



2017 Annual Report  
First Congregational Church  
of Georgetown, UCC

Sunday, January 28, 2018



# **The First Congregational Church Of Georgetown**

## **Annual Meeting January 29, 2017**

**Article I:** To receive the reports of the individual Council Members & their Teams and any others requested by the Council with the exception of the “2016 Financial Report and Proposed 2017 Budget”, and the “Nomination Report” or take any other related action; Congregant made motion to accept Article I – seconded by congregant.

**Moderator** – It is moved that the congregation receive the reports of the individual council members and their teams and any others requested by the Council with the exception of the 2016 financial Report, the Proposed 2017 Budget and the Nomination Report. The question is on the adoption of the motion that the congregation receives the reports of the individual council members and their teams and any others requested by the Council with the exception of the 2016 Financial Report, the Proposed 2017 Budget and Nomination report.

**Discussion:** Congregant had questions regarding the 2016 Annual Meeting – some information was missing, Rich Brock to make corrections which will be added to report. Motion to amend the motion to approve Annual Report 2016 excluding previous year Annual Meeting Report, motion seconded, and motion carried. Moderator called for a vote on original amended motion – motion carried

**Article II:** To receive the 2016 Financial report, to hear the Finance Team’s proposed 2017 budget, and to approve a budget for 2017 or take any other related action; Bob so moved and it was seconded.

Bob Knapp, Financial Team: Points on Financial Report, there was enough money to pay bills, thanks to a surplus from last year (see collectors report page 39). Pledges are down and as the COA is leaving there is concern of income and expense wise. Recommendation, no staff raises to save money to balance the budget.

**Discussion:** Joan Chatterton would like to see raises to the salaried and stipend employees. She suggested unbalancing the budget to give raises of 3% increase to salary and stipend employees; it is a modest amount of money.

Motion was made: Salary employees and stipend employees receive a 3% raise, seconded by congregant. Bob reminded the congregation the importance to present a balanced budget; the amount of \$2,200 for the raises of 3% is best coming from the congregation to pass an unbalanced budget. Congregant commended the hard work of the staff and asked congregants to support the raises with participation in fund raising. Congregant appreciates a balanced budget but mentioned that Bob Knapp does not get a stipend and his duties have increased, he is a big part of the music for the church and she suggested a



stipend for him. Although Bob appreciated the request he felt that at this time he was not ready to take it and would like to see the church get on its feet again.

Amendment motion carried with four abstaining. Moderator called for vote on amended motion, motion carried.

**Article III:** To receive and hear the “Nomination report” and call persons to fill Council and Team vacancies or take any action;

Congregant moved to call persons to fill Council and Team vacancies as listed on nomination report, congregant seconded. An updated copy of the nomination report was distributed with the agenda. Individuals that have “Re-Nominated” referenced will serve a second term. Individuals that have Nominated reference are new members on a team. Church Council members are noted as well. The year that is referenced on the report indicates when an individual’s term will expire. Lastly, as referenced on the report the member at large position is currently vacant. Congregant commented member at large is a one year position. No other discussion.

Moderator: The question is on the adoption of the motion that the congregation vote to fill positions as stated report, seconded, motion passed.

**Article IV:** To hear and act on any other business relative to Our Congregation and its property.

**New Business:** After attending a Finance Team meeting, Joan Chatterton noticed that \$6,000 in unpaid pledges which has cause for concern, other pledges have been received, and this is just an observation on her part. It was suggested that an ad hock committee be formed to look into ways of giving as a church. Looking to pull in creative ideas to increase our giving, perhaps a once a week collection for general expenses. Proposed Council create a task force for financial stewardship consisting of Pastor and two members at large to investigate how we can give creative ideas to enhance our work. Suggested the Council discuss and organize the Team with objectives and a time line.

Motion made by Joan Chatterton to create a Team of length and purpose determined by Council. Motion seconded – Motion passed.

The oath to the clerk, Toni Cassidy, was administered by moderator Rich Brock.

Motion to adjourn was passed.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Toni Cassidy, Clerk



# Pastor's 2017 Annual Report

*Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*

Philippians 4:8,9

2017 held so many memorable highlights in the ministry we have accomplished together. I wish I could share all those moments with you, so you could experience the life that comes to people every day through our efforts. We know that our Redeemer lives in what we do each and every day! Now, let's see how the year unfolded.

I want to highlight how appreciative I am of Moderator Rich Brock's work on our Nominating Team, and the great position we found ourselves in at our Annual Meeting at the end of January. And our thanks to the Council and our leaders who shifted off their teams in this year—your leadership and efforts for our church have been so instrumental in making First Church a great church to be part of. Appreciation to Mary Ann Nelson and Deb Lamoureux at Council, their involvement made such an impact on our church. We welcomed JoAnne Kelly and Tim Dougherty, who have been such great contributors to the Council this year, along with Diaconate Chair Gladie Kneeland, Christian Development Chair Michelle Brock, Clerk Toni Cassidy, Finance Chair Bob Knapp, and Moderator Rich Brock.

Our Annual Meeting gathered and voted on a budget recommended by the Finance Team. Thanks to the Finance Team, the Stewardship Team, and the church Teams for their fiscal efforts. And a special thanks to Moderator Rich Brock and Clerk Toni Cassidy for their very capable handling of the Annual Meeting.

Following Christmas, I went on vacation for two weeks. The Diaconate Team and Ms Rev Alice Erikson took charge of my duties while I was away. Great thanks to them. The Diaconate led a carols and scripture service January 1 and celebrated a church brunch on January 8th, Three King's Day. Both services were very well received.

The Diaconate and Church Office helped out with the sad news of three deaths while I was away. With their contact, I was able to reach out to families that were grieving. I led David Stewart's funeral on January 12th. And I conducted T. Louis' (Bud) Hamelin's service was on January 21, with a collation following led by Janice Murphy and Ruth Soper. Our prayers go out to Dave and Bud's family. Lewis Pingree's family was also contacted by



Diaconate on his passing. I sent out thank you letters to the many gifts we received honoring Dave Stewart, Bud Hamelin and Lewis Pingree. There was discussion by the Diaconate and the Finance Teams on how to use these gifts, as well as Dorothy Blanchard's gift to the church.

For mission in January, thanks to The Ladies' Guild led the H.O.M.E. Project with great success. Thanks to our generous church families, families in need were able to celebrate the joy of Christmas with special gifts.

Special mention of congratulations for the youth's successful sub fundraiser under the direction of our Youth Leader Rich Brock with volunteers and to our congregation that supported them. It made watching the Super Bowl and Patriot's win just that much sweeter.

Thanks to our Property Team under the leadership of Tim Dougherty as they tackled the challenges of winter. Appreciation for Janice Murphy and Ruth Soper for all of our wonderful fellowship hours and luncheons. And I'm grateful to Joan Chatterton for our Communion Table flowers in February. I offered pastoral coverage to Rev Laura Gronberg in February.

During Lent, we had the One Great Hour of Sharing offering to help people across the globe with other denominations. Thanks for all the assistance. Hats off to all who worked toward the Heifer fundraiser done by the youth. We raised \$500, enough to buy a cow!

For Ash Wednesday, a prayer and reflection center was set by Gladie Kneeland and me in the Chapel. The labyrinth path ended at the Communion Table where there were ashes and the Lenten daily reflection called: Sacred Space. The music playing was John Rutter's Requiem. I prepared for Lent by putting up the purple banners with the help of Head of Diaconate Gladie Kneeland. I put up a candelabra with six purple candles and one white Christ candle to mark the six weeks of Lent. Each week a reflection was offered and a candle extinguished, in a reversal of the Advent Wreath. The Christ candle was extinguished on Maundy Thursday in a candlelight service of song and communion. Our Good Friday cross was set up on our lawn.

Our Lenten Skits based, very loosely, on the Parables of Jesus, were well received, with the youth doing one week, and the congregation doing two weeks. The first week Gladie generously took the helm with a fantastic result.

