



PLYMOUTH
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023



259th ANNUAL MEETING

June 18, 2023

Carol Stewart, Council Chair

Wayne Martin, Council Vice Chair

Linda LaPrad, Finance Officer

Wayne Martin, Clerk

Rev. S. M. Holland, Pastor and Teacher

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259th ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA
PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
PLYMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Sunday, June 18, 2023
10:45 AM

Carol Stewart, Council Chair

Convening of the Annual Meeting, Declaration of Quorum.....Carol Stewart, Council Chair

Call to Meeting.....Wayne Martin, Clerk

Invocation and Owing of the Covenant.....The Reverend S. M. Holland

Minutes of the 258th Annual Meeting received.....Wayne Martin, Clerk

Items for Action

Renew the Covenant
with Habitat for Humanity.....The Rev. Ruth Mosher, Mission Committee

Reaffirmation of UKAMA (Partnership) Covenant.....Eileen Torrey

Anti-Racism commitment to be voted on.....Alison Thatcher

Report of the Nominating Committee and
Election of 2023-2024 Officers and Committees.....Fran Taylor, Nominating Committee

Approval of Proposed Budget for 2023-2024.....Linda LaPrad, Finance Officer

Approval of the Committee Reports.....Committee Chairs

Other Business

Adjournment

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit,
God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God,
and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being; create persons in your own image,
and set before each one the ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior,
you have come to us and shared our common lot,
conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit,
creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ,
binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues and races.

You call us into your church
to accept the cost and joy of discipleship,
to be your servants in the service of others,
to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil,
to share in Christ's baptism
and eat at his table,
to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you
forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,
courage in the struggle for justice and peace,
your presence in trial and rejoicing,
and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

COVENANT OF THE CHURCH

We covenant one with another to seek and to respond to the Word and the will of God.

We purpose to walk together in the ways of the Lord,
made know and to be made known to us.

We hold it to be the mission of the Church
to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world
while worshipping God, and striving for truth, justice and peace.

As did our fathers and mothers, we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us.

We pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God
and look with faith toward the triumph of righteous and eternal life.

COMMITMENT TO OPENNESS AND AFFIRMATION

In keeping with the Covenant of our church, we, the members of the Plymouth Congregational Church of the United Church of Christ in Plymouth, New Hampshire, respond to the call of the 15th General Synod of the United Church of Christ and to the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ by making the following commitment:

Blessed by the bountiful care of God and by the support and love of one another, this church seeks to affirm all members of our fellowship and all who live in the greater community. We especially declare our openness and affirmation to all who have been diminished by prejudice, bigotry and oppression. We marvel at the many children of God and their varied talents. Yet we acknowledge that the world's views have often prevailed and that these same brothers and sisters in Christ have at times been neglected or met with silence.

As a result of this Church's experiences, intentional study, prayer and action in dealing with those who may feel alienated from the Church of Jesus Christ, we lift up all people as equal brothers and sisters and resolve that this Church shall continue to seek ways to affirm and to include them.

Recalling the example of our Lord, we resolve to welcome all people regardless of their economic status. We look and work for the day when success will not be measured by material wealth.

Recognizing the enrichment of the Church calls for the involvement of all people, we resolve to welcome both young and old, as well as those of all physical and mental abilities.

Remembering the Good Samaritan, we resolve to welcome all without regard to race or ethnic background. We shall be active in celebrating the rich texture of our cultural differences.

Acknowledging that all are equal recipients of God's grace, we resolve to welcome those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. Just as many gifts from God differ from one person to another, we understand sexual orientation to vary.

Knowing that in Christ there is no such thing as male and female, we resolve to welcome both men and women as equals. We welcome all people, in families, couples or as single persons, and hope that together we may work toward justice and peace.

Therefore, we declare that the Plymouth Congregational Church shall be an open and affirming Church for all people in both its membership and leadership. Knowing that this commitment poses a spiritual challenge, we promise to gently encourage each other in our own struggle to understand and accept, to pray for the strength to dispel ignorance, fear and hatred, and to choose to turn toward loving and away from judging, since only God is capable of pure impartiality.

