

Annual Report
2012

First Congregational Church of Georgetown, UCC

Sunday, February 3, 2013

First Congregational Church of Georgetown

United Church of Christ

7 Andover Street, PO Box 200, Georgetown, MA 01833

978-352-8443, www.georgetowncongregational.org

Rev. Lorraine Edwards, Pastor

January 12, 2012

WARRANT

The members of the First Congregational Church of Georgetown are hereby advised that in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of said Church, The Annual Meeting of the Church Membership will be held Sunday, January 29, 2012, immediately following worship, in the Church Edifice, then and there to act on the following listed Articles:

Article I: To receive the reports of the several boards, committees and officers of the Church, except for the sections entitled, "Finance Committee Reports" and "Nominating Committee Report" or take any other action in relation thereto;

Article II: To hear and act on the report of the Finance Committee in regard to the 2011 financial operations and the 2012 proposed budget, and to approve a budget for 2012, or take any other action in relation thereto;

Article III: To see if the Church will vote to amend the vote of the 2011 Annual Meeting by adjusting the endowed amount of the housing endowment to \$60,000.00 and continuing to allow the usage of the proceeds of this fund for more than just support of the Pastor's Housing Allowance, or take any other action in relation thereto;

Article IV: To see if the Church Membership will vote to adopt Version 4.2.1 of its Constitution and Bylaws, or take any other action in relation thereto;

Article V: To hear and act on the report of the Nominating Committee, or take any other action in relation thereto;

Article VI: To hear and act on any other business and to take any other actions, relative to the Church and its property, which may be brought before the Annual Meeting in accordance with the Bylaws, or take any other action in relation thereto.

By direction of the Church Cabinet

Michelle Bridges

Michelle Bridges, Clerk

Annual Meeting Minutes, January 29, 2012

First Congregational Church of Georgetown 2012 Annual Meeting Minutes January 29, 2012

Following Church Service: Meeting was called to order.

Michelle Bridges distributed an attendance roster amongst the congregation for attendance of the meeting. Reverend Lorraine Edwards led us into prayer.

Clerk read :

Article I: To receive the reports of the several boards, committees and officers of the Church, except for the sections entitled, "Finance Committee Reports" and "Nominating Committee Report" or take any other action in relation thereto;

Kirsten Davis made a motion to accept article 1. Joellen Fielding seconded motion. With no further discussion motion carries.

Clerk read:

Article II: To hear and act on the report of the Finance Committee in regard to the 2011 financial operations and the 2012 proposed budget, and to approve a budget for 2012, or take any other action in relation thereto;

Meghan Lichty made a motion to accept the article II. Motion was seconded. Motion carried.

Bob Knapp from the Finance Committee reviewed in slide format the current financial situation of the Church. An overview of where the expenses were reduced and which areas were affected mostly. Bob provided clarification as to the schedule of the organist and music director for 2012.

Concerns were voiced from the congregation regarding the budget cuts and the reduction of the Christian Education Directors position and the impact that this could have on the congregation and new families attending our church. A conversation took place about what we as a congregation can do to raise money for the church.

It was determined that the Congregation will ask each member for the \$18.00 annual membership due that the Congregation has been paying for each of its members.

A congregation member expressed her gratitude towards the church personnel in the various positions, a A round of applause followed.

Clerk read:

Article III: To see if the Church Membership will vote to adopt amend the vote of the 2011 annual Meeting by adjusting the endowed amount of the housing endowment to \$60,000.00 and continuing to allow the usage of the proceeds of this fund for more than just support of the Pastor's Housing allowance , or take any other action in relation thereto;

Peggy Smith made a motion to accept article III. Joellen Fielding seconded the motion, no further discussion motion carries.

Annual Meeting Minutes, January 29, 2012 (continued)

Clerk read:

Article IV: To see if the Church Membership will vote to adopt Version 4.2.1 of its Constitution and Bylaws, or take any other action in relation thereto;

Allan Barlow reviewed the changes made to Version 4.2.1

Allan Barlow made a motion to accept Article IV. Bob Knapp seconded the motion. With no further discussion motion carries.

Clerk read:

Article V: To hear and act on the report of the Nominating Committee, or take any other action in relation thereto;

Tom Stewart reviewed the nominating committee report.

Tom Stewart made a motion to accept article V. Bob Knapp seconded motion. With no further discussion motion carries.

Clerk Read:

Article VI: To hear and act on any other business and to take any other actions, relative to the Church and its property, which may be brought before the Annual Meeting in accordance with the Bylaws, or take any other action in relation thereto.

By direction of the church Cabinet

Michelle Bridges
Church Clerk

Pastor's Report, Rev. Lorraine Edwards

I thank God for this past year of pastoring the First Congregational Church of Georgetown and ministering with you all! Our congregation celebrated many important events this year, strengthened the bonds of community, extended God's love to our community, and deepened our spiritual journeys together. The year offered many challenges, but these were embraced and addressed by the congregation joining together as one. With each day, sharing our best skills, we truly became a team.