The Lenten Study Group went through April 2 following church. It was about Jesus' words in Aramaic and how they inform his teaching. We had slide shows and lively discussion.



Thanks to Bob Knapp and Alecia Balduf for their excellent music at our Sunrise Easter Service. And thanks to Steve Pinto, Kevin Southwick, Alecia and Shayne Balduf for preparing the Camp Leslie site and starting the campfire. Deb Lamoureaux, Kirsten Orender, and JoEllen Fielding took part in the service with me. We had a great turnout for a warm and sunny morning, sharing a bread communion. Big thanks to Pam Sheehan with the Youth Group and parents for a warm, delicious breakfast to greet us following the sunrise service. It gave us a time of Fellowship and Communion to enrich our Easter Day.

The Easter Service was a bold and festive service with wonderful music from the Senior Choir, the Bell Choir, led by our Music Director Bob Knapp and our Organist Emily Knapp. Thanks for the superb music and trumpet playing Bob and Emily! Packets were made by Marilyn for the family Sunday, and I spoke about Burt the Caterpillar at the Children's Message, and handed out gifts. Thanks to the many congregants for their Easter Egg donations and to Christian Development for leading the hunt. Our youth were very excited as they made way in their Easter finery.

I held a class for new members on March 26 following church with Chris Comiskey, our church historian, who offered a presentation to the members about the history of the church. Bob Knapp also led the group on a tour of the historic organ. On Palm Sunday, April 9th, we welcomed three new members with a litany, introduction, and certificates done by Donna Desisto. Our new members are: Jennifer Harris, Marie Birdsall, and Tom Chaffee.

I worked with Gladie Kneeland and Toni Cassidy on our Women's Retreat, April 21-23 "God's Love for Us". We stayed at a fabulous location, graciously offered to us by Toni in Tamworth, NH. We studied a program with the journal "Love Never Fails" by Hilda St Clair, visited an artisan, enjoyed hiking, activities, and campfire chapels at night. Carol Lutes shared some tools for calming, with music by Alecia Balduf. The retreat was a great success in bringing us closer together and sharing a deeper spiritual path.

For Earth Day Sunday, George Comiskey offered the worship message and Children's Message on the topic of Earth Day on April 23. Mary Ann Nelson led worship. Bob Knapp was Bible reader. This is an affirmation for the environmental ministry of our church, carried out in a variety of ways by the members of this congregation.

Gladie Kneeland, Peggy Smith, and Tom loaded up our Pantry food, taking it to the Council on Aging to set up a Food Pantry in their Council's new location. We received a nice thank you from the Council, expressing how the food was already needed by two groups.



In April, I offered pastoral coverage for the Pastor of W. Boxford, attended the Northeast Association, MACUCC Day of Covenant, had a memorial service for Carol Green Pierce and attended the Massachusetts Congregational Church Minister's, of which I am on the Board, Education series. I conducted funerals for Margaret Lillian Phillips and Susan Ryder Kelly Miller.

The Ladies invited me to present at their Guild meeting April 26th. I honored Earth Day and our environmental ministry by sharing the remedies found in our own backyards. We made a remedies craft that the Ladies took home.

A special worship on May 7th was focused on the youth and their mission work for the 30 Hour Famine. The youth were honored with the Good Shepherd award, and broke their fast with the Church family at Communion. Great job Rich Brock and Youth leaders for making such an important event for our Youth.

I worked with Christian Development on very successful Children's Sunday service June 14. Also connected with graduates for Graduate Sunday, where we offered recognition, a gift and a congregational Godspeed blessing.

Steve Pinto did a tremendous job at working on the phone system with volunteers Jeff Orender and Jeff Lamoureux during the week and on weekends to have our elevator phone system work in the elevator. This helped us move toward our state elevator certificate. We now have an updated phone service for the price we were paying before. Great job!

I took part in the community Memorial Day remembrances, and later in the day went to the Fire Station for a debriefing on a call. I offered prayers on June 11th at the Firehouse in Georgetown as they hosted the region firefighters remembrance and breakfast.

In June, I worked with Joan Chatterton and Marion Harding on the mission projects for summer. I went to Mass Conference of Congregational Ministers, whose board I am on, for a Convention on June 12 & 13. It is always a great way to meet other clergy and sharpen our skills for ministry. I counseled the Kalfin wedding. I prepared the graveside service for Dave Stewart with his family.

I invited the church staff to dinner in thanks for all their tremendous gifts that they offer to our church throughout the year: Emily Knapp, Bob Knapp, Marilyn Crosby, and Kim Knapp - you are outstanding!

Our Office Manager Marilyn Crosby was out for surgery from June 21 through July 6th. Thanks to our volunteers who came in and kept our office rolling during those times. Late



June I did the prayers for the retirement of Fire Deputy Russ Moyer over at the Erie Fire station.

Thanks to the Diaconate and the Music Team for our summer Wednesday evening services. Our first summer session was themed "Christmas", where we celebrated the meaning of Christmas at our informal, interactive worship services with dinner. Our second summer session was themed "New Years" where we embraced new beginnings while celebrating New Year's traditions from around the world. Thanks to Gladie and Janice who filled in for me during my summer vacation. I always hear such wonderful news about their work. I so appreciate Ruth Soper and Janice Murphy who gave us such a nice meal and dessert before each worship. And appreciation to our music team Mary Ann Nelson, Allan Barlow, and Alecia Balduf, with the help of Music Director Bob Knapp, who brought live music and guest musicians in for the evening worship. Thanks to Shirley Powell who donated a lovely plant to liven up our alter space for the summer services. Laura Gronberg covered for me as emergency pastoral care while I was away. I covered both Laura Gronberg and Robert Hagopian as emergency pastoral coverage. I conducted a funeral for Rev Hagopian. I assisted Kristen Arsenault in preparing her father Wendell Arsenault's burial service in Maine. I performed a graveside memorial service at Harmony Cemetery for Dave Stewart on Friday, June 16.

During this summer, I collected many books and resources and donated them to the various church teams and began reading the materials and formulating plans for the program year. I prepared an adult education on the issues of race, reviewed new church directions, sought fundraising information, and studied various topics. I also researched worship resources, revamping our weekly worship, and new ways to use the web. I worked with Joan Chatterton and Marion Harding on the mission projects for summer. We had a fabulous collection of school supplies for families in need. It was gratefully received by families facing the daunting costs of school start up.

In September, I worked with Christian Development chair Michelle Brock on Rally Day September 17 start up and yearly dates. The office created and printed up Rally Day postcard reminders that went out to the church, and the Diaconate sent out cards to all who moved to Georgetown this summer. The service highlight was another outstanding message by JT Turner on the theme of "Love and Serve". My children's message was on the growing of our spirits at church with expanding dinosaur sponges. September 17, we had our backpack blessing for the Children's Moment.

I led the funeral for Earl Johnston, and we offer prayers for his family. A special heartfelt thanks to Janice Murphy and Ruth Soper and all the volunteers that put together the Fellowship meal for Earl Johnston's Memorial service.



Our office manager went to Nashville September 15-20 for a Contemporary Choir Music Convention in Nashville, TN. She shared with me all the exciting advances in contemporary Christian music and mission that she learned while at the conference.

I restarted the church staff meetings this September so we could have a direction for this very busy fall. I contacted a family in Groveland to arrange a baptism in the fall. I also continued marriage counseling for the Vanni wedding in Topsfield. I performed a ceremony of blessing a wedding band for a parishioner. I conducted a funeral for Brenda Hutchinson in Peabody.

This summer I spoke with area clergy who have had successful fundraising and gleaned from them tips for our fundraising that I shared with Rich. The Office Manager and I put together the approved fundraising letter, giving guide, information packet, and pledge pull out and with the help of Joan Chatterton and Ann Kelloway, we were able to send the letter to the church and friends of the church.

