

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



ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2020

Written Committee Reports

www.FCCManchesterNH.org

603-625-5093

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Senior Pastor's Report

*Come gather round people wherever you roam,
And admit that the waters around you have grown,
And accept it that soon you'll be drenched to the bone
If your time to you is worth savin'
Then you better start swimmin' or you'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a-changin'*

—Bob Dylan

Dear Friends,

Reading over my annual report from last year, 2019 ended up being one of the busiest years I've ever seen in ministry. What with Songweavers, the Holocaust Event, playing host for two Conference wide gatherings, and an armload of other efforts, we ended the year with our heads spinning. But despite all that activity, we could still easily say it was a very full, but mostly normal year.

This year, we've all be experiencing something altogether different. Times have been changing. January, February and the first half of March were mostly pretty normal, and then Covid-19 seemed to come out of nowhere. From the 8th to the 15th of March, we went from a fully functioning, lively, downtown congregation, to a complete lockdown. At the time, none of us could have imagined that, as we finish up the year, we would still be almost entirely avoiding anything like a face-to-face worship service, meeting or program. Neither could we predict that the pandemic would be worse now than at any time since it began.

We are all looking eagerly ahead to better times. As the vaccines are given to more and more people, it seems likely we will be "back in action" before too long. In the meantime, reflecting on what we have learned and accomplished, we can take great pride in how we have responded to this crisis. We have gone from almost total ignorance of online worship to a collection of robust and effective weekly offerings. We have risen to the challenges of keeping our congregation connected and conducting a very successful remote stewardship campaign. We have continued our ministries of outreach and caring and have all learned to "Zoom."

These have all been collective efforts of course. Our staff and lay leaders have been phenomenally creative and tireless, not only keeping our church alive, but working to become an even more vital congregation than we had been already. I don't want to single anyone out here, but the contributions you have all made deserve to be greatly celebrated.

For me personally, as you know, this has been an extremely difficult year. We found out about Pam's returned cancer shortly after we went into lockdown. She struggled with symptoms and treatments throughout the summer to no avail, entered Hospice at the beginning of September, and died seven weeks later. Much as I have been back at work and "functioning" for a number of weeks now, I fully expect my grief to continue for some time to come. That is simply the nature of the beast.

However, I need you all to understand how deeply grateful Pam was and I am for your unbelievable love, support and care throughout our ordeal. Your understanding of my need to reduce my work schedule, your cards, letters and gifts, your meals, your heart shaped balloons, your presence at Pam's service and, when the time came, your gift to me of time away. You have been graceful and caring to us in ways I never imagined we could expect or would need you to be. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

Yours in love,
Kevin

Commissioned Minister of Pastoral Care's Report

2020 has certainly been an eventful year for me and after the pandemic struck life changed for me, just like it did for all of you.

Before the pandemic, I visited many folks in the hospital and nursing homes and at their own homes. I know I say this every year, but I love visiting with you and listening to your stories.

Also, before the pandemic I preached twice, presented the prayer requests during worship, participated in leading Communion with Kevin, led the book club, attended the Annual Meeting, attended Kevin's Pastor's Class, and attended clergy meetings for the Hillsborough Association.

I write my monthly "Senior Moments" article for our Church Window.

With the advent of the pandemic, I was no longer able to visit in hospitals and nursing homes, and private homes. However, when weather allowed, I put lawn chairs in my car and did some outside home visits with people, but the bulk of my visits were on the phone.

With the church closed to worship, I started working with Adam and Kevin on recording services. We cannot thank Adam enough for all the hard work he puts in to present our services every Sunday. We are all on a learning curve, and I think you will agree that he is doing a fantastic job. He taught me how to do the recordings and send them to him, so I am able to do that when he isn't available.

I continue to preach once a month and present the prayers every week. I led Communion on the first Sunday of Advent. I organized, recorded, and led the Blue Christmas Service.

