

**First Congregational Church
508 Union Street
Manchester, New Hampshire**



**2018
ANNUAL REPORTS
Written Reports**

Written Reports 2018

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Senior Pastor's Report

But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him.

—Second Corinthians 2:14

Dear Friends,

In the normal business of being a church, it's easy to lose sight of the high calling that lies at the heart of all we do. We are here for the sake of community, worship and outreach of course, but all our efforts also weave into the larger tapestry of serving God to the best of our ability. In the colorful language of the Apostle Paul, we are part of God's great "triumphal procession." It's always good to bear that in mind when we reflect on what we have managed to accomplish in a given year. It's important to recognize that all of our "trees" are part of a larger "forest."

This year, our third since the beginning of my ministry with you, has been an eventful one. We began the year studying Tod Bolsinger's book Canoeing the Mountains. There were about 40 copies circulating around the congregation at one point, which led to a very positive Saturday workshop in April attended by about 30. Though the book is hardly an easy read, it helped open up the conversation about the changes that churches like ours are facing in today's society. This conversation led us to join the two-year 21st Century Leadership class which began in September.

With the announcement that Betsy Green would be stepping down as our C.E. Director, we launched into a search for a successor, and were pleased to be able to hire Kelda York, who is doing a fantastic job. We celebrated Barbara Papagian's Commissioning in June, and soon learned that she would be continuing on to full Ordination in the year ahead. Emelia Attridge completed her seminary training and will be standing for her Ecclesiastical Council early in January. We also celebrated with Kathy Alger, who graduated from her Tree of Life program, was Ordained, and is now working through her first Clinical Pastoral Education unit at a hospital in Boston. We are thrilled with all of these wonderful calls to ministry.

In this first year after voting to become an Open and Affirming congregation, our ONA committee has been hard at work with a very positive presence at this year's Pride Day gathering in Concord, a wonderful Celebration Service on the first anniversary of our vote, and hosting the upcoming April 6, 2019 state-wide Open and Affirming conference.

Through the year, I continued my work on the board of the Pastoral Counseling Services and our Association's Church and Ministry Committee. I also helped in the work of revising our Safe Church Policy, although the lion's share of the credit goes to Bruce Felmly, who did an outstanding job of drafting out a new policy for us. Along with Ellie Stetson, Peter Perich, and Matt Lyons, I've begun a new and much more effective Confirmation process, which included expanding Barbara's worship leadership responsibilities in order to free me up to personally lead the class on Sunday morning every few weeks. I led a class on the book of Genesis in the spring, and on C.S. Lewis's The Great Divorce in the fall, and still found time to participate in this year's wonderful Messiah Concert (many thanks to Adam for what felt like the best concert ever!)

In the months ahead, we're working on a Holocaust artwork program for Lent, a concert by the Songweavers in April, the Open and Affirming gathering in the spring, continuing work on our 21st Century Leadership initiative, and a host of other plans and programs. All of which, of course, is in addition to the normal and ongoing worship, education, outreach and administrative work of our very active day to day church. I wish to thank all of you for all the ways in which you are involved in this great "triumphal procession" that is First Congregational Church of Manchester.

Yours in Grace,
Rev. Kevin

Music Ministry Report

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.

-Colossians 3:16

As I reflect upon 2018, I am filled with a remarkable sense of gratitude for all the good works of God and the people who participated in music ministry. We are blessed to have so many talented people who put forth the time and energy to help make worship uplifting, meaningful, and truly inspiring. Over the next few paragraphs, I will mention some of the highlights of the past year and recognize those who helped make it happen.

The **Chancel Choir** continued to faithfully serve the church by singing almost every Sunday from September through mid-June. We have expanded our repertoire of musical offerings and welcomed some new members into the fold as well. Those members include Sharon Arsenault, Vance Spaulding, and Chuck Noble. The choir led worship for special services including Gospel Sunday, World Communion Sunday, Music Sunday, and the anniversary service of becoming an ONA congregation. The **Sabbath Bells** also rang beautifully at our Christmas Eve and Easter services along with the Chancel Choir. The bell choir has also learned new music and continues to build upon past success. I would like to thank Terri Pattee and Pam LeBlanc for their work in fabricating a new roll-cover for the new bell tables. As you may have noticed, the old roll-cover was faded and needed replacement. The new roll-cover is elegant and fits well with the décor of the Sanctuary.

The **Peace Ringers** and **Sunday School Choir** sang and rang throughout the year. We received special leadership from Laura Parker. Her work is always well received by the young people and it shows through their enthusiasm for singing. The young people also sang exceptionally well for our Children's Sunday celebration as well as our Children's Advent and Christmas Eve Family services. These services demonstrated that we have many talented young people. With the grace of God, we will continue to support them in their music making.

During the summer months, the Chancel Choir and Sabbath Bells take a seasonal break and individual musicians sign up to help lead worship. Due to the dedication of our members, we filled every Summer Sunday with special voices and instrumentalists. My thanks to those who faithfully served: Allen Pattee, Kevin Pleas, Bob Ward, Abby Curtis, Laura Parker, Lauren Peithmann, Michelle Harrington, Jeffrey Frye, Carol Soucy, Bridget Thornton, and Terri Pattee. Another instrumentalist that is important to note is Jay Daly. Jay graced us with his trumpet playing for the Sunday commemorating Memorial Day and he helped organized our brass for Easter. I would also like to thank Leo LeBlanc for playing percussion at various times throughout the year including at the Great Bay Choral Festival in Exeter, NH.

Turning our attention to the organ, I am happy to report that we completed another phase of the restoration work. The Ortloff Organ company brought the 8' Trumpet on the Great division back to life. The contracted work included transporting the trumpet and the wind chest to their shop near Boston where they cleaned, re-voiced, and re-engineered the entire stop. We now enjoy a beautiful, singing trumpet. My thanks to Jon Ortloff for his work and expertise.

And of course, I would be remiss if I did not mention the extraordinary "Messiah" concert. This event was a great success and truly inspiring. The Chancel Choir, with the help of community singers, joined forces with professional soloists and players to put on a beautiful and inspiring concert. The Sabbath Bells also rang beautifully and added to the spirit of Christmas. My sincere thanks extend to all who participated. Additionally, I would like to thank the benefactors of the concert. Due to their generosity, we were able to fully fund the concert and give all the proceeds from the free-will offering to the Union Leader's Santa Fund. In all, we had

around 330 people in attendance and raised \$2,203 for the Santa Fund. This donation represents the largest donation in recent history.

As you can see, we had no shortage of great blessings this past year. We will continue our work into 2019 and beyond. May God uphold us, bless us, and grant us the grace, enthusiasm, and joy for the work ahead of us.

Respectfully Submitted,
Adam Peithmann, Director of Music Ministry

Director of Parish Care

2018 was an especially memorable year for me because I became a Commissioned Minister in Pastoral Care. The process was long and involved taking classes in Pastoral Care and Psychology, Theology, and UCC Polity and Church History. There was an Ecclesiastical Counsel where I was questioned by clergy in the Hillsborough Association. Through all of this I not only learned a lot academically, but I learned a lot about myself and my relationship to God. All of this culminated in my Commissioning Service in June.

During the year I visited many of you at home, in the hospital, in nursing homes, and in my office. I transported some of you to appointments and delivered gifts from our quilters, meal train, and outreach committee. I prayed with you, laughed with you, cried with you, and kept you all in my daily prayers. I work closely with the Parish Visitors and Meal Train.

I attended the UCC Prepared to Serve Workshop and the annual meeting. I also attended a seminar on church safety.

I organized and participated in the Blue Christmas Service, I led worship four times and served communion twice. I also gave the eulogy at a memorial service for Wesley Belisle. I continue to have the honor to lift your prayer concerns every week.

After many hours of reflection, praying, and talking with Kevin and close friends, I have decided to continue on to Ordination. Pastoral Care will always be my priority, and I feel that I can serve more deeply and meaningfully with the training for ordination. So I am officially a Member in Discernment and am working with my discernment committee of Ellie Stetson, Pam LeBlanc, and Tom Irving. We are currently working on my "Call" and talking about what my duties will be in the coming years at FCC. I have met with The Committee on Ministry and they are guiding me in my discernment and the courses and training I will need in the next year.

Thank you to Kevin, who is supporting me and guiding me. Also thank you to Ellie, Pam, and Tom, and to all of you, the congregation. It is an honor and blessing to serve you.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Papagian, Commissioned Minister of Pastoral Care

Reports from the Ministry of Spirituality

The Ministry of Spirituality area is comprised of a Coordinator, 3 Council Representatives, the Board of Deacons and numerous committees and groups that supports worship and spiritual opportunities throughout the year.

This year proved to be another busy, productive and exciting year in this area of worship. Here are some of the highlights from 2019:

January – The Council voted to recognize the ONA team as an official standing committee within the church.

March – The Deacons offered an opportunity for people to attend the “Lenten Sacred Space” during lunchtime on the five Fridays in March. The Deacons also participated in the Maundy Thursday Service and Simple Supper, the Altar Design Team decorated the altar with lilies and tulips for Easter, and the Quilt Ministry worked on quilts.

May – The Members in Discernment Team hosted the reception following Barbara Papagian’s Ecclesiastical Council.

June – The CYM Committee hosted the Teachers Appreciation Breakfast, the ONA Committee participated in the Pride Concord Day and handed out FCC labeled water bottles and literature and the Members in Discernment Team hosted the reception for Barbara Papagian’s Commissioning.

Summer – The Quilters worked over the summer to finish quilts to be blessed in September.

September – The Deacons coordinated the Blessing of the Quilts.

October – The Deacons held and hosted the Usher Breakfast Meeting and unveiled the new Usher/Greeter structure and the Usher Handbook 2018-2019 that they have been working on this year. The Quilters kicked off their quilt raffle.

November – The Deacons wrapped up their yearlong “Gratitude for Helping Hands” recognizing the different groups in the church, the Altar Design Team decorated the altar with vegetables and fruits for Thanksgiving, the CYM Committee coordinated the Advent Workshop, the ONA Committee helped plan and participate in the ONA Celebration marking the one-year anniversary of the ONA vote and the Quilters selected the three lucky winners of the Quilt Raffle – Selma Naccach-Hoff, Terri Pattee and Dick Jarvis.

December – The Altar Design Team decorated the altar with poinsettias for Christmas.

None of this would have been possible without the dedicated Chairs, leaders and members of the groups and Board involved in this area of ministry. It has been a privilege to work with all of them.

