income pledges are lower than expected but this was offset by well above average Apple Harvest Festival income, rental for the temporary AT&T cell service, and increase in non-pledge giving. Expenses continue to be responsibility managed and are expected to be less than budgeted overall. Capital expenses were also held in check relative to budget.
- The trend over last several budget years and the upcoming budget year is the inverse of what we are seeking as a fiscally responsible church and Board of Trustees.

### **2018-2019 Proposed Budget Notes**

Our proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year, like in past years, was created following extensive discussion, multiple iterations, and teamwork across the Trustees, Treasurer, Church Council, Generosity, and Rev. Ron Brown. The budget was initially formulated, presented and approved in April (significantly earlier than usually) but due to updated pledge projections in late May, the revised budget will be presented at the Annual Meeting, the details of which are contained in the Treasurer’s Report (Financial Addendum)

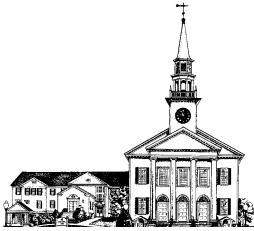
### **Conclusion**

This year continues the trend of financial challenges that we experience for the last several years. The financial strength and momentum which we seek has been elusive. We were blessed this year with several unexpected sources of income that offset the continued trend of decreased pledges which we cannot rely on year to year. As a congregation and a community, we face difficult decisions in the future on how to drive momentum forward, and be a leader in Southington and the surrounding communities with the resources provided to us.

I’d like to acknowledge the work and time commitments of our Trustees and Treasurer, Collectors and Counters, Church staff and lay people that support the work of the Board of Trustees, without whom none of this would be accomplished.

Respectfully submitted,  
Matthew LeBarron, Chairman

**Board of Trustees:** Matt LeBarron, Rich Enright, Damian Gambacini, Greg Hasko, Judy Lees, Tracy Chaltas, Deb Simonson, Amber Sarno



## Pastoral Statistics July 1, 2017- June 5, 2018

\*Indicates member status

### Baptisms

Noah Broomhead  
Julie Broomhead  
Brooklynn Carpenter  
Lucas Daily  
Hadleigh D'Angelo  
Amelia Ferraro  
Finley Fitzgerald  
Brayden Hungerford  
Matthew Kern  
Lucy Maynard  
Elliott Nichols  
Nora Olmstead  
Conner Santiago  
Dylan Santiago  
Hannah Stedman

### Weddings

\*Gabrielle M. W. Bychowski & \*Rev. Rachel J. Bahr  
\*Dan & Amanda Green  
\*Steve & \*Jessica Palmieri

### Funerals

\*Barbara Andres  
\*Mark Corcoran  
\*Charles Davenport  
John Francis Dutton  
\*Embert Dwelley  
\*Thomas Feeney  
Sheri Fleming  
\*Tracey Gabree  
\*Arthur Hansen  
Dorothy Howard  
\*Patricia Johnson  
\*Patricia Livingstone  
Sarah Magnanini  
\*Maureen Lyon  
\*George Moore  
\*Diana Putnam  
\*Rachel Seller  
Arlene Yell

### Removal by Request/Transfer

Suzanne Krassler  
Cathy Sheldrick  
Peter Sheldrick  
Carol Tacchi  
Richard White  
Joy White

### New Members

- \*Adrianna Broomhead
- \*Jeffrey Broomhead
- \*Christine Bruemmer
- \*Caroline Diprospero
- \*Kris Gauthier
- \*Patricia Mangiagli
- \*Joseph Mangiagli
- \*Tyler Nichols
- \*Shannon Pittsley
- \*Alisha Robarge
- \*Kimberly Steinmetz
- \*Wendy Valerio
- \*Anne West
- \*Marion Wilkes

### Confirmands

- \*Bethany Andrews
- \*Joshua Budnik
- \*Isabelle Burek
- \*Arianna Perkins
- \*Scott Putnam Jr.
- \*Alberto Sarris
- \*Brynn Steele
- \*Jonathan Stroop