

NOTICE

372nd. ANNUAL MEETING

January 29, 2012

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF STRATFORD, CONNECTICUT,
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST WILL BE HELD

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29, 2012

AT 10:20 A.M. IN THE SANCTUARY

TO REVIEW 2011 ACTIVITIES / ANNUAL REPORTS,
ELECT OFFICERS, BOARD & COMMITTEE MEMBERS
TO NEW TERMS

TO ADOPT A 2012 BUDGET

TO TRANSACT ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH MAY
PROPERLY COME BEFORE THE MEETING

Virginia Millington

Church Clerk

THE SENIOR PASTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

It's been quite a year. It began with record snow fall, then an earthquake, (well not exactly here), then a hurricane, and then a record October snowfall. You almost wonder if God is trying to tell us something.

I had some wonderful experiences this year. In May I went to the National Homiletics Festival in Minneapolis, MN, where I sat for at least eight hours a day and listened to sermons and lectures from some of the greatest preachers of our time. I LOVED IT. I only think pastors who preach every Sunday and who take their craft seriously would enjoy something like this. But there are over two thousand who come from not only the United States, but from places as distant as Australia. I also was a delegate for General Synod for four days in Tampa, Florida. General Synod is the national meeting of the United Church of Christ that meets every two years. I worked on resolutions, experienced amazing worship with over 300 youth delegates, and met old friends for dinner that I've known for over thirty years. It was an honor to be a delegate for the Connecticut Conference at General Synod, and it was an honor to be chosen to be the preacher for the Annual Connecticut Conference Meeting this past October.

I am very blessed to work with the best staff in Connecticut. We all know the wonderful music program that Dr. Joe Utterback directs. You get to experience it firsthand each Sunday and sometimes in special concerts through the year. We are so blessed to have him. You may also know that I have one the best secretaries that anyone could ask for. Sandy O'Neill does such excellent work here. You all know because of how she represents our church in such a positive way when you call. You may not know of how she helps to comfort the homeless and poor who stop in our church; or how she is always willing to take on any extra project without complaining, or what a wonderful administrator she is of all that's going on in this church. You may not know of the great work that Tammy Langston is doing as our new Youth Director. She has created a program with her volunteers, where our youth were no longer satisfied with meeting every other week but wanted to meet each week. Tammy not only is building the youth group but she brings a spiritual depth in her relationships with our teenagers. We

also have a new Christian Education Director, Kristine Bacon, who puts in more hours than you would think possible for someone who also works full time. She directed one of our best Christmas Pageants and Youth Sundays ever, and has brought on new teachers in our growing Christian Education program. I haven't even mentioned our other staff; Bill Hickey, our Facilities Manager; Dick Ross, our treasurer, and Don Coulson, our assistant treasurer; all whose hard work and excellence, make their work something you rarely even think or ask about. You know why? Because there's never a problem. Things run so smoothly that I think our Personnel Committee has one of the easiest jobs of any church.

I think it's important for leaders such as the pastor, to be involved in the wider church and in the community. I have done that well over that past seven years. But now I am cutting back. I completed my work as Moderator of the Fairfield East Association last May. I will complete my term as Moderator of the Stratford Clergy Association this coming May. I will also complete my term as Chair of the Worship Planning Team for the Connecticut Conference this coming May as well. I have been asked to do other things in the town and in the conference, but I'm saying no for the time being to focus more of my energies here.

You might ask where I plan to focus more of my time and energy. One thing that we began this year was the Pastor's Weekly E-Letter. People seem to appreciate getting it each week even if it's only for the jokes. But I think this has become an excellent way to communicate on a weekly basis all of the great things that are happening in our church. And honestly, I think it has helped increase awareness and attendance at events other than Sunday morning. If you have a computer and an email address and don't know about this letter, please contact the church office and give us your email address so we can keep you updated on timely information of events in the church's life. But let me also say, that putting this E-letter together takes a lot of time.

I hope my focus in the coming year is two-fold. First, I'd like focus on church growth. It's hard for a church to grow if you don't have the programs that would draw people to come and stay, or if the congregation isn't welcoming. Everything is in place as far as our programs; and if you ask any of our new members what

attracted them to our church, one common factor is the friendliness and the hospitality of those they meet when they walk in the door. You are a very welcome and gracious congregation. Just ask any of the new members of our church. We have most of the things necessary for growth and expansion if we can all put our energies together. But growth is not something the pastor does. It's something that he/she can help to foster, mobilize and organize; but if the growth of a church is simply up to the pastor, it won't happen. The other focus is to work with our boards on Stewardship. We need to make Stewardship something we work on all year. But let me be clear. Being a good Steward is a life-long learning process. I want to spend time teaching about Stewardship and learning more myself. I also believe that Stewardship is as much about how we spend our money as a congregation as it is how we spend our money as individuals. For the past few years, we have made a lot of wonderful investments in our building which were necessary. But now we need to turn that focus and invest in our people and our programs. If we would have the same commitment to Christian Education, to worship, and to our mission, that we had to our building campaign, the amount we raise would become less and less of a problem.

I am well into my eighth year now as your pastor. I've got to tell you that this southerner has never felt more comfortable or at home as I do in this church. During my absence on account of back surgery, I never experienced such a show of love and concern as I did from you. You were wonderful. I continue to recover and not try to do too much with my back. But you have been so supportive.