In 2013 we celebrated 280 years of the congregation's life on a Sunday with a baptism and a display by Dan Meader of the history of the church. And we pledged to the future life of our church. Among the other highlights of this year for me was the confirmation class with mentors Nancy Aberman, Steve Pinto, Janice Murphy, and Corey McBain; the 10 week intensive program created a supportive group for the youth as they developed an adult spiritual direction, discovered the behind-the-scenes life of the church, and bonded with their mentors. Both the Sunrise Service at Camp Leslie, and the Nashua, New Hampshire mission trip, stays with me as a reminder of how the Confirmands were a caring and able group. On the day of their confirmation, the congregation shared in the grace and joy of this group of Confirmands. The Georgetown Abbey players made the Lent season an entertaining and enlightening event. Perhaps they will come back for another season?! The Community Thanksgiving Eve Service held on Tuesday evening, was celebrated after I organized nine churches in the area to unite at our church to give thanks; a service enriched with the work of Emily Knapp our organist and Bob Knapp our Music Director, who led a 50 person choir for a full congregation. The evening collected both money and canned goods for the feeding of the hungry in our community. In December our community Christmas Eve service welcomed a full church with the carols and candlelight. During this year I have spoken with three Girl Scout troops, various community organizations, and the Boy Scouts to increase awareness of the community pantry and to introduce them to the history of First Church. I also enjoyed working with Christine Litch who created a new program for healing yoga at the church, as we pursue developing the church as a healing and safe place for people can gather in.

Pastoral visitation with members in the hospital, convalescing and homebound has been a steady component of my ministry this year, and I am especially grateful to the Deacons for their support in coming along with me to visit long time members who may have wondered about the new face coming to visit them. The Deacons, led by Gladie Kneeland, have been stellar in their ability to carry out their duties, demonstrating the true caring and commitment they have for our church. The workless suppers fundraiser by the Deacons created a gathering every month where we enjoyed good food and great company. It has been an honor to work side by side with them. What a blessing they have been to the church.

Throughout the year I also attended and conferred with the church's team members and groups including Christian Education, Finance, By-Laws, Deacons, Cabinet, Stewardship, Trustees, Ladies Guild, and Book Group. My hat goes off and I whoop Hallelujah for our dedicated members,

Pastor's Report, Rev. Lorraine Edwards (continued)

leaders of the Cabinet, our church Moderator Chuck Davis, all of the Church's boards, committees, teams and groups – you are all terrific!

Many people have worked diligently for church fundraising to help the budget, to help our mission work, and to share their wonderful gifts and skills with others in a way that also served as great community building events! Thanks to Emily Knapp for the Strawberry Social, Michelle Bridges and Michelle Brock for the Summer Fun Day, Deb Lamoureux for the Church Fair, Tracy Southwick for the Craft Center and Janice Murphy for her coffee hour fundraisers. And thanks to all who have volunteered time and donations to make it possible for the church to pursue its fiscal goals and commitments. Steve Pinto and the Trustees have worked hard and frugally to maintain our church in its well kept state.

This year I extended my professional presence beyond the walls of the Church in several ways. I was honored to become the Chaplain of the Georgetown Fire Department, and in that role I offered prayers for the Memorial Day observance, at the 9/11 Fire Department Service, participated in the wake visits for two firefighters with prayers, took part in the meetings and trainings of the Massachusetts Corps of Firefighter Chaplains, and delivered the invocation and prayers for the Massachusetts Firefighters and Emergency Services Graduating Class in Stowe.

As part of a presence in the wider Massachusetts United Church of Christ, I have been become a member of the Essex Association clergy group Community of Practice recommended by the Massachusetts Conference to pursue excellence, and I have become a board member of the Massachusetts Conference of Congregational Ministers a group that has been active in both training and enriching clergy since the 1700's. I have also participated in the Confessing Christ clergy group for faith development. During this year I have met with the church and ministry of Essex Association, U.C.C., to support Skip Walker in his discernment process. I have also met with the Essex and Andover Associations' combined church and ministry team, offering them a status update in the life of my ministry. Emily Knapp and I met with the Essex Association church and ministry team to update them on the ministries of First Church of Georgetown. Our church hosted the Combined Essex and Andover Associations' Spring Meeting, where Emily Knapp displayed the wonders of her musical abilities on the organ.

This year I pursued classes that would help strengthen my ministry at First Church. Gordon College offered free classes that I enrolled in the field of youth: one was Counseling Youth in Crisis led by an internationally known leader in the field; the other was a three-lecture symposium on Youth Ministry by Dr. Dave Rahn. The Council on Aging of Georgetown offered an insightful class with a speaker who had expertise on aging issues and legalities in Massachusetts. Different social organizations from Georgetown were able to hear up to the moment answers to some of our questions at this round table talk. The Essex Community Center for Nonprofits held a class with instruction on fundraising, which had some very important discussions on fundraising timeline

Pastor's Report, Rev. Lorraine Edwards (continued)

and resources from a speaker who has spent a lifetime helping non-profits with their fundraising. As part of becoming a Chaplain in the Massachusetts Fire Chaplain Corps, to be a Chaplain with the Georgetown Fire and Emergency Services Department, I took an intensive three day training for emergency task force members, including law enforcement, firefighters and EMTs, held at the Wilmington Public Safety Building. This class held the newest training in the crisis intervention work that these public safety people encounter.