With the congregation not being able to gather together and not hear about what's happening at the church, some people came up with ideas of having a weekly newsletter go out to everyone via the constant contact that Kevin uses for his "In the Spirit" letters. Thus evolved the FCC Friday Link. I thought it was a little boring just having news items, so I have encouraged church members to submit writings and pictures, as well as inspirational words, jokes and trivia. We mail copies to those who do not have computers.

With the onset of Pam's illness and death, Kevin stepped back to focus on her and then himself after her death. I stepped up my hours and with help from Jeanine Finefrock and Carol Soucy and Selma Hoff, I took on more responsibilities.

I attend committee meetings and Jeanine and I co-chair connecting with the congregation committee.

I performed the graveyard service for Jesusa Mancebo and led Friday morning Bible/book studies.

I attended The Hillsborough County Association meeting where my Ordination Paper was accepted. My Ecclesiastical Council was held in October and I was approved for Ordination.

During all of this I am still working on my Masters of Divinity Degree and am attending online classes from Sioux Falls Seminary, including three "Intensives" workshops from the seminary via zoom.

I took part in the Manchester Clergy Association Thanksgiving Service and became a member of the Local Church Support Committee for the New Hampshire Conference UCC.

I pray that you all stay safe and well and urge you to call me if you need something or just want to talk.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Papagian, Commissioned Minister of Pastoral Care

Director of Music Ministry's Report

What a year it has been! In more normal times, the task of writing this annual report is pretty straight forward. However, this is not the case this year. I vividly remember our last choir rehearsal in mid-March. We knew that the coronavirus was making its way around the globe, but we were still planning to sing together, in-person, that following Sunday. Unfortunately, we never got the chance. It's been a challenge this year to create and make music for worship in the FCC Community, and it couldn't have happened without the help and support of so many people. I'm proud of how far we've come, and what we've accomplished.

First and foremost, I want to thank my wife Lauren. Shortly after our shutdown in March, she suggested that we host a weekly hymn sing in our home over Facebook Live. Over the course of the next several months, well through the summer and into the fall, we sang all of our favorites, took requests, and introduced some new hymns too! Though our internet connection wasn't the greatest, and sometimes we were interrupted by our boisterous children, Lauren and I kept the song going. Little did we know how those first simple hymn sings would give way to even more.

As we moved into the Spring from the cold of the winter months, I started recording several individual piano pieces, and then later started a new, weekly musical program called Friday Mini-Concerts. These were truly a joy to prepare and share. The earliest version of the Friday Mini-Concert was simply a Facebook Live broadcast from the church, but then grew to include commentary and discussion. And people tuned in to watch, both within our FCC community and beyond.

Next, our pastor, Kevin Pleas, suggested that I investigate a user-friendly, innovative video editing software program called Premiere Rush. After downloading this app to my phone, I started to create more detailed videos for the FCC community. Using this simple phone app, we began to produce pre-recorded worship services on Vimeo, and I also recorded preludes and postludes for worship. These online pre-recorded videos produced on Premiere Rush added to the weekly programming we were already providing from our live hymn sings.

Around this time, I also began broadcasting these pre-recorded services on Facebook, through a feature called Facebook Premiere. During these Facebook broadcasts of our services, our church family watched, commented, and experienced the service together, keeping us connected. As our online services grew in complexity, we ceased our hymn sings, and put our energy fully into the online worship service which we still enjoy today. In addition to our regular worship service elements, we've added new things such as a slide show during the prelude.

In order to better assist my family and to support my daughter's remote learning, I moved my workstation to the corner of our living room, and purchased equipment like better cameras and microphones, and a dedicated ethernet cord. I also learned the more complicated software program, Premiere Pro, which I downloaded to the desktop computer. This program helped me to expand our worship services and to make them more professional looking. Although it was difficult to learn on my own, I persevered (thanks, YouTube!), and now can successfully navigate and use the program to execute our service each week. Perhaps our most successful worship service was our recent Christmas Eve service (aka my "Magnum Opus"). That service incorporated virtual choirs, readers, our beautifully decorated altar, soloists and small ensembles, and our guest brass players.