Each year I attempt to hone my skills as an effective worship leader and preacher. Even after thirty three years, I feel like a novice. I was thinking recently about the process of preaching and I thought of Jacob wrestling with the angel, not letting go until the angel promised to bless him. Each week, I wrestle with the biblical texts, not letting go, until they reveal something fresh and alive. I admit that sometimes the messages are better than others. But honestly, I'm never sure which is which. I leave that to God. But I love this creative process and the privilege to share each week with you what I've been given. Each year I try to hone my skills as a leader, as a spiritual counselor, and as a pastor to those in our church community who need a visit or a friend. In some areas, I feel it comes

natural after all these years. In other areas, such as leadership, there is still so much to learn. But we learn and we grow. I do my best each year to be a faithful pastor who serves this church to the best of my abilities.

Let me just close in saying that this past year I did eight funerals including gravesides. There were three in the church. I had six baptisms in which one was an adult. We've only had one wedding here this year and that will be on New Years Eve. We had five new members join and three new members confirmed.

Rev. Edward Rawls

Church Clerk Annual Report 2011

Church membership as of January 1, 2011.....	561
2011 New Members:	
By Confession of Faith (COF)	2
By Reaffirmation of Faith (ROF)	3
By Letter of Transfer (LOT)	0
By Confirmation	3
By Reinstatement	0
Total Additions.....	8
 2011 Removals:	
Deaths	5
Transfers	0
Removal by Diaconate	0
Removal by Request	0
Total Deletions.....	5
 Church Membership as of December 31, 2011.....	 564
 New Members:	
Zeaneth McNemar (COF)	Shawn Arnette (ROF)
Erin McNemar (COF)	Wendy Arnette (ROF)
Deborah Lindberg (ROF)	

Confirmation Class:

Jordan Bacon Joshua Poisson Ian Smith

Reinstatement:

None

Deaths:

Raymond Peck Louise Cole Helen "Billie" Anderson Marion
Child Anne Knapp

Transfers to Other Churches:

None

Other Church Records in 2011:

Baptisms:

Steven Firimonte
Casey Companik
Brandon Gordon Arnette
Norah Litwinovich (parents non-members)
Joseph William Sanborn (parents non-members)
Wendy Arnette (adult baptism)

Marriages:

Tracy Reale and Michael Sellas (non-members)

Funerals/Memorial Services:

Kurt R. Marcus (non-member)
Shirley Lee (non-member)
Phyllis Cole Smith

Respectively submitted,

Virginia M. Millington,
Clerk of the Church

Church Council Annual Report – 2011

The Church Council had a busy year in 2011 working with all of the Boards and Committees and Rev. Ed Rawls. The Church Council is the organization that brings all of the church Boards and Committees together and shares information between the different groups.

At the February 7th meeting, Steve Bump was elected chair of the Council, with Virginia Millington serving as Clerk.

At the January 2011 Annual Meeting, a motion was made to create a special committee to study the budget deficit and propose suggestions for how it can be reduced. A committee was formed under the guidance of Bill Cabral and the group reported monthly status to the Council. The group presented an analysis to the Council in June with their findings that expenses have been cut as much as possible and focus should be on increasing revenues to reduce the deficit. The committee offered suggestions on how to increase church revenues.

Following the January 2011 Annual Meeting, there were a number of comments and concerns expressed over not having adequate time to review meeting materials and the pace of the meeting did not encourage member participation. The Council discussed these concerns throughout the year and documented a list of suggestions to improve the quality of the meeting, increase communication and participation while staying within the framework of our Constitution.

Other highlights from 2011 include:

Lenten Fish Suppers – Under the leadership of Bill and Sue Wilson, First Congregational Church celebrated our 25th year of providing Fish Suppers during the Lenten season. The Fish Suppers brought in \$2,682 in revenue while bringing members and non-members together for fellowship.

All Church Retreat – The “All Church Retreat” was held June 10th – 12th at Camp Bethel in Haddam, CT. By all accounts, the event was a huge success and the kids had a great time.

Church Fair – Our annual church holiday fair was held Friday, November 11th and Saturday, November 12th. Many people participated in making the fair a huge success, but special thanks goes to Carol Haberlin for her tireless work organizing and coordinating all of the activities for preparation leading up to the fair, execution of an extremely successful event and all the cleanup that took place afterwards. The fair made approximately \$11,500 this year. Coordinating the Fair has become a year-around activity and Carol deserves our highest praise for all she has done.

Public Relations – Public relations work continued to be done by Steve Bump, promoting Rose Window Concerts, Lenten Fish Suppers, the Holiday Fair and more.

Chancel – Beth Turner continues to do a great job keeping the sanctuary looking beautiful; especially during the holidays with Christmas poinsettias and Easter lilies.

Main Street Festival Day – The town did not sponsor “Stratford Day” this year, but there was a similar event called “Main Street Festival Day” on June 4th. A number of volunteers participated by selling sandwiches and refreshments and making passersby aware of our church.

Safe Church – Carl Larsen, Jr. and the Board of Christian Education took ownership of analyzing and then updating our Safe Church policy. “Safe Church” exists to ensure there are specific rules for everyone who interacts with our children.

I would like to thank all members of the Church Council for their dedication and commitment to serving our church. I would also like to thank each of the Boards and Committees who send representatives to the monthly Council meetings in addition to running their own groups. And I would especially like to thank the efforts of Virginia Millington, Council Clerk, who keeps me organized and does a tremendous amount of work recording the minutes and preparing for each monthly meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Bump, Chair

Board of Benevolence and Social Concerns

Annual Report 2011

The mission of the Board of Benevolence and Social Concerns is to do the work of Jesus Christ by offering opportunities for Church members to be financial and hands-on missionaries wherever the need exists.

While economic challenges persisted for many, pledging to Benevolence increased in 2011. Our Church Family's support was incredibly generous and allowed us to meet our mission goals. Our Board is very grateful to our Church members and friends for their wonderful generosity and commitment.

We once again were able to meet our budget allocations, in which we try to strike a balance of giving for world, national, state and local needs.

