

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

First Congregational Church of Natick (UCC)



*Celebrating 20 Years  
as an  
Open and Affirming  
Congregation*



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

First Congregational Church of Natick (UCC)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Warrant for the Annual Business Meeting .....	5
Nominating Slate .....	6
Ministry Team Leaders and Members .....	7
Moderator's Message .....	8
Report of the Church Clerk .....	10
Pastor's Report .....	11
Spiritual Vitality & Congregational Care Director Report .....	12
Church Administrator Report .....	15
Finance Team .....	16
Treasurer's Report and 2024 Budget .....	17
Balance Sheet .....	17
Operating Fund INCOME .....	18
Operating Fund EXPENSES .....	19
Operating Inc./Exp. Totals, Other Fund Balances .....	21
Buildings and Grounds .....	22
Bylaws .....	24
Capital Improvements Projects .....	25
Capital Projects Financial Summary Narrative .....	28
Communications .....	30
Social Media .....	31
Congregational Care .....	32
Curator .....	33
Mission and Outreach .....	34
Guatemala Partners .....	35
Immigration and Asylum Support .....	37
Music Ministry .....	39

*Continued on next page*

Open and Affirming (ONA).....	40
Search Committee .....	42
Stewardship.....	43
From the Trustees.....	44
Narrative Comments .....	44
Trustee Balance Sheet.....	45
Reconcilement – Trustee Checking Account.....	46
Reconcilement – Pilgrimage Checking Account .....	47
F L Putnam - Schwab Reconcilement.....	48
Performance of Trust Fund Investments.....	49
Description of Trust Fund Accounts (incl. restrictions) .....	50
Welcome .....	53
West Virginia Work Camp .....	55
Worship.....	56

# **WARRANT FOR THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**

## **FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NATICK NATICK, MASSACHUSETTS 01760**

**FEBRUARY 4, 2024**

GREETINGS. YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED THAT ALL MEMBERS OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NATICK ARE TO MEET AND ASSEMBLE IN THE VESTRY OF THE MEETINGHOUSE ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2024, AT NOON. THEN AND THERE TO ACT ON THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES:

ARTICLE I To act on the report of the Coordinating Council and to elect such coordinators and officers of the Church as required, who shall serve until their successors are duly qualified and approved, or to otherwise act thereon.

ARTICLE II To grant money for the support of the ministry of this Church, for Benevolences and all other Church expenses, or otherwise act thereon.

ARTICLE III To authorize the Church Treasurer under the direction of the Church Finance Team to borrow up to \$10,000 to meet necessary expenses in anticipation of receipts, or otherwise act thereon.

ARTICLE IV To receive the reports of the Pastors, all Church Officers, Ministries, and Organizations, or otherwise act thereon.

ARTICLE V To act on any business which may properly be presented for the consideration by the Church at the Annual Meeting.

DULY POSTED IN SAID MEETINGHOUSE, JANUARY 28, 2024.



Catherine Mattera, Clerk

# Nominating Slate

The Coordinating Council recommends the following slate of candidates for elected office in 2024. *Italicized* names are new candidates for the position. Positions followed by an \* have a seat on the Coordinating Council.

ANNUALLY ELECTED POSITION	NOMINEE	TERM
Moderator *	Lane McDonough	2024
Vice Moderator *	Sara Hanna	2024
Church Clerk *	Catherine Utley-Mattera	2024
Executive Financial Officer (EFO) *	Bill Ramage	2024
Treasurer	Heather Seiche	2024
Assistant Treasurer	Pam Weagraff	2024
Board of Trustees Treasurer	Wayne Szretter	2024
Curator	<i>Sara Hanna</i>	<i>2024</i>
UCC Delegate	<i>Open</i>	<i>2024</i>
UCC Delegate	<i>Open</i>	<i>2024</i>

## 2024 MINISTRY TEAM COORDINATORS

The Leaders of each Ministry Team select a Coordinator, who is Ministry Representative on the Coordinating Council. A Team may select Co-Coordiators, but only one Coordinator from each Team has a vote on Council. The EFO is the Finance Coordinator.

Building & Grounds Team Coordinator	Faith Formation Team Coordinator
Board of Trustees Coordinator	Outreach Team Coordinator
Worship Team Coordinator	Welcome Team Coordinator
Congregational Care Team Coordinator	

## Ministry Area Leadership

The Coordinating Council recommends the names below for election at the 2024 Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church in Natick. Ministry Area Leadership are responsible for facilitating, supporting, and developing teams in their Ministry Area.

2024 MINISTRY TEAM LEADERSHIP	NOMINEE	TERM
Congregational Care	Sarabeth Guptill	2024
Finance	Sara Hanna	2026
Faith Formation	Rick Dubois	2026
Outreach	Beth Garreau	2026
Trustees	John Gentry	2026
Welcome	Jeannine Keedy	2026
Worship	David Coulter	2024
Worship	Jeannine Keedy	2024

# Ministry Team Leaders & Members 2024

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS	
MEMBERS	ROLE
Hank Szretter	Leader
Doug Hanna	Leader
Amy Foley	Leader
Randy Brewer	Member
Alyssa Springer	Member
<i>Snow Brigade</i>	Members
<i>Worship AV Team</i>	Members
<i>Keepers of Clock</i>	Members

OUTREACH	
MEMBERS	ROLE
Beth Garreau	Leader
Gail Martin	Leader
Jeff Clausen	Leader
Robin Clausen	Member
Jeanette Szretter	Member
Marge Roberson	Member
Kirsten McDonough	Member
Lane McDonough	Member
<i>Mini Pantry Team</i>	Members
<i>Open Door Team</i>	Members

WELCOME	
MEMBERS	ROLE
Sharon Kirby	Leader
Jeannine Keedy	Leader
David Richardson	Leader
<i>Coffee Hour Hosts</i>	Members
<i>Natick Day Volunteers</i>	Members
<i>Natick Night Volunteers</i>	Members
<i>Event Hosts</i>	Members
<i>Newcomer Welcome</i>	Members

BOARD OF TRUSTEES	
MEMBERS	ROLE
John Gentry	Member
Wayne Szretter	Treasurer
Doug Hanna	Member

CONGREGATIONAL CARE	
MEMBERS	ROLE
Sarabeth Guptill	Leader
Grace Seiche	Leader
Linda Champion	Leader
Jean Sniffen	Member
<i>Meal Preparers</i>	Members

FINANCE	
MEMBERS	ROLE
Bill Ramage	EFO-Coordinator
Heather Seiche	Treasurer
Pam Weagraff	Asst Treasurer
Wayne Szretter	Member
Sara Hanna	Member
Greg Magarie	Member
<i>Trustees Coord.</i>	<i>Ex-officio</i>
<i>B&amp;G Coord.</i>	<i>Ex-officio</i>
<i>Counters</i>	<i>Coming Soon!</i>

WORSHIP	
MEMBERS	ROLE
David Coulter	Leader
Ric Ripley	Leader
Jeannine Keedy	Leader
John Weagraff	Member
<i>Lay Leaders</i>	Members
<i>Ushers</i>	Members
<i>Worship Slides</i>	Members

FAITH FORMATION	
MEMBERS	ROLES
Rick DuBois	Leader
Rhonda Mulloy	Leader
Michelle Brewer	Leader
<i>Owl Instructors</i>	Members
<i>Godly Play Teachers</i>	Members
<i>Connect Teachers</i>	Members
<i>Youth Grp. Leaders</i>	Members

# Moderator's Message

One of the more important lessons I learned as a Moderator this year is that I am an impatient person and unfortunately some of that impatience seeped into how I imagined the church should operate. It's either ironic or hypocritical because I have a habit of reminding everyone that the universe is 13.8 billion years old and that we shouldn't assume we are the end-all and be-all of human existence. So, what's been my hurry?

Maybe I'm just a product of our rush-rush society. More likely, I didn't think that it would take nearly FOUR YEARS(!) to find a settled pastor. I made a list in early 2023 of things that I wanted to cover as Moderator, things that I thought FCC could address even during a post-pandemic world, capital projects, and the search process.

I had about 25 items on that list, which I shared with Andy in February. I wanted to revise the bylaws – I thought we needed to do that before the new settled pastor arrived. I wanted to revisit our Mission Statement and resurrect the *Good Word*. I thought it was vital – *absolutely* vital – that we draft a policy to discern how we decide whether a meeting should be in person or via Zoom. I actually thought that. It's on the list.

Covid-life will do that to one's mind. Thankfully, Andy talked me down.

Of the 25 items, we addressed about nine. We began a review of the bylaws, which will continue this year. The capital projects team is managing the completion of the renovations. We celebrated Andy's service. The Search and Welcome Teams introduced and welcomed Cindy in true FCC spirit. We continue to investigate our congregation's historical relationship with Indigenous people and slavery. And while not a full-blown written procedure, we got a handle on using Zoom accounts for meetings.

Obviously (or thankfully), 95% of the good work that FCC completed in 2023 was not on my list. And most of that ministry came naturally and was not rushed. The capital project is an example. Yes, it would have been preferable if we had been worshipping in the sanctuary when Cindy arrived. It wasn't, and that was fine. But I could not imagine how active, creative, hospitable, and prolific our Welcome Team would be in 2023. Neither was a town-wide Caring Coalition on my radar in February. I did not foresee how true the statement "Because of You, FCC Changes Lives" was.

My impatience did find its way into the mix. Change is difficult but necessary, and I thought that the sooner we get new ideas on Council, the better. I was wrong. As a wise sage incessantly reminds us, whether we want to hear it or not, it's taken 13.8 billion years to get here. Fresh ideas need time to percolate.

It's taken the whole year but serving as Moderator has helped me to slow down. A church isn't a business. Yes, we must make payroll and pay our bills. But the work of our Ministry Teams has no deadline. We show up and do our best, living into our Mission Statement to "express the love and welcome of Christ." I am thankful for the people who come together year after year (after year) who do just that and keep FCC thriving. I want to especially recognize my predecessors, Robin Clausen and Bob Seiche, who, with the assistance of Reverends Jonathan New and Andy

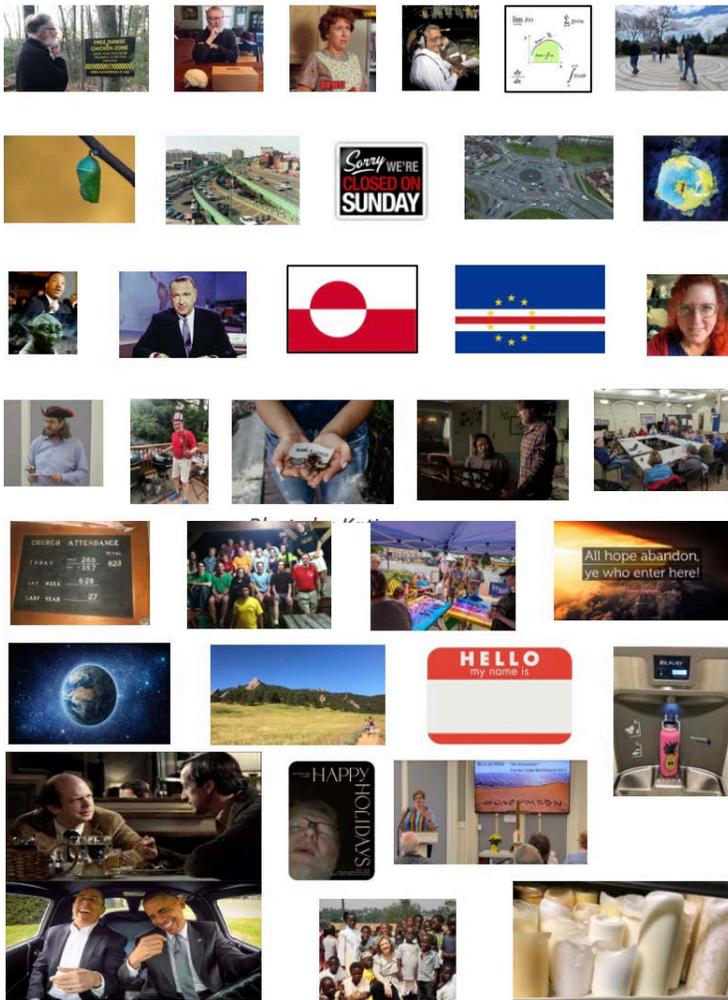
Burr, navigated the many disruptions encountered during a Covid-augmented interim time. Again, they could not have done it without the assistance of the many engaged members of FCC.

I also want to thank Sarallyn Keller for keeping the flame of who we are as a congregation bright over these past four years. Yes, it was a team effort, but Sarallyn kept the proverbial lights on and sustained the connections that make FCC who we are when we all retreated to our Zoom squares. It was a critical effort that enabled FCC to come out the other side of the pandemic and interim time with a vitality lacking in some other churches.

I could go on (and you know I could) recognizing the individuals and Ministry Teams that made this past year noteworthy. But I won't. The reports in this Annual Report testify to the inspired efforts of FCC in 2023. Instead, I will conclude by stating the obvious: We are blessed to have Rev. Cindy now leading us. With Cindy in the proverbial and literal corner office, I feel confident that she will equip the saints of FCC Natick for the ministry that calls us, confidently taking up the many opportunities and challenges that I believe 2024 will present.