Resting in the guidance and inspiration of Scripture and believing that there are many interpretations of the Word, we acknowledge that God encompasses yet surpasses the written word, and we pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our continuing quest to be open and affirming.

THE CALL

PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UCC

is called to be:

A COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY
INTENTIONALLY INCLUSIVE
OPENLY SEARCHING
JOYFULLY SERVING
IN THE WAY OF CHRIST

COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY

Believing that we are charged to act on God's mission, we seek to become the Creator's hands and heart in this world. We strive to be God's welcoming love in an all-encompassing community, believing that from our own privilege comes much responsibility.

INTENTIONALLY INCLUSIVE

We seek to trust in the uniqueness and diversity of God's children, believing Grace is infinite and is offered to all. Trusting that the paths of faithfulness are many, we invite, welcome, and embrace all people of God's 'kingdom.' We strive to love and support each other in our 'differentness,' as we meet God's family face-to-face.

OPENLY SEARCHING

We believe that the pilgrimage of all human beings is to understand God and God's mission. As progressive seekers on a lifelong spiritual journey, we find more grace in the questions than in dogmatic answers, more faith in our search than in human-conceived constructs. We believe that our lifelong journeys are as varied as the ways of learning, and that our walk together strengthens our relationship with God, each other, and the world.

JOYFULLY SERVING

We believe that the abundance of God's grace is exciting, liberating, inviting, and life changing. Opportunities to do justice and bring kindness are many and are expected of us as God's missionaries in this world. From the abundance of our blessings, we join the generations that came before us to continue the circle of service to God's children, as joyful stewards of God's wondrous creation.

IN THE WAY OF CHRIST

We claim our voice as a Christian community, welcoming the challenges and opportunities as we approach God through the life and teachings of Jesus.

Together we seek to imitate Jesus' compassionate treatment of those often excluded from society. We covenant with each other and with God to do justice, as Jesus did.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

ITEM: HABITAT FOR HUMANITY COVENANT

In 2023-2024 PCUCC covenant with Habitat for Humanity to collect one special offering on Christmas Eve and divide it, sending 1/3 to Habitat International and 2/3 to the Pemi-Valley Habitat for Humanity.

ITEM: RESOLUTION TO RE-AFFIRM OUR UKAMA (Partnership) COVENANT

Be it resolved that the 2023 Annual Meeting of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ (PCUCC) reaffirms its UKAMA (Partnership) covenant with the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe in Masvingo by continuing to participate in the partnership between the United Church of Christ in New Hampshire and the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe.

ITEM: ANTI-RACISM COMMITMENT TO BE VOTED ON

We, the congregation of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, encouraged by the love of God, challenged by the teachings of Jesus, and energized by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, commit to the ongoing process of becoming an Anti-Racism Church. This commitment includes continual learning of the ways white supremacy is manifested in our society and in ourselves, including in our church. We commit to naming racial injustices that exist in everyday interactions as well as explicit actions of hate and bigotry. We commit to honest reflection of our own complicity in perpetuating racial injustices. We will strive to constantly take faithful action to bring about meaningful change in ourselves, our society, and our church.

ITEM: REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE and Election of 2023-2024 Officers and Committees

ITEM: BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR 2023-2024

ELECTION OF 2023/2024 OFFICERS, MINISTRY COORDINATORS, AND COMMITTEES
 Report of the Nominating Committee:
 Annual Meeting of Plymouth Congregational UCC
 June 18, 2023

Church Council Carol Stewart, Chair Wayne Martin, Vice Chair Megan Magrauth, Clerk Susan Gontarz, At Large Bev Newton, At Large	2024 2024 2025 2025 2024	Building and Grounds Committee John Fallon, Chair Dale Mosher Roger Boyer Jane Berg Butch Castor	2025 2025 2025 2024 Advisor
Music Committee Peggy Martin, Chair Margot Swift Alison Thatcher Lisa Lovett Eileen Torrey, Worship David Williams, Ex-officio	2024 2024 2024 2025	Finance Committee Ann Thurston, Treasurer Linda LaPrad, Finance Officer Jenny Thibeault Steve Majeski	2024 2024
Deacons Carol Stewart Malcolm Taylor Bev Tedeschi Lynn Morrison Eleanor Spencer Eileen Torrey, Worship Chair	2024 2024 2025 2025 Support Support	Human Resources Committee Lynn Morrison, Chair Bev Tedeski, Music Kathy Henning, At Large Chris Pollock, Faith Formation	2025 2025 2025 2025
Fellowship		Nominating Committee Megan Magrauth Georgene Fabian	2025 2025
Faith Formation Committee Julie Kelsey, Chair Emily Ball Edie Doherty	2024 2025 2025	Mission & Social Outreach Committee Ruth Martz, Chair Rebecca Larson Ruth Mosher Kathy Henning Eileen Torrey Linda Byam	2025 2025 2025 2024 2024 2024
Worship Committee Eileen Torrey, Chair Carol Stewart	2024 2025	Parish Relations Bev Newton Rebecca Larson Wayne Martin	