World: From our budgeted funds we contributed to the UCC Wider Mission and Mercy Touch Orphanage in Zambia. This year's Mercy Touch special collection was also once again successful as was the offering for the UCC One Great Hour of Sharing. We supported Simply Smiles, an organization dedicated to helping impoverished children, by purchasing coffee which everyone can enjoy at the Sunday fellowship hour. We also supported the mission work of Myles Olenski as he travelled to the Dominican Republic and he later shared his experiences with our congregation.

National: Nationally, our mission spending included National UCC support for various needs and the Gordon-Conwell seminary. There were also special offerings for UCC Neighbors in Need, Fat Sunday Gulf Coast Relief and US Storm & Hurricane Relief. We continued to support the ministry of Stephanie and Ryan Bethel of Maine who run Lifelines, the outdoor ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ. Funding was also provided to Holy Joe's Café which ministers to members of our armed forces serving overseas.

State: In Connecticut we contributed to Connecticut UCC, the Silver Lake Conference Center and the Connecticut Hospice - Branford.

Local: Locally, our largest budget item was the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport (CCGB). In addition to general support we made contributions earmarked for their major missions: Project Learn, Janus Center, Bridge Building, and their Co-Op Center program. Rev. Dr. Brian R. Bodt, President and Chief Executive Officer of the CCGB visited with our congregation and provided a detailed presentation to our board.

We also supported the Stratford Clergy Association, Bethlehem Transitional Housing, and Emerge, Inc. On White Gift Sunday many toys and gifts cards were donated and will certainly be a blessing to local families who are in need. Working with Covenant to Care we provided gift

cards to help several of our Church families. In support of local veterans we donated to the Vietnam Veterans Association of Southern CT.

This year our church participated in the Lord's Kitchen program which offers a true hands on experience where members cook and serve meals to those in need. The program has seen a steady increase in meals served and it is a very rewarding experience for our volunteers.

We have continued to provide funds for the Pastor's Discretionary Fund and this year \$2000 was given to Rev. Rawls to help people in our church and in our community. To assist families in our church funds were contributed to Silver Lake Scholarships to help make a week of summer camp more affordable.

Within Stratford, we supported programs at Sterling house to provide backpacks for needy children as well as help families at Christmas. We also donated to the Agape Food Bank to help provide families with Thanksgiving turkeys. We invited Jim Corcoran from Habitat for Humanity to speak to the congregation and we later made a donation to Habitat.

In addition to funding, our Church Family provided abundant amounts of clothing and food for the Taste and See Mission and the Agape Food Bank of First Baptist Church. We also liaised with CROP walk which had another successful year.

This year our annual Tag Sale once again did well. During these difficult times many who shopped expressed their gratitude that we offered a wide variety of items at extremely affordable prices. While the Tag Sale helps to raise funds for our church, it is also an enormous benefit to many people in our community who live on tight budgets. Our tag sale leader Judy Larsen did a superb job of organizing the event and recruiting people to work.

We would like to extend many thanks to Board members Carl and Judy Larsen and Kathy Henry who are ending their terms on our Board. We would also like to thank Rev. Rawls for his input and guidance.

Finally, we want to give SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS CHURCH FAMILY who kept the faith with us as we pursued our goals to help those in need at home and all over the world.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carl W. Larsen
Chair, Board of Benevolence

Safe Church Committee Annual Report 2011

In 2011 a standing Safe Church Committee was once again created to address issues with training and to investigate the use of rigorous background checks. The committee consisted of five members: Carl Larsen, Anne Larsen, Lisa Peterson, Tammy Langston and Jane Hartigan (representing the Board of Trustees).

With regard to Safe Church training, it was no longer being regularly schedule and no one was responsible for serving as the trainer. The committee investigated training options and focused specifically on an offering from the Insurance Board (<http://www.insuranceboard.org/>) - a nonprofit corporation established by the participating Conferences of the United Church of Christ. The Insurance Board provides free online training as part of its Safe Conduct Workbench program. Over the summer the committee reviewed the training and decided to proceed with adopting online training for any volunteer working with children.

There are several advantages to using online training. The training is available at the convenience of the volunteer, the training is delivered in a consistent manner and the training materials are provided and maintained by a third party. Our Training Administrator, Tammy Langston, can also easily determine if a volunteer has successfully completed all of their training. For those volunteers without a computer accommodations will be made to use a computer at church.

Next, the committee researched background checks and the Insurance Board offered several options. The committee's choice was to use a background check that required the volunteer's Social Security number. Before approving the new background check policy, the board first reviewed internal procedures for safeguarding each volunteer's confidential information.

The selected background check process includes a Multi-State Criminal Records Search and National Sex Offender Registry Search, Social Security Number Trace, and Alias Search. The social security number trace will identify all names (including aliases) and addresses known to be associated with the social security number. The Multi-State Criminal Records Search and National Sex Offender Registry Search are run for every name identified by the social security number trace. The entire process is handled online and each check is run by the Background Check Administrator, Sandy O'Neill. The results are returned almost instantly and maintained online. All volunteers working with children are required to complete and sign a background check consent form.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carl W. Larsen
Chair, Safe Church Committee

2011 Annual Report of Board of Christian Education

The Board of Christian Education continues to be an important and vital board defining the goals of Christian Education. Our primary goal is to help guide our children and youth in their development toward a Christian way of life through the Sunday School, Pilgrim Fellowship and family oriented programs.

The board is very fortunate and privileged to work with two energetic and dedicated leaders, Kristine Bacon the Director of CE and Tammy Langston the Director of Youth. This year the board sought to create a stronger working relationship with both leaders, with a specific focus on the Church School. The result was a very productive team which led to positive changes and the adoption of a new Sunday School curriculum for grades Nursery through Six.