Peace,

Lane



# Report of the Church Clerk

## Membership information from 2023

**Active members as of December 31, 2022** **164**

Adding to Active members during 2023

New members	3
Reactivated	1
Confirmands	1
<b>Total Additions</b>	<b>5</b>

### Deleted from Active membership during 2023

Adults (moved to inactive)	0
Youth	0
Transferred Out	-2
Deceased	-1
<b>Total Deletions</b>	<b>-3</b>

**Total Active Members at the end of 2023** **166**

**Total Deceased members (Active + Inactive) in 2023** **1**

**Baptisms in 2023** **5**

Respectfully submitted,



Catherine Mattera, Church Clerk

# Pastor's Report

You are already equipped.

Remember the church profile this congregation created about a year ago? The gorgeous document that described First Congregational Church of Natick, and what you were looking for in a pastor? The profile proclaimed that FCCN was looking for a pastor “who would equip the saints for the work of ministry,” quoting the Letter to the Ephesians.



That description of the pastoral role is such a healthy one. So often churches are looking for someone with a magic wand who will solve all their problems, someone who has all the answers and will tell the church the three-step process to balance the budget, fill the pews, and make everybody get along.

Instead, this church expressed a commitment to being grounded in the Spirit and practicing God's ministry in the world – doing inner work and outer action to transform self and the world. You wrote about just needing a pastor who would help equip you for that work.

Except you are already equipped.

In our first 77 days together (that's what we had in 2023 – 77 days) I witnessed how beautifully you have equipped yourselves for God's ministry. You wrestle with your history. You try new things. You roll up your sleeves. You read and study and pray. You ask interesting questions. You highly value collaboration. You laugh. You show up.

I believe that is why you experienced four years of pandemic, pastoral leadership transition, economic upheaval and institutional change and did not just survive but *thrive*. In a time when you might have been tempted to batten down the hatches and turn inward, you did the exact opposite.

You are already equipped for the work of ministry. Maybe I'm here just to make sure you know it?

- I don't see a renovated kitchen – it's a tool to address food insecurity and social isolation.
- You aren't working on a new website – you're figuring out how to proclaim hope to the world.
- Those aren't yard signs and banners – they are promises of safe space for all.
- You didn't remove a pulpit from the sanctuary – you redesigned sacred space to reflect God's vision of inclusion.
- Those aren't planning meetings with other religious communities and agencies – it's a glimpse of the kin-dom, the way the world should be.

Beloved saints, you are already equipped for the work of ministry. It is an honor to work beside you.

Peace,  
Rev. Cindy

# Spiritual Vitality & Congregational Care Dir. Report

2023 started out in a quiet optimism as we slowly came together more and more in person. We had an in-person Soul Sabbatical group that got together during the season of Lent to discuss how to live out God’s justice in our world. We had a confirmation class of four youths who went on pilgrimage together in April as part of exploring their faith together and then of the youths was confirmed in worship in the spring.

Pub Theology resumed with lively discussions about how our faith intersects with our lives; The “Contemplation and Action” adult Sunday morning discussion group continued. Our group has expanded a little this fall and there is still room at the table – all are welcome, and anyone can join us anytime! The Midweek Connection and Centering Prayer groups continue to gather weekly on zoom, providing an amazing connection to one another and to the larger congregation through prayer; groups hiked trails together; and we held lunch bunch social gatherings.



The fall included a number of memorable events including Rally Day with another all-church BBQ under the tent. The children made a banner celebrating our 20 years of ONA welcome with a colorful rainbow. Of course, the highlight of the fall was the arrival in October of Rev. Cindy to FCC! The long wait is finally over, and we are collaborating to continue to create spiritual vitality programs and focus on congregational care that makes our church community stronger.

The FCC players presented a fabulous Christmas pageant, “Las Posadas” (if you missed it – find it on our website – it is worth watching a recording!). The sanctuary was packed with family and friends of our young actors. And what an amazing cast we had – these are young people who like to learn lines and shine on stage – I am so grateful to our congregation for providing a loving and supportive audience! And of course, the show wouldn’t go on without the support and help of many adults who designed and built sets, helped with rehearsals, gathered props, and made costumes.



We invited the wider community to the tenth annual vigil to remember lives lost to opioids. This gathering is appreciated by many in the community who are living with grief and find the holiday time especially challenging. Christmas Eve found us packed in with old friends and new neighbors marveling at the magic of flickering candlelight and beautiful carols. We could celebrate the changes and updates to our worship space while also being surrounded by the

familiar peaceful, sacred space of our Victorian sanctuary. It was a joy to gather with such a large group of people! We gathered in the vestry to welcome the New Year one day early on the final day of 2023 with an intimate communion service followed by a delicious and relaxing brunch. We are a congregation who likes to worship together as well as spend time getting to know each other better and to know that we are on this spiritual journey together. 2023 was an excellent year to be together.

While the Jr and Sr Youth groups have been struggling to meet regularly because of the busy nature of our young peoples' schedules, there are five 7<sup>th</sup> graders in the OWL class this year. We continue to strategize how we can engage and be relevant with our young people. Grace Seiche and our nursery team have continued to welcome little ones into the nursery on Sunday mornings and we rejoice to welcome some new families with small children! The Prayground in the sanctuary is a busy spot on Sunday mornings, providing children a comfortable space to engage before they head off to their Sunday morning programs.



I give thanks for the gifts of all the adults who gave of their time and talents this year in our programs for children and youth, for their creativity, spirit, faith, commitment and so much more! We couldn't do it without you!

- |                   |                  |                 |                   |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Robin Clausen     | Kristine Weddle  | Sara Hanna      | Mark Dixon        |
| Michelle Brewer   | Matt Basiliere   | Rhonda Mulloy   | Lane McDonough    |
| Maura Shaughnessy | Gretchen Dubois  | Justin Kear     | Rachel Schmitt    |
| Alyssa Springer   | Rick Dubois      | Ric Ripley      | Deede Bergeron    |
| Amy Corbin        | Beth Canterbury  | Mikal Rosendahl | Pam Weagraff      |
| Heather Seiche    | Amy Foley        | Bob Seiche      | Sue Mascioli      |
| Jessica Treadwell | Sarabeth Guptill | Chris Gentry    | Kirsten McDonough |

I said it last year, and it is still true, that the time of the pandemic will have a tendency to melt together in our minds and it may be hard to distinguish one year from another, even post covid, but for me, 2023 was a year when we saw even more people in person, but still had a large



number who were wanting and needing to connect to us on a virtual platform. We marked and celebrated the standard liturgical events, and we also found ways to be together in community with one another, discover new truths, and to find meaning in our fellowship together. The unique challenge of doing all this virtually and in-person at the same time was lightened by the grace and love shown by our congregation. We were willing to try something new, even if it might fail.

All our Spiritual Vitality programs have something in common; whether geared for children or youth or adults, they provide the opportunity to practice the radical idea of extravagant welcome and love. Our newest challenge has been to find new ways to show that welcome and love using digital formats to ensure we are including those who can't join us in person.

We never forget that we are a covenant people, and we expect the Holy Spirit to show up when we are gathered together. That promise shows up in the stories and lessons we share with the children; it is there in the discussions we have with our youth about the challenges of school or social justice issues; and it is there at a Pub Theology session when we are talking about immigration issues. We will continue to provide programs that give us opportunities to practice this radical love in our lives. Stay tuned as we face the challenges that are ahead of us. I feel incredibly blessed to travel this road with all of you at First Congregational Church of Natick!



Peace and blessings to you,

*Sarallyn*  
Sarallyn Keller  
Director of Spiritual Vitality and Congregational Care

# SCENES FROM CITY REACH OVERNIGHT



# Church Administrator Report

As far as I can tell, this may be the *first* report from a Church Administrator (Admin) to appear in the Annual Report. Putting this document together is the most time-consuming single Admin task all year, so maybe there just isn't time for reflection. But it may also be the case that this position is often invisible and perhaps taken for granted. I hope this will help shed some light.

What does the Admin do? Here's a list of some of the recurring tasks:

- **Facilitates communication.** Sort the mail; read, respond, and forward email; monitor the door; handle phone calls and messages; greet visitors, volunteers, and contractors, and so on. Maintain the email and mailing lists.
- **Produce the Bulletin every week.** Fit the Pastor's content into the established template. Fit unique content in creatively. Plug in the music. Add the Lay Reader and Coffee Hour host. Update the Prayer List and Calendar. Track, edit, and format upcoming events/requests.
- **Produce *The Link* twice a week.** (Community edition Tuesday, Worship edition Friday – abridged as a worship-reminder Sunday morning.) The eNewsletters are the main line of communication outside of worship. It is put together in MailChimp, but requires creative use of design tools (Canva, PowerPoint, etc.) to present various events in a visual way. One needs to track a lot of information, including URLs for more information.
- **Support Buildings & Grounds.** Be their eyes and ears for malfunctions, inspector and contractor visits. Reserve the use of rooms by FCC teams. Facilitate room rentals by outside groups. Facilitate communication with custodial staff. Assist tenants (ACHIEVE) as needed.
- **Supplies and Equipment.** Make sure the copiers have paper and ink (and fix jams), keep office supplies stocked, and building supplies as well.
- **Support Financial Assistant.** This includes receiving and routing reimbursement requests, bills, payments, and time sheets.
- **Mailings and Special Projects.** Format text and graphics into mailings, run labels, coordinate the stuffing of envelopes, design cards and certificates – sometimes with little advance notice.

I could go on, but hopefully you get the gist of it. This is a *part-time* position, so there is a constant need to set priorities (and track requests which cannot be handled immediately - sorry).

I stepped into this job in April 2022, an “emergency” fill-in with Holy Week only a few weeks away. (I was reentering the job market, with 30-years work experience in small nonprofit offices, and made a detour.) This was always meant to be a temporary position – there is a rule of not hiring within the congregation. I expect to transition out of this role sometime in 2024.

This has been a challenge role to step into. It has also been a blessing to apply my skills to support this congregation and its ministers (officers, staff, and volunteers) in their work.

There is so much “invisible” work that goes on every day in a functioning congregation, way beyond Sunday morning. It is the combined efforts of volunteers and staff, *working together as colleagues*, that is the key to long-term health and success.

Respectfully submitted, Randal Divinski

# Finance Team

TEAM: Bill Ramage (Executive Financial Officer), Heather Seiche (Treasurer), Pam Weagraff (Assistant Treasurer), Sara Hanna (at large), Greg Magarie (at large), Hank Szretter (Building & Grounds rep.), Wayne Szretter, Doug Hanna (Building & Grounds rep.); and John Gentry, (ex officio - Trustee representative)

This is my seventh report to the congregation as your Executive Financial Officer. It has been an honor to witness the way FCCN uses its resources to express the love and welcome of Christ, both within and beyond the congregation. As was the case with many churches, 2023 was a difficult year for the Finance Team. Fortunately, the church and the Finance Team continue to be blessed with many talented members who have invested their time and energy to serve the church on the Finance Team.

It seems every year there are new challenges facing the church, and 2023 was no exception. The 2023 budget approved at last year's Annual Meeting included a \$40,000 budget deficit. Several one-time factors came together to eliminate the 2023 deficit. A few members gave the church additional one-time gifts to help reduce the budget deficit. Two one-time checks related to the Antenna Fund were due in 2022 but weren't received until 2023. The result was an additional \$12,000 of income added to the Antenna Fund income line in 2023. Careful management of our expenses resulted in expenses coming in below the budgeted amount. Cost savings were also realized when our interim pastor departed several weeks before Rev. Cindy started her ministry with us in mid-October. The result of all these factors is that we were able to eliminate the entire deficit for 2023 and end the year with a surplus of over \$37,000.

While 2023 resulted in a very favorable outcome, 2024 is proving to be another difficult year. The Finance Team, with the help and support of Rev. Cindy, was able to look closely at every line item in the budget and reduce many of them, if only by a few hundred dollars. Even so, the Finance Team recommended to Council, and Council agreed, that we present the 2024 budget to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting with a projected deficit of just over \$33,000. The Finance Team will review our progress in 2024 on a quarterly basis and may recommend further action by Council or the Congregation to mitigate the projected deficit if we believe it's necessary. The full 2023 Treasurer's Report and 2024 budget can be found immediately following on the next 5 pages (pp. 17-21).