PASTOR'S REPORT

Dear Members and Friends,

We continue to receive blessings from pledges, partnerships, in kind donations, and from your talents and time. It is a struggle in our current cultural climate to figure out how we will identify publicly as a Christian community. Our gospel call is to determine how we can bring God's love to the world – through service and proclamation. While we are more connected through technology than ever before, figuring out *how* we are compelled to reach out is difficult. Together, we work to keep the faith and carry good news, no matter the challenges before us.

In this post-pandemic / COVID-19 endemic time, we see many challenges. We wonder why more people have not returned and yet we work to be grateful that so many people find deep comfort in being able to worship from home. In the past year, a second AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) group has begun to meet here; this is good news as many people in society struggle with addiction. While Meals for Many will be continuing, that group will be facing an upcoming transition as Michael Nicholas will be stepping down as the head chef. Let's pray for Plymouth Area Community Closet and Michael during this transitional time. As our building continues to be open, we must ask ourselves how we can best provide testament to the love, justice, peace, and hope of Christ.

Since my last annual report, we have tried launching a Sunday evening service and we have established consistent and publicized new member Sundays (3rd Sundays). I pray we will continue to be proud that folks continue to join our beloved church. While we have strong programming for many ages, there is still much room to grow regarding reaching out to families with children and youth. In the upcoming year, our leadership (including lay as well as pastoral) should work to strategize ways for increased engagement. For example, perhaps there is a way to expand our music and youth efforts in a combined way.

The Council and Parish Relations team continues to explore ways that our church can grow in its understanding of polity (church structure) as well as boundaries. We are planning to enlist the help of the conference.

We continue to be blessed by visiting musicians and many lay people who offer their musical talents – thanks to all who plan, coordinate, and organize these efforts! Our community also grows in its justice efforts as we will be voting on if we will become an Anti-Racism church; may we all know that this is the beginning of a journey, rather than an ending.

Finally, the HOPE Fund remains one of the greatest testaments of our gospel call. Unfortunately, many people are currently in need. Our funds have gotten relatively low, and while it is not a good thing, it does mean that we have helped several people in meaningful and important ways.

Please know I continue to hold you and yours in prayer. We are one, the body of Christ, aiming to move with gospel Love.

With hope,

Rev. Sa. M. Holland, Pastor & Teacher

BUILDING & GROUNDS REPORT

The 2022-2023 year has been a challenging one for us on many fronts as our "to do" list keeps growing and our "doer's" keep declining, resulting in the need for more outside help and expense. Thankfully we were able to add John Fallon as Chair, so we can continue to move forward.

Dale Mosher has, again, been a huge help in continuing to tackle various problems. He also made and installed a new facade and cabinetry around the organ pipe chest on the wall behind the console.

The committee's major issue was how to address the problem with the continuous seepage of water on the access ramp to Fellowship Hall and in both the kitchen and FH itself. Attempts to locate and fix the problem internally over a prolonged period proved unsuccessful so we solicited a proposal from Rowell's Services.

With the coming of warmer weather, we were able to locate a small contractor to run a camera through our exterior and interior pipes. This resulted in the ability to pinpoint the likely source. We had Rowell come to pressure clean out our kitchen pipes. The floor dried out, damaged tiles were removed and replaced thanks to Dale Mosher.

All our annual inspections have been completed and certificates of approval posted.

Kudos to Butch Castor and all who in their quiet way helped to make our building welcoming and accessible.