I’d like to thank Ruth Knowles for her leadership as Chair of the Deacons; JoAnn Ward for organizing and coordinating Communion; Cheryl McKenney and Linda Sowa for coordinating the Hospitality/Fellowship time; the Usher Captains – Steve Payne, Kathy Nelson, Grant Dugan, Tom Irving and Sam Knowles; Ethel Parker for coordinating the Greeters; Pam LeBlanc and Terri Pattee for leading the Altar Design Team; Larry Dearborn, Chair the Audio Team; Barbara Papagian for coordinating the Parish Visitors; John Curtis, Chair of the Pastor/Parish Relations Committee; Ellie Stetson and Pam Leblanc for supporting Barbara Papagian as her Members in Discernment Team and for Sue Curtis, Matt Lyons and Rev. Kevin for supporting Emelia Attridge as her Members in Discernment Team; Carolyn Wilson for leading the Quilt Ministry; Carol Soucy, for her leadership as Chair of the ONA Committee and Jennifer Longval as the Chair of the Children/Youth Ministry Committee as well as her role as Chair of the Music Committee. Thanks also to JoAnn Ward, Jennifer Longval, and Joan Currier for serving as representatives on the Church Council from the Ministry of Spirituality area.

I am grateful to Rev. Kevin, Adam Peithmann, Betsy Green, Kelda York and Barbara Papagian for their guidance and support throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanine Finefrock, Ministry of Spirituality Coordinator

Worship Ministry Deacon Report

The Board of Deacons continues to develop and refine its role under the guidance of the Ministry of Spirituality. The main objective of this twelve member board is to work closely with Rev. Pleas in organizing and planning worship services, prepare for and serve Communion, and assist with baptisms. When developing special services, the Board of Deacons will collaborate with the Director of Music Ministry, Adam Peithmann. As always, Adam's input is gratefully appreciated.

During the 2018 church year the Board of Deacons oversaw the following initiatives:

- revamping the Ushers and Greeters into 5 weekly teams. Each team is headed by a Team Captain, three ushers and 2 greeters.
- producing a *Greeting as Ministry In the Life of Our Church* Handbook. The handbook outlines the duties and guidelines for each Greeter and Usher.
- organizing a workshop breakfast for the Greeter and Usher Teams to review the duties outlined in the *Greeting as Ministry In the Life of Our Church* Handbook
- facilitating the setup and organization of the Maundy Thursday supper and worship service
- honoring the following committees with a monthly **Gratitude for Helping Hands**. The committees recognized were Hospitality Committee, Greeters and Ushers, Friends of the Office, Altar Design Team and Audio Committee, Building and Grounds, Scholarship Committee, Parish Visitors, Hands On Mission for Everyone, Meal Train, Senior Board and Women's Connection
- honoring the Quilt Ministry with a Blessing of the Quilts Service
- supporting the ONA committee
- continuing to faithfully serve both the Sanctuary and Chapel services
- upholding prayerfully the monthly Healing Service
- assisting Rev. Pleas with other special services throughout the church year

Most of all, the Board of Deacons give thanks to Jeanine Finefrock, Coordinator of the Ministry of Spirituality, for her spiritual commitment, organization and leadership. Her guiding hands created a sturdy framework for a successful year.

The Board of Deacons extend a special thanks of gratitude to JoAnn Ward, Communion Deacon coordinator, for all her work organizing the Deacons who serve Communion.

2018 Board of Deacons

Pip Adams, Lisa Allen, Craig Finefrock, Jeanine Finefrock, Karen Hawver, Tom Irving, Ruth Knowles, DT Lewis, Richard Nelson, JoAnn Ward, and Donna Willey

Respectfully submitted,
Ruth Knowles, chair

Open and Affirming Discernment Process

*"Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you,
for the glory of God."* Romans 15:7 NRSV

Following the congregational vote to adopt the Open and Affirming Covenant in November 2017, the Church Council voted to establish a permanent, standing committee to lead our congregation in living out the promises expressed in our Open and Affirming covenant. Committee members include those that served on the original ONA Discernment Process Team along with new members, Jeanine Finefrock and Bridget Thornton. In January, First

Congregational Church also received an official designation from the United Church of Christ. When people seek a new church in the Manchester area, FCC is listed as an Open and Affirming congregation on the UCC denomination website and on the NH UCC Conference website. This designation is now reflected on the FCC Sunday bulletin, an addition that was endorsed by the Deacons and the Church Council.

A change to the bylaws was proposed at February's Annual Meeting for the purpose of including the Open and Affirming Covenant in the church bylaws. This proposal was approved through a congregational vote. The Open and Affirming Covenant now appears in the bylaws, along with our historic Church Covenant.

Throughout the year, the committee engaged in efforts to connect within the congregation and in the wider community. On June 2, committee members and volunteers attended the annual Pride Concord celebration, held on the NH Statehouse lawn. The experience exceeded expectations and affirmed our calling to serve Christ in the world. We attracted attention with an eye-catching poster, FCC T-shirts, and a central location on the NH statehouse lawn, interacting and connecting with hundreds of participants throughout the afternoon. The group distributed bottles of water, complete with FCC labels. When asked about cost, we offered the water as our gift - requesting only that people read the label and our poster. Those exchanges sparked deeper conversations about the meaning of Open and Affirming, about our FCC faith community, and about God's love for all. Ours was the only church group present. Volunteers heard lots of positive feedback, thanks for our presence, and appreciation of our message of welcome and acceptance. A number of participants shared their difficult experiences in other churches and they were interested and heartened to hear about a place of worship that is open and affirming.

On Sunday, November 18th, the congregation celebrated the one-year anniversary of the vote to adopt the ONA Covenant. The special worship service was organized by Pastor Kevin, the Open and Affirming Committee, Adam Peithmann, and the Deacons. Participants included readers Linda Noble, Rick Nelson, Sam Knowles, and Ruth Knowles. NHCUCC's new Conference Minister Rev. Gordon Rankin and guests from the Hooksett and Hancock UCC churches were in attendance. Worship was spirit-filled and affirming. Pastor Kevin's inspiring meditation was a highlight. Members of the Chancel Choir shared an anthem, and a large, enthusiastic group from the NH Gay Men's Chorus performed two selections. Jeffrey Frye's debut of his composition, "We Are Unbroken - Even After All" was beautiful and moving. Church Moderator Peter Perich accepted a framed certificate from UCC's Open and Affirming Coalition, signifying our church's official Open and Affirming designation. The offering proceeds from the ONA Celebration Service were designated for the Coalition, for the ongoing mission to provide educational outreach, support churches in the discernment process, and advocate for issues related to inclusion. Thanks to the many volunteers that helped with the enjoyable reception following the service.

Guest Rev. Carlos Jauhola-Straight of South Church in Concord shared several thoughts and observations about our discernment process, among them a helpful reminder that the anniversary service serves as a *mile-marker*, not a milestone. In keeping with this reminder, our congregation's efforts to live into the ONA Covenant will continue when FCC hosts the NHCUCC ONA Spring Conference on Saturday, April 6, 2019.

We are thankful to Rev. Carlos Jauhola-Straight for his willingness to support, shepherd, and care for our congregation throughout the past year. Thanks also to members of the FCC Open and Affirming Committee: Kathy Alger, Bruce Attridge, Jeanine Finefrock, Jeffrey Frye, Karen Hawver, Michael Pugh, John Rowe, Kathy Rowe, and Bridget Thornton.

We are grateful to FCC members and friends of the congregation for supporting efforts to fulfill our shared promises for inclusion and affirmation. The words of the late Gracie Allen

prompt us to “Never place a period where God has placed a comma.” Through our ongoing commitment to offer welcome to all, we will continue living into the words of our ONA Covenant and affirm that “God is still speaking” to us – here at First Congregational Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Soucy, Chairperson of the FCC ONA Team

Parish Visitors

There are now four people on the Parish Visitors Team. We will be meeting formally three or four times per year, but we are in contact with each other frequently for updates on people visited and people needing visits or phone calls.

I love that many of you, even though not officially on the Parish Visitor Team, are visiting people and asking me about people and giving me names of people who might need visits. FCC is such a loving and caring congregation and it is impressive how well the Parish Visitors, the Meal Train, the Outreach Committee, the Quilters, the Senior Board, and the Knitters work together to help our congregation and community.

I thank Lucia Carlisle, Becki Krueger and Ruth Knowles who have all been on the Parish Visitors Team for many years now and demonstrate their caring for the people in our congregation who need that extra bit of caring.

Peace and Blessings to all of you in the coming year,
Barbara Papagian, Commissioned Minister of Pastoral Care

Communion Committee

The Sacrament of Communion is served to all who wish to receive it, following the tradition of our church. The elements served are non-alcoholic grape juice and bread (plus a gluten-free option). People serving Communion are usually current members of the Board of Deacons, aided as needed by the Communion Deacons.

Communion was celebrated at the 10 o'clock Sanctuary service six times during the year, usually on the first Sunday of each new church season: Epiphany Sunday (January 7), the first Sunday in Lent (February 18), Easter Season Sunday (April 8), Pentecost Sunday (May 20), World Communion Sunday (October 7), and the first Sunday of Advent (December 2). On World Communion Sunday, a selection of international breads enhanced the bread element. Seven Deacons assisted the Pastor serving at each Sanctuary Communion service. Communion by intinction was part of the February 14th Ash Wednesday and March 29th Maundy Thursday evening services, and was the main focus of the first Sunday of the month Chapel services on days there was no Sanctuary Communion service. One Deacon assisted the Pastor during these services.

It is an honor for all of us to serve the Sacrament of Communion. Thank you to all the Deacons for faithful service throughout the year. The people who contributed by preparing, serving, or bringing elements were Pip Adams, Lisa Allen, Grant Dugan, Craig Finefrock, Jeanine Finefrock, Karen Hawver, Tom Irving, Dick Jarvis, Ruth Knowles, Sam Knowles, D.T. Lewis, Dan Mc Kenney, Kathy Nelson, JoAnn Ward, and Donna Willey.

Respectfully submitted,
JoAnn Ward, Communion Committee Chair

Hospitality Committee

The Hospitality Committee at First Congregational Church is a combined effort of many boards, groups, committees, and individuals to provide a Fellowship Hour after worship each Sunday. The Hospitality Committee schedules these groups on a monthly or weekly basis depending on the size of the group. The groups are responsible for setting up, serving, cleaning up, and supplying the food items and punch each week. Items such as coffee, creamers, sweeteners, etc. are part of the Worship line items in the budget. We are very thankful for these groups. In the summer we ask individuals or families to sign up for individual weeks to bring a light, refreshing snack for Fellowship Hour. We are very grateful to the people that volunteer to do this. We also have two angels that check and clean out the refrigerators frequently for us. Our thanks to them as well.