And all the work I do would not be remotely possible without the supportive and talented staff of First Church: Michelle Brock as Office Manager, Emily Knapp as Organist, Robert Knapp as Music Director, Rachel Edwards as Sexton, and the volunteer staff JoEllen Fielding as Collector, Kristen Arsenault as Treasurer, and my Newsletter Ladies. Michelle Brock is leaving her position as Office Manager after five plus years, and I offer her the church's heartfelt thanks and best wishes.

The great work of so many in 2012 has brought us to a strong place to begin 2013: with new By-Laws that fit the life of the church in this time, with the opportunity to further improve our church's stewardship and finances, and with a community life that fosters our common goals to live rejoicing as faithful followers of Jesus. May God continue to bless us!

Rev Lorraine Edwards

Church almanac notes:

Funeral services were held this year for: Richard Thomas, Jacqueline McPhail, Charles Blanchard, Alberta Rogers, with members Don Ames and Dr. Skeirik having services held elsewhere.

A wedding service was held for the Kestler-Orlandino families.

Baptisms were performed this year for the Lucido family, Quimby family, Young family, and the Andrus family.

New members this year were Steve, Lorraine and Iris Edwards, Sylvia Johnston, Corey McBain, Stacy Lucido.

Our confirmands this year were Megan Litch, Jessica Lee, Jonathan Brock, Bridget Bratland, Eric Bratland, Julia Southwick and Nick Moore.

Moderator's Report

2012 has been a year of welcome for The First Congregational Church of Georgetown. We welcomed Reverend Lorraine Edwards at the end of 2011, and have gotten to know each other during the year. We have retained many of our traditions, and have begun some new ones. We have welcomed some new friends and members and have sadly said goodbye to those who have passed during the year. I am proud to serve the congregation in the role of Moderator. I couldn't succeed in the duties of this position without the support and dedication of our Pastor, officers, board chairs and members and the support of the congregation. We all work together to support God's work.

We have had many exciting events during the year. The Strawberry Social, under the capable leadership of Emily Knapp, was held in June. It unfortunately rained, but was a good time and well attended. A Summer Fun Fair was held in June as a community, social and fund-raising event. This was accompanied by a Chicken barbecue. This was also an enjoyable time. Autumn brought us the Harvest Fair which included many crafters, the usual white elephant sale, several well prepared meals, and numerous other exciting events. This was a great time to connect with fellow parishioners, the community and was a successful fund-raising endeavor. During the year the Deacons have been hosting a number of "Workless Suppers" where we attend a local restaurant, purchase our meal and provide a contribution to the church. These were, and continue to be, well attended and a good means of connecting with each other in a social setting without time pressures of normal daily life.

We continue our outreach to the community. Our food pantry has continued to be a focus for our mission outreach. We have utilized several means of stocking the shelves including outside groups bringing in donations as well as the regular drop-offs by community members and parishioners. We see that things come and go from the shelves on a regular basis, so we know that it is being well used.

We mourn the passings of several members and friends during 2012:

Charles Blanchard was a beloved member of the Congregation and community. He was a member of the Diaconate and a dedicated servant to the congregation. He was very active in the community at large including 4H and Conservation activities.

Evelyn Boose was an extremely active member of the congregation. She was superintendant of our Sunday school for many years, founder and director of our Bell Choir, Junior Choir director, and one of the creative and talent sources behind "Broadway Belles".

Alberta Rogers was an active member, and a member of the Diaconate coordinating card and flower delivery during her tenure.

Moderator's Report (continued)

Richard Thomas was the dedicated husband of Elizabeth Thomas.

We have been very fiscally prudent during 2012. Our CE director position was eliminated in the Spring, and others on our staff have taken pay reductions to help reduce our deficit. Regretfully, again in 2012 T-Mobile has not exercised their lease option to build a cell tower in our steeple. We pray that they will build in 2013. We are hopeful to create a balanced budget in 2013. Our boards and financial stewards have been working diligently controlling expenses, and our congregants are more generous in their pledging. We ask that if you have made a financial pledge to the Church, that you fulfill it if you are able to.

I would like to thank a number of people who made a significant impact on the success of the church in 2011:

Reverend Edwards, of course, as she has gotten to know us all during the year and has a kind and delicate touch in dealing with all of us.

Our Music staff Bob and Emily Knapp who have continued to provide us with good music throughout the year.

Michelle Brock (Office Manager) and Rachel Edwards (Sexton) who continued diligently in their jobs despite fewer paid hours.

Deborah Lamoureux who chaired the church fair (solo) and all who volunteered and contributed. Michelle Bridges has gratefully agreed to chair the event in 2013.

Our diaconate who has been very self sufficient and motivated throughout 2012, providing service coverage during Reverend Edward's vacations and on other occasions.