Many thanks to those who have kept our garden areas so beautiful and neat.

Major projects for 2023-2024 are 1) replace the toilets in the lower-level bathroom with ADA compliant ones, 2) determine whether a new, different water issue is the result of recent, heavy rains, or something more serious, 3) replacing the flooring in the corridor between the elevator and fellowship hall.

Respectfully submitted,
John Fallon
Butch Castor, advisor
Jim LaPrad
Dale Mosher

Council REPORT

Council convened 10 regular meetings during the 2022-2023 year, most of them Zoom for the convenience of avoiding driving during inclement weather or at dark. With Covid restrictions in the rear view mirror, we have begun meeting in person again. It is nice to be able to bump elbows rather than stare at a box on the screen.

We were able to discuss most of what we needed to do each month without needing to hold additional meetings and we continue to seek ways to support Rev. Holland in their ministry. Wayne Martin has gracefully acted as scribe over the past year while we have been searching for a new clerk. A great big thank you for a well-done job. Nominating has advised us that a candidate is waiting in the wings.

Again, we owe heartfelt thanks to the hardworking committee chairs who, along with their members continue to work diligently toward keeping our church vibrant and active. Of particular note, we are blessed with the Hospitality Committee's ability and flexibility to hold coffee hours in spite of wet floors, few helping hands and other obstacles to make it all happen. Building and Grounds is also to be commended for solving the thorny problem of the Fellowship Hall/Kitchen floor water seepage and subsequent repair of the area.

The deadline for submission of this report occurs before our final meeting (one of the 10 listed above). The expectation is that there will be nothing further to report that has not been noted elsewhere in this Annual Report.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Stewart, Council Chair

FAITH FORMATION MINISTRY REPORT

Faith Formation has had a wonderful year and has accomplished many things! We continue to use the Lectionary Spark Curriculum for Sunday School and have about 4 to 8 children in grades PreK - 5 attend. This year, when possible, we split the group by age to better meet the needs of the children. The children have enjoyed the games, songs, and crafts that have accompanied the Bible lessons.

One thing Faith Formation focused on this year was community service. The children replenished the Little Food Pantry each Sunday. They also helped to host coffee hour and church potlucks. The children also packed bags for the Feeding Our Children Together Program.

Other focuses this year were protecting the Earth and Racial Justice. The children drew wonderful drawings showing examples of how they can protect our planet. The option was then given to enter their drawings into the Climate Hope Art Contest sponsored by the UCC. We talked about Racial Justice in Sunday School and read some books demonstrating some racial injustices. The children then drew a picture depicting how we could all have an inclusive future. These pictures were then entered into the Racial Unity Team of New Hampshire's Art and Poetry Challenge.

Rally Sunday was a success! We had a carnival theme that included piñatas, bubbles, corn hole, face painting, popcorn, and cotton candy. This was great fun for the children and adults alike. We met and watched the movie Coco while eating pizza, popcorn, and candy. It was a great night of fellowship! We are hoping to get together during the summer as well.

The children also connected with the rest of the congregation on several occasions. On Ukama Day, the children learned about the Masvingo Church in Zimbabwe, our UCC sister church. Diane Arsenault showed pictures to the children and told of visiting the church in Zimbabwe. During Advent and during the spring, the children sang some songs for the congregation.

Next year we want to continue to include service opportunities for the children and include some family events. We also would like to include the children in the Racial Justice work the church is doing. We had a great year and are looking forward to the possibilities that will present themselves next year.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Byam

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Finance Committee and Treasurer work together to plan and manage the financial affairs of the church.

We thank the congregation for their generosity and faithful completion of their 2022-23 pledges. Although we fell short of our initial pledge goal of \$180,000, we received 55 pledges (53 pledges plus 2 member commitments) totaling \$170,900. We believe we will be able to balance the budget with pledges paid in full, additional donations outside of the pledging, not spending the full amount in budgeted categories, and by using this year's allocation from our invested funds. If you have not yet fulfilled your 2022-23 pledge and are able to do so, please send it to the attention of the treasurer at the church office via PO Box 86, Plymouth, NH.