In closing, I'd like to thank everyone in the church for their continued support of time, talents, and treasure. With your help and support the church is well positioned to continue to carry on God's work in the Natick community and beyond.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Ramage,  
Executive Financial Officer

Treasurer’s Report and 2024 Budget (1 of 5)

## Balance Sheet

	Balance as of Dec 31, 2022	Balance as of Dec 31, 2023
<b>Assets</b>		
General Operating	\$131,626	\$146,962
Communion	\$5,632	\$6,574
Activities	\$2,925	\$2,955
West Virginia Work Camp	<u>\$447</u>	<u>\$447</u>
	<b>\$140,183</b>	<b>\$156,938</b>
Prepaid Expenses (Operating)	\$11,743	\$1,116
Accounts Receivable (Operating)	<u>\$2,069</u>	<u>\$2,069</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$151,926</b>	<b>\$160,123</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Prepaid Pledges (Operating)	\$17,900	\$19,475
Accounts Payable (Operating)	\$13,416	\$4,954
Due to Capital Campaign	\$550	\$0
TSA (Pension Board)	\$785	\$0
NPS Prepaid Rent 2023	<u>\$57,750</u>	<u>\$53,525</u>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$90,401</b>	<b>\$77,954</b>
<b>Fund Balance</b>		
General Operating Fund	\$52,826	72,193
West Virginia Work Camp Balance	\$150	\$447
Communion Fund	\$5,682	\$6,574
Activities Fund	<u>\$2,868</u>	<u>\$2,955</u>
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$61,525</b>	<b>\$82,169</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$151,926</b>	<b>\$160,123</b>
 <i>Mortgage Principal Balance</i>	 <i>\$665,892</i>	 <i>\$641,812</i>

Treasurer’s Report and 2024 Budget (2 of 5)

**Operating Fund**

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>'23 Budget</b>	<b>'23 Actuals</b>	<b>'24 Budget</b>
<b>Stewardship</b>			
Contributor Income	\$248,000	\$266,287	\$260,000
Loose Offering	\$2,000	\$2,927	\$3,000
Holiday Envelopes	<u>\$1,400</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$1,400</u>
<b>Stewardship Income</b>	<b>\$251,400</b>	<b>\$269,214</b>	<b>\$264,400</b>
<b>Pre School/ NPS ACHIEVE Income</b>	<b>\$79,356</b>	<b>\$86,101</b>	<b>\$81,420</b>
<b>Antenna Fund</b>	<b>\$133,646</b>	<b>\$145,491</b>	<b>\$134,735</b>
<b>Trustee Funds</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>
<b>Other Income</b>			
Fundraising (church)	\$5,000	\$3,100	\$5,000
Enhanced Giving Opportunities			\$5,000
Special Missions	\$5,000	\$5,695	\$5,000
Church Use	\$2,000	\$1,025	\$4,000
Parking Lot Rent	\$11,100	\$11,100	\$11,100
Flowers	\$1,000	\$969	\$1,000
Miscellaneous Income	<u>\$1,500</u>	<u>\$1,054</u>	<u>\$1,000</u>
<b>Other Income</b>	<b>\$25,600</b>	<b>\$22,943</b>	<b>\$32,100</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b><u>\$570,002</u></b>	<b><u>\$563,749</u></b>	<b><u>\$592,655</u></b>

# Treasurer's Report and 2024 Budget (3 of 5)

## Operating Fund

<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>'23 Budget</b>	<b>'23 Actuals</b>	<b>'24 Budget</b>
<b>Mission</b>			
UCM (Basic support and dues)	\$13,180	\$13,180	\$13,180
Mission & Outreach	\$11,800	\$11,744	\$11,800
Special Mission	\$5,000	\$5,695	\$5,000
Scholarships			\$5,000
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	\$1,000	\$0	\$0
<b>Mission Giving</b>	<b>\$30,980</b>	<b>\$30,619</b>	<b>\$34,980</b>
<b>Pastoral Ministry</b>			
Pastor's Salary & Housing	\$84,000	\$84,000	\$128,360
Pastor's Taxes	\$6,426	\$6,426	\$9,820
Pastor's Annuity	\$11,760	\$8,588	\$17,970
Pastor's Insurance	\$31,178	\$16,791	\$0
Pastor's Professional Expenses			\$1,200
Pastor's Auto Expense	\$500	\$0	\$850
Pastor's Education	\$1,000	\$2,796	\$1,800
Pastor's Sabbatical	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$4,000
Pulpit Coverage	\$4,200	\$3,150	\$3,150
New Pastor estimated need	\$9,600	\$7,754	\$0
<b>Pastoral Ministry Expenses</b>	<b>\$149,664</b>	<b>\$130,505</b>	<b>\$167,150</b>
<b>Spiritual Vitality &amp; Congregational Care</b>			
Director of SVCC Salary	\$65,927	\$65,926	\$67,905
Director of SVCC Taxes	\$5,043	\$4,585	\$5,195
Director of SVCC Insurance	\$6,494	\$6,494	\$6,696
Director of SVCC Professional Expe	\$1,250	\$699	\$1,250
Nursery Assistant Salary	\$2,035	\$1,643	\$2,096
Nursery Assistant Taxes	\$156	\$122	\$160
Faith Formation Program	\$5,725	\$5,660	\$5,725
<b>Spiritual Vitality &amp; Cong. Care Expense</b>	<b>\$86,630</b>	<b>\$85,129</b>	<b>\$89,027</b>
<b>Music Program</b>			
Minister of Music Salary	\$44,319	\$44,670	\$45,649
Minister of Music Taxes	\$3,390	\$3,417	\$3,492
Minister of Music Professional Expe	\$1,000	\$442	\$1,000
Organist Substitutes	\$1,200	\$400	\$1,050
Music Program Expenses	\$3,000	\$2,282	\$3,000
Musician & Choir Soloists	\$10,000	\$5,665	\$7,500
<b>Music Program Expenses</b>	<b>\$62,909</b>	<b>\$56,876</b>	<b>\$61,691</b>
<b>WORSHIP LEADER EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$299,203</b>	<b>\$272,510</b>	<b>\$317,868</b>

# Treasurer's Report and 2024 Budget (4 of 5)

## Operating Fund

<b>EXPENSES (contiued)</b>	<b>'23 Budget</b>	<b>'23 Actuals</b>	<b>'24 Budget</b>
<b>Church Program</b>			
Worship	\$3,000	\$677	\$1,750
Congregational Care	\$400	\$0	\$400
Stewardship	\$1,500	\$49	\$500
Welcoming	\$2,000	\$2,457	\$2,500
Flower Expense	\$1,000	\$499	\$1,000
MA Conference Delegates	\$450	\$134	\$450
ONA Committee	\$1,000	\$969	\$1,500
Church Events	\$1,500	\$357	\$1,000
<b>Church Program Expenses</b>	<b>\$10,850</b>	<b>\$5,142</b>	<b>\$9,100</b>
<b>Building &amp; Grounds</b>			
Building Maintenance & Grounds	\$21,000	\$16,356	\$21,000
Building Equipment	\$5,000	\$199	\$3,000
Office Equipment	\$4,000	\$6,584	\$4,000
Software	\$2,000	\$3,212	\$5,000
Snow Removal	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000
Property/Liability Insurance	\$36,869	\$36,896	\$36,664
Utilities	\$36,640	\$31,966	\$37,200
Sexton Salary	\$7,006	\$5,136	\$20,600
Sexton Taxes	\$536	\$332	\$1,576
Sexton Contract Services	\$18,200	\$6,300	\$2,000
Sexton Materials	\$3,000	\$470	\$2,000
<b>Building &amp; Grounds Expenses</b>	<b>\$135,251</b>	<b>\$107,451</b>	<b>\$134,040</b>
<b>Mortgage</b>	<b>\$51,098</b>	<b>\$52,298</b>	<b>\$52,298</b>
<b>Church Administration</b>			
Admin Salary	\$31,555	\$33,794	\$32,502
Admin Taxes	\$2,414	\$2,646	\$2,486
Admin Contract Services	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000
Finance Assistant Salary	\$14,434	\$8,806	\$14,196
Finance Assistant Taxes	\$1,104	\$673	\$1,086
Communications / Web Assistant	\$15,000	\$4,387	\$15,000
Communications / Web Assist. Taxe	\$1,148	\$338	\$1,148
Office Supplies	\$6,000	\$2,991	\$3,000
Postage	\$2,750	\$1,024	\$1,000
Payroll Fees	\$2,000	\$1,023	\$1,500
E-Giving Fees	\$1,500	\$1,217	\$1,500
Worker's Comp Insurance	\$2,500	\$1,636	\$2,000
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$1,500	\$138	\$1,000
<b>Church Administration Expenses</b>	<b>\$82,905</b>	<b>\$58,674</b>	<b>\$77,418</b>

# Treasurer’s Report and 2024 Budget (5 of 5)

## Operating Fund

### TOTALS

	'23 Budget	'23 Actuals	'24 Budget
Total Income	\$570,002	\$563,749	\$592,655
Total Expenses	\$610,287	\$526,694	\$625,704
Net Difference	(\$40,285)	\$37,055	(\$33,049)

## Other Funds

Communion Fund	
<i>FUND BALANCE - January 1, 2023</i>	\$5,632
2023 Communion Income	\$942
2023 Member Services	\$0
<i>FUND BALANCE - December 31, 2023</i>	\$6,574

Activities Fund	
<i>FUND BALANCE - January 1, 2023</i>	\$2,925
2023 Activities Fund Income	\$30
2023 Activities Fund Expenses	\$0
<i>FUND BALANCE - December 31, 2023</i>	\$2,955

West Virginia Work Camp	
<i>FUND BALANCE - January 1, 2023</i>	\$5,946
2023 WVWG Income	\$0
2023 WVWG Trip	\$5,499
<i>FUND BALANCE - December 31, 2023</i>	\$447

Pastor’s Discretionary Fund	
<i>FUND BALANCE - January 1, 2023</i>	\$650
2023 Discretionary Fund Income	\$0
2023 Discret. Fund Member Services	\$508
<i>FUND BALANCE - December 31, 2023</i>	\$142

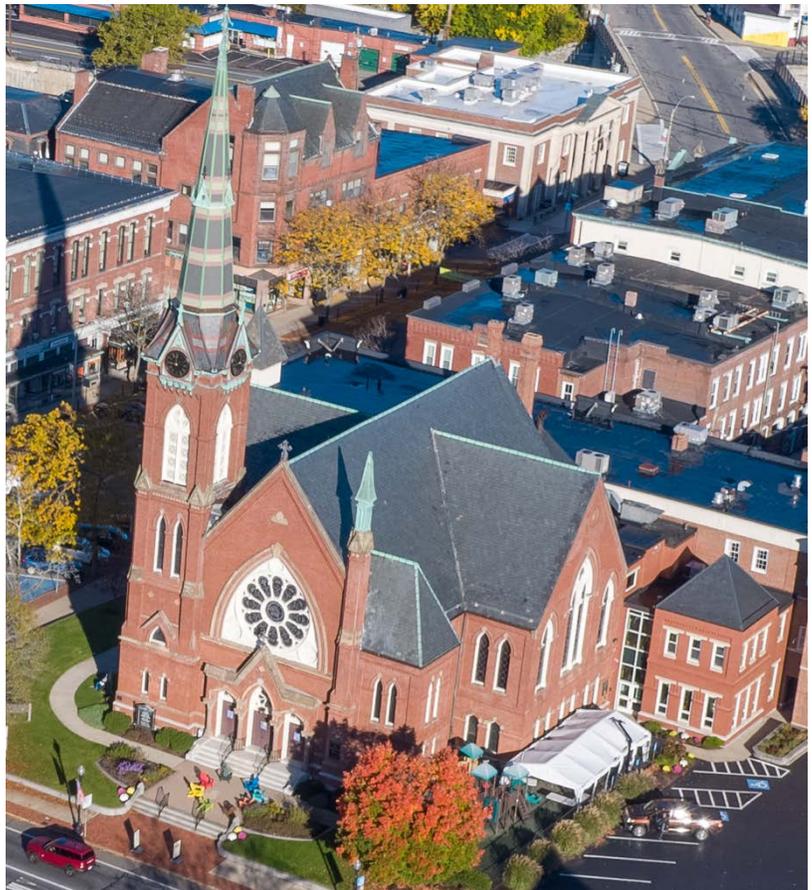
# Buildings and Grounds

TEAM: *Hank Szretter & Doug Hanna (Co-leaders), Amy Foley, Randy Brewer, Alyssa Springer, Ken Pierce.*

The Building and Grounds Team function is to oversee the church property, including daily and long-term maintenance and repair. This includes the interior, exterior, computers, utilities, etc. In addition, a considerable amount of time is spent meeting with vendors and supporting the church computer systems and network. Building and Grounds also manages and oversees the door security system for daily church use, meetings, and special events. Additionally, the B&G team coordinators are members of and attend meetings of the Finance Team and the Coordinating Council, as well as providing input to and acting as a resource for, any other team or group with ongoing or ad hoc building needs.

The bulk of our activities in 2023 was working with the capital projects team on the extensive renovations in the kitchen and sanctuary spaces. Please see the Capital Projects report for more details on this work.

In addition to the capital projects work, the team also had the usual mix of on-going activities to support the normal day-to-day operations of the church and maintenance of the building, as well as many other ad hoc projects to handle the unique situations that occurred during the year. As usual, this was a mix of contracting and meeting with various vendors for some of the tasks, but for the bulk of them, the work was completed by the B&G team members themselves.