Over the course of the last 9 months, my job at FCC has drastically changed. While I still provide music for worship and lead many of our congregants in music making, I have now expanded my skills beyond music ministry, and my job duties now include editing hours of video footage, utilizing software and various technologies, and coordinating the worship experience of our congregation each week. Of course, I can't do this all on my own!

Thanks are due to all of our musicians that made worship in 2020 so special. We are so grateful for everyone's donations of time and talent. Elizabeth Blood, Michelle Harrington, Mellissa Hughes, Audrey and Lauren Peithmann, Michaela Horan, Terri Pattee, Susan Wilkes, Leo LeBlanc, and Bob Ward led hymns and responses, provided instrumental accompaniments, and played or sang special solos for worship. Our Chancel Choir members participated in various virtual choir performances and projects. I'd also like to take the opportunity to especially thank Susan Wilkes, who has gone above and beyond to support our music ministry through her singing, and guitar and flute playing. She even provided therapeutic music at no cost. We are truly blessed to have so many wonderful musicians among us at FCC.

I don't know what 2021 will bring for our ministry at FCC. However, I do know that we have the tools, the energy, the support, and the enthusiasm for transformative and meaningful worship. I am grateful for the opportunities I've been afforded in 2020 to provide our church with connections, community, music making, and celebration. Whatever 2021 brings to us, let us be together in unity and praise.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Peithmann, Director of Music Ministry

Reports from the Ministry of Spirituality

Ministry of Spirituality Coordinator

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

Who would have thought when we turned the calendar to January 2020, a new year and decade, that we would have spent the greater part of the year in a pandemic and away from each other? The year initially started out as any normal one with our typical activities and preparing and planning for Easter and the Songweavers Concert when everything came to a screeching halt in mid-March. How could any of us ever imagine our church doors remaining closed on Easter morning? Or that our vocabulary would soon consist of words like COVID-19, face masks, hand washing/sanitizing, social distancing, Zoom meetings, Facebook Live and Facebook Premier. What about having a shortage on toilet paper, paper towels, tissues, disinfecting wipes, Lysol spray and a limited supply of food on the grocery store shelves? Yet, through it all, we remained faithful and managed to stay connected in new and different ways thanks to the adaptability of the entire staff and assistance from many lay leaders and members.

The staff quickly came up with ways to move from in person to an online service format. We are grateful to Adam Peithmann and his wife, Lauren (and the occasional appearances from their daughters, Audrey and Annie), for opening their home up for our weekly Hymn Sing which was followed by a Facebook Live service. Rev. Kevin Pleas and Barbara Papagian shared the role of worship leader and preaching. Rev. Kevin also initiated a weekly online prayer service, the “9:10 Morning Watch”, which has developed a faithful online following. Kevin took some time off to be with Pam and upon her passing took a short sabbatical. During this time, Barbara stepped up and became our primary worship leader and preacher and Carol Soucy took on the role of coordinating the worship planning. We were also grateful to have numerous guest preachers help with coverage including: Rev. Richard Slater, Rev. Sarah Foulger, Peter Perich, Selma Naccach-Hoff, Rev. Stephen Cushing, Rev. Gordon Rankin and Rev. John Potter. Adam continued to expand his knowledge and expertise and we eventually went to a Facebook Premier format of the service at the end of September which allowed us to record individual segments and involve more people in the Sunday morning worship service. For the first time in a long time, the worship experience felt like we were actually back in the church. Adam continues to improve his editing skills each and every week. We even had a few services with a virtual choir. What a joy it was to see so many familiar faces and hear their beautiful voices come together.

Every group, committee and Board that fall under the Ministry of Spirituality was impacted by the pandemic in one way or another. We had to postpone events such as the Songweavers Concert and the Holly Berry Fair. In addition to all those listed above there are so many other people to thank for getting us through the year.