The schedule for 2019 is posted on the office window for everyone to check.

Many thanks to all that have helped with a successful year. A special thanks to Linda Sowa for her assistance. I truly appreciate it!

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl McKenney, Hospitality Chair

Greeter and Usher Team

One of the responsibilities that the Board of Deacons undertook at the end of the 2017 church year was combining the Greeters and Ushers into one team. The Board first examined the duties and guidelines from a Membership Committee document that was created during a previous workshop.

The Board consulted with greeters and ushers, their team captains along with Ethel Parker, Joan Currier and Dick Jarvis to help the Deacons understand the essential duties of both the greeters and the ushers. Once the Board created a list of responsibilities, it was decided that the easiest format to present the new team concept would be in a handbook format. Hence the “**Greeting as Ministry In the Life of Our Church**” became an official document.

Our first decision was to dedicate the booklet to Ethel Parker and Dick Jarvis: Our Greeter and Usher Emeritus. They reflect as stated in 1 Peter 5:14 *Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.* Their years of service to this ministry within the church is to be commended. Thank you, Ethel and Dick, for being the warm, loving and friendly faces of our church family.

To kickoff the new Greeter and Usher Team, the Board of Deacons hosted in October a workshop breakfast for all the Greeters and Ushers. Each member of the team received their own handbook which will be updated yearly. A special thank you goes to Lauren Henderson for helping the Board craft the “**Greeting as Ministry In the Life of Our Church**” handbook.

The Board of Deacons want to express their thanks to Team Captains: Steve Payne, Kathy Nelson, Grant Dugan, Tom Irving and Sam Knowles along with their greeters and ushers for their willingness to be the welcoming faces for our congregation.

Respectfully submitted,
Ruth Knowles, Chair of Board of Deacons

Greeters

"Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers." Romans 12:13

Thanks to all of the regular greeters who extend hospitality to members, friends, and guests each week. We also thank those individuals who served as greeters for special worship services and on special occasions during the past year.

As chairperson of the FCC Greeters since 2010, I have seen and felt the positive impact of friendly greetings as people enter our house of worship. I enjoy and am inspired by this role at First Congregational Church. If you'd be interested in serving as a greeter, please contact me by phone, speak to me on a Sunday morning, or you may also contact the Coordinator of the Ministry of Spirituality, Jeanine Finefrock. We invite you to get involved in this important aspect of our ministry to God and to each other.

Respectfully submitted,
Ethel Parker

Altar Design Committee

This was a great year for the altar design team. Many Easter lilies and tulips were donated making a wonderful display, we had many volunteers for summer flowers which we will continue, the fall display was spectacular, and I think this was one of our best years for poinsettias.

Members of the committee this year included: Pip and Cecile Adams, Sue Clement, Joan Currier, Deana Dubois, Jeanine and Craig Finefrock, Lindsey Goodrich, Karen Hawver, Pam and Leo LeBlanc, Jennifer Longval, Peggy Neveu, Terri and Allen Pattee, Martha Perich, Liz Verity, Lisa Allen, Denise Beurivage and Vicki Tinsley We extended our projects this year to include decorating the narthex, the dining room, the parlor and the hanging of the greens for Advent and Christmas.

Many thanks to Sokhom Sar, Larry Dearborn, and Dick Jarvis for their continued support.
Respectfully submitted,
Terri Pattee and Pam Leblanc

Quilt Ministry

The FCC Quilt Ministry continues to work on lap quilts for our parishioners. On Saturday, March 10th, the group met to begin creating fifteen quilts to be given to our shut-ins and adults being baptized. The fifteen gorgeous quilts were displayed and blessed on Sunday, September 30th. Also on that day, a quilt was blessed and presented to Barbara Papagian. Over the summer, members of the Quilt Ministry began working on a surprise quilt for Barbara Papagian to commemorate her Commissioning. Squares were prepared and signed by 127 friends of Barbara, with personal messages of support; and then lovingly crafted together in a "rail fence" pattern, creating a lasting memory of our admiration for Barbara and her achievement as a Commissioned Minister of Pastoral Care.

On that same day, we kicked off a Quilt Raffle with three unique quilts presented to the congregation to be raffled off on November 11th. The quilts were created and donated by DT Lewis and Carolyn Ferguson-Wilson. The raffle was a huge success, raising \$840 to be used for future Quilt Ministry projects. Quilts were won by Dick Jarvis, Terri Pattee, and Selma Naccach-Hoff.

This ministry would not be possible if were not for those individuals or groups who offer encouragement and support, secure the day to work, advertise the event, open the facility, set up

tables and extension cords, haul out the stored sewing machines and fabric, donate beautiful fabrics, generously give monetary gifts, do the stitching, ironing and hand sewing, provide refreshments and warm, friendly fellowship and arrange for an opportunity to bless the final products. As you can see, there are many who participate in this ministry. Thank you so very much! I appreciate and love you all.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Wilson, Quilt Ministry Coordinator

Audio Committee

Mission – Provide the services needed to enable the congregation to be able to hear the church service and to record the service.

It is the duty of the Audio Committee to set up the required number of microphones for the worship service each Sunday and record the service to make CD's for shut-ins or anyone requesting them. We also will record any other special services if requested.

The two speakers from behind the organ screen have been moved to the front of the organ screen. New hearing assistance headsets will be explored in 2019.

Respectfully submitted,
Larry Dearborn (Chairman) & Bob Koehler

FCC Members in Discernment

“Member In Discernment” Status is a Covenantal Relationship between a person on a journey toward Authorized Ministry, the Hillsborough Association, and the person’s local church.

Two members of First Congregational Church, Barbara Papagian and Emelia Attridge, continued to pursue their respective calls to authorized ministry. During 2018, each of them achieved numerous milestones along their journey.

Barbara Papagian completed her last required course in January. In February, she was approved for her Ecclesiastical Council which was then held in the Sanctuary on Sunday, May 6. She received approval from the Council to move forward with her Commissioning. She was Commissioned as a Minister in Pastoral Care during a ceremony held in the Sanctuary on June 3. During the year, Barbara lead worship on 4 Sundays, assisted with Communion, performed one funeral and led the Blue Christmas Service. She is currently pursuing a path to Ordained Ministry and has established a new Support Committee.

Barbara’s FCC Commissioning Support Committee: Ellie Stetson and Pam LeBlanc

Barbara’s FCC Ordination Support Committee: Ellie Stetson, Pam LeBlanc and Tom Irving

Emelia Attridge finished her final semester at Boston University School of Theology and graduated summa cum laude in May. Shortly after graduation, she entered into an intensive summer unit of Clinical Pastoral Education at Havenwood Heritage Heights in Concord, NH. CPE was her final required educational component of her discernment process. During the summer she also filled pulpit supply roles leading worship and preaching at a variety of churches each week, including a week at FCC! Throughout the year she continued working part time at Hancock United Church of Christ as the Congregational Care Coordinator, involved in pastoral care as well as worship and programming. In September, she submitted her Ordination Paper to the Hillsborough Association Committee on Church and Ministry, and after an interview in October, the paper was accepted and the committee recommended her to an Ecclesiastical Council which will be held at the church on Sunday, January 13, 2019. Also, as of January 1, 2019, she

will be serving full time at Hancock UCC in Lexington, MA as Acting Minister temporarily until May 2019. She is so thankful for the prayers, support, cards, kindness, and grace she has received from FCC during this time of discernment since she began this process in the spring of 2015.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanine Finefrock, Ministry of Spirituality Coordinator

Children and Youth Ministry

In 2018 the Children's Ministry Committee had 6 members: Lucia Carlisle, Scott Thornton, Kathy Nelson, Pamela Leblanc, Michelle Horan and Chair Jennifer Longval. We also welcomed Ellie Stetson, Kelda York, Rev. Kevin Pleas and Jeanine Finefrock to our meetings.

In the spring of 2018, the Committee assisted with the planning of the June 2018 Children's Sunday Service. We provided an Appreciation Breakfast for the teachers and cradle roll volunteers. Thank you to Kathy Nelson for providing an appreciation gift to all volunteers! We also hosted/provided an ice cream social during coffee hour for the congregation. Sandy Howard was kind enough to gift potted Marigolds to all the children in the congregation! The Committee also facilitated a congregational collection for a good-bye gift for our departing CE Director, Betsy Green.

In November 2018 we held the annual Advent Workshop themed *Angels*. A light lunch of soup, sandwiches and desserts was provided by the Committee while the tree ornaments were drying. The children decorated the tree beautifully after lunch! Thank you to all the craft volunteers for another creative ornament year!!

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Longval, Chair

Pastor/Parish Relations

There were two meetings of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) during 2018. One held in the Spring and another in the Fall.

The committee is comprised of four church members: two nominated by Church Council and two chosen by Pastor Pleas. The four members are: John Curtis, Grant Dugan, Bill Jones and Carol Soucy.

The purpose of the PPRC is to provide a trusted channel for communication and feedback between the leader of our ministry, Rev. Pleas and the collective body of the congregation. Where sensitivity of issues might otherwise deter open and direct dialogue, this committee is established to respond to concerns or issues that may emerge between our senior pastor and our membership. During the scheduled PPRC meeting, the objective is to address those issues or concerns professionally and thoughtfully so that Rev Pleas is made aware and discussions transpire.

The congregation is encouraged to bring positive feedback and concerns directly to Rev Pleas. When congregants are unable to do that, they are encouraged to speak with any of the PPRC members who will then facilitate the matter with confidentiality and promptness.

The PPRC will continue to meet periodically throughout the year on an as-needed basis. Our goal is to support and maintain open communication channels and an understanding between the congregation and our senior pastor.

Respectfully submitted,
John Curtis

Reports from the Ministry of Mission and Outreach

A Christian church is called to serve. The many committees and groups represented by this ministry answer this call in an admirable fashion. They reach out to members of the congregation, to our Manchester community and to the national and international community. The many services they provide vary widely but all contribute to the mission of creating the beloved community. The individual reports of each organization will provide ample evidence of this.

Committees that serve our own congregation are an important aspect of outreach. They help to create a sense of belonging and community in members of the congregation who participate. The Women’s Connection offers monthly activities for the women of the congregation that are eagerly anticipated. They also help to organize receptions at a number of events. The Men’s Club offers a service of performing odd jobs for members of the congregation in need of assistance. The Senior Fellowship Board reaches out to the seniors of the congregation most notably in providing three luncheons per year at a local restaurant. The Book Club offers an opportunity to discuss books of interest. The Meal Train provides meals for families in times of need such as illness.