Of note for 2023 was the hiring first of Galba Carvalho, and then also Galba's wife Marlene, who now job share the custodial duties for the church. Prior to this we had a contract cleaning service only, but with Galba and Marlene on board we now have staff to help with room setups, minor painting and building repairs, etc. As an example, during the end of year school break for Achieve, Galba painted the new air conditioning interior ductwork in the classroom next to the vestry. Great work Galba!

As in prior years, the church infrastructure continues to age and degrade, but we have managed, for the most part, to stay ahead of the game. The Team has also been very successful in

significantly reducing expenses by performing much of the work using volunteer labor, from not only the members of the committee, but by others in the congregation. Team volunteers have provided many hours of skilled services in the areas of computer systems and networking, electrical infrastructure, project management, and general carpentry.

As in previous years, we've continued a snow brigade of volunteers to clear the church sidewalks and steps of snow and ice, saving several thousand dollars each winter. For the 2023/24 season we're very happy to have the following continuing members of the snow brigade: Jeff Clausen, Randal Divinski, Mark Dixon, Matt Basiliere, and Bob Seiche, and new member Felix Alvarez.



Many of the accomplishments of 2023 were no easy task and were very time consuming, and we really want to thank *all* the B & G Team members and other members of the Congregation who have given their spare time, knowledge, special skills, and most of all, their hearts to help these tasks get done.

As an additional note, we would like to invite any of our parishioners who may have some skills that could assist us in the maintenance of our Church to either join our team or to just lend a hand, even learn how to run the sound system or video record a service or other Church event. Many of our ongoing tasks could be handled with just a few hours of your time. If you are interested, please let us know.

Respectfully submitted,

*Hank Szretter & Doug Hanna*  
Building and Grounds Coordinators



# Bylaws Review Task Force

TASK FORCE: Robin Clausen, David Coulter (chair), Sara Hanna, Janet Levesque, Lane McDonough, and Jeanette Szretter.

The Bylaws Review Task Force was formed by the Council during its meeting on June 21, 2023, and charged with three tasks:

- Review the bylaws as required in Article X, Section 10.08
- Make recommendations for revision as needed
- Identify possible new issues for consideration

The Council asked that the Task Force report in the fall of 2023, which was done on 11/15/23.

Rev. Cindy Worthington-Berry also joined the discussion when she arrived as Senior Pastor.

The Task Force reviewed numerous drafts by email throughout the summer and fall. The Task Force met in person at the church on August 20, 2023 and September 24, 2023, and by Zoom on October 16, 2023, November 8, 2023, and January 9, 2024.

## Findings

Pursuant to the first task outlined above, the review was completed.

The overall structure and governance of FCC are sound and no major changes are needed.

Some straightforward recommendations for revision include removing references to the Preschool and updating the descriptions of the various ministry areas. Some minor grammatical issues were also identified for revision.

More significant issues include discussion of the nature of membership (removing the inactive category), clarifying the mechanism for policy development and review and conforming the Bylaws with the employee handbook and other church documents as needed.

## Actions

The Council voted to authorize the Task Force to continue working in 2024.

Possible new issues (including those mentioned above) will be considered.

A final tracked-change version of the Bylaws with proposed revisions will eventually be prepared and submitted to the congregation for approval. Legal review will be requested prior to final submission.

# Capital Projects Report

## Capital Projects Key Dates

CORE TEAM: Doug Hanna, Amy Foley, Hank Szretter, Wayne Szretter, Randy Brewer, Alyssa Springer, Steve Evers.

April 30 Last worship service in the sanctuary prior to construction  
May 1-31 Kitchen and Sanctuary removal process  
May 7 Worship Services begin in Vestry  
June 1 Kitchen and Sanctuary construction begins

SANCTUARY TEAM: Core Team plus Tom Foster, Sarallyn Keller, Carolyn Cheever, Nate Keedy, Beth Canterbury.

KITCHEN TEAM: Core Team plus Bob Seiche, Gwyn and Bill Ramage, Ken Pierce, Deb Evers, Sharon Kirby.

What a long (strange) trip it's been! We assessed needs in 2019, realized the urgent need for steeple repair in 2020, planned for a capital campaign in 2020, conducted the campaign in 2021, repaired the steeple in 2021, and designed, budgeted, and identified a general contractor for the kitchen and sanctuary in 2022. In 2023 we finally were able to renovate those areas!

The capital projects team had a very busy year, preparing for construction, monitoring its progress (or lack thereof! ;-), and then beginning to move back into our newly renovated spaces.

Preparation work began with another major cleanout of the basement in late March / early April. (We sure know how to pack a dumpster!). We needed to make room not only for temporary storage of construction materials, but also the complete contents of both the kitchen and sanctuary, as those spaces needed to be completely empty for the renovation work to proceed.

Emptying out the kitchen also meant building a temporary kitchen in the hallway area outside the bathrooms, for Achieve's use as well as our own, during the construction period.



Thanks to the diligent work of Bob Seiche, emptying the kitchen also resulted in finding a new home for some of the obsolete kitchen cabinetry, including Bob driving some of it down to one of the West Virginia work camp project homes.

We also had to prepare the vestry space for worship services, relocating some of the camera and other AV equipment, building a temporary AV desk on the stage, along with making space for a special, elevated version of the pray ground! On April 30<sup>th</sup> we held our last BC (before-construction) service in the sanctuary, presenting all church members with small keepsake crosses made from excess sanctuary pews.

Renovation work began in earnest in May, and soon both spaces were almost unrecognizable, with the kitchen space down to the studs (revealing several original exterior window frames, btw), and the sanctuary looked like a dance hall, with all the pews pushed back and the carpet removed to reveal the wooden plank floor beneath. Even the vestry looked a bit odd, with a giant new plastic wall separating us from the construction of the pass thru opening in the adjoining wall.

Our published timetable for construction called for completion of both spaces by late August. This date was chosen in an attempt to minimize disruption to the Achieve school program, though both the contractor and architect warned us that it was clearly a stretch goal given that some items were not released early, with the complexities of the project being what they were.

Sure enough, it didn't take long to get behind schedule, unfortunately. The delays were primarily due to some required value engineering to meet the budget goal, followed by procurement lead times, often with some of the more unique and custom-built components in both areas.

There were also some missteps along the way by the design team (e.g. insufficient detail) and also some of the sub-contractors, resulting in portions of the projects that needed to be re-done to meet agreed-upon design goals and acceptable measures of quality. Weekly team meetings and daily (sometimes multiple daily!) on-site monitoring kept things from going too far astray, but the weeks did tick on.

Eventually though, we did in fact get the kitchen project done and began using it for coffee hour by the end of October. We celebrated our 'First Supper' at the beginning of December. What a glorious space it is! All new cabinets and counters, done in a muted color palette designed to be soothing for our Achieve students. We now have all new appliances including both conventional and convection ovens, a warming cabinet, and a dishwasher with an amazingly fast 2-minute cycle time! There are also multiple rolling



stainless steel worktables, including one that electrically raises and lowers to accommodate wheelchairs (now able to roll over a smooth threshold.) All fit into a new floor plan that separates clean food preparation from dirty dish cleanup operations and includes a dedicated space for coffee hour operations right next to a wonderful arched pass thru serving window to the vestry. Lighting is also new and bright, including below-cabinet for tasks and mood-setting.

‘Commercial functionality with a residential feel’ was our buzz phrase to describe what we were trying to achieve. Hopefully folks will agree we did it! And to make our ‘dining room’ (aka vestry) more comfortable, air conditioning in both that room and the adjoining classroom!

We’re worshipping back in the sanctuary now too, just in time for the children’s Christmas pageant and most of the Advent season. One of the early jobs in the sanctuary was working to eliminate as many floor squeaks as possible. This was accomplished with nearly 11,000 deck screws, driven through the wood into the supporting joists below. The old raised (not fully accessible) dais was removed, with some of the more distinctive woodwork elements retained for possible future projects. The new larger single level dais was then framed in, including an integrated ramp for full accessibility. This necessitated closing off the small deacon’s closet, but new storage space was provided with a new custom-built cabinet at the back of the new dais (we left the doorknob to the old closet in place, just to add to the future mystery of the place).

Our beautiful, but complex semicircular seating arrangement provided significant challenges for the flooring subcontractor to align the pews with the boundaries between cork and carpet, but eventually it was completed, with the carpet getting laid down literally the day before our first return service! The older sound system was removed and a new one installed, with new microphones and separately tunable speakers for each distinct area of the space (main floor, under balcony, choir loft, balcony, etc.) Stay tuned (pun intended) as we continue to tweak and monitor the sound including adding hearing-assisted devices.



Flooring, accessibility, sound, and lighting. Of our four major design goals, our biggest time challenge has been the lighting delivery, several components of which remain on backorder. New under balcony lights as well as recessed main sanctuary ceiling lighting is in place, but planned track lighting and new hanging pendant fixtures will not be available until the spring. Thanks to the resourcefulness of Randy Brewer though, who has rigged up some temporary lighting in the meantime, we're now able to be in the space, and even managed to have our coveted dimming of the lights for our traditional Christmas Eve candle-lit service.

Who to thank for all this work? The entire church as a matter of fact! First there's the list of specific people involved, from: needs assessment; capital campaign; planning; design; coordinating; construction monitoring; financial monitoring; supporting side projects, etc. Add to that the huge list of church members who financially supported the project through their capital campaign pledges and donations, including our wonderful anonymous kitchen project donor! And add to that the incredible patience of the entire congregation, to put up with being displaced to the vestry for worship services during the construction. Truly a whole church effort! With the greatest Thanks Be to God!

### Capital Projects Financial Summary Narrative

The following tables show summarized financial information for both the kitchen and sanctuary capital projects, as well as the funding status.

	May 2023	Actual	difference
<b>Kitchen</b>			
All -in' cost	\$ 645,054	\$ 623,095	\$ (21,959)
Kitchen donation	\$ 650,000	\$ 650,000	
= Kitchen surplus to apply to sanctuary side	\$ 4,946	\$ 26,905	

<b>Sanctuary</b>			
Sanctuary 'all-in' project cost	\$ 1,154,764	\$ 1,131,460	\$ (23,304)

The first two tables (above) indicate that each project closed out the year roughly \$20K below our May 2023 cost estimates. No significant further expenditures are expected for either project; the kitchen is complete, and the cost of the backordered components for the sanctuary has already been factored into the total cost. Our generous anonymous kitchen donor had told us that any excess funds from that project could be applied to the sanctuary project and so in aggregate we finished the year at \$45,264 under our May estimates.

<b>Funding:</b>			
Endowment	\$ 423,300	\$ 423,300	
Mortgage refinance	\$ 420,445	\$ 420,445	
Campaign pledge totals	\$ 928,988	\$ 928,988	
Kitchen surplus to apply to sanctuary side	\$ 4,946	\$ 26,905	
from B&G maintenance fund (portion of AC+ Electrical)	\$ 30,198	\$ 30,198	
= Total Budgeted funding	\$ 1,807,877	\$ 1,829,836	
Less all other capital project \$ already spent	\$ 673,560	\$ 673,560	
= Total available funds for sanctuary before adjustments	\$ 1,134,317	\$ 1,156,276	
<b>Net shortfall for sanctuary project</b>	<b>\$ 20,448</b>	<b>\$ (24,816)</b>	<b>\$ (45,264)</b>

The third table (opposite) begins to summarize the funding side. Our original total capital campaign pledging was at \$929K, which combined with the other funding sources but then also subtracting out all the other completed work (such as heating system, steeple work, etc.), left us initially in May with an estimated shortfall of \$20,448. Thanks to the project cost underruns though our total costs fell under original full project funding by \$24,816.

Pledge status	May 2023		Actual
Originally pledged	\$ 928,988		
Withdrawn or reduced pledges	\$ (30,000)		
plus additional pledges	\$ 8,790		
Revised Pledge total	\$ 907,778		
collected to date	\$ 811,266		\$ 872,723
outstanding	\$ 96,512		
expected collection	\$ 77,210	80%	\$ 14,582
= total expected collected pledges	\$ 888,476		\$ 887,305
Shortfall of expected total pledges versus original total	\$ 40,512		\$ 41,683
<b>Revised Remaining Funding Shortfall</b>			<b>\$ 16,867</b>

The fourth table (above) provides a status update on pledging. Back in May we knew that some folks had withdrawn or reduced pledges, but others had increased pledges, leading to a lower revised total, as well as an assessment that with 80% of outstanding pledges collected, we'd be at a total of \$888K. That pledge analysis has been updated and the total expected number remains essentially the same at \$887,305, or \$41,683 less than the original total.

The bottom two lines of the table indicates that the \$41K shortfall in total pledging, set against the total project costs underrun of \$24,816, leaves us with a funding shortfall of just \$16,867.



# Communications

TASK FORCE: Jeff Clausen (chair), Randal Divinski (Project Manager), Judy Dixon, Saralyn Keller, Gail Martin, Hank Szretter

During 2023, the Communications Team focused its efforts almost exclusively on advancing the project to develop a new FCC website. As work to update and refresh our physical building faced delays during the previous year, so too did the overhaul of FCC's digital presence, as the two projects which present our Congregation to the wider world and provide a space for our shared ministries are intertwined. The team looks forward to a full launch of the new website in Spring of 2024.