Though the board spent most of the year with fewer than 12 members it did not dampen our enthusiasm or energy. Kristine, Tammy and the board members accomplished much this past year.

Sunday School: **Overseeing the Sunday School continues to be one of our most important responsibilities.** This year we were fortunate to have many of our past teachers return and we welcomed three new members to the teaching team. All of our teachers are to be commended for their strong commitment to the children. Parents also play an important role and their support is crucial to the success of the Sunday School. Through weekly email newsletters Kristine has made a point of keeping both parents and teachers well informed about current and upcoming Sunday School plans and events.

This year teachers started using the new Spark - Activate Faith curriculum (<http://activatefaith.org/>) which helps them provide informative, engaging and enjoyable classes. The Spark curriculum offers key Old Testament and New Testament Bible stories coupled with a weekly pamphlet for the children that contains interesting articles and activities. Each Sunday all classes learn the same Bible lesson but at an age appropriate level.

In addition to the curriculum we have developed activities to engage the children such as the weekly Bible Trivia, the UNICEF challenge, a prize box and an Easter activity calendar. There are also special classes such as the Advent Lesson & Workshop where this year Anne Larsen planned the age appropriate special craft for each class. We also had an informative Nativity Lesson provided by Jeff Gedney where the children learned more about life during the time when Jesus was born. There are also special mini-worship services in LPH, which help the children to be prepared for a service in the Sanctuary, as well as a monthly Children's Moment.

With this past year's remodel work on LPH the grade 5/6 class moved to a former Nursery room that was not in use. Board members cleaned the room and sorted through toys that were no longer needed. A big thank you to Jenn and Matt Silberger for hauling away the toys and for their efforts to

sell them and raise a little extra money for the Sunday School. We are also grateful to Bill and Barbara Hickey who did a beautiful job remodeling the Crib and Toddler Room.

Special Worship Services: During the course of the year there are several special worship services involving the children: Scout Sunday, the Children's Service and the Christmas Pageant. These services involve hours of planning and coordination and Kristine has done a wonderful job with each of them. This year's Children's Service was especially well received. The children did a wonderful job as did the teachers who prepared and rehearsed with them. The annual pageant is something parents and children look forward to and we wish to thank Deb and Jeff Gedney for all the work they do to make sure each costume looks perfect.

The last day of Sunday School is also a special time where teachers and students are recognized. The board also recognized Don Coulson and Barbara Marcinko with special engraved gifts to mark their many years of service.

Fundraisers: The board once again held several fundraisers to help defer costs for church related activities. In March we held our annual Corned Beef Sandwich Fundraiser to raise scholarships for the Family Retreat. Later in April we organized a Bingo Night event to raise scholarship money for children to attend Silver Lake Summer Camp. This fall we also tried our first Movie Night event to raise funds for Silver Lake Scholarships and we plan to have more Movie Nights in 2012.

Special Events: Deb Perman once again planned and organized the "Breakfast with the Easter Bunny" which was a delightful family event. Deb, with assistance from Barb Poisson, also ran this year's Halloween Trunk or Treat which was something new and a huge success. The event had barely ended when Deb and Barb were already working on ideas for next year.

As is tradition, on the last day of Sunday School the BOCE sponsored an Ice Cream Social for the congregation to celebrate a successful year. At the start of the new school year the BOCE hosted the All Church Picnic. It was a beautiful day and the picnic was well attended and enjoyed by all. A special thank you to Lisa Peterson and Allyson Jessop for setting the tables and preparing trays of hotdogs and hamburgers, as well as to Matt Silberger and Carl Larsen Sr. for manning the grills

Youth Groups: Tammy has done a fantastic job of providing a welcoming environment for youth who participate in our Pilgrim Fellowship group. During meetings youth are guided towards living a Christian way of life and this past year there was an emphasis on learning how to pray. During the year the members enjoy many activities both at the church and out outside locations. Some special outings include bowling, Bounce U and the annual weekend retreat at Silver Lake.

To help raise funds for their activities, PF held a Waffle Brunch after the Annual Meeting in January, in February a bake sale was held and in April it was a pie sale. At the Church Fair PF sold fudge and other candies to help raise funds for our church and its greater mission.

PF members also learned about giving and service to others through their work on the Linus project, their helping with the Church Fair, the running of the Halloween Spook House and caroling for those who are shut in. Tammy had a great idea for ending the year and giving back to the community by having PF sponsor a food drive to help the South End Community Center in Stratford.

Assisting Tammy are four dedicated advisors, Ron Tichy, Dawn Angeleri, Shawn Arnette and Jeff Gedney. We are grateful to them for volunteering their time and talent to PF.

Choirs: A big thank you to Dr. Joe and Laurie Delgado for all of their work with the children in the Cherub and Youth Choirs. The congregation enjoyed listening to their sweet voices during several of our worship services. This year we started to have special activities for the Youth Choir, such as the Organ Lesson given by Dr. Joe, which was enjoyed by everyone!

We also thank Rev. Rawls for his support in all our endeavors.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl W. Larsen

Chair, BOCE

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

The Stewardship Committee is responsible for encouraging the congregation to pledge to the Church's operating budget. We also feel that pledging is an honor and a commitment of our faith. To that end, the Stewardship Committee explores ways to have the members of the congregation reflect on their relationship with God and how a financial response to that relationship will help spread God's word in our community and in the world. We sponsored the Brown Bag Sunday program, which raised \$2000.00 to help people in need. Doug Halley preached a wonderful Stewardship Sermon in October. The committee served a brunch in October to celebrate the congregation's response to the Stewardship Campaign. We will be working with Patricia Bjorling of the Connecticut Conference during 2012, to help us with the 2013 campaign.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Wilson, Stewardship Committee Chairperson

Chancel Committee- Annual Report

During 2011, each Sunday we have had beautiful Memorial arrangements on our altar. Ed Dillon has very nicely kept the prices the same as in previous years. The cost of the center arrangement is \$25.00. The price for the lilies remained the same at \$12.00. The Poinsettias were increased \$1.00 this year. They are now 13.00. I have tried to keep wreaths on our doors that change with the seasons and I'd like to add that Ed Dillon has graced us the last 2 years with beautifully decorated box wood wreaths for our red doors.