Hannaford cards continue to be regularly stocked and available in denominations of \$100, \$250, and \$500. You pay face value for every card sold through the Finance Committee and the church receives 5% which will be \$600 this year. Thank you to all who regularly purchase these prepaid gift cards. If you are interested in purchasing cards or have any questions about the program, please see Ann Thurston or Linda LaPrad.

The endowment funds through March 1, 2023 reflect the overall stock market performance during the fiscal year. We have eighteen different funds that are worth \$1.29 million. Please do remember that we only take 4% from six of those funds for church operations and use a five-year running average for each of the six funds to determine the amount withdrawn.

The 2023-24 proposed budget, which includes a pledge goal of \$180,000, has been reviewed and approved by the Treasurer, the Finance Committee and Council. We are committed to submitting balanced budgets and recognize that the budget may need to be adjusted throughout the coming year if we fall short of our revenue goal.

The budget will be available for review prior to the annual meeting and will be presented for a congregational vote at the annual meeting on June 18, 2023.

For the Finance Committee:

Jenny Thibeault

Steve Majeski

Linda LaPrad, Chair

Ann Thurston, Treasurer

Hospitality REPORT

First and foremost, thank you to Georgene Fabian for training all of us and starting the ball rolling to get coffee hour back after COVID. In addition, the whole church thanks the committees below for taking on the responsibilities of the sacred fellowship hour after church. We have used it as a time to inform and discuss current issues like race relations and New Hampshire's response to the Ukrainian orphan relief program in addition to getting to know one another more. The delicious offerings have been attended on average by about 30 people, including the children.

First Sunday – Missions Committee

Second Sunday – Choir

Third Sunday – Faith Formation Committee

Fourth Sunday – Finance Committee

Fifth Sunday – Hospitality Committee

CHALLENGE: If other committees and members not on any committee would join one of the groups above already giving their time once a month, it would mean food offerings would amount to only 3 or 4 times a year. Contact one of the committees above or Alison Thatcher to prepare food for the Sacred Sunday Fellowship.

HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

We are pleased to report that there were no new hires this past fiscal year. After 5 years of many personnel changes, it's good to have a consistent staff. HR completed updating the Personnel policy handbook in the summer of 2022. There had been no revisions in 11 years. We also completed a review of job descriptions and did all staff evaluations as well as the evaluation of the Pastor. For the pastoral evaluation, 7 church members completed an evaluation form. The compilation of the final report was a cooperative effort between council chair, a pastoral relations committee member, and HR chair. An all-church Pastoral evaluation should be done next year.

The current HR team is leaving in June. We wish the next group well in their endeavors.

Jan Bass

Linda Carrier

Susan Gontarz

Mimzie Uhler

MISSION & SOCIAL OUTREACH REPORT

Since last fall we have featured a monthly mission focus. We began in October with a focus on Voices Against Violence collecting items needed, especially personal care items, and welcoming a representative of the organization to speak to the congregation about the organization and their needs. In November the focus was on the Plymouth Area Community Closet's Keep the Heat On project. M&SO donated \$500, we had a speaker come and invited the congregation to donate as they felt moved.

December the focus was on the Star Child program where we supplied warm winter clothing to 17 children in the Head Start program. We also provided 21 gift cards for students in need at Plymouth Regional High School. February's focus was on Black History Month where Alison Thatcher, chair of the anti-racism study group, provided a video and discussion during Coffee Hour. We continued that theme into March.

In April we focused on the Common Man Ukraine project. M&SO donated \$750 while a congregational offering yielded \$670. Steve Rand presented a program on the project at Coffee Hour.

Other disbursements from our discretionary fund of \$250 went to Pemi Youth Center, The Circle Program and The Bridge House. We have set aside \$1,000 for our partner church Masvingo in Zimbabwe. As usual our support of PSU campus ministry is \$2,000.

The Feeding Our Children Together program had a great year, we consistently provided weekend meals for 13 children at Head Start and 18 children at Plymouth Elementary School. Our volunteers are: Alice O'Conner, Linda and Jim LaPrad, Peggy Martin, Georgene Fabian, Ruth Martz, Marilyn Wixson, Kathy Henning, Rebecca Larson, and Mike Nichols.