I worked with Joan to turn our World Communion Sunday into a time to collect monies to give to the UCC fund for those affected by the recent disasters. The Diaconate service for World Communion Sunday on October 1 highlighted this cause.

I was approached by Selectman Doug Dawes to be part of a town panel to hear about a drug information and resource plan being put together for the town with a grant they received. Given all the drug issues our state has been affected by, I was very interested to be included in this initiative for the town.

I did Elizabeth Merrill's graveside service at Harmony Cemetery on September 29. She was a member of the church in the past.

In October, Our World Communion Sunday focused on the Disaster UCC Fund Collection. With Gladie Kneeland's help, our Communion table was designed to look as if the elements were coming out of the floods, and offered "sweet bread" as a salute to those workers in Houston who have given their offerings to the flood victims. Also, Mary Ann Nelson shared a moving story about experiencing a flood at her home when she was a youth. Our collection for the UCC Disaster Fund was outstanding! Thanks to our community and our Missions Team led by Joan Chatterton.

October 15, we crafted a service to celebrate and bring a blessing to our pets and the earth's creatures. We had a special pet themed service and prayer with pet pictures on the Communion table. Then St Francis medals and pet treats were handed out to everyone for their pets. This was to celebrate our Pantry now offering pet supplies, which is led by Marie Birdsall and Tom Chaffee.

Big thanks to Moderator Rich Brock for agreeing to be the Fall Fair Chair on October 20 & 21! And our teams focused on their parts of the fair: recruiting volunteers from our church community. Great job everyone! And thanks to the hours and armies of volunteers that bring everything together for the event.



October 20, I offered the invocation for the formal awarding of the Peace Medal to the Korean War veterans in this area at the Ipswich Performing Arts Center. The ceremony included the Republic of Korea's Boston Counsel General, who spoke and offered words during the event. The head of the MA Veterans was also there and offered words. This was to affirm the sacrifices of the vets during the conflict.

October 28 and November 5th were our Sundays for our conversation on "Race and Us", following church. We used the book and movie about a high school football team in the 60's in Alabama to begin our discussion. I appreciated the thoughtful responses and discussion for this adult education class.

On Spooky Sunday, with special music by the Bell Choir and a Halloween's themed Children's Message, we explored the second most cultural and commercial holiday after Christmas. The message was on Reformation Sunday, celebrating 500 years since the Reformation began, reminding us of the history and spirit that still shines in us all.

Our All Saints Service of Remembrance in November combined candle lighting with music in honoring those who have departed.

"The Harvest is great"-great thanks to our dedicated Stewardship team of Team Leader George Comiskey, Sylvia Johnston, and Toni Cassidy for completing this Stewardship season with such spirit! Our speakers Janice Murphy, Haleigh Harris, and George Comiskey really offered wonderful words about the importance of contributing to support First Church, in order to continue our spiritual journey here.

We had the Benjamin Ace Fregeolle baptism on Sunday, November 12. The church children watched as the family and godparents came forward with joy. Little Benjamin charmed us all and received his certificate, a white rose, a book of prayers, and a candle blessing.

I went to the Fall Association meeting in Lynnfield where we fellowshiped and exchanged ideas with representatives and clergy from other Northeast Association Massachusetts UCC churches.

We celebrated Thanksgiving Sunday with themes of gratitude. And our choir and I took part in the Community Thanksgiving Service hosted this year at the LDS church. We were warmly greeted with a service of song, preaching, and prayer.

November 26 was a pre-Advent Greening of the Church themed service, with traditional Christian folk songs. December 3 began with Communion and Advent with its themes, and lighting the Advent wreath. Our Children's Messages doing worship were joyfully offered by myself Michelle Brock, Karen Young and Steve Edwards, who read children's Christmas books following the Advent themes. The sharing of these individuals



let our youth and children become more familiar with those in our congregation. Our Advent Wreath lighters also added a wonderful touch to the Worship services.

A private memorial service, led by me, was held for the one year remembrance of August Kettkowski's passing, with a Fellowship meal following. Kim Knapp was the Sexton for this service and the following luncheon.

I worked with Joan Chatterton and Marion Harding on the mission projects for HOME. Joan was thrilled that the congregation took all the tags for gifts for children in the first week! Joan says that this is a record!

I worked with Christian Development on their mission project "Soles4Souls", under the leadership of Christian Development Chair Michelle Brock, with skits that introduced the collection of shoes. This collection goes toward the health and safety of people around the world. I also assisted in the Pageant development, which turned out to be a fantastic moment of awe and joy in the worship service.

I gratefully received the invitation to share in the Christmas Luncheon offered by the Guild, with a chance to greet this lively group.

On December 10th we welcomed Kinslee Isabella Norton-Graffum, with her parents Anne and Allyson Norton-Graffum and Godparents, remembering the blessing of being welcomed into God's family. We gave our traditional certificate, baby blessing blanket, white rose, children's prayer book, and candle blessing. I then capped off the Sunday with the artistic guidance of Shirley Powell as I created my entry for the youth fundraiser "Gingerbread House" competition, with a pre-constructed house. Results for my house went better than two years ago.

Our Diaconate and volunteers have transformed our space and worship with the holiday spirit. We truly enjoyed the Diaconate offering a cocoa and cookie bar following our Pageant this month. I received small Christmas trees decorated by the local Daisy Troop, and have distributed them. A thank you and photo were sent to the troop leader.

Christmas fell on a Monday this year, so we had an interactive, twelve gifts of Christmas service that used scripture, reflections, gifts and music to share the Christmas story on Christmas Eve morning. And a fabulous, full candlelight and carols service took place on Christmas Eve with the Bell Choir. Musicians, choirs, DiaconateTeam, and volunteers that made this season so special.

Many thanks to Janice Murphy and Ruth Soper for all of our wonderful fellowship hours, and the special treats for Baptisms and the Christmas Season. And I'm grateful to Jaime Krenn for her amazing weekly altar flowers, and to Jaime and Steve Pinto for all the work they put in this season to make the church look so festive.



Our busy Office Manager Marilyn Crosby went in for knee replacement surgery and recovery and was out of the office following Christmas.

The church office closed the week following Christmas, December 26 until January 2, which many churches do. The Diaconate checked in on the office messages that week. Sylvia Johnston began in January 2-the first week of February twice a week, Tuesday and Thursdays, 9-noon to share in the Office Manager duties. Volunteers covered the office duties on the remaining days. Marilyn Crosby, from home, and Sylvia Johnston, at the office, share the office duties until Marilyn comes back full time in early February.

Marilyn prepared a sheet that lists when the volunteers will be in the office. She created a folder to answer questions on the office procedures, and trained Sylvia Johnston in the office manager responsibilities. And Gladie volunteered as head of Diaconate to be available for questions while I was out of the office December 25-January 8.

Marilyn has included in her folder which tasks she will follow up on at home during her recovery. She sent a copy of that information to our Moderator Rich Brock as Moderator, given a copy to Sylvia, and will have a copy available in the office. She also provided her own information regarding coverage for her time away to be available in the office. Best wishes on a speedy recovery.

Special thanks to all who have been such faithful supporters of the work we are accomplishing on this church.

Thanks to Marilyn Crosby, our Church Office Administrator, for her work with Guidestar and Amazon to put into place Amazon Smile where people can contribute a portion of their purchase costs toward a donation to First Church. I encouraged our church to continue taking part in Amazon Smile and we are now listed both with the national non-profits site "Guidestar". PayPal also continues to be available on our web site for convenient donating.

There has been an interest in our Shawl Ministry this year. We blessed our shawls and offered them when requested. We would appreciate donations of adult and Baptism shawls to replenish our supplies.

My general duties continued with my usual pastoral duties of visitation, preaching, strategic planning, meeting with teams, staff meetings and counseling. I encourage communication, including thank you letters for donations, within and outside of the church. I am taking part in Professional Community of Practice, Association Clergy groups and educational opportunities. I wrote articles for the church newsletter and other



events. I am taking part in Professional Community of Practice, Association Clergy groups and educational opportunities.