2013 will bring us a new corporate structure and bylaws which will take a little getting used to, however bylaws are only a guide, the Church mainly runs on our members energy and devotion to God. We will be seeking a number of volunteers for tasks or small assignments versus long-term board commitments. The thought is that it is easier to get people to commit to a smaller task than a major commitment. (We will still need those, too). If you see a task which has a need of some hands, don't wait to be asked, please volunteer. The major board members will be taking the role of coordinators, and (hopefully) less of "doers". It is through our volunteers that the church functions well. During the year, once we digest and get used to the new structure, we will figure out how to make people aware of the needs. Let's make 2013 a year for the Church to shine and once again be the focus of the community.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chuck Davis

Moderator

Clerk

First Congregational Church Of Georgetown
Membership Information

Members as of 12/31/2011

209

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Deaths | 3 |
| New Members | 6 |
| Confirmation Classes | 7 |
| Baptisms | 2 |
| Weddings | 1 |
| Funerals | 0 |

Deaths:

Charles Blanchard
Alberta Rogers
Donald Ames

Members as of 12/31/2012

219

Diaconate

Members and Friends of the First Congregational Church of Georgetown:

“Rewarding, Fellowship, Teamwork, Challenging and Spiritual”....A quote that demonstrates the duties of a Deacon. Each of these words fit the people who have served as your Deacons for 2012. Their individual talents, together with their common bond of faith, belief and caring assure us of a healthy and strong Church.

Writing an annual report can be daunting because of the many, many things that can be shared with each of you and not wanting to omit anyone or anything! So here goes:

Working with Rev. Lorraine Edwards has been our joy. She continually makes us aware of her presence, whether it be at board meetings, her amazing style of preaching, or her very quiet ‘behind the scenes’ smiles...we are certainly blessed by having her at the helm! (Thumbs up to the search committee!)

We continue to support Skip Walker, our student in discernment. One of his projects is the “Blessings of the Pets”. This was a very interesting day. We welcomed “Muddy Creek” representatives who set up a table with a lot of useful information. I personally know two very special kitties who had a great time!!!

Members of the diaconate also attended the Essex Association Church and Ministry Committee’s Ecclesiastical Council Meeting and gathered information on our duties with reference to our student in discernment.

Workless suppers continue to be a financial and social success. Thanks to all of you who support this. If you haven’t attended one, please do, I can assure you it is relaxing, fun and a good way to share memories and make new ones!

A new fund raiser is the “Project Day.” All those who participated enjoyed the social enjoyment, the wonderful three meals, and finishing up those things we seem to never get to. We are hoping to do three of these each year. It’s a great way to add money to the church and to share a casual day with good friends.

Easter plants and Christmas plants were distributed, together with birthday

Diaconate (continued)

roses for our "over 80" group. Thinking of you cards, meals when needed, and other situations were addressed when necessary.

Last winter and spring, under the wonderful direction of Steve Edwards, "Georgetown Abbey" was presented. The characters were all perfect and the fashion statements were outstanding! Perhaps we will see more of this in the future....and what lies ahead for Lady Mary, Carson, the kitchen staff and poor Mr. Bates....

Our church hosted the spring meeting of the Essex/Andover Association of UCC.

We continued to hold summer services on Wednesday evenings. This, again, proved to be successful. A special thank you, not only for summer services, but all services to those who were asked and said yes to being scripture readers. This adds a special touch to our readings.

A quiet service of reflection, communion, scripture and song was held on Maundy Thursday. A wonderful Easter sunrise service was written, prepared and led by the Confirmation Class followed by a delicious breakfast back at the church.

Easter service is always a beautiful day, topped at the end of service by all joining our fabulous choir in the Halleluiahs Chorus. The annual Easter Egg Hunt for the children was then held on the church lawn.

December brings us to the very moving Candlelight service, the Christmas Pageant performed by our children. Who can forget that beautiful face of our "Baby Jesus" Cecila, the finger snapping Wise Ones, the narrator Julia telling us the beautiful Christmas story that we all look forward to with anticipation each year. Thanks, Christian Ed adults for all you do! Of course, Christmas service was perfect, and the annual caroling is always so much fun and topped off by cookies and hot chocolate and Kirsten's hand made marshmallows!!! YUMMY!

At the end of the year, two services were organized by the Diaconate, again showing their powerful sense of commitment. The first was a fact-filled musical carol sing! Much research and planning went into this very enjoyable service.

The second service reminded us of our heritage and those who went before us. A story was chosen that originally had been told by a very young new pastor on his first Christmas with us. The narrator this year thanks Rev. Phil Southwick for giving us this gift as a story that has now been re-told to another generation! Blessings to you, Phil and thanks!

As always, I thank Donna, Emily, Janice, Rachel, Steve, Tracy...for your endless energy, your common bonds for this church, your hard work attending to the spiritual life of our church..you are the 'wind beneath the wings of this chairman."

Respectfully submitted, Gladys M. Kneeland

Christian Education Team

The Board of Christian Education had a very busy and successful year in 2012. Our goals are to offer opportunities for church members and their families to enrich their Christian Education through fellowship, small gatherings, and classroom participation.

Heifer Project - What is Heifer?

It's a gift of milk every morning for a malnourished child.

It's a gift of up to four gallons of milk a day so an anxious parent can sell the extra to pay for their child's food, clothes, school and medicine.

It's a gift that brings generations of renewed hope for an impoverished village as each family fulfills its promise to Pass on the Gift of offspring.

In February, we raised over \$600 as part of a candy sale. The money raised allowed the Church School to purchase many animals for Heifer.

Easter Sunday - After the Sunday worship, an easter egg hunt occurred on the front lawn of the church. Children, both young and old, enjoyed searching and collecting the many eggs that were scattered on church lawn.