Thank you to Ruth Knowles, Chair of the Deacons, for her steadfast leadership through this challenging year. She has completed her 2nd term and will be stepping down as a Deacon and Chair. Ruth, it has been an honor and pleasure to work side by side with you as Chair of the Deacons. I wish you well in whatever role you will be in next year. You will be a blessing wherever you serve and I will miss you. I’m grateful to the Deacons who have stepped up and read scripture, participated in the communion services or offered assistance in any area as needed.

Thank you to Larry Dearborn, Chair of the Audio Committee, for your faithful work recording the CD’s each week for members of the congregation. In this year of COVID-19, this work has been more important than ever in helping to get the worship service into the hands of those who don’t have access to a computer. Thank you to the Outreach Committee members who delivered the CD’s along with a copy of the Bulletin, Sunday News and/or Friday Link to keep members updated and connected.

Through it all, Pam LeBlanc and Terri Pattee continued to decorate the altar for the Sunday morning services no matter where the service was held. They started out in the Chapel, then moved to the Parlor during the heat of the summer and eventually to the Sanctuary where we currently record from. Thank you both for your continued dedication and to all of those who provided flowers for the altar over the summer months.

Thank you to the Pastor/Parish Relations Committee (PPRC), chaired by John Curtis. They were a lot more active this year than in years past as they supported Kevin with the challenges brought on by the pandemic and Pam's illness.

Many thanks to Barbara's Members in Discernment Team: Ellie Stetson, Pam LeBlanc, Tom Irving with Pastor Kevin as her Spiritual Advisor and Carol Soucy as her Personal Advisor. They were busy this year supporting Barbara as she worked her way towards completing her studies and her Ecclesiastical Council as the final step towards Ordination.

Thank you to Carol Soucy, Chair of the Open and Affirming Committee, and the committee members for their continued work throughout the year to find ways to live into the Open and Affirming Covenant. We mourned together the loss of one of our own, Bruce Attridge. With heavy hearts we continue our work in his memory. On Thanksgiving Sunday, we celebrated the 3rd anniversary of the Open and Affirming vote. We were grateful to Renee, Emelia and James Attridge who participated in the service as we paid tribute to Bruce.

Dress A Girl, under Linda Bonetti's leadership, was able to meet in person before we had to shut down. Linda, thank you for continuing to oversee the project and to all the sewers who continued to sew at home. Looking forward to the day when we can display and bless the dresses during an in-person service.

It was disappointing to have to postpone the Holly Berry Fair especially after all of the work that Pam LeBlanc and Peggy Neveu had already put into organizing it. They had already filled most of the volunteer and craft maker spots. Hopefully, we will be able to pick back up and have this event in the fall of 2021.

Thank you to Jennifer Longval, Chair of the CYM Committee, and to the committee members for your continued support with Kelda York and the Sunday school program. It was a year when we had to cancel the annual Teachers Appreciation Breakfast, Children's Sunday and the Advent Workshop.

Thanks also to Jennifer Longval and Joan Currier for serving as representatives on the Church Council from the Ministry of Spirituality area.

As always, I appreciate the support of Rev. Kevin Pleas, Barbara Papagian, Adam Peithmann, Linda Bonetti, Lauren Henderson, Kelda York and Selma Naccach-Hoff.

I was honored to also serve on both the Reopening Task Force and the Connecting the Congregation Task Force this year.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanine Finefrock, Coordinator of the Ministry of Spirituality

Worship Ministry Board of Deacons 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 assists with baptisms. The Board of Deacons will continue to collaborate with the Director of Music Ministry, Adam Peithmann.

This work continues to be our focus, but alas the Board of Deacons had to adjust to meeting remotely while lending support to Rev. Pleas and Adam Peithmann as they developed a new online format for worship.