I also attended Northeast Association meetings and trainings, participated in my Professional Community of Practice, offered Communion and met with the Pastoral Relations Team.

Hearty thanks to Head Deacon Gladie Kneeland and Deacon Janice Murphy who took over the Pastoral duties and Worship duties while I was on vacation. Rev. Laura Gronberg in West Boxford and Rev. Steve Edwards were my emergency coverage while I was out of town, and great thanks to them. I supplied emergency coverage for Rev. Gronberg and Rev. Bob Hagopian during the summertime, too. I have heard wonderful things about the contribution everyone gave during my time away. It gives me great confidence to know that the church is in such great hands during my time away. Following Christmas, when I was away, the Diaconate and Rev. Alice Erikson took charge of pastoral duties. Great thanks to them. The Diaconate led a carols and scripture service December 31 services was very well received.

As always, I am only able to complete this calling by being surrounded by the amazing dedication of our staff. Thanks to the Music Director Bob Knapp, our Organist Emily Knapp, and our choir, bell choir, band and various musicians for making such wonderful contributions to the worship services throughout the year. JoEllen Fielding as Collector and Kristen Arsenault as Bookkeeper working on having our finances in order, including an internal audit this year. Kim Knapp always spends her own time and resources above her allotted ones to make our church shine. And Marilyn Crosby makes our many overlaying missions all come together in her work and ministry as Office Manager. We really are blessed!

Deepest appreciation and thanks to the Teams and volunteers for an outstanding, busy, and fruitful year. Nancy Aberman leads a fabulous book group in our church. Appreciation to Janice Murphy and Ruth Soper for all of our wonderful fellowship hours and luncheons that lets our hospitality shine. And I'm grateful to Jaime Krenn for her amazing weekly alter flowers, and all that Jaime and Steve Pinto do to keep our property so very well kept.

I have also written thanks to John Face who helps with our property, and suggested an invitation to the Strawberry social to him and his mom as a sign of our appreciation.

This year's Moderator Rich Brock's leadership for our church has brought many parts of this church's ministry and well being to life. Working with him, to bring the church to an outstanding place, has been a joy. We are blessed indeed!



And I end with a prayer for us:

O God, life-giving Spirit,  
Spirit of healing and comfort,  
Of integrity and truth,  
We believe and trust in you.  
Warm-winged Spirit, brooding over creation,  
Rushing wind and Pentecostal fire,  
We commit ourselves to work with you  
And renew our world.  
As the hand is made for holding and the eye for seeing,  
You have fashioned us, O God, for joy.  
Share with us the vision to find that joy everywhere:  
In the wild violet's beauty,  
In the lark's melody,  
In the face of a steadfast man,  
In a child's smile,  
In a mother's love,  
And in the goodness of Jesus. Amen.

-Celtic prayers and Janet Morley

Blessings on the life of First Church in Christ,  
Ms. Rev. Lorraine G. Edwards  
Pastor, First Congregational Church of Georgetown, UCC



# Pastor's Church Almanac

## New Members:

Marie Birdsell  
Tom Chaffee  
Jennifer Harris

## Funerals:

David E. Steward—January 12, 2017 with graveside burial on June 16, 2017  
T. Louis Hamelin—January 21, 2017, church service and burial  
Carol Greene Pierce—March 23, 2017, church service and burial  
Margaret Lillian Phillips—April 5, 2017 graveside service and burial  
Susan Ryder Kelly Miller—April 8, 2017 graveside service and burial  
Brenda Hutchinson—September 17, 2017 graveside service in Peabody, MA  
Earl Johnston—September 17 church service with Fellowship Meal, private burial on September 18, 2017  
Elizabeth Merrill—September 29, 2017 graveside service  
August Rettkowski—December 9, 2017 remembrance service  
Frank E. Phillips—December 15, 2017 graveside service

## Deaths (2017):

Earl Johnston—member  
Margaret Lillian Phillips—member  
Frank Phillips—inactive member  
Lewis Pingree—member  
David E. Stewart—member

## Wedding:

Elizabeth Michelle Kalfin and Rautha Franklin Jones III—June 17, 2017  
Vanni and Sparrow—October 2017

## Baptisms:

Benjamin Ace Fregeolle—November 12, 2017  
Kinslee Isabella Norton-Graffum—December 10, 2017



# Moderator's Report

At the beginning of each year, I asked the church leadership three simple questions.

How can we grow our spirituality?

How can we expand our outreach?

How do we continue to excel at what we do well, while expanding our vision?

We will continue to ask these questions during the upcoming year and I would encourage everyone to share your ideas with the church leadership team so that we can continue to share God's blessings and teachings with each other and those that may be outside of our four walls.

We welcomed Marie Birdsall, Tom Chaffe, and Jennifer Harris to our congregation this year. We're excited about their future participation and contributions as members of our church.

Our annual events continue to be as successful as ever, and are anticipated by many within the community. Our Strawberry Social welcomes in the Spring Season. Who can resist fresh picked strawberries on top of shortcake, smothered with whipped cream? Behind the scenes, everyone rallies together for a time of fellowship as we pick, sort, and hull the strawberries, as well as bake the shortcake. The musical talents of our Church Band were on display. Many thanks to Emily Knapp and Janice Murphy for their efforts and leadership.

Our Women's Day Fair has also become a wonderful annual event. The Women's Day Fair brings local crafters and our members of the congregation to share their many talents with the community. This fair has grown each year. Thank you Michelle Bridges for your efforts with this fair.

The annual church fair has been very successful over the past few years. This two day event takes many months to schedule and coordinate, and each year seems to outperform the previous year. Many volunteers are needed to cook all the glorious pies, soups, breads, cookies, breakfast sandwiches, lobster rolls, hotdogs, chili, corn chowder, and apple frapples that are sold during the fair. The Youth Group gives up their day to sponsor a Bouncy House on the front lawn and to assist wherever needed throughout the day. We have volunteers that work the candy store, the snack bar, the raffles, the white elephant, the clothing store, the cookie walk. This year's fair included a golf outing. To top it all off, we end the fair with the best turkey dinner in town. Many thanks to the team of volunteers that assisted me with the fair. A job well done by all.

As with every fair or social event hosted by the church, we continue to expand our outreach to Georgetown and the neighboring communities.

Our food pantry continues to be well stocked, sometimes overflowing. We also expanded our pantry to care for the needs of our pets. We receive many donations



throughout the year, and we encourage those that are able to donate food, household goods, and pet supplies. These blessings are quietly shared with those less fortunate. We also continue with our donations to both Heifer International and HOME projects, along with donations to Ruth's House. Sharing our donations sends a simple message that there is hope no matter what the circumstances.

Throughout the year, much of the church council's efforts focused on the needs of the church building and property. In years past, our church has made significant improvements to the interior of church. Significant work is now needed on the exterior and infrastructure of the building.

In September of 2017, we initiated the 'Continuation of our Legacy' fundraising campaign, with a goal to raise \$50,000. Proceeds from this fundraising effort will be used to repair and/or replace various aspects of our church's building. This includes the replacement of the fire alarm box, the replacement/repair of the front and side steps leading into the church, replacement/repair of our walkways, a new door awning over the back door for protection against the weather, any additional expenses incurred for replacing the church doors, and the replacement of our heating system. We have also earmarked 10% of the total raised for a local mission.

During the 2017 annual meeting, the congregation directed the council to form an ad-hoc team to identify creative ways to increase the donations from the congregation. The formation of this team has been deferred to 2018, as the efforts to initiate the 'Continuation of our Legacy' fundraising efforts took priority.

I'd like to thank the Church Council members for their efforts throughout the year. Without your efforts and those of your teams, our outreach efforts and our spiritual growth, along with everything else we do to spread God's blessings would not have occurred.

I'd also like to thank Marilyn Crosby, our office Administrator. She works tirelessly to pull together newsletters, bulletins, the annual reports, announcements, as well as maintaining minutes and other artifacts. Her subtle reminders keep us on track and organized.