Confirmation Sunday - The church welcomed seven confirmands who joined the church on XXX. Our confirmands worked very hard with Rev. Edwards to better understand their faith and their role within the Church. Many participated in the 'One Day of Sharing' mission trip to Nashua NH, where they helped restore a local playground. The 2012 confirmands are: Jonathan Brock, Jessica Lee, Megan Litch, Julia Southwick, Erik Bratland, Brigit Bratland and Nick Moore

Graduation / Children's Sunday - During Children's Sunday, which marks the end of the Sunday School year, we students who were graduating from either high school or college. We wish them congratulations for their accomplishments.

Summer Fun Day - On June 9, 2012, a new tradition was introduced this year as the Board of CE sponsored a summer fun day. Activities included many crafters selling their products, a bouncy house, obstacle course, and train rides for the young at heart, a lobster raffle, a chicken barbecue, plus many games and music.

Rally Day - JT Turner once again blessed us with his presence by dramatizing Christian stories as we welcomed in the new Christian year. During the Rally Day service, backpacks were blessed, hoping that God's presence with guide and nurture our children and adults throughout the coming year.

Coffee Hour - The Sunday School sponsored a coffee hour in the fall of 2012. The children made various types of cookies and snacks. The 5-7th grade students also met at the church the day prior to make their treats together. Many cookies, cupcakes, brownies, and other treats were made that day, with many laughs and fellowship shared by all.

Fire Drill - The Church School participating in a fire drill in November 2012. While a

church wide fire drill will occur in the near future, it was important for the children to understand what they needed to do in the event of an actual fire. During class time, the children, their teachers and helpers, successfully vacated the church and met at the bench that is located on the front lawn. Fire drills will occur on a periodic basis to ensure both students and teachers understand their roles and responsibilities in the event of an actual fire.

Safe Church Contributions - Recognizing the needs of the congregation as well as other groups that use the church, the Board of CE facilitated the aquisition and/or installation of the following. A wheelchair that is located in the hallway behind the pulpit, Evacuation Plans that are posted within each classroom, and an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) device. Training on how to use the AED will be offered in 2013, and will be available to all groups that use the church.

Gloria Webster – In June of 2012, Gloria Webster retired after five years as the Director of Christian Education. Gloria's energy and Christian ministry to both children and adults will be sorely missed and we wish to thank Gloria for her dedication and inspiration to the First Congregational Church of Georgetown.

Teachers & Sunday School – Many, many thanks to those that continue to help with teaching our children about God and his Love. Our classrooms have had steady attendance over the year, filled with much joy and laughter. The curriculum is relatively simple to both prepare for and to teach, and your involvement and excitement about teaching our children is truly appreciated.

Youth Group

The youth group of the First Congregational Church is for all youth to feel welcome, appreciated, and accepted as members of the congregation through involvement in their own age-group, as well as intergenerational activities. The hope is that the youth will be spiritually fed and strengthened in their relationship with Christ through fellowship, worship, and outreach, with the goal of witness and service to the community.

Below are the highlights of youth group activities that occurred during the past year

Food Drive

The youth group raised funds by selling subs on Super Bowl Sunday. Ham, Turkey, and Italian sandwiches were made and distributed to the community. A few weeks later, the youth participated in an 'Amazing Race' by splitting into teams and racing through a local supermarket. Each team was given a list of groceries to purchase, and the same amount of money. Recognition was given to the team that finished first, bought the most food, and had leftover change. Many patrons were witnesses to the youth group's contribution to Church's mission of "Extending God's Heart and Hands".

Ski Trip to Mt Sunapee

A small group ventured to Mt Sunapee for a fun day of skiing. We hope to make this an annual event.

Fund Raising

Our major fund raising events for the year are to host the intermissions for the productions put on by JT Turner. In addition to hosting intermission, the youth group also hosts a Spaghetti Dinner before the Saturday show. The youth assist in the preparation, distribution, and clean-up. The spaghetti dinners have become a tradition, and participation and support has grown over the last couple of years.

Haunted House

During the annual fall fair, the youth transformed the 2nd floor of the Church into a Haunted House. Many witches, goblins, and ghosts were lurking in dark corners. The youth had a tremendous time setting up the rooms and acting out their roles as patrons ventured through the Haunted House.

Trustees

2012 was a relatively quiet year after several with much activity for the keepers of the church property.

The annual cleanup went well with the assistance of many church members, the Brownies, Boy Scouts and other helpers cleaning benches, rugs, woodwork, etc. to prepare the church for spring. Many thanks to all those who helped out.

The grounds were attended to in all seasons and efforts were made to keep up the appearance and safety of the church with a number of improvement projects.

New thermostats were added to the temperature control system and this has helped keep our heating oil costs down (along with a really mild winter!).

New window safety coverings were added to the 2nd floor class rooms to make these rooms safe for our children.

Interior and the front doors were serviced to allow for better and easier closing.

We have begun to refinish, replace sills, and paint the windows in the "new wing" in the continued effort to keep the church in good condition.

Thanks to our ever so helpful neighbor John, the leaves were all raked and disposed of in the fall.

Projects for 2013:

Repair of the front windows: We do need someone with a "bucket or lift" device to help out with repair. If anyone can - or has a friend or relative who can help with this task, it could help save the church a large expense.