Again, I am eternally grateful to Cindy Buckley for all her work on the Memorial Flower Calendar. For five years she has made sure all was in order with our flowers each Sunday. This is her last year with the calendar. I will be taking over the duties for the weekly altar flowers. In the event that no one has a Memorial arrangement, I have asked Ed Dillon to just send one. The Chancel Fund will be responsible for the payment.

Ted Pert has the challenge of keeping all our lights working for Christmas. The Chancel committee also wants to thank Bill Hickey for his help. Ted and Tom Pert, Ray Severance and myself decorated the Sanctuary for Christmas. We will also arrange the Poinsettia's. During Lent we separate the palms and arrange the Easter Lilies. Many, many thanks to Charlotte Severance and Lynne Pert for their help handing out the Poinsettias and Lilies after worship service. We have many helping hands keeping things running smoothly.

Again, I would like to thank Ray Severance who delivers the majority of the flowers to our shut- ins.

As always, I appreciate everyone's help they so graciously give.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Turner, Chancel Chairman

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ANNUAL REPORT – 2011

Buildings and Grounds

I would describe this year as the final installment in the transformation and restoration of our church building for generations to come! First of all renovations to lower Packard Hall were completed including new hardwood floors, ceiling tiles and cabinets for both LPH and the kitchen. A new industrial grade ceramic tile floor was installed in the kitchen as well as an industrial dishwasher, thanks to the generosity of the Women's Service League.

The entire exterior paint was stripped and painted with a ceramic coating from Rhino Shield. Their process is guaranteed for 35+ years against peeling and cracking. The total cost was \$110K including the cost of lift trucks and landscaping upon project completion. One half of the cost was offset by contributions from the Congregation Burial Grounds Association (\$25K) and the Ecclesiastical Society (\$30K).

New storm windows were installed in the Sanctuary.

Valley Restoration of Torrington inspected/repaired/replaced slate tiles on the steeple and sanctuary roof which were lost/damaged as a result of storm/hurricanes this past summer/fall. They also inspected and sealed all flashings, and inspected and sealed all copper finial up to the weathervane. The cost to the church was the \$10K insurance deductible.

The Crib & Toddler room was renovated due to the generosity of Barbara Hickey and the gift of labor of her husband, Bill.

The ragged carpet under the piano in the sanctuary was torn up and replaced with a beautiful bamboo floor. This will allow ease of movement of the piano during concerts, etc. The cost was approx. \$4K.

Two “junk” maple trees at the parking lot entrance were cut down and removed.

Finances

Expenses were monitored very closely this year and as a result we should finish the years right on budget. Our income, both pledged and plate offering will be approximately \$20K more than anticipated, reducing our deficit from \$102,600 to approximately \$83K. I guess you could say that is the good news, but this hefty deficit is unsustainable and will deplete our endowments in as few as 10 years. Anyone who heard Doug Halley’s impassioned stewardship sermon knows we have major financial problems, primarily due to too few parishioners stepping up to the plate and pledging until it feels good! The deficit will have to be address in earnest, soon, or our church cease to exist as we know in years to come. We have done just about everything to preserve the church for generations to come. Let us pray we will have a congregation in generations to come to enjoy our building.

The Bridgeport Hospital Free Bed Fund was granted the use of 5% of the fund’s value by the Trustees, as of September 30th of this year and last year. In 2009, 58 patient accounts were cleared with the funds.

The Seventh Day Adventist Church’s covenant with us was revoked due to continuous issues, and a covenant was signed with the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Bridgeport was signed this fall. The Unitarian’s were forced to sell their church on Chapel Street due to significant annual financial deficits.

Personnel

Thanks to Walt Dunbar performance reviews were conducted with all church staff this fall. Annual performance reviews have now been conducted every year for at least the past six years.

Carol Haberlin replaced long-time Scholarship Officer, Jim Nies in January. Jim and his wife, Jean were recognized for their decades of dedicated service to our congregation.

2012

Stewardship and Trustees have begun working with Rev. Patsy Bjorling, Associate Conference Minister for Generosity Ministries, UCC, Connecticut Conference on a number of issues on stewardship and planned giving. Next year Trustees will tackle what is going to be referred to as the Adam Blakeman 1639 Legacy Society.

Be on the lookout for more details after the new year.

Bill Haberlin

Chairman, Board of Trustees

Music Committee

Music is an agreeable harmony for the honor of God and the permissible delights of the Soul...

Johannes Sebastian Bach

Annual Report- 2011

The Committee is pleased to report that despite continued economically difficult times, our music program remains on firm ground. Acknowledgements to the leadership of Dr. Joe with our Senior choir and Meetinghouse Ringers, Laurie Delgado with our Junior choirs, as well as our resident and guest soloists each who work so hard to provide excellent music to assist and enhance our services.

Financial

Events including the Palm Sunday, Oktoberfest concerts, and the Valentine Day Potluck and Talent show provided profits of \$150, \$261, and \$731 respectively. Michael & Friends in January and the Joe Carter concert in March each took a bit of a hit, neither concert was well attended (in part due to the rough winter) and neither concert was able to realize a profit. Fellowship and good music notwithstanding, collectively these events have provided nearly \$1,000 to the Special Music fund.