In June 2023, the Coordinating Council unanimously approved the Communications Team's recommendation to utilize Theory One Design (TOD) for the development of our new FCC website. Over the summer, FCC Website Project Manager Randal Divinski and his counterpart at Theory One Design developed a productive working relationship. The two met weekly to advance design work that included a site map, color palette, and graphic features. This work was informed at every phase by weekly and biweekly meetings of the Communications Team. During the fall, the team dove into the work of creating written content for the site. This work draws upon a number of available sources including:

- a discovery document developed by the Communications Team as part of the partnering process with Theory One Design,
- the current FCC website, and
- the 2023 Church Profile developed as part of the search for our Senior Pastor.

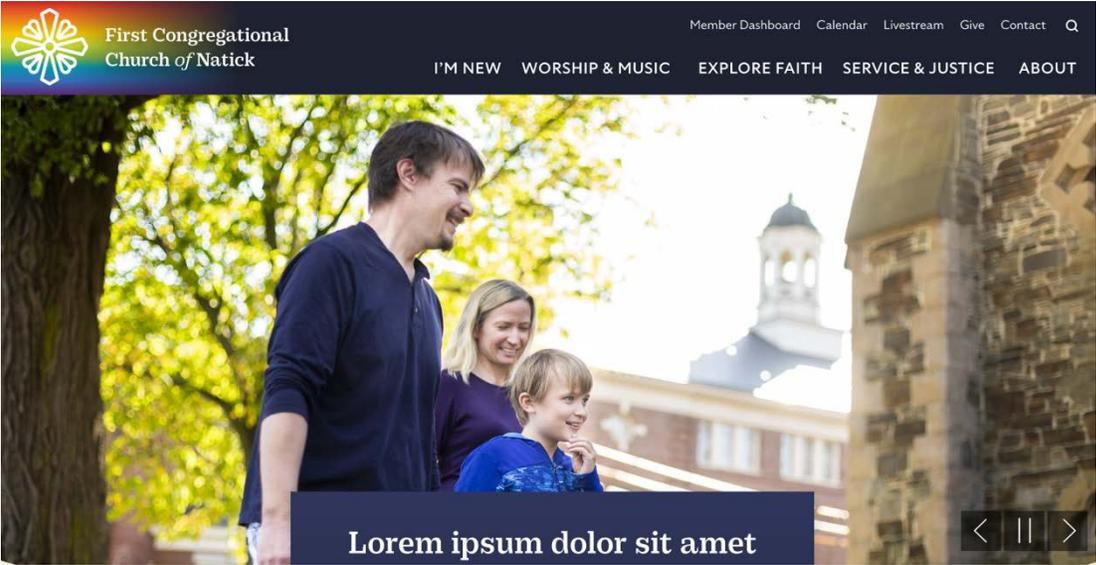
This drafting work will continue during the winter of 2024, while Theory One Design completes the technical architecture of our site.

A photo shoot, provided to us through our contract with Theory One Design, will be held in May and will generate current, high-quality, well-composed, and unified images that best represent our church visually. Strategically scheduled in the spring, the session will allow us to present our new Senior Pastor Cindy Worthington-Berry leading worship and programming in our newly refreshed spaces with weather conducive to outdoor shots that highlight our exterior architecture as well. After the shoot, the text generated by the Communications Team will be married with the fresh photos and uploaded to the new website. Then, a small group of FCC staff and designated Communications volunteers will participate in training to learn how to manage and update the website on an ongoing basis. Finally, the new FCC website will go live in June 2024.

FCC's new website will be a cornerstone for communications within our church community, as well as a resource for people in the wider community who seek to engage with us for a range of purposes. It will include information for newcomers as well as a Member Dashboard designed to provide resources to members and active friends at the touch of a button. The anticipated ease with which the site can be updated will allow for the timely posting of current projects as well as seasonal church programming. In addition, the site will be well-equipped to receive donations to advance the ministry and missional work of our Congregation. FCC will have a beautiful and

efficient digital space in parallel to our vibrant physical space. Together, those spaces will recenter our Congregation in the heart of our local and global communities.

In addition to shepherding the website development project to a full launch in the coming months, the Communications Team looks forward to partnering with Pastor Cindy, the church staff, and the members of the Coordinating Council to ascertain how the team can best support FCC’s ongoing communications in a purposeful, coordinated, and unified manner going forward. The team hopes to amplify the efforts of our members and staff and the inspired words of our faith to maximize FCC’s positive impacts on the community and the world around us.



A mock up of the top portion of a potential home page for a new FCC website.

## Social Media Update

In the past year, we published approximately 214 posts to Facebook, Instagram or both. Posts receiving the highest responses were related to our pastor search and welcoming Rev. Cindy, photos and details of the construction in the Sanctuary and kitchen, and the recent lawn sign campaign to support the Natick students and teachers. Posts fell into the following categories: weekly notices about worship and other ongoing activities, special events such as “Eyes on Owls” and Dr. Ross’ meeting with the ONA Task Force, holiday notices for special services and events, and posts shared from the Southern New England Conference and the National UCC Facebook page.

Most posts were created and/or posted by a social media volunteer with support from Pastor Andy, Rev. Cindy, Saralyn Keller, and Randal Divinski. A major accomplishment has been developing a reliable system for getting information and requests for posting from various teams. The biggest challenge has been the lack of social media posting when the volunteer was unavailable or found it difficult to manage. Social Media is expected to be part of future communication discussions, which can help address this challenge and better coordinate with other communication and messaging from FCC.

Submitted by Deede Bergeron

# Congregational Care

TEAM: Sarabeth Guptill (Coordinator), Linda Champion, Sarallyn Keller, Jean Sniffen, Grace Seiche

The Congregational Care Ministry Team is small but mighty. We have been providing comfort, care, and prayer for the church community for many years. Some of the services we provided this past year were:

- We welcomed back the Prayer Shawl ministry team. We gifted beautiful hand-knitted shawls to several people in the Natick community and beyond! Thank you to our amazing team Linda Champion, Sara Hana, Jeanette Szretter, Mikal Rosendahl, Heather Seiche, and Grace Seiche.
- We provided comfort food to families in need.
- We delivered Christmas Poinsettias.

Thank you so much to the team members who served with me this year! I truly appreciate your willingness to always lend a helping hand.

Warmly,

Sarabeth



Blessing of the Prayer Shawls, 01/21/24. Photo by Jeff Clausen.

# Curator

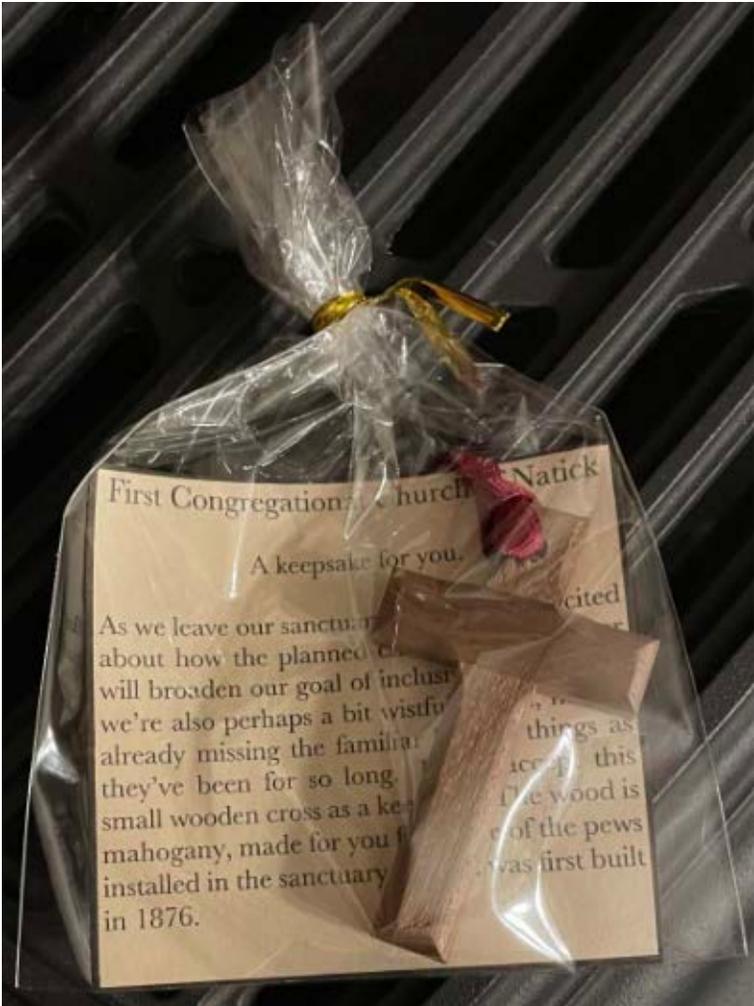
In 2023, my primary role was to follow through as co-chair of the Sanctuary design team. I was available as needed to assure that the details of construction execution were compatible with design intent, and as an architect assuring design solutions compatible with our historic Victorian house of worship. I continue to act as a primary liaison to the town Community Development office and Historical Commission if necessary.

An ad-hoc group has also been formed to better understand our relationship with the past Church, since inception as a mission to the Native American population in 1651 and through the centuries of transition to who we are today. There is much more to re-discover.

The major kitchen and Sanctuary projects mostly behind us now have stabilized, modernized, and restored our National-Register-listed historic property and it remains as Natick's centerpiece. Together with all four faces of the restored Town Clock, we are a beacon marking Natick.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephen Evers, AIA



Mahogany cross made from FCC pews installed in 1876. Made by Doug Hanna to commemorate the sanctuary renovation.

# Mission & Outreach

TEAM: Jeff Clausen (*Co-Coordinator*), Robin Clausen (*Co-Coordinator*), Beth Garreau, Gail Martin, Kirsten McDonough, Lane McDonough, Marge Roberson, Jeanette Szretter

In 2023, the Mission and Outreach Team continued its focus on identifying ways to give voice to our congregation's commitment to an active faith through opportunities for engagement and connection both within—and beyond—the walls of our church.

In November, Outreach sponsored an **Open Door** dinner. Open Door is a long-standing grass roots initiative in which members of our community come together once a week for food, music, and conversation. The weekly dinner is free and is provided and served by volunteers.



Our congregation was well prepared to host its Open Door dinner. Utilizing our church's renovated kitchen and new ovens, Kirsten McDonough efficiently cooked four turkeys (simultaneously!) while other church members assisted with preparing side dishes and serving the food. Approximately 80 members of our community dined with us that evening; it was a fun time for all and proved to be a wonderful way to build community. Outreach seeks to sponsor additional Open Door dinners in 2024 as an important way for our congregation to connect with and support our larger Natick community.

Recognizing that food insecurity continues to exist in our community, the **Common Street Mini Pantry** remained an important initiative for the Outreach team. We donated goods throughout the year and sponsored several church-wide food drives, inviting members of the congregation to not only donate food items, but to also join group walks after church to restock and familiarize themselves with the food pantry.

We continue to work to make it known that *any* member of the church, not only those on Outreach, are welcome and encouraged to provide non-perishable food, toiletries, diapers, and feminine hygiene products for the pantry.

In September, Outreach hosted a **church-wide diaper drive** to support *A Place to Turn's* National Diaper Need Awareness campaign.

Our congregation's response was very strong, with special thanks to Marge Roberson for delivering the many, many boxes, bags, and bins of diapers to *A Place to Turn!*



During the past year, the Outreach team also continued its **Coffee Hour Chats** to provide a forum for members of our congregation to discuss and share information about organizations and initiatives that are important to them.

**Coffee Hour Chat**  
**Family Promise Metrowest**  
**Sunday, March 19<sup>th</sup>**  
**TODAY!!**

- Join us during coffee hour for a discussion on Family Promise Metrowest.
- Learn about this important community response that supports local families who are facing homelessness.
- Discussion will be held in a classroom off the vestry.



A sample of the Coffee Hour Chats in 2023 included:

- Path for Adaptive Opportunities
- Family Promise Metrowest
- Coffee With a Purpose
- Angels of Hope

The Outreach team plans to continue hosting Coffee Hour Chats in 2024 and invites members of the congregation to identify organizations or interests to spotlight.

In 2023, our congregation continued to deepen its connections with the indigenous community of Santa María Tzejá, Guatemala. In February, members of our congregation joined the **Guatemala Partnership's** February delegation to Santa María Tzejá, along with members of the Needham Congregational Church and the Ainsworth UCC church in Portland, Oregon.