Replacing the large oil fired boiler for the Sanctuary and Fellowship hall with a natural gas burner. Once again, if there is someone who is in the business or has a friend or relative that can help with this task, it could help save many thousands of dollars in expenses.

- Restoring some of the original church doors – help would be much appreciated.

We continue to do our best to keep the church in good order. Please let us know if there is something that you feel needs to be taken care of in this regard.

Your friendly Trustees,

Steve Pinto and Joe Rawlins

Music Team

The Music Team felt the effects of budget cuts quite hard this year. We were saddened to learn we would have to forego "real" music during our summer services and not have Bob and Emily's talent for several months. However, thanks to Bob for putting all our hymns on the computer, as well as Chuck and Dwight who were able to broadcast the hymns over the PA system each week. We are hoping to have a better year in 2013, and hope the budget will allow for both Bob and Emily to continue through the summer. We also thank those brave souls who offered to perform "live" during our summer services.

We again sponsored our annual Christmas Caroling around town on December 23 followed by hot cocoa and cookies back at the church. We postponed from the original date of December 16 due to bad weather. About 20 church members were also able to attend JT Turner's adaptation of "A Christmas Carol" in Ipswich. This one man show is absolutely fabulous and we encourage you to give it a try some year. We hope to be able to take another group next December. We are happy to support JT in his acting as he has contributed so much to our church with his Moonlight Production shows!

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Evelyn Boose. She was the long-time Bell Choir director, Junior Choir director and Church School superintendent. Her estate left a very generous monetary donation to the First Congregational Church which is greatly appreciated by all of us who were privileged to have known and learn with her.

We encourage anyone to offer up any fundraising ideas you think the Music Team can support in 2013. Several have been discussed already and we are checking the very busy church calendar to move forward on some.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Davis, Chair
Corey McBain
Ruth Stewart
Dwight Southwick
Kim Knapp

Women's Guild

Another year has come and gone in the life of our Women's Guild, a group dedicated to serve the church, enjoy educational and fun programs together, and befriend each other. After experiencing the warmest winter on record, we were forced to postpone our first spring meeting due to a snow storm! In March we finally held our meeting with **Starr Anderson, representing the Brocklebank Museum**, and found her to be a delightful speaker. She told us fascinating stories of the one-room neighborhood schoolhouses of Georgetown, and located them on interesting vintage pictures and maps.

During our April meeting, under Millie Gangloff's direction, **we completed eighteen baby quilts** for the Community Giving Tree. Loose change from our Coffee Hour Penny Bowl, in charge of Ann Kelloway, allowed us to make a donation to our church's General Fund to cover the cost of Church School supplies for one year. In May **we sponsored a drive** for personal care products to be made into **Mother's Day Baskets for the Community Giving Tree's annual distribution** to struggling Moms of the Merrimack Valley. Our congregation was very supportive, resulting in contributions worth several hundred dollars.

Marion Harding, Jean Perley and Ann Kelloway represented our Guild at the semi-annual **Essex Association Women's Fellowship meeting** that was hosted by the Second Congregational Church of West Boxford in May. This was a learning meeting, highlighting the mission work of the Evangelistic Association of Russia. On the last Thursday of May we concluded our spring program with an annual **luncheon outing to the Bradford Tavern**. Eighteen women attended this enjoyable event.

Fall meetings started out with a **"Field Trip" to the Community Giving Tree**, a ministry devoted to helping needy children in our area, who are identified by social workers and nurses. We went bearing gifts of baby quilts and fourteen dozen diapers. A volunteer gave us a tour of the facilities and showed how "bundles" of good-condition, clean clothing are assembled according to ages and sizes, with added touches of books and stuffed animals. Our women actually were put to work assembling "bath supply bundles" for babies and toddlers. We all came away impressed with the great work of this mission.

October found us busy with baking cookies and **organizing the popular "Cookie Walk" for the Fair**. With the help of many wonderful bakers in our Church Family, who contributed their favorite recipes, the Walk brought in over \$500 in profit for the Fair!

At the end of 2012 we again welcomed back **Gus Reusch in November** who discussed the **life and art of Norman Rockwell**. This is the third program Gus has brought us in the last two years. He is a humorous and gifted speaker with wonderful tales about his subjects. A **Christmas luncheon** at Barb Morehouses's Wheelerbrook Farm rounded out the year, with inspiring stories told by Judy Robillard and a sing-along of old familiar carols. Ruth's House of Haverhill, a community thrift shop, benefited by our donation of 160 pairs of new socks.

Sadly, we have suffered the loss of two dear members – **Evelyn Boose**, who died in October, and most recently, **Helen Snow**. Both women were long-time, active members of our group, supportive of all our endeavors, always contributing their wise and intelligent opinions on the work and missions of the local and wider church. They are very much missed.

We feel fortunate to have welcomed some new members to our Guild this year, and we want all of our church women to know that **we happily reach out to newcomers**. Our luncheon gatherings are informal and friendly. Please contact us for further information.

Outreach Coordinating Team

Guild women began their second year as the Outreach Coordinating Team at the beginning of 2012. We emphasize the word “coordinating” (it is an effort to act as a scheduling and assisting team for missions undertaken by the congregation as a whole). We encourage and ask for your input in this task. If you have new and creative ideas about helping our neighbors in need, please come to us.