The Little Free Food Pantry continues to provide a valuable service to the community. Special thanks to the children of the church for helping to keep it stocked and learning the meaning of giving.

We are thankful to Kathy Henning for representing us on the campus ministry board. And special thanks to Chris Pollack for the amazing job of coordinating the Zimbabwe container project last fall.

Respectfully submitted
Rebecca Larson, Chair

MUSIC COMMITTEE REPORT

The Music Committee's role is the oversight of music at our church. This includes the support of the Music Director and accompanist, care of our organ and pianos, and general awareness of the value of music in Worship. We consider music to be an essential part of all Worship Services.

David Williams, Music Director, has led our faithful choir through the challenges of Covid concerns, audio issues, and weather problems. Regular choir members are Jan Bass, Arline Bownes, Melanie Dixon, Sally Jensen, Peggy Martin, Bev Newton, Alice O'Connor, Jim Preston, Carol Stewart, Rob Stewart, Fran Taylor, Alison Thatcher, and Izzy Thon. Two high school students and one PSU student augmented us irregularly in the fall. David's ability and dedication produces quality choir results even with irregular attendance and variable vocal experience.

Ashley Rose, organist/accompanist, has increased her organ ability. During Sunday services, she has been accompanying instrumentalists as well as playing the flute and singing in duets. She was the rehearsal accompanist for the Rutter concert. Her ability and flexibility are wonderful.

The new Viscount organ was featured in five recitals every Sunday afternoon in July 2022, with five accomplished organists. The dedication of this grand instrument was held November 27th with organist Ethan Haman from the Institute of Sacred Music at Yale University. The event was well attended, and Ethan provided an excellent program.

The New Hampshire Music Festival held four chamber concerts in our sanctuary in July. They paid \$8,000 for the use of the church.

In addition to the organ recitals, the Joan Campbell Lovett Fund was used for four other events. Oboist Alex Hayashi and Kristjon Imperio on piano and organ performed in November. In February the Jazz Sanctuary Band from Concord returned for a Sunday service. In March, a Mozart/Martini chamber concert with five musicians was held. In April, a community chorus of 52 singers performed a John Rutter Festival concert which included two solo organ pieces, three hymns and the Requiem with 5 instrumentalists. This was a dream of David's which became a reality due to his perseverance, organization, and outreach.

Special thanks to the dedicated work of the Music Committee: Linda Carrier, Lisa Lovett, Margot Swift, Alison Thatcher, Eileen Torrey, and David Williams.

Respectfully submitted,
Peggy Martin, Chair

STATISTICAL REPORT

PCUCC MEMBERSHIP STATISTICAL REPORT JANUARY 1, 2022 – MAY 21, 2023

Membership as of January 1, 2022 – 181

REMOVED BY DEATH:

Fran Lewis - on April 1, 2022, member
Julian “Shoe” Shoemaker - on May 5, 2022, member
Dorothy Smith - on June 10, 2022, member
Len Swenson - on September 19, 2022, non-member
Winnie Oustecky - on November 28, 2022, member
Rev. John Shaw - on January 10, 2023, member
Eldwin “Ed” Wixson = on April 6, 2023

TRANSFER OUT:

Rev. Bob Feeny – September 8, 2022 to Westminster Congregational UCC, Spokane WA
Julie Jenkins - April 2022 to Center Harbor Congregational Church, Center Harbor NH
Earl Jenkins – April 2022 to Center Harbor Congregational Church, Center Harbor
Rev. Carol Asher April 2022 to Center Harbor Congregational Church, Center Harbor
Nance Ruhm – March 22, 2023 to South Congregational Church, Concord, NH

REMOVED BY MEMBER REQUEST:

Ken Ruhm – May 3, 2023

NEW MEMBERS BY TRANSFER IN:

Ruth Martz - March 6, 2022, from Sanbornton Congregational UCC, Sanbornton NH
Steve Majeski March 6, 2022, from Sanbornton Congregational UCC Sanbornton NH
Dawn Marie Jackson – June 6, 2022, from Main Street UMC, Nashua, NH
Steve Stanley – June 6, 2022, from St. Peters Episcopal Church, Londonderry NH
Edith Doherty - June 6, 2022, from East Granby Congregational UCC, East Granby, CT
Ken Howe – December 18, 2022- from Second Church, UCC, Newton MA
Michele Giggi-Howe -December 18, 2022, from Second Church, UCC, Newton MA
Jane Berg – May 21, 2023 from Bloomfield Congregational Church, Bloomfield, CT