Several committees offer an outreach to the wider community. The knitting and crocheting group provide hats and mittens to accompany holiday baskets for each child in the family as well as other items. This year they provided 81 sets of hats and mittens to school children, 10 pocket prayer shawls and 2 balaclavas and 1 hat to the New England Seafarers Mission. Outreach disburses funds provided by the annual church budget to local, national and international organizations such as New Horizons, Habitat for Humanity and Heifer International. They also provide volunteer services for a number of organizations and work with the Hallsville School to meet the needs of children there, particularly providing food for weekends and coats and boots for the winter. The food closet provides families and individuals with enough food for a meal. There has been a steady flow of people requesting this service. Donations from the congregation has helped to get the closet full. H.O.M.E provides volunteer services for a number of community organizations including New Horizons and the Upreach Riding Center. The quality and quantity of those services is reflected in the Spirit of New Hampshire award given to Liz Verity this fall.

Membership Committee provides outreach to both the congregation and to the community. Its focus is on encouraging more citizens in the community to consider becoming members and on encouraging members to feel a part of our congregational community. For instance cards are sent to members in certain circumstances such as illness or loss. Three members of the committee as well as Rev Pleas and John Rowe are attending a class on the 21st century church presented by the New Hampshire Conference. This is in follow-up to discussions on the book, Canoeing the Mountains and the hope is to develop ways to respond to the pressures of demographic changes that challenge the vitality of FCC.

As will be seen in the reports below for the individual groups, the work of mission and outreach is alive and well at FCC. The activity level is reflective of a church that values itself, its members and the community, nation and world in which it lives.

Respectfully submitted,
John Rowe, Ministry of Mission and Outreach Coordinator

H.O.M.E.

H.O.M.E. (Hands on Mission for Everyone) continues to provide volunteers from our church family for **New Horizons**. We do kitchen prep once a month and serve dinner twice a month. Many of our volunteers are regulars, and others join when able. We have also helped on occasion with the New Horizon's food pantry.

Peggy Neveu and Liz Verity co-ordinate the **FCC Meal Train**, which provides a connection between those who receive a meal or special treat and those who prepare and deliver. Taking the time to say "we care about you" in this way is proving to be rewarding for the preparers and much appreciated by the receivers. We thank all those who have provided food, and those who have delivered meals and goodie bags. In some cases, visits and meals are continuing beyond requests from the Meal Train. This year we have delivered 18 individual meals, and 40 soups, cookies and muffins bags. We also gave out 33 cookie and breakfast (pick me up)bags. THANK YOU to those who have become a part of this ongoing project, and to Barbara Papagian for her continued guidance.

Meal Train volunteers provided dinner monthly during sessions at the **Upreach Therapeutic Riding Center** in Goffstown. This program is for families taking part in a 7-week program for kids who have been identified as having Adverse Childhood experiences (such as Abuse, Neglect, and Household Dysfunction). They attend the center after school, work with a counselor in a group workshop, and have the opportunity to groom and work with the horses, before joining their parents and volunteers for a family meal. In recent sessions parents have also been able to attend workshops geared to their needs.

Morning Conversation with our ENA students has continued: students and volunteers get to enjoy conversation as we learn about each other and give the students the opportunity to practice their language skills outside of a classroom setting. Students and teachers welcome our involvement and find the sessions very useful. Volunteers also express they enjoy the great experience.

The **Annual English for New Americans Dinner** took place on Thursday, December 13th. Our ENA students and their families, teachers and volunteers say the evening was wonderful. Thanks go to the many volunteers who did food prep in the kitchen, set the tables, did the dishes, cooked, baked and served. Special thanks go to chef Judy Dinatale and to Lucia Carlisle who organized the serving of the food to around 98 students and families members. Pam Pleas gave the blessing before the meal, and volunteers joined the students to explain more of our American holiday traditions. Teachers and students sang holiday songs. Thanks also go to the Outreach Committee who donated grocery store gift cards which were used as raffle prizes. There were so many volunteers, and on behalf of the students and teachers I want to thank each and every one of you. You made this First Church tradition possible, sharing the blessings of this season with our new neighbors, which meant so much to them.

I am deeply proud to be part of this Congregation and am always amazed at the generosity of your hearts

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Verity, H.O.M.E Coordinator

Outreach Committee

The Outreach committee works to bring the message of FCC to the community. Members include Sam and Ruth Knowles, Marsha Neubert, Elizabeth Robertson, JoAnn Ward, Devin and Sue Clement, Linda Bilodeau, Zane Knoy, Sandy Salinas, Eric Gagnon, Karen Hawver, Kelda

York, Jonathan Martin, Sue Curtis, Carolyn Lane, Maggie Jespersen, Stephen Bearse and Pam Priebus. Special thanks are extended to JoAnn Ward for her work as secretary, and Sam and Ruth Knowles for their work as treasurer.

Part of our work is to distribute the funds donated by the congregation to various ministries. These can be seen in the Financial Report. Covenant ministries are ones with which we have covenanted a certain level of support. For example, we have been a long-time supporter of Habitat for Humanity, contributing money, providing lunch once a month for their volunteers, and, not least, several volunteers who spend many hours working on the homes. Similarly, we support the New England Seafarers Mission with funds as well as with volunteers. Support ministries include a number of ministries to whom we donate and a number of services that we provide to the community.

Another aspect of our work is providing services directly. The food closet has seen increases in the number of people requesting food; the cost of this has been offset by an increase in donations from the congregation – we are very grateful to everyone who brings something in. In February the congregation donated a record 1277 food items for the “Souper Bowl.” These were donated to the New Horizon’s Food Bank and the congregation was rewarded with two cakes baked by Ethel Parker. In the spring 12 members of the congregation participated in the Walk Against Hunger and raised \$55 to add to the \$1000 from the committee. \$760 was raised for Mothers’ and Fathers’ Day cards for the Church World Service.

In the summer we celebrated Christmas in July at the Helping Hands Mission. We sang carols and gave \$20 gift cards to the residents. We were unable to participate in the annual Crop Walk this year as the churches we worked with have moved on to other activities. We did participate in the Religious Response to Hunger in September, delivering two carloads of groceries in a caravan from Brookside Church to New Horizons.

The Angel Tree project, organized by Sue Clement, provided almost 150 gifts to individuals in the community, most of whom would not have had a Christmas present. We select the agencies we serve based on how great the need and these are the ones where the least has been available. For holiday baskets, we provided 15 \$50 gift cards with hats and mittens to families at local schools for Thanksgiving and an additional 15 gift cards at Christmas. In addition, gift cards were given to individuals connected to the church who are in need. Gift cards are given now instead of holiday baskets because many families, especially at the schools, will not have facilities to cook a turkey dinner and most will have access to a Thanksgiving dinner, but limited food for the rest of the holiday period.

Our relationship with Hallsville School, a school in Manchester with 62% of their children living at or below the poverty level, continues to grow and be productive. We continue to provide grocery store gift cards to be used for families experiencing hardship. The school administration distributes these judiciously to those in the greatest need. We provided staples for two families every other week through the end of the school year in June. This year we have decided with the school to participate in a program called Blessings in a Backpack. This national organization provides meals for a whole weekend every Friday to participating children who otherwise will not have food when school is not in session. The cost will be about \$120 per child and provides meals for 38 weekends. The committee has covenanted to provide for 25 children and there is an opportunity for members of the congregation to contribute so that more children can be served. We also provided a lunch at the end of the school year to thank the teachers for all they do for the children which was attended by many of those who have assisted in some way.

In the fall of 2017, we initiated a program to provide winter boots and coats to children at Hallsville who were without them using funds provided by the Fall Fun Auction. This year we used the remaining auction funds combined with money from the Manchester Fund and the

choir's Palm Sunday breakfast to provide for 46 children. A special thank you is extended to the members of the congregation who helped by purchasing a coat or a pair of boots. We hope to make this an annual event.

The work of the committee is supplemented in many ways. Funds remaining from the Fall Fun Auction of 2017, money raised by the choir's Palm Sunday breakfast, and the 2018 disbursement from the Manchester Fund enabled us to provide boots and coats for Hallsville. A donation from the Digital Credit Union has helped us to fund the Blessings in a Backpack program at the school. Donations from Hannaford's shopping bag sales has helped to supply the food closet. Many thanks to all of these donors.

A concern to be addressed over the coming year is the decline in the number of FCC members volunteering at Habitat for Humanity. This is one of our oldest relationships with an organization that provides an invaluable service to the community. We welcome input as to how we can restore the enthusiasm for providing volunteer service as well as the funds we contribute.

The Outreach Committee is grateful to FCC and to all of the members of the congregation for the tremendous support we receive for our work. Together we bring God's love to those most in need of it. The committee chairpersons also wish to express our gratitude to all of the members of the committee who work incredibly hard throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,
John Rowe, Outreach Coordinator

First Church Special Olympics Young Athletes Program

After meeting with the Council and Trustees in September 2018, First Church decided to host a Fall Term of the Special Olympics Young Athletes program starting in October. The program was offered on Thursdays from 5:30pm to 6:30pm, and was supported by 12 volunteers of the church who served as Coaches.

The Young Athletes program is a weekly, one hour, sports-play activities event for children ages 2 to 7, with and without disabilities. The program engages children through developmentally appropriate play activities, involving gross and fine motor skills designed to allow children to be active, have fun, and learn foundational sports skills.

The activities were created by specialists from the fields of special education, physical education, adaptive physical education, physical therapy and occupational therapy. Children develop physical, cognitive and social development skills – skills that are important on and off the sports field. The program follows an 8 week curriculum which introduces a different set of games and activities each week to help children develop strength, body awareness, spatial concepts, visual tracking, and how to follow directions. Studies have shown children participating in Young Athletes can make 7 to 9 months of developmental improvements in just 2 months.

Comments from the parents of the athletes at the conclusion of the Fall Term in December speak to the value of this program:

"Having my child participate in Young Athletes really improved his social skills. My son can be very shy, but during this program I saw him open up to the instructors."

"Participation was a positive experience for S. P. and T. P. It clearly helped their physical skills - especially coordination. It helped their social skills through interactions with people of all ages and having to wait their turn and listen to instructions."

"It helped his anxiety. Before sports, it would be hard to get him in the car without a fight. Now, he looks forward to Thursday sports with friends."