The **Youth Group**, with their dedicated leaders, started out 2012 with a “new and creative” idea – assembling and delivering “**Subs for Super Bowl Sunday**”. What a fun and delicious way to raise money for missions. In this case **their mission was our own Church Pantry**. Organized into teams, our teens took their hard-earned money to the grocery store and competed in a “Great Race” to see what team could gather the most items in a given number of minutes! This was a win-win event. Our Pantry benefited, and the Super Bowl parties benefited by having our teens prepare the food!

Festive candles, cookies, beautiful quilts, colorful jewelry, flowers and homemade candies were sold on February 12th to support **Heifer Project International**, and in honor of Valentine’s Day. To our utter amazement, we were able to raise enough money (\$642) to purchase TWO SHEEP, TWO PIGS, and ONE LLAMA! Heifer is indeed “our pet project”. Also, during the winter months, we encouraged people to bring in warm clothing in good condition that could be taken to Ruth’s House in Haverhill, a community Thrift Shop helping families in the Greater Haverhill area. At Christmas the Women’s Guild donated 160 pairs of new socks for this mission.

A drive was held in the spring to assist the **Community Giving Tree**, located in Boxford, an organization created to help needy children in the Merrimack Valley. Our 2012 drive, however, concentrated on the “Moms” of those children. CGT assembles over 500 baskets each May to provide Moms with personal care items. Our congregation generously provided toiletries that found their way into these Mothers’ Day baskets, and were valued at several hundred dollars. The Guild provided 40 dozen diapers for CGT – monies that came from your loose change and dollars donated to the Coffee Hour Penny Bowl!

Our Church supports the United Church of Christ’s annual **One Great Hour of Sharing** in the spring and **Neighbors in Need** in the fall, to which we contributed \$687. OGHS’s main mission is the distribution of funds to help refugees of war and natural disasters. NIN finances educational and self-helping initiatives in the U.S. From our weekly pledges and contributions, donations to **Our Church’s Wider Mission** (through the UCC) amounted to \$3,542. In addition we support scholarship funds both at the **Andover Newton Theological School** and through the **Essex Association** for their “in care” students (\$700).

At Easter the mission portion of our **Lenten Offering** (\$397) was allocated to Ruth’s House Mission and at Christmas, the mission portion of the **Advent Offering** (\$615) went to help victims of Hurricane Sandy. An ecumenical **Thanksgiving Service** was held just before the holiday. Attendees at this service gave generously of non-perishable food (donated to our Pantry) and cash donations (\$500+) that also benefited our Pantry.

Our church’s **Prayer Shawl Group** knitted and crocheted many beautiful shawls that have comforted those in hospitals, those who are confined at home, or those who need a little TLC. They created tiny hats, warm sweaters and blankets for premature babies that are much appreciated by the nurses in the neonatal ICU unit at Mass General. **The Women’s Guild** provided eighteen hand-made baby quilts for the Community Giving Tree in West Boxford. At a September worship service the prayer shawls, hats and quilts were blessed and dedicated during a meaningful

Outreach Coordinating Team

(Continued from page 20)

ceremony.

Beginning this past fall our Team initiated a **"First Sunday of Every Month Pantry Drive"**. We encourage everyone to bring in just a few items on the first Sunday that will benefit our Pantry that gets cleaned out quickly. Frozen foods should be taken to the Pantry freezer right away. Other non-perishable foods and paper products may be left in the Pantry or in the Narthex on those Sundays. During the month of November – for the three Sundays leading up to Thanksgiving – we challenged the congregation to bring in 500 Pantry items. Everyone was asked to write down the number of items at the time they were brought in. **GOAL: FIVE HUNDRED** was a success!

December always finds us picking tags off the Christmas tree in the Narthex to help the children of H.O.M.E. **Homemakers Organized for More Employment** was founded forty years ago to support the cottage industries of the poorest county in Maine. Starting modestly, the movement morphed into a community of helping hands: a community of hard-working people who shelter the homeless, run food pantries, day cares, and GED classes, they mill wood, and build modest homes with that wood. But they struggle and cannot afford Christmas gifts for their children. You have provided those gifts! We are so proud of how much you gave this past Christmas. Every tag on the tree was taken, and a gift returned with the tag in place!

We know there are many needs, and many organizations doing God's work. We are studying the **Family Promise program** that is being organized to help the homeless population. Last spring we welcomed lay leader, Bill Nelson, from the First Church of Wenham. He explained the types of volunteer opportunities involved if we were designated as a "Support Church". Many good people are still working on getting this program up and running (including representatives from our church) and we should have information to consider in the very near future.

Thank you all for your generosity, for your time, talent and treasure. We thank those individuals who have stepped up to organize a mission project, help sort food in the pantry, write letters, make telephone calls, and just listen. We look forward to another year of reaching out to those in need, and trying to make the world just a little bit better.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Harding & Joan Chatterton for

The Outreach Coordinating Team

**Fall Fair 2012
October 19 & 20**

Chair: Deb Lamoureux

WOW!!! What more can I say! I am continually amazed at what this church can do! This year we did something I would never have dreamed of.....It was our best fair in 10 years!!!!!!