TOTAL MEMBERS AS OF MAY 21, 2023: 178

Worship Ministry Report

Worship brings members, friends, and visitors together each week both in the sanctuary and those viewing from the sanctuary of their home through Facebook live streaming. We draw spiritual strength from hearing the word of God through scriptures, preaching and music. We strive to love and serve God through the teachings of Jesus and through prayer. We draw strength from our friends at church all working toward a common goal of serving our church, our community and those who are in need in our community and the world.

The year of 2022 and the first half of 2023 find us searching for how to encourage our members and friends to return to the pews after Covid-19. Our attendance is low, around an average of 40. We have had over 20 faithful members leave us this last year and a half through death of 11 members and others moving to be nearer their children, warmer climates, or retirement communities like Havenwood Heritage Heights. If you have any ideas as to how we can grow the attendance, please share them with me and Pastor Holland.

We are so fortunate and blessed to have 8 new members join this year. They are very active in the life of our church and bring a renewed joy to all of us. We are grateful for your presence!

This year we implemented having friends join the church by coming forward toward the end of the worship service on the third Sunday of each month. Pastor Holland receives them into membership following the hymn and has them come to one or two classes in the coming weeks.

Some of the highlights of our year was the dedication of our new Viscount organ console with Ethan Haman at the organ! Excellent service!

The John Rutter Festival by the Plymouth Festival Chorus and chamber orchestra under the Direction of David Williams on April 16th was spiritually uplifting and well done.

The Christmas Eve Service and Easter services by Rev. Holland were uplifting as we celebrated Jesus, our risen Savior. For the Easter Sunrise service there were only 3 hardy souls that watched the sunrise over the town of Plymouth from the church steps. Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18

The Maundy Thursday service went very well and blessed those in attendance. We were blessed by music and the word for the celebration of Easter at 9:30 a.m.

We've also returned to receiving communion by going forward 12 at a time forming a circle and served communion by Pastor Holland. No more communion in a plastic cup!

My deep appreciation to Sammy, David, Ashley, Linda, and all the members and friends that stepped up to do my worship chair duties while I was in the hospital and recovering from home. God bless you all!

So many of our members and friends participated in worship not only as attendees but through their service to the church as choir members, liturgists, greeters, ushers, communion stewards, audio/video, artwork on our sanctuary walls, flowers, donations of poinsettias and Easter flowers, advent candle lighters, decorating the narthex and sanctuary for Christmas and much more.

Our grateful appreciation to our staff Rev. Sam Holland, David Williams, Ashley Rose, and Jennifer Byam who bless us every week with their gifts and graces of love and service to our congregation and community,

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Torrey, Worship Chair

MINUTES OF THE 258th ANNUAL MEETING

PCUCC
Draft Minutes
Annual Meeting
June 19, 2022

(This meeting was held in person and via live-streaming on Facebook.)

Those in attendance were asked by Rev. Sara to sing one verse of “Blest Be The Tie That Binds,” which was followed by Rev. Sara giving the opening prayer.

After ascertaining that attendance would meet the quorum needed to conduct the meeting, Carol Stewart, Council Chair, declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:47 a.m. There were 31 people in attendance in the sanctuary.

Church Clerk, Alice O’Connor, then read “The Call” (as printed in the 2021-2022 Annual Report), and Rev. Sara led the owning of the Church Covenant.