I look forward to 2018 as there are many opportunities for us to continue to grow as a church. It is an honor and a privilege to serve as your moderator.

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Brock, Moderator



# Clerk's Report

## Membership Information

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Members as of 12/31/16       | 199 |
| Deaths                       | -4  |
| New Members                  | +3  |
| Baptisms                     | 2   |
| Wedding                      | 2   |
| Transferred                  | 0   |
| Inactive Status              | -3  |
| Funerals & Memorial Services | 11  |
| Members as of 12/31/17       | 195 |
| In Memoriam                  |     |
| Earl Johnston                |     |
| Margaret Phillips            |     |
| Frank Phillips               |     |
| Lewis Pingree                |     |
| David Stewart                |     |

Respectfully submitted by,  
Toni Cassidy, Clerk



# Diaconate

“Try to be a Rainbow in Someone’s Cloud” Maya Angelou

Reflection, celebration and rededication....Three words that truly sum up the work of your Diaconate team this year. The responsibilities of this team are many and are done by these exceptional people: Kristen Arsenault, Alecia Balduf, Emily Knapp and Janice Murphy. You do so much, and do it quietly, tirelessly and without complaint. Thank you. It has been my joy to be your Chairperson for the last three years and I love each and every member of our church family.

This year many goals were accomplished by the hands and love of our church members.

We are, as a family, blessed to have Reverend Lorraine Edwards leading us. Thanks to her for the gentle peace she brings to this Congregation. She is our “cup of magic!” Thank you for your wonderful spiritual leadership, enthusiasm, and dedication to our Church.

A big thank you to all who have participated in our services...our communion servers, scripture readers, Christian service helpers, and greeters. Our music program is superb. To our organist Emily Knapp, our choir, our bell choir and our band director, Bob Knapp, your God-given talents amaze us and fill our ears and hearts with love. Music is such an important and beautiful part of our services.

Thank you to Jamie Krenn, our very talented flower coordinator. Her tireless work adds so much to the beauty of our services. She also tends to our church garden, which provides nature's beauty for the entire community to share. If you would like to provide flowers on our altar please contact Jamie.

Our Hospitality Team continues our Church tradition of delicious food, hot drinks, and our every popular coffee hour after church. The sounds of laughter, good conversation and happiness echoes through the walls! Sincere thank you to Janice Murphy and Ruth Soper for their ever present delicious goodies and warm smiles.

Kirsten Davis continues to provide Christian Service, thank you Kirsten for continuing with this important work.

To thank the Missions Team requires a large applause! Joan Chatterton, Marion Harding and the Guild Ladies. Your dedication and love for others is unsurpassed. These projects bring all of us, young and old alike, working together to help those less fortunate than ourselves. You provide so much to so many.

Our ushers: George Comiskey and Barry Games share their welcoming smiles and gentle caring to each of us every Sunday. Thank you.



Our Pastor Parish Relations Team is made up of Susan Stead, Carol Sheehan and George Comiskey. Thank you for the love you show for every member of our Church family.

Thank you to Peggy Smith for being our telephone communicator. Your job is so important to keep everyone 'in the loop.'

Greeters...such an important part of our church. As you enter our church you are warmly greeted by members of your church family. You are the first ones to welcome one and all.

Our Stewardship Team: Toni Cassidy, George Comiskey and Sylvia Johnston. This year's theme is "Journey to Generosity". Thank you for coordinating this important part of our church. As stewards you are called to care and preserve this Church in order to continue its missions and spiritual message. Thank you for all you do. Also, a big thanks to the speakers in church who shared their stories of blessings they have received as members of this church.

**JANUARY:** Our year began with our traditional New Year's Brunch, incorporating our worship service with a beautiful service. Remember to "Keep your Fork!" Thank you to all those who provided the delicious dishes. We nourished our bodies and souls together.

Our Annual Meeting was held in accordance with Our Congregation's Constitution and By-laws.

**MARCH:** George Comiskey shared a message during worship as our Earth Day Celebration. Palm Sunday held in our traditional manner. Maundy Thursday was our service of communion, music and scripture.

**APRIL:** Easter Sunday, a glorious day filled with the joys and hopes of our beliefs. We began this day with a moving sunrise service at Camp Leslie, followed by our Easter breakfast that fills our bodies and our spirits. Our Easter Service was inspirational. After the service our youth hunted for the Easter eggs and all the fun of the morning. Easter plants were delivered to members of our congregation by the Diaconate and helpers.

April also held exciting times for 13 church women as we headed up to Tamworth, New Hampshire for a retreat. Thank you to Toni Cassidy and her family for opening their beautiful home to us. It was a weekend of many emotions. We made new friends, connected with old friends, learned so much about each other and our faith and our beliefs. Rev. Lorraine provided us with spiritual nourishment as we discussed "Love Never Fails, A Journal to be inspired by the power of Love" by Hilda St. Clair. We enjoyed the fellowship that only a bonfire can give off, with moving songs by Alecia Baldof. Of course, we enjoyed preparing and eating our meals together. We slowed down, drank our tea and goodies from antique china cups and bonded at our very own "Tea Party." We trekked down to the local farm and were charmed by God's creatures, and one of us (Gladie) felt her heart swell at the sight of the baby lambs! Hikes, food, companionship, kindness and care. It was perfect.



**JUNE:** Our STRAWBERRY month. Our Annual Strawberry Social was certainly happy and successful! Under the very capable leadership of Emily Knapp and Janice Murphy we enjoyed a wonderful time with a great turnout! It is a fine-tuned machine that works so well!

June also brings our traditional Children's Service and our Graduation Sunday. We all look forward to these special days of sharing with our wonderful youth.

**JULY and AUGUST:** Our Wednesday evening worship services started in Fellowship Hall. Diaconate was responsible for two services in July and two services in August while Rev. Lorraine was on a well-deserved vacation. The theme for our summer services "Christmas in July" was a lot of fun for all who attended. Our beautiful Christmas tree with all the changing colored lights, our handmade stockings we hung with care, and we even had a fireplace to keep us warm! Several international crèches were placed on our tables to enjoy. Our very capable team of Janice Murphy and Ruth Soper made sure we had delish hot dogs, lemonade, and iced tea each week. Ruth even baked Christmas cookies and Christmas cupcakes to keep with our theme. We hope you all had fun and enjoyed sharing traditions and your moving Christmas memories with your Church family.

During our summer services, we were so blessed to have our musicians, who shared their God-given talent with all of us. Richard Aberman, Gabe and Rachel Angerhofer, Alecia Balduf, Allan and David Barlow, Bob Knapp, Mary Ann Nelson, Linda Flynn, and our own fabulous bell choir! We also were entertained by the beautiful music of Betsy Kopyc, with her incredible harp music that brought us such peacefulness and beauty. Each one of our musicians spend so much time researching, preparing and performing for us. Thank you. Joan Chatterton decorating our "School Supplies" box with happy snowmen. You are a tireless member of missions and never let us down. The box was overflowing because of the generous support of all our church family. You are all the greatest.

**SEPTEMBER:** Our Sunday Services resumed.

Rally Day with J.T. Turner. As tradition continues, J.T. never lets us down. A great speaker with great messages! The day continued with a delicious brunch, attended by many. Blessing of the Backpacks was continued. Always a nice way to start the new "school and work" year.

**OCTOBER:** OUR FAIR!! So many thanks to all those who continuously share their talents and their time. To our Chairperson, Rich Brock, you amaze us all with you energy and love for this church. A New England Fall Church Fair? Who can resist the colors, the smells, the laughter and the home made apple pies???!! A bite of these legendary desserts opens a floodgate of memories.

World Wide Communion was held with special breads and a meaningful service. Also worked with Missions for collecting monies for UCC Fund for those affected by weather disasters.