"Participation in the program improved socialization and listening skills. The staff was kind and knowledgeable about the curriculum, with patient redirection. You can see how each week

the children anticipated the physical action required for the task at hand. I noticed improvement in participation every week."

"Independent activity - space from Mom and self-confidence. The YA coaches are amazing and loving. Non-judgmental space to explore physical activity."

"It seems to be a well thought out program. It is heart warming to see a group of dedicated, kind and patient volunteers with such a varied age group. You can see how the skills build on each other. I see nothing that needs improvement. Thank you very kindly on behalf of our children."

The Young Athletes program offered a Winter Term starting in January 2019, with all 9 children returning from the Fall Term. There were also 11 new children added, increasing the program to 20 athletes. A Spring Term will also be offered starting in April.

This has been a wonderful win-win opportunity for First Church to gain additional exposure in our community while providing a much needed benefit to children with special needs. Please contact Bill Jones if you would like to become involved as a volunteer Coach.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Jones, Young Athletes Coach & Coordinator

In-House Missions: Outside Groups Using the Building

Our building continues to bustle with activity as it is an extremely valuable commodity to the community, and we have a tradition of being very generous in making our rooms available to outside groups provided their mission coincides with ours. This tradition strengthens the groups who benefit from the use of our building; however, even in the few instances when groups contribute financially to the church, rarely does their contribution come close to covering our operating costs. Opening our doors to outside groups entails considerable coordination and accommodation from the staff as well as church members. We are all pleased to assist in whatever way we can, but let us all be aware of this very significant area of church contribution to the life of the city as well as the Greater Manchester area.

English for New Americans and Citizenship Classes: Sponsored by Southern New Hampshire Services. Barbara DelloRusso continues as Coordinator, and together with her dedicated staff, Barbara does a remarkable job helping immigrants to assimilate into our society. We are a proud partner in this enterprise, which serves the Greater Manchester area and is well respected throughout the community. The space for 12 English classes has been provided by FCC for 14 years now and this program continues to serve well over 200 foreign-born persons, Monday through Friday, mornings, afternoons and evenings all year long. In addition to the English classes, the program has expanded to multiple Citizenship classes, tutoring, "Welcoming Manchester" citywide and the FCC specific "conversation cafés", Manchester Adult Learner Services where trained volunteers are paired with adult learners, and a health program to help immigrants work towards an LNA certificate.

The 14th Annual ENA Holiday Dinner was held on Thursday, December 13th, with over 100 people attending. Thanks to Liz Verity, again this year, for coordinating a very successful event, and a big thank you to all of the church members and staff who make this holiday dinner so popular every year by coordinating the many details involved and donating all of the fixings for a huge turkey dinner. Everyone who attended had a great time and many students have since expressed their sincere gratitude and appreciation that FCC is continuing this multi-cultural, holiday tradition. Southern New Hampshire Services pays a monthly rental fee.

Korean Presbyterian Church: For over sixteen years on Sunday afternoons, Pastor Jang has led a small group of Koreans in worship, education and fellowship meals. Pastor Jang's congregation may be small, but they are truly committed to their faith, and the remaining

members only use the building for their Sunday afternoon worship service and fellowship meal. We continue to provide the space to Pastor Jang and his congregation free of charge and I know we can all agree that it is always a pleasure being able to help our Korean friends. Pastor Jang has also expressed his deep gratitude for the giving nature and generosity of this congregation and his church does contribute to our church offering, which we do deposit as rental income.

Alcoholics Anonymous: Every Friday night AA meetings continue to be well attended in our dining room and these meetings have proven to be an extremely valuable and needed service to many individuals in and around the Greater Manchester area. D.T. Lewis is still coordinating the meetings with the help of volunteers and they all are doing a terrific job in running this very important program. We are more than pleased to offer our dining room free of charge to AA groups, however, as is part of the 12 Step Program, they insist on giving us a stipend regularly to help defray their costs. This contribution is deposited into rental income upon receipt.

Scouting: All of our dedicated scout leaders as well as their co-leaders deserve a huge thank-you for their excellent work over the years with Greater Manchester's youth. We do not charge any of the troops for their weekly meetings, but their contributions through various work projects within the church as well as throughout the community is more than enough payment. So, a special "thank you" to all of our wonderful scout participants and the selfless scout leaders who are nurturing and grooming the young people of America who are the future!

Girl Scout troops continue to use our space for their Tuesday meetings and this is a great opportunity to thank the dedicated troop leaders who make it all happen. Many thanks to Shayne Fritz and Deana Dubois for always coordinating their schedule with the Church office! Tuesday nights can be chaotic, but the Girl Scouts prevail!

The Venturing Crew is taking a hiatus from meeting due to the lack of leaders. We hope to see it start again soon. The Venturing Crew is a program of the Boy Scouts of America.

New Hampshire Gay Men's Chorus: NHGMC has contracted to use the sanctuary for rehearsal space for their bi-annual extravaganzas. It's a joyous place on rehearsal nights! In addition to rent, they offer a free concert to our members for our support. NHGMC pays a monthly or per session rental fee.

Special Olympics Young Athletes: It has been an eye-opening experience hosting the Special Olympics Young Athletes, age 2-7, on Thursday evenings. With our first 8-week session under our belts, we can all agree that the dozen volunteers from FCC, led by Coach Bill Jones, benefitted as much as the children from the experience. As the program expands to 20 active children, everyone is encouraged to join the coaching staff to broaden their understanding of not only the Special Olympics program, but the obstacles facing the parents of these special kids.

Neighborhood Ministry: Thank you to all who contribute to the FCC Food Closet so that we may help those less fortunate. The Outreach Committee continues to shop for food and supplies so we can keep our Food Closet well stocked. Thanks to the many groups who have collected food, and the individuals who "drop a bag" in the office or provide a gift card to Outreach. This year we had over 400 visits! For the 2017-18 school year, every two weeks volunteers drop "a weekend's worth" of food at Hallsville School for at least two needy families. In 2019 we will initiate the Blessing in a Backpack program. By teaming up with the Outreach Committee to support the Angel Tree, volunteering with Habitat, prepping and serving food at New Horizons every month, celebrating Christmas in July at CAM, bonding with Interfaith Women, and distributing weekly donations of baked goods to ENA on Wednesdays, we ensure that those less fortunate will always have our support. In thanks for her unlimited support in all of these activities which give back to the greater community, FCC nominated Liz Verity for the 2018 Spirit of NH Award and over 30 member proudly supported her at the November award ceremony at the Capital Center for the Arts.

Miscellaneous: The Chapel and the Sanctuary were used many times this year to celebrate weddings and showers, to honor loved ones with memorial services and funerals, and to present Mind, Body, Spirit...inspirational topics. Baptisms are generally incorporated into the regular worship service. We also make the Sanctuary and Chapel available, usually at no cost, for other area churches in town when they are in need of a larger space for funeral services or other functions.

When we reflect on the activities and vast successes in 2018, I can't thank everyone enough, staff and volunteers alike, for the synergy created by First Congregational Church...making the corner of Hanover and Union a beacon of love and support in Manchester.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Bonetti, Church Administrator



English for New Americans Program
508 Union St., Manchester, NH 03104 603-361-2649
bdellorusso@snhs.org

January 18, 2019
First Congregational Church
508 Union St.
Manchester, NH 03104

Dear Trustees, Members, and Staff of the First Congregational Church,

This will be my fourth year here and 2019 appears to be off to a overwhelmingly good start.

First I want to thank the entire FCC community for continuing to embrace our student population – with highlights being the collaboration with the Morning Conversation Café volunteers, the wonderful Holiday Dinner in December with Liz Verity and dedicated church volunteers' excellent cooking, serving home style to many students and their families, and so I've been told, many observed kindnesses, and much appreciated gift cards for our students... Sue Corby, the previous Director, also worked with Liz as I was unavailable during the month of December. She really enjoyed helping out with it.

'Welcoming Manchester' used FCC space in the fall for night Conversation Cafes. They were well attended by our students and many people/volunteers from the community.

Our ESL program/English for New Americans has had another wonderful year here at the First Congregational Church. We continue to expand our classes to our student population when possible.

Our Adult Learner Services program has continued since October under the direction of Pauline Choy. Pauline continues the work that Ginette Chandler started making connections with students and community volunteers.

These community students need to prepare for testing in various subjects to be able to complete their HISET Diploma. The program also addresses specific areas of ESL and helping adult students with other specific needs – such as computer literacy and the written driver's test. Pauline is always looking for new tutors. If you have the time and would like to meet with her – please let us know.

Thank you to Linda who orchestrates the availability of space, the accommodations to our calendar, and much needed collaboration between our program and church schedules. We so appreciate Linda's ability to accommodate this growth.

I'd also like to give another huge thank you to Lauren – she continues to be someone who gives a smile, helps out in many ways – without being asked. She tolerates our late students and all the ensuing issues our population brings to the church. She is always a kind heart as well as has a great understanding of human nature.

A great deal of appreciation from all of our staff goes out to all of your staff, for a kind word and help and direction when needed. Larry and Sokhom have always helped when there is an immediate need or future need.

The churches flexibility, to help us accommodate the needs of both programs has been invaluable. Thank you!

With much appreciation,
Barbara DelloRusso, Program Manager

Membership Committee and Member Development

During 2018, the Membership Team supported the study of the problems, issues, and possible solutions for 20th century churches operating in the 21st century. After purchasing many copies of the book Canoeing the Mountains, the congregation was invited to read the book and attend a workshop led by Kevin Pleas to discuss and engage with the struggles that churches are coping with here in New Hampshire and nationally. The NH Conference of the UCC began a formal course based on the topics of this book in the fall. Five church members are attending the two-year course to learn and collaborate with other churches in the state of NH. The members of the team are Kevin Pleas, John Rowe, Lindsey Goodrich, Bill Jones and Ellie Stetson. The second year of the course will involve the application of what has been learned in the local churches who are participating. Our church will host one of the sessions during the second year.

Updates have been made to the Welcome Guide that you see in the pews for our church visitors and guests, the Church Website, and the Church Directory.

Church Members who are noted in the Sunday News receive cards from the Membership Team. This is a new initiative for the Membership Team. Many of our church members comment on how grateful they are to receive them.

The Church Fellowship Pads are being revised to request updated information required in order for the church office to more effectively make contact our church visitors.

In the fall, the Membership Team and the Stewardship Committee met jointly to talk about collaboration with church pledging and annual review of church membership. Plans are underway to initiate the publication of a new church pictorial directory that will benefit both committees and the congregation.