Items For Action

1. Habitat for Humanity Covenant: The 2022 PCUCC covenant with Habitat For Humanity is to collect one special offering on Christmas Eve and divide it, sending $\frac{1}{3}$ to Habitat International and $\frac{2}{3}$ to the PemiValley habitat for Humanity. Georgene Fabian gave us a short history of our relationship with Habitat.
A motion was made and seconded to approve this item.
A hand vote was taken, and this item was approved unanimously.
2. By-Law Amendment: Ann Thurston and Linda LaPrad.
By-Law ‘n’ under Article VIII, Church Council: A. The Council; 2. Duties of the Council are to (changes in **BOLD**) n. Provide for an **audit/review** by an independent, qualified **auditor/CPA/accountant** secured and deemed appropriate by the Council every five (5) years or whenever the Treasurer leaves that position before the end of a five (5) year interval. As part of the discussion, Wayne Martin asked Linda LaPrad to give a reason for this change. Both Linda and Ann addressed this. They shared that there were problems related to hiring an outside auditor.
They have been unable to find a certified auditor that will audit the accounts of a church. Also, a certified auditor would charge several thousand dollars. The NH Conference advised that that would not be a prudent use of church resources unless fraud was suspected. This amendment would allow a simple review by a financial person.
A motion was made and seconded to adopt the amendment to the By-Laws ($\frac{2}{3}$ of the members present and voting is required for adoption). The motion passed unanimously.
3. The Report of the Nominating Committee was handed out in the Annual Report. Fran Taylor addressed any questions. Fran directed us to look at page 8 which shows all Church committees with their memberships for the coming year. Discussion. Marlin commented that this year’s list seemed like it was exactly the same as last year’s list. Fran said that people who serve on committees usually serve three 2-yr terms and that would account for why they seem the same. Fran also announced that her term as Nominating Committee Chair is ending. Another discussion point was whether there are any term limits. According to the By-Laws, committee members may serve three 2-year terms and then must step down for one year. Edith Dougherty self-nominated to serve on the Faith Formation Committee. A motion was made and seconded that Edith Dougherty be accepted on the Faith

Formation Committee. A unanimous vote accepted Edie,

Fran shared that they are still looking for a new person to serve as the Clerk of the Church since Alice O'Connor has resigned after two 2-year terms. Georgene commented that Fran has been working very hard to fill vacancies, which prompted applause from those present. Rev. Sara said that since we are a somewhat small congregation, it would be nice if people would rotate into another committee or position when their term is up.

At this point, Carol asked if those present would accept the Nominating Committee's report. A motion was made and seconded to accept the report. There was unanimous acceptance.

4. Budget: There was further discussion and clarification from Linda and Ann regarding the 2022-23 budget proposal. Last year's budget was for \$200,000 in pledges, but we only received \$154,000, causing a budget shortfall. Due to the kindness and generosity of some members who gave more to the Church than what they pledged, we only had a \$46,000 shortfall. So, for this next year's budget they lowered the number to \$180,000, \$20,000 less than last year.

It was stated during this meeting that the Church's electric and fuel bills are predicted to go up over last year's bills. One thing we did last year that helped a lot was to prepay the bills at a rate that the company held to for the year. Right now, the electric and fuel companies have not determined a rate for prepaying. They will continue to look into this. Sue Switaj said that she used to work for an electric company, and she said would volunteer to talk to them about reducing our electric bill. Ann will meet with Sue to discuss this.

Linda shared that the Council decided that there would be a quarterly review of our budget this next fiscal year.

Rev. Sara suggested that someone volunteer to look at the fees we charge to outside entities to use our sanctuary for events. Maybe those fees need to change.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the 2022-23 budget as presented by the Finance Committee and recommended by Council. The motion passes unanimously.

Wayne Martin thanked the Financial Committee, the Treasurer and the Council for their hard work this last year. This was seconded by applause from those present.

Peggy Martin offered thanks to David Williams, our Choir Director, and Ashley Payne, our organist/pianist, and our choir members for their work over this last year. This was met with applause.

Marlin Collingwood brought to everyone's attention that there is a new committee this coming year – Parish Relations – and that Rebecca Larson and Bev Newton are on it. Their purpose is to provide support for the Pastor. He wondered if calling it the Pastoral Care Committee might be a more appropriate name.

Rev. Sara shared that the Merrimack Association for the United Church of Christ met at our church last Sunday. We have 6 kids, as well as adult leaders, heading to Oregon on a mission trip. She expressed thanks to all who have been working with the kids in preparation for the trip and expressed thanks for the support of the Church.

Eileen Torrey expressed her thanks to Rev. Sara. 2021-22 was her first year here at PCUCC and it was a difficult one.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded, and approved unanimously at 11:39 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Alice O'Connor