A Pet Pantry has been coordinated by Tom Chafee and Marie Birdsell. A Blessing of Pets was held on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Many shared photos of their beloved fur babies. These were blessed and St. Francis medals were given out.

Rev. Lorraine held a study group "Race and Us: Woodlawn."

**NOVEMBER:** Remembrance Sunday was held again this year with the lighting of candles in memory of loved ones.

A beautiful and moving Community Thanksgiving Celebration was held on November 21<sup>st</sup> at the Church of Jesus Christ of Later Day Saints.

**DECEMBER:** Advent Readers and Candle Lighters; Christmas Pageant, Christmas Skit, Christmas Eve Magical Candlelit Service, Christmas Day Service with Opening of presents... my what a wonderful Christmas season we all shared. Also, continuing our Gingerbread House contest was a huge success!

The Diaconate and many helpers decorated the sanctuary. We hung garlands and wreaths, placed candles in the windows, and set up our beautiful crèche. Thanks to all who turned our beautiful sanctuary into an "awe-filled, catch-your-breath" beauty!

H.O.M.E. for Christmas is our annual Christmas gift-giving, and again our Christmas Tree was set up in the Narthex. Thank you for all who decorated and to all who gave so freely to make Christmas special for these children. Your generosity reaches far and wide!

The Diaconate delivered poinsettias and visited with members of our Church family. Blessings upon your deacons, who work so hard to be there for each of you. We encourage each of you to share your thoughts, joys, sorrows with any one of us. We love spending time with you.

Lastly, the "heart" of our Church...the Volunteer. I have never asked for help without receiving it, and receiving it with a smile and "anything else I can do?" as well. You are all so loving and generous with your individual talents and endless hours of time. Thank you. *"Nobody really knows how much anyone else is hurting. We could be standing next to someone who is completely broken and we'd never know. So, be kind always. With yourself and others."* Unknown

Respectfully submitted,  
Gladys M. Kneeland, Chair

Remember: "God's love is so large it can cover the world, but so small it can curl up in the corner of your heart."



# Christian Development Report

## Lent

Youth performed three skits during the Lenten Season. They were:

|                          |                |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| March 17 <sup>th</sup> : | Good Samaritan |
| March 26 <sup>th</sup>   | Invitations    |
| April 2 <sup>nd</sup>    | Heifer skit    |

## Women's Retreat

This year the women of our congregation were once again able to attend a women's retreat due to the generosity of Toni Cassidy and her family. Several women of our congregation traveled to Tamworth NH to enjoy the company of each other at her family's vacation home. Rev. Lorraine organized a program that was very engaging and meaningful to the participants. The women felt a great sense of camaraderie and were very thankful to spend time with each other in such a beautiful place.

## Easter Sunday, April 16th

### Sunrise Service Breakfast

Youth Group provided breakfast for those who attended Sunrise Service at Camp Leslie, immediately following the service, in the Fellowship Hall.

### Easter Egg Hunt

As has become our annual tradition, CD sponsored an Easter Egg Hunt on the front lawn of church immediately following 10:30am worship. We appreciate all who donated candy Easter Eggs. It was a warm beautiful day and the children had a lot of fun gathering the colorful eggs.

## Thirty Hour Famine, May 6-7th

The Youth Group once again participated in the 30 Hour Famine as their service project. Rich Brock organized a group of youth to fundraise money and participate in this special event. Children and leaders stayed at the church overnight and participated in activities designed to help them understand what it is like to be hungry as part of daily life while not eating anything themselves. The group then breaks their fast immediately following worship with a group breakfast in Fellowship Hall.

## Children's Sunday, June 11th

Children and Teachers were recognized with gifts during worship for participating in Church School throughout the year.



## **Rally Day, September 10th**

JT Turner presented another engaging message to the Congregation to kick off Rally Day. Adults and children from the congregation alike participated with him during his performance.

## **Christmas Pageant**

This year, CD worked with Rev. Edwards to present a skit over the four weeks leading up to Christmas. The skit was a service-oriented skit titled "Christmas Shoe Tree". Children and adults participated. The story is set at a Tree Farm that collects lightly used and new shoes to donate to those who cannot afford them due to economic, disaster or personal reasons. CD sponsored our own Shoe Tree collection. We collected shoes throughout Advent. These shoes were then shipped to the Soles4Souls.org who will distribute them domestically and internationally. We appreciate the congregation's support of this service project.

Also, during worship on the fourth Sunday of Advent, the congregation participated in a Christmas Pageant. The Christmas Story was narrated and the audience had bags presented to them prior to worship with designated parts and props. When the narrator read the word that signaled their participation the congregants made their way to the pulpit and remained there until the end of the pageant.

## **Teaching Schedule**

Many thanks to the teachers who volunteered their time and talent to teaching our youth. This year we restructured the teaching schedule so that the teachers were only responsible for teaching one third of the Church School year. Teaching assignments were arranged on an Excel spreadsheet and distributed, so that each teacher would know when they were teaching and to give them advance notice of days when Church School was not meeting. We feel that this was easier for the teachers to manage their time.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michelle Brock  
Chairperson



# Church Book Group Report

The Church Book Group, met nine times in 2017. The get-togethers were held in members' homes, in the Guild Room at church, and at Camp Denison.

We read a variety of books, fiction and non-fiction, and we had some lively discussions. This group has been meeting for twelve year.

Anyone is welcome to attend these discussions. New attendees are always welcome!

Submitted for the Book Group by

*Nancy Aberman*



# FCC 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. Proceeds were split between the food pantry and the youth group.

## **Lobster Raffle**

The Youth Group sponsored a Lobster Raffle during the 2017 Strawberry Social. Tickets were sold for \$5.00 for a chance to win 5 lobsters delivered anywhere in the United States. This event was very successful and may be an annual fund raising event for the Youth Group.

## **Mt. Monadnock**

The youth group kicked off their season by climbing Mt Monadnock, a mountain located in New Hampshire. It is the most prominent mountain peak in southern New Hampshire and is the highest point in Cheshire County. It is nearly 1,000 feet higher than any other mountain peak within 30 miles and rises 2,000 feet above the surrounding landscape. While just about everyone made it to the summit, we had lunch just below the summit as there were so many bugs at the top.

## **Church Fair – Bouncy House**

The youth group sponsored a bouncy house on the church's front lawn during the fair. The youth assisted with the set up and take down of the bouncy house, as well as contributed their time to help supervise the younger children that used the bouncy house throughout the day. Their willingness to contribute an hour or two demonstrates their energy and willingness to help contributed to a very successful fair.

## **Christmas Tree**

During each holiday season, the youth group sets up and decorates the Christmas Tree that is in the Narthex. Christmas Music is heard throughout the church while the trees are decorated.

## **Gingerbread House and Brunch**

The youth hosted a pizza party during the Christmas season and a Gingerbread House contest. Fellowship Hall was filled with great food and plenty of holiday cheer as over twenty gingerbread houses, trains, and a church were constructed on a very festive afternoon.



### **Youth Group Donations**

The Youth Group has decided to donate proceeds raised from the Super Sub Sales to the church's Continuation of our Legacy fund.

### **30 Hour Famine**

The Youth Group participated in the 30 hour famine, raising just over \$2500 for world hunger. Fourteen young adults along with their chaperones spent 30 hours together spending time together. The group was split into three teams and participated in activities that were fun and educational, teaching them about what it might be like in a country where food and water is not as abundant as it is at home. During the event, the youth group's mission was to venture to Plum Island to help clean up a local beach.

### **Thank You**

A huge THANK YOU to Deb Lamoureaux, Kirsten Orender, and Michelle Brock for they assistance throughout the year. Along with the youth's energy and friendship, your assistance and spirit is very much appreciated. Our youth group would not be as successful as it is without your participation and assistance.