With the support of the Church Council, the Board of Trustees and the Membership Team, Bill Jones has begun a Young Athletes program sponsored by Special Olympics in NH. The fall session included young children from a couple of the Manchester schools and the surrounding area. It was a great success with athletes attending regularly, and volunteers from our church and the community serving as coaches for the athletes as they gain confidence and ability with the motor skills that they have not yet mastered. Much growth was gained by each and every one of the athletes. Parents are there to support the young athletes each week and comment on how much fun the children have and the growth in confidence and skills that their children made just in the eight week session. They also appreciate the care and patience of the church volunteers. The program will continue for the winter term with all athletes returning and expansion to additional schools.

Church Membership Orientations and Joining Sundays for new members occur periodically. Recognition Sunday for all church members, long time and current members occur each fall. We especially highlight twenty-five and fifty plus 50 years of membership. These members are notably recognized and honored during the Sunday Service.

Respectfully submitted,

The Church Membership Team:

Joan Currier	Bill Jones	Marsha Neubert	Stephen Bearse
Neil Funcke	Pam LeBlanc	Ellie Stetson	Kevin Pleas
DT Lewis	Liz Verity	Lindsey Goodrich	

Senior Citizens' Fellowship

The Senior Citizens Fellowship Board held its first event on May 15, 2018 at The Manchester Country Club. Instead of having a guest entertainer, it was decided upon by the Board to let everyone enjoy each other's company and play several games of Bingo.

The Fall Luncheon was held at The Executive Court Banquet Facility on October 9, 2018. Rob Dionne from the Majestic Theatre performed a Broadway Cabaret routine. Not only did Rob sing, he also joked around with the guests and made us all laugh.

The Christmas Luncheon was held at The Derryfield Restaurant on December 11, 2018. Our own Director of Music Ministry, Adam Peithmann, led the entertainment with a Holiday-Sing Along. The very talented soloist, Melissa Hughes, was a welcomed addition. All in attendance were both satisfied with the location, food and entertainment.

The Board traditionally sends out "Thinking of You", "Get Well" and "Sympathy" cards to our own church members and friends. In the month of December, the Board Members visited many of the elderly bringing a gift bag and a home-made Christmas Card, made by the talented Pam LeBlanc.

The Board was responsible for coffee hour the last two weeks in October. As was the custom, the Board usually had the whole month in October but the ONA Committee graciously volunteered to take the first two weeks.

The Senior Citizens Fellowship Board Members includes Kathy Payne (President), Elizabeth Robertson (Vice-President), Lucia Carlisle (Treasurer), Nancy Simmons (Recording Secretary), Joan Currier (Corresponding Secretary), Larry Dearborn, Steve Payne, Marsha Neubert, Liz Verity, Barbara Hebert, Cecile Adams, Pip Adams, Gerda Cote and Zane Knoy.

A special thanks to Anne Williamson and Bill Beidler who stepped down from the Board this last year. Their time served on the Board has been greatly appreciated.

The 2019 events are already in the planning stages and information on them will be forthcoming.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Payne, President

Women's Connection

Women's Connection Mission Statement: The Women's Connection offers opportunities for the women and friends of First Congregational church to experience social time together, to build connections and to strengthen friendships. We seek to encourage and support one another as we journey through life together at every season in our lives. All adult women are welcome to join us for whatever event interests them. Our activities are varied and have included outings crafts, spiritual reflections, hiking and volunteering in the local community...something for everyone.

Here is a monthly report of events from 2018.

January- Game/Movie Day became a Movie Day. We chose "The Bucket List" with Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman. We had some laughs, we cried... good movie with all kinds of emotions. Fourteen ladies enjoying each other's fellowship and delicious soups, chili, sandwiches and desserts. A great time was had by all.

February- The Sixth Annual Valentine's Day Breakfast was a great success. The food, the fellowship and activity were awesome. We enjoyed beginning putting together a scrapbook for all WC past events. There are so many events that have happened in the last six years that we will be

continuing the creative process of scrapping. Some ladies had a chance to make a Valentine's Day card to send to their loved ones.

March- A visit to "You're Fired" was scheduled but we had a Nor'easter that day and we had to cancel the event. Everyone was disappointed, but we will schedule it again in the fall.

April- Four of us went to Portland ME to attend United Church of Christ New England Women's Celebration X. The theme was A Seat at the Table "Come for all things are now ready." Luke 14:17b. This event is held every 4 years. Over 400 ladies from all over New England attended this year's Celebration.

Eighteen ladies attended the smash hit musical MAMMA MIA! at the Palace Theatre on April 15. The show was absolutely fantastic. We all left the theatre singing the songs and shaking hands with the talented actors. We are so lucky to have the Palace here in Manchester and to be right down the street from church.

WC was assigned Coffee Hour for April 15, 22 & 29. We had lots of ladies baking, setting up, serving and cleaning up. We were all connected!!!

May- The 6th annual Mystery Ride was held on May 19th. There were 23 ladies who signed up to go on a trip of a life time! We meet in the church driveway at 9:00 am to prepare for the ride. The ladies were asked to bring can goods to help support the Girl Scouts who were collecting food for our church's food closet and to help homeless women of Angie's Shelter. A total of 170 items were counted and put inside church by the food closet. The Girl Scouts really appreciated our efforts. Starting off on our first leg of the trip, the drivers headed toward the Amoskeag Bridge. The ladies were very happy when they followed the route to the Amoskeag Fishways right here in Manchester. Most of them had never been there before. The viewing windows were full of River Herring. It was very exciting to see so many fish swimming upstream. The next leg of the trip was south off to Derry, NH, Rt 28 Bypass, to a new store called Revived Furniture. This is a husband and wife owned store. The store has a beautiful silk flower bar, tin flowers, tin containers, wooden signs made right on site and old furniture that has been revived by Richard, the owner. Richard makes custom furniture and refinishes old furniture. He also does metal work. This store was on NH Chronicle. We got a backdoor tour of the warehouse and workshop. From there we went off to Cracker Barrel for lunch. Two large tables were all set up ready and waiting for our arrival. We enjoyed each other's company while eating delicious southern food. Following our route back to Rt 28 Bypass we arrived at The Robert Frost Farm. Here we were split into two groups. One group stayed in the barn to see a video of Robert Frost and learned about his family and why he moved to Derry NH. The other group went inside the farm house to see where he lived with his family. As one group came out of the house and into the barn the other group went in. The guides were very knowledgeable and informative. It was a great experience. Next, we were off to our last stop before heading back to church. The Nestle's Toll House Cookie Cafe right in Derry. Everyone ordered their favorite ice cream, cookies and drinks. We socialized and gave out prizes to the person and car that brought the most can goods for the Girl Scouts.

June- A month of rest and relaxation.

July- There were eleven ladies who got together in July to see the movie "Mama Mia! Here We Go Again!" The movie was fantastic and we all walked out feeling that now we know the full story! The acting was great and even Cher joined in. After the movie we went to the "99" for a bite to eat and discuss the movie. We were all surprised on how the movie was done, but loved the way it was presented. We had a lot of fun and laughs.

August- Gearing up for September!

September- Women's Connection celebrated our 7th annual Kick Off Pot Luck on September 13. There was a small group of 12 ladies but we accomplished a lot. We enjoyed all the delicious food, in which the recipes will be added to the cookbook. We filled the 2018-2019 calendar with events. Last but not least, we made 33 Christmas Cards for soldiers with a thank you for their service and a Christmas Message inside. We also gave a donation of \$25.00 to help mail the cards out to the military for Christmas.

October- Apple picking was delayed a day because of rain but it was worth the wait. The 7 of us went after church on the 14th. We decided to eat lunch at Panera's before going to pick. Then we drove to Mack's Apples. It was a cool beautiful fall afternoon. The pumpkins and apples were plentiful. We each brought a dessert in a bag so no one could see it. After apple picking we shared our mystery desserts with each other. This is one more great idea someone suggested at the Kick Off.

November- We meet at "You're Fired" on November 13th. This was rescheduled from last March. We enjoyed each other's company, ate pizza, all while looking around at the many shelves of greenware to choose a piece to underglaze. Once we began painting, it got very quiet. We were all concentrating on our master pieces, they all turned out great.

December- Annual College Cookie Mailing/Cookie Swap. We packed lots of cookies and snacks to mail out to 9 college students. We have received thank you's, and they are posted on the WC bulletin board in the dining room. After packing, we shared our cookies, signed Christmas cards to our church members and friends who are in nursing homes, homebound or in retirement homes. Then we got into the Christmas spirit even more and did our "White Elephant" Yankee Swap.

Cookbook Update - About a year and half ago Deana Dubois graciously offered to collect the 250 recipes that are in the book. Now we have a "Bon Appetit" Cookbook Committee of six ladies, organizing the book to have it ready for the printer in January. In December, we pre-sold cookbook orders for \$12.50 a book or 2 for \$20.00. We sold a total of 77 books. We are still taking pre-orders but the 2 for \$20.00 deal is no longer. The books are now just \$12.50. See Pam LeBlanc, Denise Beurivage, Vicki Tinsley or Barbara Hebert to order your book. The books should be back from the press in April. The profits from the sale of the cookbook will be designated for the future kitchen remodel project!

Women's Connection Book Club- This club is going strong, about 6-8 people attending. It is open to anyone interested in reading the book that the club chooses. Contact Barbara Papagian and watch for the book announcement and sign-up sheet on the church office window. The club meets about once a month on a Sunday afternoon in different places.

Denise Beurivage and I want to thank Terri Pattee for being our e-mail technician. She always comes through getting the news out to all the WC ladies. We also want to thank everyone for all the great ideas, for supporting WC and the events throughout the year. We look forward to more ladies attending and gathering together for fellowship and to growing in faith and the camaraderie that we all enjoy.

Respectfully submitted,
Pam LeBlanc Co-chair

Memorial Reception Team

This is a group of seventeen people can be called upon to organize a memorial reception for any funeral that is held here at church, and the family would like to have the reception here as well. This year in June we hosted Diane Brown's husband, Donald Brown's reception. We had five people who were able to help that day. The memorial service was in the chapel and the

reception was held in the Parlor. We had four card tables set up with white tablecloths and small center pieces. We also had extra tables set up in the chapel after the service for people to go in if it got to crowded in the parlor. We used three of the parlor tables for food. They were also covered with white tablecloths. The centerpiece came from the altar. The reception was catered by Belmont Hall. The family brought water and we supplied the iced tea and coffee. Everyone was pleased with the food and how nice the parlor looked. If anyone would like to be a part of this team, please contact Pam LeBlanc.