The Committee continues to work cooperatively with the Trustees through a mutual agreement that provides for a sharing of the costs associated with the regular and routine maintenance of the organ, where a portion of the costs are provided from the Helen Jones Organ fund for a three-year period through 2013. The agreement will be revisited at the conclusion of the agreement and any further decisions and/or recommendations will be made at that time.

This September, the music committee received and accepted the resignation from the committee by Kathy Roche due to health issues. We want to thank Kathy for her service to this committee, and pray for her to get well. We welcome Sam Rawls who has agreed to fill in for the remainder of Kathy's term which ends in 2012.

This fall, the Committee and Dr. Joe reluctantly accepted the resignation of our Alto Soloist, Sandy Kish. Following discussion with Dr. Joe and the Trustees, the remaining salary was turned back to the general operating budget and at least for the present time, the committee does not anticipate filling the position. For many, many years, Sandy has always been an important and valued part of our musical endeavors and we are most pleased that she continues to be an integral part of our senior choir as well as the Meetinghouse Ringers. Thank You Sandy!

Special Music Fund

The Special Music fund continues to be one of the more solid and stable funds associated with the church. This year saw the generosity of six people who contributed to the fund.

Events

For those who missed it, Michael & Friends was arguably one of Michael's best concerts to date, yet the snow affected the attendance and the concert was unable to realize a profit, for the first time ever. The Palm Sunday concert (the 69th) saw a slight increase in attendance this year and turned a profit for the first time in the past three years. The annual Valentines Day Potluck & "Talent" show remains one of the consistently remarkable fun and profitable programs each year.

The choir continues to work diligently to provide special music week in and week out, and especially for those special services such as the Christmas Cantata, Christmas Eve candlelight services. The Meetinghouse Ringers also continue to provide their wonderful and unique brand of music to our services. Annually, our musical family and their guests, enjoy two special get together(s), a summer time picnic at the Strother home this past June and an Epiphany party at the Kish Residence in January. Both get together(s) were the source of good times, good food, and excellent fellowship.

Respectfully Submitted

*Paul E. Bernor
Committee Chair*

*Dr. Joe Utterback
Director of Music*

TO THE COUNCIL
LIBRARIANS' REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2011

DECEMBER 4, 2011

Let the records show that the library went through a reclassification this year. Some new topics were added and others were consolidated to meet the needs of the changing congregation.

There exists two library collections, and one feeds the other. The newer books have later publication dates, and they are a part of the lending library. As they age, they get relegated to the research and reference library. Both libraries exist side by side, but only the latter library is located on two floors.

Both library collections are popular, depending on the needs of the parishioners. Concordances and historical references are in the Key Boardroom, and the books on prayer, Bible study, daily devotions, modern authors, personal growth [et alia], are on the shelves opposite the Pastor's Parlor.

The main method of educating the congregation on the new offerings has been through submissions to the monthly church "Courier." 48 books were introduced in this way, with many book reviews included. Mary Hulford has personally seen to purchasing most of them. Ruth Desrosiers has donated 2 books from her collection, which we appreciate, and are grateful.

Joshua Toman has schlepped the books to the choir balcony a couple times this year: once from LPH, so that the hall could be refurbished, and once for the church fair, from the bookcase in the hallway of UPH.

Zoltan Toman has submitted 10 histories on our church's former ministers. Most of the information was culled from histories of Stratford, and some from church archives. Church members Carolyn Ross, Winnie Ingram and Eric Nyquist also contributed to this effort by stylizing and writing certain short biographical sketches of ministers. In Winnie's case, she wrote about Stanley Sellick, her father. It is especially meaningful when church members get involved in this endeavor.

The church pays dues so that the church library has access to the publications from the National Church Library Association. Dues are under \$100 per annum. They have stayed steady at \$55. The money afforded to the library in the budget pays for labels, tabs, boxes and like sundry items, which ordinarily would be paid for by the librarians.

The entire collection is featured on the church website, thanks to Carl Larsen, webmaster.

Respectfully submitted, Mary Hulford, Zoltan Toman, & Joshua Toman, co-librarians.

2011 ANNUAL REPORT

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Kate Sterling Bunnell Scholarship (KSB) awards program and the Church-funded scholarship awards were successfully completed for the 2011/12 academic year. It should be noted that the KSB awards are made to parents, rather than "scholarships" to students to preclude financial aid being taken back by the institutions when our funds are disbursed.

1. For the KSB program, the Scholarship Committee solicited applications from Stratford-resident students having a financial need for their college education. Application packets were furnished to Guidance Counselors of 11 secondary schools attended by Stratford students. In accordance with the Will of the Fund's founder, Catherine Mitchell, notice of the availability of this program was made to the Superintendent of Stratford Schools, and to local newspapers for publication. Upon receipt of applications, interviews were held with first-time applicants and their parents to clarify any financial questions and to explain our procedures in disbursing funds. From submitted financial information for all students, new applicants, and re-applicants (all those who have previously applied) a Need Analysis was completed by two members of the committee. A summary of need was compiled and from available funds, award recommendations to be made by the Scholarship Committee to the Board of Trustees were made.
2. This year there were 61 applicants. A total of \$95,000 was awarded to parents of 55 students. The highest award given was \$2,500 and the lowest award given was \$300. There were 6 applicants showing limited or no need who were not given an award.

The Church-funded scholarships are available to students who are members of the Church..

1. The Frances C. and Harriet B. Blakeman Memorial Scholarship of \$2,000 is funded in the Church budget for an undergraduate student. Criteria for this award, as well as the Cebik and Zorn awards are academic achievement, volunteerism and demonstrated leadership qualities. This scholarship was not awarded this year.
2. The James and Ella Cebik Memorial Scholarship of \$500 is funded by a bequest in the will of their late son, Roy Cebik. This scholarship was not awarded this year.