As a Board we began 2020 with high hopes of building upon the initiatives of 2019 by:

- Continuing to participate in the Good Friday Cross Walk with the Deerfield Community Church. The Cross Walk was scheduled for April 10, 2020.
- Supporting the Songweavers' concert which was scheduled for April 19, 2020.
- Reviewing the Pew Bible project coordinated by Karen Hawver. The pew Revised Standard Version Bibles date back to 1971. Each Bible was examined for its physical condition, each dedication

bookplate was recorded and a list was compiled. Bibles purchased through Memorial Funds were also noted. The Bibles in the best condition were replaced in each row of pews. Thank you, Karen, for your diligent work. A future goal will be to replace the 1971 pew Bibles with an updated version to match the RSV Bibles now located in the chapel.

Starting with our April meeting the Deacons began to meet via Zoom.

The Board continued to assist with worship planning by discussing ideas to enhance the new Facebook online services. As a Board we wish to acknowledge the following:

- Our heartfelt thank you goes to Adam Peithmann for stepping up “to the plate” and coordinating our online services. From the two part services of hymn singing with the Peithmann family along with an abridged worship service, our online worship services have grown into an excellent traditional worship experience. FCC now has a professional online presence on Facebook Premier.

- During the difficult days of 2020, our deepest gratitude goes to Barbara Papagian for undertaking a major role in worship. Carol Soucy’s help in coordinating worship planning is gratefully appreciated.

- We wish to thank the following worship leaders; Peter Perich, Dr. Sarah Foulger, Rev Gordon Rankin, Rev. Stephen Cushing, Rev. John Potter, and Mrs. Selma Naccach Hoff.

A positive outgrowth to our remote worship experience is the addition of the Morning Watch prayer service that Rev. Pleas began in April. *A Guide to Prayer for All Who Walk with God* is the text used each week. By focusing on a weekly theme each day became an uplifting spiritual experience of insight and prayer.

On Sunday, October 25, 2020 via Zoom, Barbara Papagian’s Ecclesiastical Council was held. With great pleasure the delegates and clergy of the Hillsborough Association approved Barbara for Ordination. The Board looks forward to helping coordinate her Ordination service in 2021.

Most of all, the Board of Deacons extend many thanks to Jeanine Finefrock, Ministry of Spirituality Coordinator, for her spiritual commitment, organization and leadership.

A special thank you to Front Office Assistant, Lauren Henderson for greeting all who rang the church office bell with a warm smile of welcome. Without the support of Administrator, Linda Bonetti our Zoom meetings would not have happened.

A special thank you to Lisa Allen for acting as Scribe.

Serving on the Board of Deacons for the past six years has been an honor and privilege.

Respectfully submitted,
Ruth Knowles, Chair

2020 Board of Deacons

Lisa Allen, Cal Bowie, Craig Finefrock, Jeanine Finefrock, Tom Irving, Ruth Knowles, Samuel Knowles, Becki Krueger, Richard Nelson, John Rowe, and Donna Wiley

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.

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. Unfortunately, the pandemic has greatly altered our Sunday mornings. Hopefully, in early 2021 we will again resume in-person 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 or speak with the Chair of the Board of Deacons. We invite you to get involved in this important aspect of our ministry to God and to each other.

Respectfully submitted,
Ethel Parker

Open and Affirming Committee

Living Into Our Covenant in 2020

Our committee's guiding question during 2020 was, "How can we live out our Open and Affirming Covenant and offer welcome and loving support to **all** people?" As part of the Mind, Body, and Spirit Series, the committee partnered with Stewardship and Outreach Committees to sponsor guest speaker Jason Sokol after worship on February 2. Dr. Sokol, a professor at UNH Durham, is an expert on the civil rights movement. He shared key stories from his book, *All Eyes are Upon Us: Racial Struggles in the Northeast, from Jackie Robinson to Deval Patrick*. The program was funded in part by a grant from the *Humanities to Go* program of the New Hampshire Humanities.