Respectively submitted,
Pam LeBlanc

Interfaith

Interfaith's goal is to develop a greater understanding of other faiths and cultures as we work together in the City of Manchester.

Interfaith Women of New Hampshire:

Krystina Harwood and I have served in 2018 on the Steering Committee for this group which is based in the Manchester area. Our mission is to share religious beliefs, cultures and traditions with women of different faiths. In so doing, our goal is to develop understanding and friendship among each other. Our Website www.interfaithwomennh.org and our email address interfaithwomennh@gmail.com.

Events

“NURTURING YOUR SOUL”

On Tuesday, March 20th over 100 women attended an Interfaith Women of New Hampshire event hosted by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints at their Wind Song Ave. meeting house in Manchester. The evening explored the topic of how we all renew our souls from the perspective of our three presenters, women of Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths.

Our presenters were:

Rabbi Beth Davidson: Temple Adath Yeshuran Manchester NH. Rabbi Beth presented her thoughts on Shabbat as a day of renewal and rest.

Sr. Pauline Maurier, CSC: A Sister of Holy Cross, former school principal and teacher for 20 years as well as a Pastoral Associate for 16 years. She shared her thoughts on the observance of the Sabbath Day of worship and rest in the Catholic tradition and how it seems to have evolved over the last 70 years.

Reyhane Oztekin: a PhD candidate at Southern Methodist University Dallas. She is an active member of Peace Islands Institute Massachusetts located at Boston and Revere and is also a member of Greater Lowell Interfaith Leadership Alliance (GLILA), which has been in place more than 20 years. Reyhane spoke of the Muslim prayers that take place 5 times a day, each prayer renewing the connection with God.

A question and answer session with our presenters followed. We thank members of our audience for asking interesting questions, furthering the opportunity to learn more about each other.

“RAMADAN: BLESSED MONTH OF ISLAM”

Interfaith Women of New Hampshire were delighted to be invited to the Islamic Society of New Hampshire's Manchester Mosque, on Thursday, May 3rd, for this event. Allowing all attendees an opportunity for us to learn more about Ramadan with local Muslims.

Ramadan begins and continues throughout the ninth month of the Islamic Calendar.

Our three presenter's for the evening were:

Imam Sherif Shabaka: Sherif spoke about the significance of Ramadan, and provided a welcome to the Manchester Mosque. Sherif serves as Imam at the Islamic Society of New Hampshire Mosque and teaches Arabic.

Imane Naji Amrani: Imane received her doctorate in education from Northeastern University. Imane presented to an attentive audience of over 90 women of different faiths, her perspective of the practice of Ramadan in the home.

Munise Ulker: a member of our Steering Committee explored with us the importance of charity (Sadaqa) in Islam and during Ramadan.

Munise's presentation was followed by a question and answer period where the audience was able to ask questions, and discovered more similarities than differences between us.

“STAND UP AND SHOUT!”

On Tuesday, October 4th, Interfaith Women of New Hampshire presented “Stand Up and Stand Out: Women of Faith in Our Time.” The event was hosted by Gethsemane Lutheran Church of Manchester and had an attendance of over 120 women.

The event shed light on the changing roles of women of faith in modern times regardless of religion or religious denomination.

Greater Manchester women presenters were Veronica Molloy, Roman Catholic; Jean Dickson, Protestant; Masoma Athar, Muslim; and Mary Singer with Rachel Spierer; Jewish. Highlighted female role models are as follows:

Mary Antona Ebo, FSM, African-American Catholic, a pioneer of civil rights, who identified as a voting “Negro Nun” during an interview at Selma.

The Protestant Women's Missionary Movement, Christian denomination women who stepped up to open doors for more active female Church roles.

Tawakkol Karman, a Muslim female recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, 2011, for women's civil rights accomplishments in Yemen.

Debbie Friedman, a Jewish woman who transformed the sound and spirit of Jewish liturgical music.

“REJOICE...A CELEBRATION OF DIVERSITY”

This event was hosted on Monday, Dec 3rd by St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Manchester. It was well attended by women of different faith and cultural origins.

Performances were given by;

Karishma Manchanda, a junior at Manchester Central High School, who performed the Deewani Mastania, a classical dance in the Kathak tradition of Indian storytelling.

Brookside Congregational Church's handbell choir, who performed selections from their Christmas concert.

Esmira Alperen, originally from Azerbaijan, who performed a traditional wedding dance of the Muslim women of Uzundere.

Three friends from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, harmonized in latin, singing Dona Nobis Pacem meaning ‘Grant us Peace’, along with other musical selections.

The evening continued with French speaking committee members leading the audience in singing the traditional French Christmas song “Il Est Ne, Le Divin Enfant” and finally we all sang along to Hanukkah favorite among Jewish children “The Dreidel Song”.

Each of our events includes a welcome by a member of clergy or lay leader in that community. We also take a free will offering at the events which are presented to a charity chosen by our hosts.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Verity, Interfaith Coordinator

NHCUCC Annual Meeting in Review

U.C.C. Delegates Kathy Rowe, Ruth Knowles, Sam Knowles and Susan Curtis attended the 217th Annual Meeting of the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ, held on October 20, 2018 at the Grappone Conference in Concord. The meeting was opened by Conference President, Marcie Miller and followed by the morning worship. The keynote speaker was Rev. Dr. Stephen Ray, Jr. The scriptural text for Rev Ray's address was Jeremiah:4-6. His sermon was titled "...For our Children". We were invited to imagine the future of our children and grandchildren and how our witness of faith in the public square would help form that future.

The new Conference Minister, Rev. Gordon Rankin spoke optimistically about the future of the Outdoor Ministries. He reported that a Horton Center Fund raising Committee has been established by the Board of Directors. His focus is to see how we can help Horton Center thrive.

Gail Kinney presented the resolution affirming support for the continuation of the NH Health Protection Program (Medicaid Expansion in NH). The Rev. Renee Rouse and the Rev. John Gregory-Davis presented the Resolution of Christian Witness in Support of NH Conference U.C.C. Congregations Awakening to Racial Justice which passed unanimously.

A delegation from the United Church of Christ Zimbabwe was introduced to the Conference. The Rev. Dr. Menson Mpfu thanked the NHCUCC for bringing the delegation here and for providing scholarships for those studying for ordained ministry.

During the lunch break, focus groups were held. Included were conversations with the Conference Minister, the Zimbabwe Delegation, Global Ministries and Dr. Ray. There were also discussion on the Horton Center Reports, the Resolution and the Amendments to the UCC Constitution.

After lunch, Speak Out sessions on numerous topics were presented.

John Herbert presented the Treasures report and Matt Van Wagner presented the Mission Income and Spending plan.

The UCC Conference budget, the Ratification of the Amendments to the Constitution of the UCC, and the nominating report were presented and voted on.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Curtis, UCC Delegate

Report of the Representative of the First Congregational Church to the Elliot Hospital Board of Trustees

The Elliot Hospital has completed over 128 years of support to Manchester. It has done so as a non-profit acute care non-sectarian community hospital that has provided high quality critical medical services to the community while also providing over \$130 million in uncompensated care to the community.

In response to the ever increasing pressures on health care providers to provide even more advanced high quality care with reduced resources, the Elliot this year entered into an affiliation with the Southern New Hampshire Medical Center to create a regional health care system called

SOLUTIONHEALTH. This combination will provide significant cost savings while, through the sharing of expertise and access to different clinical programs, enhance the health care provided to both communities. The role and mission of the Elliot is not altered under this arrangement, and the two hospitals have a shared governance within this regional system.

Other significant Elliot events of the year include:

- The selection of Sherry Hausmann as the CEO of the SOLUTIONHEALTH System. Sherry works closely with Dr. Greg Baxter who was chosen to be the President of the Elliot Health System after a nationwide search. Dr. Baxter had been the Chief Medical Officer of the Elliot.
- Construction commenced on the new \$29M Elliot Regional Cancer Center. This center will allow patients to receive the most advanced comprehensive cancer services and programs in one location.
- The Elliot at Bedford opened and provides Urgent Care, several medical practices, imaging and lab services, and a pharmacy.
- As part of its mission to provide comprehensive medical care to the community, the Elliot hired 23 new primary care physicians.
- The psychiatric evaluation program was expanded in the Elliot Emergency Department.
- A new total joint replacement unit was opened which includes the latest robotic technology and private rooms for patients.
- And perhaps, most importantly, the new veteran’s service room at the Elliot was dedicated to the memory of Richard Aldrich in honor of his military service and volunteer service to the Elliot.

These events and statistics show the amount and quality of care provided to the community and the vibrancy of the Elliot Health System. We should be pleased that medical and charitable mission that this church played a role in creating is still being filled with such dedication.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your representative to the Elliot.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul W. Hoff

Reports from the Ministry of Sustaining Our Church Home

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees oversees the fiscal health of the church and care of the physical building and property at 508 Union Street in Manchester, NH. For 2018, the nine Board members were: Cal Bowie, Lucia Carlisle, Betsy Gaston, Charlie Goodwin, Allen Pattee, Kathy Nelson, Ron Poloske, Scott Thornton and Greg Goodrich. Non-Trustees who regularly attend meetings of the Board include Reverend Kevin Pleas, Church Treasurer Jeffrey Frye, Building Manager Larry Dearborn and Church Administrator Linda Bonetti. Cal Bowie served as Chair and Lucia Carlisle as Vice-Chair.

The Chair would like to thank all the Board members for their work this year and a special thanks to Betsy Gaston who will be stepping down from the Board at the end of the 2018 term.

The Church Treasurer, Jeffrey Frye, will provide information on the performance of church funds in his annual Treasurer's Report.

Accomplishments over the past year include improvements to the organ pipes which were requested by Adam Peithmann. Adam will have more detail in his Music Director's Report.

One of the more significant accomplishments in 2018 was the upgrade to the sound system. Over the years, the loud speakers that were mounted high over the choir area began losing their ability to produce sound in certain audio ranges. With the help of the Music Factory out of Hooksett, NH, the three old speakers were replaced with four new speakers, a new amplifier, two new headsets and two new hand-held microphones. There were some kinks in the new system at the outset, but we eventually got them worked out.

The Trustees also approved funding for new doors in the Narthex. These doors were installed in the beginning of December. Not only will the new doors provide better weather insulation for the Narthex, they will increase the safety of the church with the ability to lock the doors from the inside but allow egress in case of an emergency by pushing the crash bar. The new doors in the Narthex operate in a similar manner as the doors in the back of the church such as the parlor door and the door that leads out to the driveway.