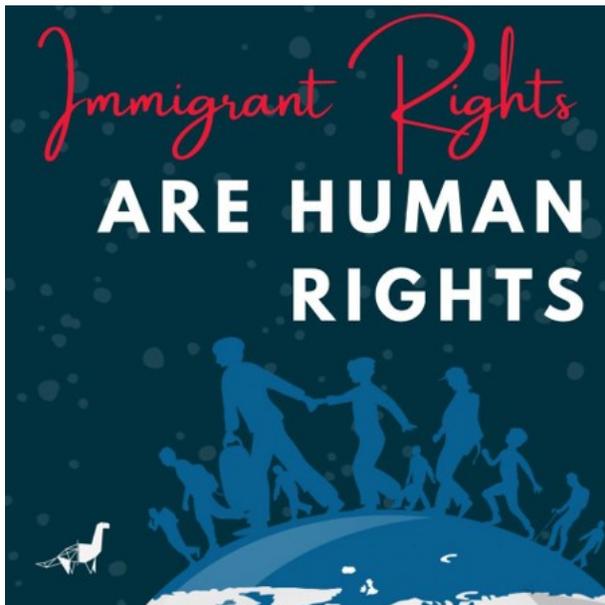
Through the **Guatemala Partnership**, our congregation is working in solidarity with Santa María Tzejá to support education and development in the community. As part of this effort, we also seek to unlearn stereotypes held by the global north toward the global south, and to bring home the impact that US history and policy has had on other parts of the world.



During the February delegation, over meals in family homes and meetings with community leaders, members of our congregation discussed and explored many complex societal issues ranging from environmental and social justice to education, health, welfare, and im/migration.

Community building through the Guatemala Partnership extends beyond in-person delegations. In June, our church participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual **Farm-a-thon Fundraiser** with the Needham Congregational Church. The event was a success with 19 volunteers (10 from FCC Natick and 9 from Needham Congregational Church). All funds raised supported education and development in Santa María Tzejá, while all physical work benefited the farm. It was a great way to support our friends both globally and locally.





**Immigration** is a known and crucial issue. In 2023, our congregation continued to assist our immigrant neighbors by answering the call whenever support was needed for those arriving in our community. This work included food and clothing donations to newly arrived Haitian immigrants as well as financial contributions for those arranging and providing housing for immigrant families.

Our congregation also expressed support for a Natick Immigrant Welcoming Policy. This policy has been in development for over 2 years by a committee of Natick residents including Myriam Hernandez Jennings and

Marge Roberson. Recognizing that Immigration is used as a divisive political tool, but that our immigrant neighbors are human beings trying to work and care for their families, we will continue to strive to provide needed assistance now and to learn new ways to aid in the future.

Finally, recognizing the importance of strong community organization, in November, the Outreach Team initiated and hosted the beginnings of a **Caring Coalition** with six (6) local area churches represented by lay members of the congregations. This first gathering was an opportunity to meet and learn from one another. During a very engaging two-hour session, participants identified immigrant needs and food insecurity as the two most significant hardships. Immigrant needs encapsulates housing, ESL, transportation, education, and mental health issues. Each of these issues impact not only immigrants, but our entire community. A second Caring Coalition meeting has been scheduled for January 28, 2024, with invitations extended to those who were unable to attend the November meeting.



Exploratory meeting for the Caring Coalition. *All photos and photo collages in this section by Jeff Clausen.*

As is our custom, the Outreach team made meaningful **contributions** to organizations that are important to our members and our community. These included:

<b>ALLOCATIONS</b>	
<b>Amount</b>	<b>Organization</b>
\$2,000	Family Promise MetroWest
\$2,000	Partners for Guatemala Education
\$1,200	Guatemala Delegation Traveler Support (Kirsten McDonough)
\$1,000	Natick Service Council
\$760	Hartford Street Church (Immigrant Family Support)
\$600	Mini Pantry
\$500	Angels of Hope
\$400	Out Metrowest
\$400	Southboro Safe Spaces
\$500	CASA
\$500	A Place to Turn
\$300	Girl Up (SMT Computer Center Campaign)

The special offering on Easter Sunday was split between One Great Hour of Sharing and the Syria/Turkey Earthquake Relief fund. The Christmas Offering was split between Doctors Without Borders and World Central Kitchen.

**2024 Mission & Outreach Initiatives**

In 2024, the Mission & Outreach team will continue to find ways to connect our congregation with the needs of our community. Outreach will host additional Coffee Hours Chats, with *Southborough Safe Spaces* kicking off the series on February 11<sup>th</sup>. In addition to addressing ad-hoc needs and requests, we will continue to support the Common Street Mini Pantry, our friends and partner families in Guatemala, and we will focus on the important work of building and sustaining caring relationships between organizations, religious communities, neighborhoods, towns, the people we hope to serve through the Caring Coalition, and other means. We also hope to bring back the Reverse Offering during Lent and to host a community yard sale in the Spring.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Clausen and Jeff Clausen  
 Co-Coordinator Mission and Outreach Team

# Music Ministry

2023 was busy year for the music program at FCC. There were transitions, guests, additions, and other exciting changes. There were also some difficulties, but all in all it was a good year.

Transition to the vestry during construction, and later back to the sanctuary, went smoothly most ways, except for some troubles with the organ. The construction firm, ZVI, failed to cover the organ pipes during construction as asked, resulting in a significant dust build up. Happily, a cleaning was accomplished in time to use the organ in the first service back in the sanctuary, cost covered by ZVI. Minor damage to a few pipes was also rectified. Looking ahead, the reed stops of the organ will need a more in depth restoration. This was the case prior to construction, and now after the extra dust deposited during construction, they are mostly unusable.

Among several changes in the sanctuary, of note is how handy the new chancel steps are for the choir to stand on during the anthem — the chancel straight front (rather than a full semicircle) was a perfect choice. In addition, that design creates enough room to allow for any future group musical performances in front of the chancel. The new cork floor at the front, being uncarpeted, makes moving the piano around a cinch. Though we may not end up needing the floor space near the door to the balcony steps (where extra pews were removed) for the choir, it makes a great spot for the piano to live, freeing up walking space around the chancel.

We welcomed a few musical guests in 2023. In October, we hosted Silent Movie Night. It was a hit as usual. Rob Humphreville entertained with his unique improvisational skills, supplying the film score on piano, extempore, to the spooky classic *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror* (1922). If scheduling allows, we're looking to invite Rob back in spring to do a comedy film, in addition to a Halloweentide "scary" feature. In December, it was a pleasure to again hear trumpeter Daryl Robbins and other brass players enhancing the Christmas spirit at both the Living Creche and Christmas Eve Worship.

In other good news, the choir, which suffered some shrinkage during and after COVID, shows signs of making a comeback. Adding 3 new members, we are up from around 9 to 12. We welcome Cindy, an experienced chorister, not only as pastor, but as soprano as well. While the



increase in number is exciting, we are still on the small side as choirs go. Members have gone above and beyond in terms of commitment to make singing happen on as many Sundays as possible. Being aware that this is a report, and not a recruitment advertisement, let me just say: Join the choir today!

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Foster

# Open and Affirming (ONA)

TASK FORCE: Carolyn Williams, Charlotte Hannon, David Coulter, Rev. Cindy Worthington-Berry, Beth Canterbury, Deede Bergeron, Sarallyn Keller



October 2023 = 20 years of ONA at FCC!

Our year of celebration kicked off with ONA Sunday October 22. This was Rev. Cindy's first Sunday with us, so it was a double celebration – truly joyous! Our guest preacher was Rev. Dr. James D Ross, II who serves as the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion [DEI] for the Southern New England Conference UCC. He brought a message of praise for our ONA work, reminding us of the life-changing nature of affirming any member of any minority--not just LGBTQ. We personally, and as a church, are changed because of this work of bringing the love and peace of Christ to others. Rev Ross urges us to continue to explore ways to extend the welcome of Christ to all those who are longing to be loved, affirmed, and to belong.



Rev. Ross returned for an evening discussion exploring our ONA ministry, where we have been, and where we want to go, and ways that the conference can support us. This meeting was attended by over 20 people, and we had robust discussions of the joys of our 20 ONA years and opportunities to explore for the future. We used part of time to brainstorm on ways to respond in support of the LGBTQ work going on in the Natick Public Schools after recent efforts by a vocal

minority to limit access to resources, censure curriculum, remove the pride flags from schools and intimidate staff and faculty.

Some immediate responses to the evening are the lawn signs designed by Kirsten stating support for the faculty and staff of the NPS. Another is the pronoun buttons that are available to attach to our nametags, which are also due to Kirsten's work. Beth was in touch with OUTMetrowest and has set up a Zoom training with them for any member of the congregation on January 18. Other exciting ideas are being worked on for 2024.



One big takeaway from this meeting for the ONA team was that the congregation saw ONA work as a *joy*. They cited numerous ways that we practice our covenant that go beyond ONA task force events. To include just a few: the OWL program, our many student ministers – many of whom were LGBTQ and all of whom advanced the work – the gay weddings, baptisms, and funerals, photo and visual art exhibits, and the gender neutral bathroom. Thank you to all who participated.

One of most significant forms of our welcome is the Pride, Trans and Mental Health Awareness flags flying on Main St. They are mentioned by members, friends, and passers-by often as a symbol of welcome and acceptance.

Our budget was used to support the following non-profits:

- **LGBT Asylum Task Force**, a church ministry with housing, food, and connections to support services for LGBTQ immigrants seeking asylum; based in Worcester.
- The **Trevor Project**, the world's largest suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for LGBTQ young people. Based in California with trained counselors available 24/7, all day.
- The **Open and Affirming Coalition** of the UCC to support work with all UCC congregations in their ONA journey.

Additional funds were used to replace the flags which fade and/or fray after one year of use, and to purchase the banner celebrating our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary which is currently on the Central St side of the building. Also funded were the Pride paintings for the front doors and wreaths for other seasons.

Note: OUTMetrowest was supported generously by a gift from the Outreach team; no additional support was sent from the ONA Task Force for the first time in many years.

We look forward to continuing the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in 2024!

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn M Williams  
ONA Task Force Chair

# Search Committee

TASK FORCE: Janice Gilkes (chair), Lisa Fusaro, Matt Basiliere, Maureen Mann, Myriam Hernandez Jennings, Steve Williams.

On October 16, 2023, FCC welcomed our new Senior Pastor, Rev. Cindy Worthington-Berry.



**Search Team Training**, led by Matt Carriker (left). Committee: left to right: Janice Gilkes, Lisa Fusaro, Matt Basiliere (back), Myriam Hernandez Jennings, and Maureen Mann. Not pictured: Steve Williams.

## The Search Team Prayer

Holy One,  
Source of all life and love,  
Sustainer of all that is and will be.  
With confidence in Your abiding Presence  
we offer our imperfect selves ~  
we place our open hearts and minds before You.  
Imbue us with Your Spirit to lead us:  
beyond judgment,  
beyond fear,  
beyond the limits of  
our expectations and understanding.  
Help us to discern Your guidance  
with trust, patience, and a willingness  
to embrace new horizons.  
We pray these things with gratitude  
for Your extravagant Love and Light  
that show us the way.  
Amen.



# Stewardship

TASK FORCE: Gail Martin, Lane McDonough, Bill Ramage, Jeanette Szretter.

Our annual Stewardship Campaign, *Our Church Changes Lives Because of YOU*, began in October. Once again, members of our congregation spoke during worship services about various programs, projects, and organizations supported by FCC’s Outreach efforts, made possible by the generosity of our pledgers and other givers. Speakers shared the meaning of celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Open and Affirming covenant, recounted the beginnings and evolution of our support of Family Promise Metrowest, recalled time spent at West Virginia Workcamp, and told of our new opportunity to respond to local needs in cooperation with other faith communities. In addition, Rev. Cindy lifted up the topic of giving in her reflections during her first few weeks with us, highlighting the importance of sharing our time, talents, and treasure.

A Stewardship letter, including information on the many possible ways to give (electronic funds transfers, weekly or monthly checks, donations of appreciated stocks, cash, etc.) was sent in mid-October to FCC’s members and friends. Their generous support resulted in 57 Stewardship pledges totaling \$202,604 for 2024. These numbers are lower than the pledges in 2023.

We are grateful to all who have already made their prayerful commitments to FCC to support the work our church does daily to change lives. It’s not too late to join those who have pledged, and, as church expenses occur throughout the year, we’ll continue to explore creative fundraising opportunities as we strive to do even more good work.

We are celebrating the arrival of our settled Pastor, Reverend Cindy Worthington-Berry. She is deeply committed to all aspects of congregational life and empowering each of us to become engaged in ways that we feel called to. There is room for all our gifts.

The efforts of the Stewardship team would not be possible without the support of our Office Administrator, Randal Divinski, for his detail-oriented work to help make our mailings and communications happen, our Finance team who give countless hours to ensure that our gifts are well-spent and recorded, and Rev. Cindy for her leadership and inspiration in this important aspect of our church life together. Most importantly, we thank our caring FCC faith community for their financial support and heartfelt commitments to sharing God’s love in the world, changing lives daily. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,

Your Stewardship Team

## Annual Pledge Distribution

Updated 1/4/24

Amount Pledged	'23 Pledging	24 Pledging to date
\$1 - \$999	13	12
\$1,000 - \$2,999	21	20
\$3,000 - \$4,999	11	8
\$5,000 - \$9,999	13	13
> \$10,000	4	4
# Pledging Units	62	57
Yearly Pledge Total	\$245,974	\$202,604



# Trustees' Report (1 of 9)

TEAM: John D. Gentry (Coordinator), Wayne T. Szretter (Treasurer), Doug Hanna (Trustee)

## Narrative Comments

2023 was a very active year for our endowment. We began the year with \$3,097,703, including the commingled funds for the sanctuary and kitchen capital improvement projects. Total investment gains (including interest and dividends earned) were \$264,719. Total Contributions were \$194,902 (largely from contributions to the Capital Campaign), and distributions were \$1,520,793 (largely due to capital project expenditures) leaving us with an ending balance of \$2,036,562.