3. The John Edward Miller Zorn Memorial Scholarship of \$250 is funded by his late father, Bob Zorn. This scholarship was not awarded this year.
4. The Joel and Mary Vodola Memorial Sacred Music Scholarship of \$2000 is funded by a \$50,000 bequest in the will of the late Rev. Esther Vodola. This is awarded to a Church member majoring in music, or, secondarily, to an education major. This scholarship was not awarded this year.
5. The Edna Viner Memorial Scholarship of \$2,000 or more, funded by a bequest from the late Edna Viner, is for a graduate student only. With no award being made in the past 5 years, approximately \$10,000 is available for distribution.
6. The Carol Lawlor Memorial Scholarship of \$400 is a one-time scholarship given by her children, Kristine Bacon, Jacki Potter, and Joe Lawlor. The criteria for this scholarship is a student majoring in Nursing as well as based on financial need. This scholarship was not awarded this year.

Our scholarship program is a major out-reach effort that has benefited thousands of worthy students in their pursuit of higher education. The contributions of the time and dedication of the members of the Scholarship Committee: Bill Hickey, Treasurer; Bill Haberlin, and Doug Halley has been tremendous and is truly appreciated. I would also like to thank Jim Nies, the previous Scholarship Officer for all his help and encouragement in carrying out my first year as Scholarship Officer.

Respectfully submitted,



Carol Haberlin
Scholarship Officer

2011 Church Fair Report

This year's Church Fair was held on Nov 11th and 12th. It was a beautiful weekend and the fair was well attended. This year's fair featured many of our traditional booths and also several new booths were added to the success of the fair. Gratitude and thanks go to all who helped on the fair, no matter how large or small a part, it all added up to a successful fair.

Church Fair 2011	
Lunch Room	\$ 1239.90
Holiday Gifts	523.30
Irene's Gifts	2612.00
Cheese Booth	1908.59
Baked Goods	628.30
Books	623.30
Decorated Wine Bottles	606.00
Holiday Exchange Raffle	1,060.00
Koffee Klatch	274.20
Bows	158.00
Glitz & Glamour (Jewelry)	1,383.35
Candy Booth	423.60
Tag Sale	1235.20
Arrangements	123.00
Rented Tables	180.00
Total Gross	\$ 12,808.04
Misc Expenses	-779.44
Net Profit	\$ 12,028.60
To Bd of Benevolence	-617.60
Net Profit to Church Operations	\$ 11,411.00

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Haberlin
 Carol Haberlin, Fair Chairperson

WOMEN'S SERVICE LEAGUE

2011 was another busy and rewarding year for the WSL. We tried a few new events and culminated our latest project by presenting the trustees with a \$5000.00 check for a commercial dishwasher for the newly renovated kitchen and beautifully refurbished Lower Packard Hall Project.

At our April meeting we invited ladies of the church to bring their daughters and granddaughters to a simple tea. Our young guests enjoyed a hat contest arranged by Jen Silberger and Jaime Dobrovich, complete with prizes. Anne Larsen gave a lovely presentation about each of the exquisite detailed dolls she creates. Later the girls enjoyed a closer look at each doll.

In May we invited all the ladies of the church to be our guests at a quilt show by Carol Haberlin's Mother. Mrs. Micki McMahon shared a trunk show of her gorgeous handmade quilts. The Woman's Fellowship of Unity Hill UCC was our guests. We were all enthralled with the beauty and handwork of the quilts.

Sadly our comfort shawl group has not been meeting. However, we still delivered 12 shawls this year and hope to continue the program by knitting at home. We are always looking for volunteers who love to knit. Since we started in 2006, we have delivered over 155 shawls to members of our church who have encountered major upsets in their lives.

June we were back in our kitchens for a successful bake sale at the Stratford Main Street Festival.

October we hosted a very rewarding Pumpkin Pot Luck Supper. Our goal was to provide a good time for everyone who attended and bind all generations into the fun. The evening featured our "Pumpkin Greeter" (alias Caroline Ross) and a raffle artistically displayed by Pat Pert. The evening was topped off by amazing entertainment by Eric Nyquist and MJ Millington. It was a great time with an old fashion fellowship and mesmerizing entertainment. What a joy to look around and see guests of all ages mouthing the words of songs or swaying to the rhythm. Best of all were comments, "when will you do this again?"

We will finish the year with our Christmas Cookie sale.

Sincere thanks to all who supported these events through 2011, as well as all the ladies who worked so hard on each event which made them so successful. "Many hands make light work".

Respectfully submitted,
Irene Breault, Chairman WSL

NOMINATIONS OF OFFICERS - TERMS FROM JAN. 2012- JAN. 2015

NOMINATING COMMITTEE - 3 yr. term (9 members) **NOTE: CHURCH COUNCIL fills Nominating positions!**

Through Jan. 2013	Through Jan. 2014	Through Jan. 2015
Virginia Millington (Chair & Sec)	Brian Coralian	Lynne Pert
Terry Kneece	Diana Kunkel	Ken German
Jill Westmoreland*	Cindy Buckley	Greg Carleton

PASTORAL RELATIONS: 3 Years (5 Members) 3 members are chosen by Nominating (N) and 2 chosen by Minister (M)

Through Jan. 2013	Through Jan. 2014	Through Jan. 2015
Ray Severance (M)		Barbara Hickey (M)
Fred Zorn (N)	Gail Whittemore (N)	Don Robbins (N)

CHURCH OFFICERS NOMINATED FOR ONE YEAR: Church officers are eligible for re-nomination to the same position without interruption of service.