Respectively submitted,
Cal Bowie

Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee consists of the following members: Bill Jones, Elizabeth Verity, Sue Clement, Craig Finefrock, Vicki Tinsley, Cheryl and Dan McKenney, and Rev. Kevin Pleas as ex-officio member, Administrator Linda Bonetti, and Anita Wolcott. The committee meets monthly throughout the year to organize and prepare for the annual Pledge Campaign and to create value added workshops for the Congregation and others.

In 2018, the total Pledges, Plate contributions and Gifts received exceeded budget by 9%. The 2019 Pledge Campaign finished with Pledges that were 1 % lower than last year's Pledges, however, we are confident that the decrease will be made up with excess Plate contributions. We thank the entire Congregation for your generosity and continued support of First Congregational Church. Your support allows the Church to function and continue its growing outreach to the Community and beyond. We feel privileged to belong to a Church with so many caring and generous members.

The Stewardship Committee also hosted several Mind, Body, and Spirit workshops in 2018. The Workshops were held in the Chapel after Sunday Service. The following workshops were held in the fall of 2018:

- Genealogy - taught by Kevin Finefrock.
- Pre-Diabetes - taught by Marilyn Mills

The Mind, Body and Spirit Workshops were well received and will continue in 2019 to include topics such as:

- The History of First Congregational Church – Selma Naccach Hoff
- Safety at First Congregational Church

The Stewardship Committee welcomes suggestions on other topics that would be interesting to the Congregation or guests. You can send your suggestions to Cheryl McKenney via email at djm2140@aol.com.

In December the Stewardship Committee, along with other Members of the Church, once again volunteered at the Annual Salvation Army Toy Shoppe, always a rewarding experience. Thanks to all from the Church who participated, making us the largest group participating.

Respectfully submitted,
Dan and Cheryl McKenney, Co-chairs

Scholarship Committee

Scholarship Gifts and Awards from our church were presented on Sunday, June 3, 2018. Our graduation gifts and awards this year are funded by gifts from the congregation over the years and the recent generous bequests from Virginia Smith and Gordon Woolner. These recent bequests allow us to give significant scholarships to help fund the education of our graduating seniors and others in the congregation.

Cyrus Fennel received a graduation gift as he graduates from Goffstown High School. He has had a wonderful experience helping the kids in the Church School classes, being part of the High School Youth group on some Sunday mornings, and appreciates the people of our church for always being so kind to him. Cyrus is especially grateful to the Lyons family, especially Connor who has become a good friend. As Cyrus moves forward to the next steps in life, he plans to take a year off from schooling and travel to England.

Margaret Thornton received the First Congregational Senior Scholarship as she graduates from the Manchester School of Technology. She has been involved here at church in the Cherub Choir, the Carol Choir, and the Children's Handbell Choir. Margaret has taught Sunday School and helped out in Cradle Roll, and served as an usher and greeter. She is part of the Manchester Angels Soccer League, the Manchester East Soccer League and served as a state referee from 2011 to 2016. She has worked at Camp Sentinel Christian Youth Summer Camp and the Puritan Back Room. At Manchester School of Technology, Margaret has held many official offices, participated in sports activities, and has received many academic honors. She is the co-founder and president of the STEM Club and is currently the president of the National Honor Society. Somehow, she has found time to attend the NH Police Cadet Academy, Manchester Karate Studio, is a member of the Manchester NH Police Explorers Post, and volunteers at the Manchester Animal Shelter. Margaret will attend Norwich University this fall and eventually commission into the US Army to serve as a Biochemist Specialist making medicines for soldiers and civilians in third world countries. She hopes to be able to help save lives and to extend her Christian love and beliefs to other people around the world.

Emma Green received the Beth Jenkins Ernest Award as she graduates from Manchester Memorial High School. Emma has taught Sunday School, served on the Music Transition Team, was a volunteer at Vacation Bible School, has played in the Children's Handbell Choir, and has been part of the youth group. She has served as a volunteer at All State Music Festivals, participates in Girl Scouts, is a member of the National Art Honor Society and of the National Latin Honor Society. She has been involved in a variety of music groups at Memorial High School including A Cappella choral groups, The Chamber Orchestra, and various large group music festivals in NH. Emma will attend Luther College to study Music Education.

Connor Lyons received the William P. McGuinness Award as he graduates from Manchester Memorial High School. Here at First Congregational Church, Connor has served as a Sunday School teacher for our 2nd grade classes where he has created a friendly place for children to learn and discuss curriculum topics. He has liked getting to know each student as an individual with their unique spiritual experiences, needs and family relationships. Connor has worked at Elliot Hospital Rehabilitation Services where he has experienced patient care in an outpatient physical

therapy setting. He has been a member of the High School Varsity Baseball team for 4 years, the NH Bobcats, Manchester Sweeney Post baseball, and Regional and State All Star baseball teams. He has also done winter track, and varsity cross-country. He was a member of the Latin Club, and studied Latin for 4 years. He maintains a high level of physical fitness himself. Connor will attend Springfield College in the fall to study Physical Therapy.

Bridget Thornton received The Higher Education Award as she continues her education. This new award, established this year, is given to students who have graduated from high school who are continuing their education, whether or not they have received a Church Scholarship in the past. The intent of this award is to support our church members as they continue to pursue their education either at college undergraduate or postgraduate level or in pursuit of certificate jobs training programs. Bridget is currently working on her Associates Degree in Accounting. She plans to transfer in the future to Southern NH University to complete her Bachelors Degree.

Respectfully submitted,
The Scholarship Committee
Dawn Gagnon, Peter Perich, Michael Pugh, Lucia Carlisle, Ellie Stetson

Building Manager's Report

The following report is a summary of the more significant projects that have been worked on during 2018:

- Replaced 4 double doors in narthex, including insulated glass, crash bars, door closers weather stripping and associated hardware. With the new doors installed we expect to save on heat and will be able to lock the doors with ease of egress during the service on Sundays for a more secure building.
- Installed 5 light switches in rec. room. The lights were previously controlled at the breaker box.
- 2 more light fixtures installed on driveway side of building to discourage night time loitering.
- New wood flooring installed in classroom B12 and children's restroom. We also painted the walls and installed new stall dividers in the children's restroom.
- Purchased new coffee urn for coffee hour and new podium for dining room. Paid with profit from Coke machine.
- Dishwasher repaired by Hobart repair service (spray arms coming off during operation).
- Leaking hot water heater replaced by Lachance P&H.
- Youth room painted by Bill Jones and Pip Adams, with the help from the youth group.
- Officer Maguire from MPD conducted a walk through in Nov. With the installment of no loitering signs and more frequent police drive throughs we have fewer homeless people camping out on the handicap ramp and around the building. It was suggested that it would be a good idea to have a training session with the Community Police Supervisor to inform/train staff members and others using the building how to manage in an emergency situation.

I greatly appreciate the support that I receive from all the volunteers, they make a large difference in the appearance, comfort, usefulness and safety of the Church building and its surrounding grounds, for the benefit of all that come here

Respectfully submitted,
Larry Dearborn, Building Manager

Grounds Care Report

- Lawns mowed weekly during growing season with the easier electric start mower. Grass clippings are put out for bi-weekly pick-up. A special thank you to Larry Dearborn, Steve Payne, Sokhom Sar, and Jonathan Martin for stepping in to mow.
- Lawn fertilizer applied in late spring and late fall.
- Dedicated volunteers continue to pitch in during spring and fall grounds clean-up.
- Kudos to Kathy Nelson who continues her care of the three large urns. Seasonal decorations include Easter flowers for spring, annuals in urns and at the church sign for summer, mums for fall color and assorted greens for the winter.
- Winter snow plowing and salting continues with Giant Landscaping Co. Sokhom Sar takes care of walkways and sidewalks with church's snowblower.
- Rainmaker performs spring turn-on and fall turn-off on irrigation system and any necessary repairs.
- Daily pick-up and disposal of trash and litter of church grounds by Dick Jarvis.
- Perennials cut back at end of growing season.
- The Memory Garden is maintained by a host of volunteers who prepare it in spring to encourage the perennials to flourish, and plant annuals to enhance the beauty of our garden. The granite bench and the stepping stones are in place. Many thanks to the individual church members who made donations to make this project a reality, and to Liz Verity for continuing to coordinate the volunteers.

Sincere thanks to any and all volunteers who continue to give of their time and effort resulting in the clean and neat appearance of the FCC grounds.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard W. Jarvis

Memory Garden

The Memory Garden continues to provide a reflective space for all members and friends, and adds to the beauty of our historic church building. Our garden provides a peaceful place in the heart of the city where you can take a few moments to sit and reflect, especially during stressful and difficult times.

This year annual plantings were added in the spring. Thanks go to the volunteers who helped with the weeding and fertilizing. The Building and Grounds committee have maintained the garden, keeping it weed free and looking beautiful.

Thanks also go to Pam LeBlanc who entered the names of donors and those honored by donations into our perpetual "Memory Book" as a tribute to our loved ones. The book is on display in the Sanctuary and will be updated each year.

This is one of the ways you can honor your loved ones, and we will gladly accept future donations to enhance the plantings and continue to maintain the garden. Donation slips are available in the hallway on the table opposite the Parlor door.

It has been an honor to work with those who graciously give of their time and energy to maintain this lasting memorial, and thank you notes have been sent to both donors and volunteers. The names of those who were honored by a donation are as follows:

2018 Memory Garden Donations

Donated By	In Memory Of
Elizabeth & John Verity	"Our Mothers" Eunice Cowen & Margaret Verity
Deana Dubois	Wesley Belisle
Carolyn Lane	Wesley Belisle
Richard W. Jarvis	In kind donation of stepping stones
Noel Villiard	In kind donation of flowers

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Verity, Chair

FOO'S (Friends of the Office)

The FOO's always stay busy! Every month we collate the "Window" (put it together, fold, label and sort for mailing) to get it in the mail for you all. We go round and round the table putting together the Annual Reports, Directories and any other large work that the office needs help with. If there are extra mailings, we all come down and have an enjoyable time together as we work. And most months we celebrate our success with a special treat!

Thanks to all of our very reliable and fun loving group: Joan Currier, Donna Willey, Carol Klardie, Priscilla Robinson, Anne Williamson, Betsy Gaston, Carol Forest, Nancy Simmons, Diane Brown, Joann Van Horn, and myself, Pat McCarrick.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat McCarrick, Coordinator