The trustees have been working to develop a formal Spending Policy Statement that will help us strategize how to best use the endowment assets to support our mission in the present, while preserving the permanent purchasing power of the assets so we can support our mission indefinitely into the future.

The endowment, including designated and restricted funds invested with the endowment, funded the following special initiatives and financial activities this year:

- Capital Campaign expenses totaled \$843,946.61.
- Expenses related to the planned renovation of the kitchen totaled \$595,545.10.
- Slate roof repairs totaled \$14,600.
- \$3,000 was awarded to 6 scholarship recipients as directed by the Scholarship Committee.
- Endowment funds to support the 2023 Church operating budget totaled \$40,000.
- Transition Team expenses from the unrestricted endowment funds was \$560.
- Search Team expenses from the unrestricted endowment funds totaled \$175.91.
- Website development expenses totaled \$22,949.99.
- There were significant cash flows from the endowment accounts, including \$1,135,000 for the Capital Campaign and the kitchen renovation projects.
- In 2024, the budgeted support of the Church's operating budget from the endowment funds is \$80,000 which includes \$5,000 for scholarships.

We have also been discussing, and have begun the preliminary planning for, educational sessions on more advanced giving strategies as part of an effort to help us increase gifts to the endowment, which would allow for an expansion of our mission in the community. Please watch for announcements on these sessions and let us know if you have suggestions on content or expertise to share.

On behalf of the Trustees,

John D. Gentry

# Trustees' Report (2 of 9)

## Trustee Balance Sheet (12/31/23)

<b>Assets</b>		
Charles Schwab One Account		
Managed by F. L. Putnam	\$1,973,912.72	
Middlesex Savings Bank		
Trustee Checking Account	\$62,649.21	
Middlesex Savings Bank		
J2A Pilgrimage Account	<u>\$1,877.29</u>	
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>\$2,038,439.22</b>

<b>Liabilities &amp; Fund Balances</b>		
Trustee Accounts		
Restricted/Designated	\$741,003.30	
Unrestricted	\$1,295,558.62	
J2A Pilgrimage Account	<u>\$1877.29</u>	
<b>Total Liability &amp; Fund Balances</b>		<b>\$2,038,439.22</b>

# Trustees' Report (3 of 9)

## Reconcilement – Trust Checking Account

**Beginning Balance: Middlesex Savings Bank as of 12/31/2022** **\$ 257,393.22**

<b>Investment Income</b>	
Virginia Clark Robinson Trust	\$32,392.43
Interest on checking account	\$24.29
Requested withdrawals from F L Putnam	\$1,135,000.00
	<b>\$1,167,416.72</b>
<b>Other Miscellaneous Income</b>	
Donations (F.L. Putnam)	\$250.00
Pastor's Sabbatical Fund	\$0.00
Capital Campaign Pledge Receipts	\$158,381.88
	<b>\$158,631.88</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	
	<b>\$1,326,048.60</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>	
Transfer to 2023 Operating Budget	\$ 40,000.00
Scholarships	\$3,000.00
Bank Fees	\$15.00
Transition Team Expenses	\$560.00
Search Team Expenses	\$175.91
Website Development	\$22,949.99
Slate roof and flashing repairs	\$14,600.00
<b><u>Sanctuary Construction (\$843,946.61)</u></b>	
Design, Devel. & /Bid Admin (SPG)	\$31,191.50
Construction (ZVI)	\$654,775.52
Audio/Visual Equipment	\$91,458.86
Miscellaneous Supplies & Equipment	\$1,922.10
Construct. Docs & Admin. (SPG)	\$64,598.63
<b><u>Kitchen Renovation (\$595,545.10)</u></b>	
Preconstruction Design/Development (SPG)	\$5,304.88
Construction (ZVI)	\$464,041.96
Non-Construction Components	\$3,689.30
Construction Docs & Admin. (SPG)	\$44,123.96
Associated Vestry Improvements	\$78,385.00
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	
	<b>\$1,520,792.61</b>

**Ending Balance: Middlesex Savings Bank as of 12/31/2023** **\$ 62,649.21**

# Trustees' Report (4 of 9)

## Reconcilement – Pilgrimage Checking Account

**Beginning Balance: Middlesex Savings Bank as of 12/31/2022** **\$5,546.25**

<b>Income</b>	
Interest Income	\$ .31
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ .31</b>

<b>Expenditures</b>	
Pilgrimage expenses in 2023	\$3,669.27
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$3,669.27</b>

**Ending Balance: Middlesex Savings Bank as of 12/31/2023** **\$1,877.29**

# Trustees' Report (5 of 9)

## F L Putnam Reconciliation

**Portfolio Value on 12/31/22 with accrued interest** **\$2,840,340.16**

**Net Contributions / Withdrawals**

Contributions*	\$3,863.00		
Withdrawals	-\$1,135,000.00		
		Sub Total	- \$1,131,137.00

**Interest From**

Interest	\$21,036.57		
Dividends	\$53,420.07		
		Sub Total	\$74,456.64

Change in Market Value During Period (+ or -)	\$204,676.88		
Advisory Fees and Other Expenses	-\$14,423.96		

**Portfolio Value on 12/31/23 with accrued interest** **\$1,973,912.72**

\* Includes stock donated (less transaction fees) to the Church's Capital Campaign to fulfill member's pledges.

# Trustees' Report (6 of 9)

## Performance of Trust Fund Investments for 2023

Investment Gain/Loss = Investment gains from F. L. Putnam investments						
Interest Income = Interest income from Middlesex Savings Bank						
<b>Restricted / Designated Accounts</b>						
	Balances 12/31/2022	Principal Receipts	Payments/ Distributions	Investment Gain/Loss	Interest Income	Balances 12/31/2023
<b>Benevolence</b>						
Fisk Fund	\$ 15,088.09			1,289.24	0.12	\$ 16,377.45
Helen A. H. Rogers	\$ 27,142.81			2,319.29	0.21	\$ 29,462.32
Henry Wilson	\$ 24,054.85			2,055.43	0.19	\$ 26,110.47
Keziah F. Babcock	\$ 26,850.59			2,294.32	0.21	\$ 29,145.12
R. B. Dennett – Pastor's Discretionary	\$ 4,224.04			360.93	0.03	\$ 4,585.00
Walter S. Peterson	\$ 2,954.49			252.45	0.02	\$ 3,206.97
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 100,314.86</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>8,571.69</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>\$ 108,887.33</b>
<b>Christian Formation (formerly Christian Education)</b>						
Mary S. Hayes (Sunday School)	\$ 374.74			32.02	0.00	\$ 406.76
Rev Alvin C. Bacon (Christian Ed)	\$ 33,510.42			2,863.39	0.26	\$ 36,374.07
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 33,885.15</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>2,895.41</b>	<b>0.27</b>	<b>\$ 36,780.83</b>
<b>Church Administration</b>						
Ministers Sabbatical Fund	\$ 16,107.08	\$ -		1,376.31	0.13	\$ 17,483.52
<b>Memorial Fund (formerly Deaconate)</b>						
Memorial Fund	\$ 119,092.95			10,176.23	0.93	\$ 129,270.12
<b>Missions</b>						
General Mission and Outreach	\$ 53,765.65	\$ -		4,594.16	0.42	\$ 58,360.23
<b>Music</b>						
Music Program (incl. organ maintenance)	\$ 3,991.42			341.06	0.03	\$ 4,332.51
<b>Scholarships</b>						
Benevolence Scholarship	\$ 7,110.90		\$ 500.00	607.61	0.06	\$ 7,218.57
General Scholarship Fund	\$ 29,932.95		\$ 500.00	2,557.71	0.23	\$ 31,990.89
Gladys and Haig Markarian Scholarship	\$ 74,206.07		\$ 1,500.00	6,340.75	0.58	\$ 79,047.40
William Townsend Scholarship	\$ 7,614.63		\$ 500.00	650.65	0.06	\$ 7,765.34
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 118,864.56</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 3,000.00</b>	<b>10,156.72</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>\$ 126,022.21</b>
<b>Youth Ministry</b>						
Donald W. & John G. Armstrong Jr. Fund	\$ 4,214.89			360.15	0.03	\$ 4,575.07
Rev Alvin C. Bacon (Youth Mission)	\$ 18,474.95			1,578.64	0.14	\$ 20,053.74
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 22,689.84</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>1,938.80</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>\$ 24,628.82</b>
<b>Building and Grounds</b>						
Maintenance & Repair Fund	\$161,832.07		\$ 14,600.00	13,828.20	1.27	\$ 161,061.54
<b>Capital Projects (Excl. Kitchen)</b>						
	\$707,009.83	\$ 162,259.86	\$ 843,946.61		5.54	\$ 25,328.63
<b>Kitchen Renovation Project</b>						
	\$627,337.43		\$ 595,545.10		4.92	\$ 31,797.25
<b>Website Design</b>						
	\$40,000.00		\$ 22,949.99		0.31	\$ 17,050.32
<b>Total Restricted/Designated</b>	<b>\$ 2,004,890.85</b>	<b>\$ 162,259.86</b>	<b>\$ 1,480,041.70</b>	<b>\$ 53,878.58</b>	<b>\$ 15.72</b>	<b>\$ 741,003.30</b>
<b>Unrestricted Accounts</b>						
	Balances 12/31/2022	Principal Receipts	Payments/ Distributions	Investment Gain/Loss	Interest Income	Balances 12/31/2023
General Endowment Fund	\$ 897,287.68	\$ 250.00	\$ 750.91	194,106.26	7.04	\$ 1,090,930.61
VCR Memorial Fund	\$ 195,524.30	\$ 32,392.43	\$ 40,000.00	16,709.75	1.53	\$ 204,628.01
<b>Total Unrestricted</b>	<b>\$ 1,092,811.98</b>	<b>\$ 32,642.43</b>	<b>\$ 40,750.91</b>	<b>210,816.01</b>	<b>8.57</b>	<b>\$ 1,295,558.62</b>
<b>Fund Account Assets</b>						
Restricted / Designated Funds	\$ 2,004,890.85	\$ 162,259.86	\$ 1,480,041.70	53,878.58	15.72	\$ 741,003.30
Unrestricted Funds	\$ 1,092,811.98	\$ 32,642.43	\$ 40,750.91	210,816.01	8.57	\$ 1,295,558.62
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 3,097,702.82</b>	<b>\$ 194,902.29</b>	<b>\$ 1,520,792.61</b>	<b>264,694.58</b>	<b>24.29</b>	<b>\$ 2,036,561.93</b>
J2A Pilgrimage Account (ckg. account)	\$ 5,546.25	\$ -	\$ 3,669.27	N/A	0.31	\$ 1,877.29
<b>TOTAL Liability &amp; Fund Balances</b>						<b>\$ 2,038,439.22</b>

# Trustees' Report (7 of 9)

## Description of Endowment Funds (1 of 3)

### **RESTRICTED/DESIGNATED ACCOUNTS**

#### **BENEVOLENCE**

**Fisk Fund** can be used to help any person in Natick in need of financial assistance.

**Helen A. H. Rogers Fund** specifies that “fifteen dollars shall be used on the first Sabbath of September of each year for flowers for the altar in memory of my father Harrison Harwood, and my mother Adeline G. Harwood. The remainder to be used to cheer and comfort the needy, sick, and shut-ins of the Church.

**Henry Wilson Charity Fund** was set up “for the benefit of poor women and children belonging to the Church.”

**Keziah F. Babcock Fund** was set up “for the support or comfort of widows or unmarried women who are ill or recovering from illness and who shall be in want of such assistance or comfort, or of any widows with young children left without sufficient means of support . . . may be applied to aid in the education of some young woman . . . either a college or at some institution of learning higher than high school.”

**Robert B. Dennett Pastor's Discretionary Fund** was the gift of Circle #13 of the Women's Union to establish an endowment fund to be held by the Trustees in perpetuity, the income of which is to be used solely at the Pastor's discretion in the performance of his/her pastoral duties.

**Walter S. Peterson Fund** was established until this Fund becomes more substantial and a purpose can be identified which is acceptable to the Church, the income of this fund is to be used to purchase flowers for the altar in memory of Bruce Peterson's father and mother in February annually for the next year or two.

#### **CHRISTIAN FORMATION (FORMERLY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION)**

**Mary S. Hayes Sunday School Fund** was established in 1902 up “with the income to be used by the Superintendent of the Sabbath School for lesson books for children connected with the school.

**Rev. Alvin C. Bacon Memorial Fund – (Christian Education)** The income from this fund is to be turned over to the Treasurer of the Church to be applied to help pay the salary of the Director of Christian Education and for other expenses of the Christian Education program.