### **Farewell**

The time has come for me to step down as the leader of our youth group. It has been an amazing ten years since I agreed to serve as youth leader when Susan Stead stepped down. When initially approached, I thought it would be something I would do for a couple of years. I never imagined that I would continue in the role until our youngest son graduated from high school. During my tenure, I've seen the youth of our church grow up to be wonderful and caring people, willing to help those in need. While much of the credit goes to their parents, I'm hopeful that the few hours each month I spent with them contributed to their success and spiritual growth. Some of my fondest memories include mountain climbing, camping, six flags, THINGS, Mother of all THINGS, two 30 hour famines, paintball, ice skating, bowling, bouncy house, going to a play with our elders, gingerbread houses, Christmas parties, Pool parties. The list can go on and on. The greatest compliment I receive is when the youth would come together and assist with the mission of our church. Everyone would indicate how well they get along, how well they work together, how well they represent our church and what we represent. I've been truly blessed to work with and to get to know so many young adults over the past ten years. It has been a pleasure and an honor to work with the youth of our church.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rich Brock – Youth Leader



# Report of the Property Team

The property team has been working on a number of different projects over this past year.

A new fire alarm panel has been installed.

A dedicated phone line was installed in the elevator.

Storm windows have been reinforced and we are in the process of replacing the rest of the broken panels.

2017 has seen the start of the replacement of the exterior doors to the church. After some time for getting our approval from the Historical Commission for our front doors they have been ordered and manufactured. We got our notice just before Christmas that the doors had been finished and we are setting up for the delivery of the doors. The side door has now been replaced and the back door is on site waiting for install.

The storm that we had in late October took out one of the original windows up in the back balcony. The window was not salvageable but has been re-built and is now waiting for the installation of the glass.

We have signed an agreement with Martial Arts Studio for use of the fellowship hall during the week. The rental fee will help offset budget concerns during this new year.

Some items that we will be working on this coming year are:

- \* Installing of new front doors
- \* Replacement of front and side steps to the church
- \* Strip and shingle portion of roof over the office where we have been having leaks due to ice dams
- \* Continue replacement of storm panels.
- \* Painting of ceiling in Fellowship Hall

I want to thank members of the Property Team, Steve Pinto and Kevin Southwick for the work and time they have given to the church as we work our way through the Church's needs.

Respectfully Submitted

Tim Dougherty, Chair



# Annual Report of the Women's Guild

We continued to enjoy each other's friendship in our 94<sup>th</sup> year as the Women's Guild of the First Congregational Church of Georgetown! The following is a summary of the year we've shared.

After a winter hiatus we intended to resume our meetings in March, but it was not meant to be! Due to storms and generally inclement weather we were forced to cancel two meetings – one was a Field Trip to the Giving Tree for a service project. **We ended up not meeting again until the last week of April when we welcomed Rev. Lorraine as our Guest Speaker.** As always this was a delightful meeting with hands on sampling of the healing ingredients of our backyard plants, and old-fashioned herbal remedies, including their histories that have been handed down for generations. We supported a mission project of the Women's Essex Association UCC with a donation of fifty bars of soap for the **Bags of Hope** that is an outreach program for homeless women in the Boston area.

We also want to acknowledge Lorraine's gift of a beautiful sofa and armchair given to us for the Guild Room. We needed to replace our old sofa and thought we'd be in for considerable expense, so we're very thankful for this donation. The Guild room is not only enjoyed by our members, but is also used by other groups who meet there in comfort.

During the summer months the Guild Outreach Team sponsored a **school supplies drive** to benefit children of struggling families in the Merrimack Valley. Two boxes and three bags of school supplies were generously donated. Our fall meetings started off in September with an enthusiastic attendance of twenty-eight members and guests when we welcomed NECCO instructor, Mike Cross, as guest speaker on the very popular subject of chocolate! Mike gave an entertaining talk on the subject that was followed by a buffet of chocolate sweets.

In October Guild women organized the **Annual Cookie Walk for the Church Fair**, always a rewarding endeavor, with the generous support of the congregation. We experienced another wonderful attendance at **our Halloween meeting...** a testimony to Chris Comiskey's popular stories about our town's history! Chris' presentation focused on a "spooky" virtual trip through old Union Cemetery since it was Halloween. Twenty-four members and friends enjoyed these stories.

A work bee for baby quilts and counting Coffee Hour Penny Bowl donations dominated our November meeting. Thanks to the sewing talents of Millie Gangloff and Gloria Webster, we were able to tie six quilts for the Community Giving Tree of Boxford. The Penny Bowl proceeds, under the supervision of Ann Kelloway, contributed toward the church's heating bill and purchased diapers for the Giving Tree.



**“A Best Ever” Christmas Luncheon Party took place on December 8<sup>th</sup>**, rounding out the year with an uplifting musical entertainment, provided by Mary Ann Nelson, Alecia Balduf, Kim Knapp and Allan Barlow. An appreciative twenty-two members and friends enjoyed this pleasant Advent event.

We will resume meetings this March 2018. We always welcome new members and guests to our informal meetings.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marion Harding & Joan Chatterton



# Annual Report of the Christian Outreach Team

We're going to start our report this year by highlighting the two missions that hold the longest-standing record of our church's support: **Heifer Project International** and the **H.O.M.E.** program in Orland, Maine. Over four and a half decades our Church Family has purchased hundreds of animals for Heifer Project. Our children and teens have always taken an active role in this mission. These animals have helped people in our own back yard as well as in remote parts of the world. In 2017 we raised funds (\$500) through the **Annual Candy & Craft Sale**, to purchase a heifer - a gift that "will keep on giving". The family who received this heifer, in one of the poorest areas of our country - the Arkansas Delta, will pass on the first off-spring to another family in need of earning an income. By the same token, our dedication to **H.O.M.E.** has been steadfast as we always end the year with sending gifts to the H.O.M.E. children to make their Christmas special. This year more than sixty brightly wrapped gifts were sent to this impoverished area.

Our annual pledge given through the **Wider Mission of the United Church of Christ, Massachusetts Conference**, and support for our **UCC Northeast Association's Scholarship Fund**, amounted to \$3,264 for 2017. These funds come from the congregation's individual yearly pledges. In the spring we give to **One Great Hour of Sharing**, a UCC special offering, which focused in 2017 on the enormous plight of 65 million world-wide refugees. This year that offering amounted to \$655. We gave the mission portion (\$638) of our **Lenten** (spring) offering to **Ruth's House in Haverhill**. This organization is dedicated to providing basic necessities for disadvantaged families in the Merrimack Valley. The mission portion of the **Advent** (\$380) offerings went to the **United Church of Christ Disaster Relief USA Fund**. Local aid, from one of our church's endowment accounts, provided \$1,500 in assistance for those in crisis within our own community.

Our Team thanks those who faithfully contribute to our **Pantry Program** that includes providing non-perishable food items, paper goods, and \$800 in grocery gift cards for 2017. The Pantry is a support system for local families in need. We are now ministering to our visitors' pet companions, too, by the availability of appropriate cat and dog foods. If we have over-stocked items, we deliver them to **Our Neighbor's Table**, (130 lbs. in 2017). This is an extensive Food Pantry, located in Amesbury, and serving twelve area towns, including Georgetown. Our church also assisted with donations in setting up the Food Pantry at the new Georgetown COA home at the Perley School.

The Women's Guild continue their mission work for the **Community Giving Tree** that helps thousands of needy children in the Merrimack Valley by distributing children's clothing in excellent condition, baby equipment, layettes, diapers and blankets. Our Coffee Hour Penny Bowl contributions purchased 97 doz. diapers in the spring and 50 doz. in December. The December delivery included six hand-made baby quilts made by Guild



members. In addition the **Penny Bowl contents contributed \$175 to the church's fuel bill this year.** Loose change and dollar bills, collected at the Coffee Hours, are put to very worthwhile causes!

The Guild supported the **Bags of Hope** program (personal care items for homeless women in Boston) and sponsored a congregational drive for school supplies, during the weeks of late summer, that benefited **Ruth's House in Haverhill.** Two boxes and three large bags of **classroom supplies were collected,** helping children get off to a good start at the beginning of September. In December, members took **126 pairs of new socks** to the mission's Haverhill facility.