The "Annual Fair" is our biggest and best fundraiser of the year. The new format continues to work well. Once again the familiar faces of our family of vendors were back. They all wanted to catch up on the news around the church. New crafters were surprised to see the ease in which our family mixes with the crafters. Once again this is a great testament to the warm & inviting community of our church and members.

All of our favorite committees and tables (in-house) were as usual at top of their game. The fair would not be the same without these people. The preparation in the weeks leading up to the fair is by far the richest time we as a church family spend together laughing and sharing stories. I can't stress enough that I think everyone (guys too) should do a pie making session.

You would not believe what you will learn (and I don't just mean making pies)!

After 5 years as your fair chair, I have decided to step down for a bit. Michelle Bridges has graciously volunteered to be the 2013 Fair Chair. I will work closely with her to help in the learning curve.

My experiences in the past five years have been very rewarding. I have had the chance to really get to know a lot of you better than I would have otherwise. Thank you for all your generous time, love and support.

Deb

Flower Team

As with last year, the mild winter has encouraged the daffodils to poke up leaves well before their time at the front of the church. Competition from the weeds was as fierce as ever this year, but the perennials and flowering shrubs continued to thrive and provide a colorful border around the church.

Highlights of 2012:

- The Florence Hamelin memorial bench was moved to the sunny side of the walk facing town hall, and it seems to be a favorite spot for people and their furry friends to sit and watch the world go by.
- Brownie Troop 63061 tackled the persistent weeds in the front gardens.
- Joan Chatterton created a beautiful fall display around the communion table for Thanksgiving.
- Our neighbor, John Face, again kept the back planters in continual bloom and emptied the compost bin so that there was always room for more weeds.
- A small raised bed vegetable garden yielded a bountiful harvest of tomatoes and several other vegetables for the food pantry over the summer. The broccoli was spectacular, but there weren't too many takers.
- The plaque for Evelyn Boose's Giving Tree was moved to the front of the tree and will be flanked by spring flowers in a few months.
- Thanks to Lorraine, there is a new lilac bush near the sidewalk on Clark St.

A variety of arrangements graced the communion table, in tribute to the seasons and to loved ones. The lovely lilies and hyacinths at Easter and poinsettias at Christmas brightened first the church and then the homes of church members. Thank you to all who provided flowers and made donations to Christmas and Easter plants in memory of loved ones.

As always, we appreciate donations of flowers or plants for the communion table on Sundays. Donations of any amount in memory of loved ones or to honor someone special are always welcome.

Our thanks to everyone who helped to brighten the inside and outside of the church with flowers, or donated time and strong backs to prune, rake, pull weeds, and plant this year.

Sincerely,

Michelle Brock and Jaime Krenn

Bylaws Revision Team

At the February and March 2012 Cabinet meetings we presented a scheme for revising our Church government organization which included substantial downsizing and a number of nomenclature changes.

At its April meeting the Cabinet voted to let us go ahead and develop a Constitution and Bylaws to support our proposed new government organization. We did that and it is being presented at the 2013 Annual Meeting for your consideration and adoption. Shown on the next page is a chart of the new government organization which is the heart of the new Bylaws.

The Constitution & Bylaws Revision Team:

Allan R. Barlow, Robert Knapp, and Peggy Smith

UCC Delegate

Report from Andover and Essex Association's Fall Fellowship Meeting, October 20, 2012.

This year our Essex Association Fall meeting, in addition to the normal joint worship, there were several proposals that needed to be voted on for the purpose of joining the Andover and Essex Association, Church and Ministry Committees to work together. The idea was then to have this combined committee subdivide into two working subcommittees: one to focus on ministerial Formation and the other to focus on ministerial Standing. This would give the committee the ability to concentrate on the specific areas more fully.

The two Associations held separate business meetings for the purpose of voting on this proposal. The votes were taken, and the proper procedures were observed to make sure that neither the by-laws of Andover or Essex Association were violated. The motion passed and we are now in a trial period of one (1) year with a joint Church and Ministry Committee. If at the end of the year it seems like it is working out well, we will need to vote to make it permanent. After the business was finished, the two Associations combined to worship together.

Summited by Lawrence W. Walker, Jr. "Skip"

Stewardship Team

FCC Stewardship Team Report:

The purpose of the Stewardship Committee is to coordinate and lead the Stewardship Campaign, which encourages our members and friends to pledge towards the annual budget and also offer their gifts of time and talents to the work of this church.

This year's activities included our annual pledge drive ("Entering a New Chapter"), which has yielded an increase of \$10,629 from 50 pledges thus far! A total \$70,958 has been received from church members and friends. The Stewardship Team would like to thank this year's speakers Chuck Davis, Gladys Kneeland and Matt Hartford for their outstanding inspirational speeches during the campaign.

The annual golf outing was attended by 16 hardy golfers and raised another \$815 during fall Church Fair weekend. The Stewardship Team would like to thank Tim Clift for his outstanding service to the Church and community. Tim ran the golf outing for many years and helped raise another \$3,075 in setting up the gift-giving tree in the narthex this past spring. The Clift family as you may be aware has moved to Winchester, MA.

We would also be remiss if we did not thank Michelle Brock and JoEllen Fielding in their aid with a lot of behind the scenes work all year long!

Blessings,
Richard Aberman & George Comiskey