#### **CHURCH ADMINISTRATION**

**Ministers Sabbatical Fund** was established for use by the Pastor of the Church in defraying the costs of sabbatical Missions. Replenishment of these funds may be by individual subscription.

#### **MEMORIAL FUND**

**Memorial Fund** is a holding fund for gifts made in memory of loved ones. The money is distributed at the discretion of the Worship and Congregational Care Ministry Area Leaders (formerly the Deaconate).

#### **MISSIONS AND OUTREACH**

**General Mission and Outreach Fund:** The expenditure of Mission and Outreach funds shall be under the purview of the Outreach Ministry Area Leaders.

# Trustees' Report (8 of 9)

## Description of Endowment Funds (2 of 3)

### MUSIC

**Organ Maintenance Fund** was created by an anonymous gift of \$2,000 to encourage others to help maintain the bellows and pipes of the church organ. The fund will be administered by the Organist and the Building and Grounds Ministry Area Leaders and Coordinating Council in collaboration with the organist.

### SCHOLARSHIPS

**Benevolence Scholarship Fund.** Until 1966, this fund was supported by annual transfers from the Church Benevolence Fund. After 1966, the sole contributor of this Fund was the Women's Union. In May 1991, the balance of the Fund of \$6,753.13 was transferred by the Church Treasurer to the Board of Trustees, and the amount transferred was designated as the principal of the Fund. Scholarships may be awarded to active members of this Church from the annual income of the Fund, and any income not disbursed during the year will be added to the principal of the Fund. Scholarship recipients will be chosen on the basis of demonstrated financial need, for study at a level greater than high school. Any interest not so distributed as scholarship shall become principal of the Fund.

**General Scholarship Fund** was established in 2003 for the purpose of consolidating unspent interest derived from all other restricted and unrestricted scholarship accounts. Any undesignated donations for scholarships will also be accumulated in this fund.

**Gladys and Haig Markarian Scholarship Fund** was set up in memory of Gladys Markarian and in honor of Haig Markarian from memorial and family contributions. Undistributed income may be added to principal.

**William Townsend Memorial Scholarship Fund** was established in 1987 with a contribution of \$5,000. Income only to be used for scholarships for members of this Church who are active in church life, with a need for financial assistance, and are pursuing studies at an institution of learning beyond high school level. Unused funds are to be deemed principal of the Fund. Recipients are to be selected by the Pastor.

### YOUTH MINISTRY

**Donald W. and John G. Jr. Armstrong Campership and Youth Conference Fund:** This fund was established with a principle of \$1,071.31. The income is to be made available to the Pastor to assist the youth of this Church and/or Parish to attend summer camps or conferences.

**Rev. Alvin C. Bacon Memorial Fund (Youth Mission):** Up to \$5,000 of the balance in this Fund as of January 1, 1988, may be expended to assist youth from the Church to attend and participate in certain mission projects, both foreign and domestic. It is to be disbursed by the Worship and Congregational Care Ministry Area Leaders (formerly Deaconate).

### BUILDING & GROUNDS

**Maintenance & Repair Fund:** The use of these funds will primarily focus on major capital projects that fall outside the normal budget and are consistent with the purposes for which the funds were originally given. The Building and Grounds Ministry Area Leaders and Coordinating Council will jointly recommend, authorize, and oversee use of these funds.

# Trustees' Report (9 of 9)

## Description of Endowment Funds (3 of 3)

### OTHER DESIGNATED ACCOUNTS

**Capital Campaign Projects (2019-2024):** A “Faith in Our Future” capital campaign was formally launched in 2021. The primary scope of the project was to address outside work on the steeple, HVAC, windows and doors, and improvements to the sanctuary including lighting, flooring, audio/visual (A/V) capabilities, acoustics of the space, and redesign of the front of the sanctuary (the chancel) to maximize the flexibility of the space as well as make it fully accessible to all. The funding for this initiative included existing endowment funds, mortgage re-financing, and funds collected through the Capital Campaign.

**Kitchen Renovation Project:** Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, \$650,000 was granted to fully renovate and modernize the kitchen on the first floor. Any residual balance available upon completion of this project, may be utilized as a donation against the sanctuary renovation (Capital Campaign Project).

**Website Development:** In 2022, a sum of \$40,000 was transferred from the 2021 Church operating budget for the development and redesign of the Church’s website and to enhanced communication. Any residual funds from this project will revert to the General Endowment Fund (unrestricted) after 2024.

<b>UNRESTRICTED ACCOUNTS</b>
------------------------------

**General Endowment Fund:** This fund was established for unrestricted gifts received by the Church from its members to support the needs of the Church. On January 1, 2010, the “Endowment Bequest Fund” (established in 2007 with a gift from the estate of Barbara Cochrane); the “Millennium Fund” (established in 1999 as a repository account for the remainder of the Bacon Street Property assets); and the Parsonage Fund (proceeds of the sale of the Church Parsonage located at 39 Florence Street in Natick to provide income to help pay a housing allowance for the Pastor of the Church) were consolidated to the “General Endowment Fund”. Due to the closure of the FCC Preschool in June 2020, the Coordinating Council authorized the transfer of funds from the “Pre-School Short Term Operation Fund” to the “General Endowment Fund” based on the recommendations of the Pre-School Board, Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees, the Coordinating Council on December 16, 2021.

**VCR Memorial Fund** is the on-going gift of Virginia Clark Robinson who died in 1986. Her will established a trust fund that benefits FCC and other Natick institutions such as the Bacon St. Library and Walnut Hill School. The church continues to receive quarterly income from this trust managed by The Bank of America.

Revised January 2024 WTS

# Welcome

TEAM: Sharon Kirby (chair), Jeannine Keedy, Mindy Hoge, Judy Dixon, Dave Richardson, Jeff Clausen

Monthly meetings have been on zoom and a couple in person.

**Our mission:** Strengthen social and spiritual connections of those who worship at FCC. Welcome FCC members/worshippers, visitors, new members, prospective members the whole community to FCC Natick!

How we have pursued our mission:

## For our church:

- We support those joining us for worship by providing a Pew Card for visitors to fill out as they like and put in the offering plate. This will be followed up with a phone call from our team and the office. This is under review and will be re-instituted after we return to the sanctuary.
- We coordinate after-worship **Community Time/Coffee Hour** by hosting, recruiting hosts, providing basic supplies on the coffee hour cart (cups/plates/napkins/coffee, etc.) and any instruction/support for new folks hosting. We also send reminders and thank yous to hosts.
- We coordinated the church's potluck Maundy Thursday evening service (April 6) and after worship Luncheon for the Kick-Off Renovation of our Sanctuary (April 19) and New Year's [Eve] Brunch Worship Service (held 12/31/23).
- We gathered items from shops and parishioners and wrapping Gift Baskets to show appreciation for our departing pastor, Andy, and welcomed our incoming pastor, Cindy.
- Hosted and coordinated a larger coffee hour for Cindy's invitational worship service.
- We hosted a DOC night, showing the documentary *Thirteenth* on 6/11 for a small group, with refreshments and discussion.
- Delivering an FCC coffee mug and literature to new families that have joined us for worship. Denise Palmer takes the lead on this, in coordination with office staff.

## For the wider community:

We supported, hosted, and/or coordinated the following activities for the general public, often in partnership with Natick Cultural Council events. We hope to create new connections with families and others who may join us in future and have some fun!

- 6/2, 6/29 Natick Nites (FCC side lawn): **BIG Bubbles and Golf Auction Fundraiser Baskets**



- 9/9 Natick Days- **Natick ROCKS** (rock painting—see previous page) and **Bell Ringing**



- 10/28 **Magic Show**, 11:00 am with pizza- had 50+ families and lots of fun! Many new faces from the community. Scheduled to take place right before Spooktacular on the Natick Common. Tickets were \$5 and also sold on EventBrite for \$7.
- 11/18 **Eyes on Owls**, 7:00 pm, turnout was approximately 85, sold 91 tickets. Tickets were \$5 and also sold on EventBrite for \$7. (photo below)
- 12/2 Natick Tree Lighting/FCC **Living Creche** and Christmas Carols (coordinated by Gail Martin) Welcome created a give-away **Card/Candy Cane** w/ our upcoming Christmas events.

- **Christmas Pageant Breakfast** 12/17- invite a friend!
- We supported the New Year's Eve Natick Rail Trail (12/31/23). FCC hosted a tent with a **Wishing Tree & fire pit** (coordinated by Deede & Randal).

### Plans for the Future:

- Host a **WELCOME to our Remodeled Sanctuary event**, inviting the public and sending specific invitations to key community members. February? Refreshments/music?
- Schedule **concerts** in our new Sanctuary. (Sound & Spirit, etc.)

### Fundraising:

- Welcome launched the first ever Silent Auction of 6 golf/sports/themed baskets. This spanned 3 weeks and netted \$550.00. This was in-person, but we explored having it also be online.
- The Advent Calendar/Book Fair fundraiser netting \$86.52 on 11/5 in partnership with Wellesley Books, during coffee hour.
- **In-Kind Donations** were solicited/accepted from Roche Bros. (\$50) for Kick Off Lunch and 5 large pizzas from Lola's for Magic show as well as from the Sports/Golf fundraiser Silent Auction Baskets (separate list available). Also, 10% donation of proceeds from Wellesley Books for the bookfair/advent calendar sale.



# West Virginia Work Camp

After missing WV Work Camp in 2020, 2021, and 2022 due to COVID (or it's complications), the Lincoln-Cabell Work Camp welcomed folks back to Asbury Woods in Salt Rock, WV to another year of work camp. While we were a smaller crowd than years past, the work completed, and friendships renewed were as important and soul-replenishing as ever. Fifteen campers from Natick made the trip, we a good mix of first-timers and veterans.



A particularly noteworthy component of the 2023 trip was the repurposing of the FCC kitchen island cabinet (made available due to the kitchen remodeling project) into the home at one of our



worksites (a family that Stacie Dowling and I had worked with a few years back). It was great to reconnect and see the progress of the family and their growing children and bring a little bit of Natick to their home in Branchland, WV.

We hope that 2024 will bring even more work campers together to make homes “warm, safe and dry” in West Virginia, and establish new connections between campers from different parts of the US and the homeowners we serve. Please consider joining us on the trip if you are able!



# Worship

TEAM: David Coulter, Coordinator; Jeannine Keedy, Ric Ripley, Rev. Dr. John Weagraff.

The Worship Ministry team consists primarily of ushers and greeters whose goal is to provide a welcoming, safe, and supportive presence for the members of the congregation who come to worship in person. Typically, on Sunday the team consists of several greeters at both entrances who welcome people and several ushers who support the service. Every Sunday a lead usher is designated and charged with the responsibility for the safety of the congregation. The lead usher reviews with the team present on that day what specific procedures will be used in the event of an emergency. The lead usher would activate emergency responders while the other ushers move the congregation to safety.

The worship team ushers open the doors, put up the hymn numbers, welcome people upon entrance to the Sanctuary, hand out the bulletins, light the Christ candle and other candles, collect the offering, set up for Communion and assist with Communion, close the Sanctuary after worship and close the doors. The team's activities were particularly focused on supporting the congregation during the seasons of Lent, Holy Week and Easter, and again during Advent, Christmas, and the holidays. Of note, fewer people signed up for the Easter Vigil in 2023, which may need to be re-evaluated for 2024.

When the Sanctuary was closed for renovation in May 2023, worship resumed in the Vestry and usher activities were adjusted accordingly. Worship returned to the renovated Sanctuary on December 10, 2023, and adjustments are ongoing. Communion continued using real bread, real juice, and real wine, with congregants coming forward to take their elements from the table. Starting on December 3, 2023, all communion bread is now gluten-free.

Pulpit supply was challenging at times in 2023. The team helped Church leadership ensure that Sunday morning worship services were covered.

The Worship Team is looking forward to working closely with Rev. Cindy in 2024 to support her vision for the Church.

Recruitment of worship helpers (ushers, lay leaders and greeters) will continue in 2024. This was a major challenge in 2023 since relatively few people volunteered, so worship depended on many of the same people serving throughout the year. This did improve by the end of the year and was a success.

No experience is needed to volunteer as an usher or greeter, and all are warmly welcomed to do so. Anyone can sign up as a lay leader, usher, or greeter either by using the online "signup genius" link, which is provided on the weekly LINK email and on the FCC website, or by contacting members of the Worship Team. We extend a special invitation to those who might want to ring the church bell, which we usually do about 15 minutes before the service starts to invite people in to worship.

This page intentionally left blank.







**We support  
Students and Teachers  
Staff and Administration  
in creating a  
welcoming and respectful  
school environment  
for ALL!**

Image by Imprint

First Congregational  
Church of Natick, UCC

**Show your support  
with a lawn sign**

**Contact Kirsten**

**Donations welcome ~  
\$5 covers cost**

**Celebrating 20 years of ONA!**



**Car Magnets available  
for a free will offering (cost was \$5)  
Let's blanket the town with our rainbows!**

**Add a pronoun Pin to your nametag!  
Another way to show our LGBTQIA Siblings our support  
Ask us for more information if you are curious....**