- CHURCH MODERATOR: Bill Cabral
- CLERK OF THE CHURCH: Virginia M. Millington
- TREASURER: Dick Ross
- ASSISTANT TREASURER: Don Coulson
- HISTORIAN: Carol Lovell
- AUDITORS: **Fred Zorn (Jan.2013) Ray Severance (Jan.2014)**
- WEBSITE COORDINATOR: Carl Larsen, Jr.
- SCHOLARSHIP OFFICER: Carol Haberlin
- LIBRARY COMMITTEE: Mary Ann Hulford, Zoltan Toman, Joshua Toman
- CHANCEL COMMITTEE: Beth Turner, Cindy Buckley, Ted Pert, Tom Pert, Dick Breault

- Delegates to *Fairfield East Association* (2): Lynne and Ted Pert
- Delegates to *UCC State Conference* (3): Ray Severance, **Lynne and Bob Preto-Rodas Sr.**
- Alternates to *UCC State Conference* (2) **Gail and Gene McCarthy**
- Delegates to *Council of Churches of Greater Bpt*: Elected chairperson of all boards.

USHERS: (Total of 10 members in each group)

GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3
1. Mike Nunno - Leader	1. Albert Brown - Leader	1. Greg Carleton - Leader
2. Charlie Cable	2. Sharon Brown	2. Walter Dunbar
3. David Banks	3. Robert Preto-Rodas	3. Andrea Byrne
4. Gary Hanson	4. Allison Jessop	4. Don Reaney
5. Barbara Hickey	5. Fred Whittemore	5. Jim Perman
6. Jean Martire	6. Jane Hartigan	6. Bill Wilson
7. Nancy Mellardo	7. Susan Yermes	7. Pat Pert
8. Charlie Bitzer	8. Debby Lindberg	8. Liza Hickey
9. Christian Mirowski	9. Beverly Burns	9. Steven Bump
10. ?	10. Susan Collazo	10. Marilyn Frances

BOY SCOUT TROOP #71

Mike Connor (Scoutmaster),

Committee Chairman: Jeff Gedney

Committee: Paul Trupp, Tom Pert, Ted Pert, Bob Anderson, Al Bushinsky

POSITIONS BELOW ARE NOMINATED FOR MORE THAN ONE YEAR:

Only the nominees whose names are in bold print are being elected.

An asterisk (*) denotes a person filling an uncompleted term of office.

MUSIC COMMITTEE: 3 years (9 members)

Through Jan. 2013	Through Jan. 2014	Through Jan. 2015
Gale Whittemore (choir)	Geraldine Dunbar (c)	Paul Bernor (c)
Shirley Porter (c)	Sue Romatzick	Sam Rawls
Andrea Byrne	Laurie Delgado	Arlene Bernor (c)

CHURCH COUNCIL: 3 years (Total 9 members)

Through Jan. 2013	Through Jan. 2014	Through Jan. 2015
Bill Wilson*	Don Robbins	Gale Whittemore
Charles Bitzer	Virginia Millington	Irene Breault
Louis Mellardo	Cynthia Buckley	Steve Bump

BOARD OF DEACONS (men): 3 years (Total 10 members) Combined groups total 20+1

Through Jan. 2013	Through Jan. 2014	Through Jan. 2015
Walter Dunbar	Steve Bump	Vincent Martire
Michael Nunno	Charlie Bitzer	Ted Pert
Eric Nyquist*	Gary Hanson	
	Chris Companik	
	Bob Preto-Rodas Sr.	

BOARD OF DEACONS (women): 3 years (Total 10 members)

Through Jan. 2013	Through Jan. 2014	Through Jan. 2015
Andrea Byrne	Carol Haberlin*	Judy Angell
Barbara Hickey	Lucia Smith	Nancy Mellardo
Carolyn Ross (Chair)	Beth Turner*	Arlene Bernor
Susan Yermes		Sharon Brown

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: *4 year term (Total 12 members)

Through Jan. 2013	Through Jan. 2014	Through Jan. 2015	Through Jan. 2016
Bill Haberlin	Doug Halley*	Walter Dunbar	Albert Brown
Jane Hartigan	Stuart Clymer*	Greg Carleton*	Lou Mellardo
Paul Bernor	Rodney Smith	Thierry Decembre	Matt Silberger

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: 3 years (Total 12 members)

Through Jan. 2013	Through Jan. 2014	Through Jan. 2015
Allyson Jessop	Carl Larson, Jr.	Jenn Silberger
Lisa Peterson	Marcia Stewart	Shawn Arnette
Diana Kunkel*	Debbie Perman	Susan Yermes
Frances Morra*	Jackie Coralian*	Barb Poisson

BOARD OF BENEVOLENCE AND SOCIAL CONCERNS: 3 years (Total 9 members)

Through Jan. 2013	Through Jan. 2014	New - Through Jan. 2015
Carl Larsen, Jr.	Tracey Pierson	Debby Lindberg
Jackie Navarro	Becky Oakes	Sharon Brown
Sheniqua Ewers*	Mary Tompkins	Jeffrey Roché

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE: 3 years (Total 9 members)

Through Jan. 2013	Through Jan. 2014	New -Through Jan. 2015
Isabel Torbert*	Nancy Mellardo	Lynne Pert
Jennifer Nyquist*	Deborah Ranilla	Sue Wilson
Marcia Stewart	Tish Kryzyek*	Jean Martire

1. **New officers** are indicated in **bold face** type.
2. (*) An asterisk denotes a person filling an uncompleted term of office.
3. (?) Additional member needed

1/10/12

Submitted by:
Virginia M. Millington,
Nominating Committee Chairperson & Secretary

cc/ Sandy O'Neill, Church Secretary