Under the direction of the Christian Development Team and Youth Leaders, our teens were involved with many missions. By organizing a car wash and a Super Bowl Sub fundraiser, they raised money for purchasing grocery gift cards for the Pantry, and helping a feline rescue shelter. Their larger mission project was undertaking the **30-Hour Famine,** a World Vision endeavor to feed hungry children world-wide. An after-service luncheon and pledges to the teens for their 30-hour famine, netted \$1,395 for World Vision. (Every \$35 raised feeds and cares for a child for one month.) Out of 3,200 teams of young adults who participated in the famine, our group placed 135<sup>th</sup> in terms of money raised! Congratulations to our First Church Youth Group and their adult leaders for this outstanding success! The CD Team also sponsored **Soles 4 Souls,** collecting gently used and new shoes to help refugees fleeing from war, and victims of natural disasters and poverty.

This past fall the Outreach Team's focus was on the destruction, loss of lives, homes, and livelihoods from three monster hurricanes in the south and devastating fires in California. Through all-church offerings in October/November, and the mission portion of the Advent collection, we were able to assist the **United Church of Christ's Disaster Relief USA Fund** with a \$2,425 donation. The UCC devotes 100% of disaster relief funds to the cause for which it is dedicated: reconstruction, rehabilitation and healing.

We are blessed! And, as a Church Family, we strive to be a blessing to the community at large, and minister to those in need with our outreach. Thank you, members and friends of the First Congregational Church, for your generosity!

Respectfully submitted for the Outreach Team,  
*Marion Harding and Joan Chatterton*



# **2017 Fall Fair Report**

## **October 19<sup>th</sup> and October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

Our annual church fair continues to be huge success as was the case again this year. While a major contributor to the financial wellness of our church, this annual fair is a time of fellowship amongst our congregation and the community of Georgetown. It is a wonderful and festive event, enjoyed by all.

To all the members of the committees that helped out this year, thank you for coordinating your individual stations, and offering your suggestions and thoughts for improvements. Your talents, creativity, teamwork and dedication are truly appreciated. Our fair is great sign of who we are as a church, one of fellowship and fun.

As always, the food was outstanding. We received many compliments about our breakfast, luncheon, and our Turkey Dinner. The Cookie Walk has become a favorite with the various homemade sweet snacks that we offer. And the soups (sausage is my favorite) that were sold. Nobody went away hungry

Pies, pies, and more pies. This is the best part of our fair. Not just because they are delicious, which they are, but the effort and love that goes into each one. Anyone that was lucky enough to be in the church during the days before the fair could smell those wonderful pies cooking in the oven.

We had over 25 vendors this year with much to offer. Our success with the fair is dependent on the number of visitors that enter the church. The vendors provide different gift options, which bring the community to the fair.

We continue to benefit from the support of the local businesses and organizations within the community who contribute money, product and services to our raffle. We could not experience the successes from our fair without their contributions.

I am grateful to Michelle Bridges for her guidance and mentoring as this was my first year as fair chair. I am truly blessed to have worked with so many wonderful volunteers who give up so much of their time for the benefit of this fair and this church. Your efforts and contributions are truly appreciated. The fair generated just over \$12,000. What a huge accomplishment.

Respectively submitted,  
Rich Brock  
Fair Chair - 2017



# 2017 Annual Women's Day Fair

It all started with a vision... an idea.. a fair to welcome spring and welcome the community to meet some wonderful vendors and shop!

The Annual Women's Day Fair debuted on Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup> 2017.

The fair had everything our fall fair had, but on a smaller scale.. We had corporate vendors at the fair – another great year for our vendors and lots of fun for all of our volunteers!

The day was buzzing with foot traffic through out the fellowship hall. The lawn was active with vendors and artisans. Our marketing team really worked hard to get the word out about this event..and it certainly showed with the foot traffic!

We have been running this event since 2014 and due to the success of the event, we are in the stage of planning our 2018 Annual Women's Fair.

This would not have been possible without the dedication and talents of the congregation everyone embraced this event and fully supported it.

Michelle Bridges  
2017 Women's Day Fair Chairperson



# Hospitality

The Hospitality Team has continued to host coffee hours and special events during 2017. Fellowship after worship is an important time to meet new people attending our church and to catch up with friends that we do not see during the week.

Special Thanks to Ruth Soper who has graciously offered to Co-Chair.

Thank you also to Kevin Southwick who has helped many Sundays with setting up and cleaning up.

Special Events in 2017 included:

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>January:</b>           | Diaconate hosted a New Year's Pot Luck Brunch.<br>Louis T. (Bud) Hamelin Memorial Service  |
| <b>March:</b>             | New Members Sunday with a special coffee hour.<br>St. Patrick's Bake Sale  |
| <b>June:</b>              | Children's Day and Graduation Celebration  |
| <b>July &amp; August:</b> | Served hot dogs and desserts for our Wednesday Services.   |
| <b>September:</b>         | Earl Johnston Memorial service   |
| <b>December:</b>          | Diaconate hosted a Cocoa and Cookie Fellowship time on 12/17.<br>Christmas Eve Service – After the service we had fellowship time with punch and cookies. This was a great time to greet old friends.<br>December 31, Diaconate hosted a Special Pre-New Year's Eve Celebration. |

Thank you to everyone for helping to make sandwiches and baking goodies this past year.

Respectively Submitted,  
Co-Chairs Janice Murphy and Ruth Soper



# ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STEWARDSHIP TEAM

*"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."*

The message from Matthew beckons us to answer the call as disciples to work on behalf of the Lord.

The Stewardship Team would like to give thanks to Church Collector JoEllen Fielding for her continued support and making sure our Giving Tree is always blossoming. Our stewardship speakers this year included Deacon Janice Murphy and youth group member Haleigh Harris. Thank you both for your heartfelt messages on the importance of the Church and the effect it has on your daily lives. Your stories were wonderfully inspirational!

We thank everyone for their contributions and welcome the future gifts that you offer of your time, talent and treasures towards the health of the First Congregational Church of Georgetown. We understand that pledging involves thoughtful prayer and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for this sacrifice!

Blessings From the Stewardship Team,

Toni Cassidy, Sylvia Johnston & George Comiskey



# Church Internal Audit

Michelle Bridges  
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Georgetown MA 01833  
978-361-5646  
Mtardy123@gmail.com

January 8, 2018

This letter will serve as confirmation that I have completed the audit process and in reviewing the financials and ledger accounts for The First Congregational Church Of Georgetown Massachusetts, I have found no discrepancies all recordkeeping and reporting are in compliance per the "Internal Audit" guidelines.

At this time I have no recommendations or suggestions for any procedural changes.

Please feel free to contact with any questions.

Thank you!

Michelle Bridges



# Report of the Nominating Team-2018

| Team                    | Name               | End Year | 2018 Nominating Action |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----------|------------------------|
| Moderator               | Rich Brock         | 2020     |                        |
| Clerk                   | Toni Cassidy       | 2019     |                        |
| Treasury Team           | Peggy Smith        | 2019     |                        |
|                         | Sylvia Johnston    | 2020     |                        |
|                         | Kristen Arsenaault | 2021     | Nominated              |
| Diaconate               | Emily Knapp        | 2019     |                        |
|                         | Kristen Arsenaault | 2020     |                        |
|                         | Alecia Balduf      | 2020     |                        |
|                         |                    |          |                        |
|                         |                    |          |                        |
| Christian Development   | Michelle Brock     | 2019     |                        |
|                         | Kirsten Orender    | 2020     |                        |
|                         |                    |          |                        |
| Property Team           | Tim Dougherty      | 2019     |                        |
|                         | Kevin Southwick    | 2020     |                        |
|                         |                    |          |                        |
| Council Member-At-Large | Joanne Kelly       | 2019     | Nominated              |

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Brock, Moderator