Later in February, the committee worked with Accessibility Consultant Janet Zeller. Ms. Zeller has the unique ability to view our church's accessibility from her wheelchair. Ms. Zeller, committee members, and Building Manager Larry Dearborn toured our facility (inside and outside) with an eye toward accessibility and accommodations. Seeing our church building through her eyes was an enlightening and positive experience.

Ms Zeller praised FCC for its accessibility. She noted that churches are not required by the American Disability Act (ADA) to meet the standards for public buildings, adding that most churches (including ours) want to "...ensure equal opportunity for all people regardless of abilities to participate actively in the full life of the church." She also praised FCC for ensuring accessibility while respecting the significant historic features of the building. After the tour, the group met and Ms. Zeller provided insights about other aspects that affect accessibility such as language, attitudes, and beliefs. Thanks to Building Manager Larry Dearborn and Sokhom Sar for their follow-up to Ms. Zeller's assessment. They made updates to interior and exterior signage, and repainted striping for the van accessible parking space in the driveway.

The Open and Affirming Committee held its first Zoom meeting in late May. A major agenda item focused on how we might live out the FCC and ONA Covenants during the unprecedented and unsettling times of separation. Members of our committee joined in efforts of the *Connecting the Congregation* group throughout the remainder of the year.

Karen Hawver, Carol Soucy, Sam and Ruth Knowles participated in the *Faith March for Black Lives* in downtown Manchester on July 25. The peaceful march was sponsored by the Greater Manchester Clergy Association, in conjunction with Manchester NAACP, the MLK Coalition, and the Granite State Organizing Project (GSOP). Elliot Hospital Interfaith Chaplain and FCC's own Barbara Brawley was one of the clergy leaders. She offered an inspiring prayer at one of the stops on the march. Our committee will continue to support faith-based commitments to anti-racism and racial justice, as expressed in the event statement.

"We believe that it is imperative to bring a religious perspective to the national debate on race and justice..." and "We believe that each and every human being is created in the Divine Image, and all are deserving of respect."

- Excerpt from Greater Manchester Clergy Association *Faith March* Statement

The Queen City Pride Festival was held in September at Arms Park. The committee made a donation to support the ongoing work of the organization but decided not to host a booth this year due to concerns about health risks during the pandemic.

Our FCC faith community was saddened by the death of Bruce Attridge on October 6. Committee members respected his suggestions, contributions, and faithful service. During Thanksgiving Sunday's service on November 22, the committee and congregation celebrated the third anniversary of adopting the FCC Open and Affirming Covenant with a litany and reading of the covenant. We were pleased that the Attridge family led reading of the Open and Affirming Covenant in honor of Bruce, his, and our shared commitment to "...do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly" with our God. Based on Micah 6:8

Thanks to Pastor Kevin, Barbara Papagian, Adam Peithmann, all church staff, and the many friends and members of FCC that joined heads, hands, and hearts to keep our faith community active and connected during an unprecedented, challenging year. We ended the year with renewed commitments for faith-based study and action for 2021. We will continue to ask ourselves and our congregation how to

enact God's love in our world. The words of 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13 offer guidance, inspiration, and can be summed up with an essential question, "*What does love ask of us?*"

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Soucy, Chair

FCC Open and Affirming Committee

Jeanine Finefrock, Jeffrey Frye, Karen Hawver, John Rowe, Kathy Rowe, Bridget Thornton,
and Carol Soucy, Chair

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, with a gluten-free option. People serving Communion are usually current members of the Board of Deacons. They are aided as needed by the Communion Deacons, because once a Deacon, always a Deacon. They assist Pastor Kevin Pleas and Commissioned Minister Barbara Papagian.

The Sacrament of Communion is celebrated in our sanctuary during worship six times a year on what we call "Threshold Sundays." These include the first Sunday of Advent, the first Sunday of Epiphany, the first Sunday in Lent, Emmaus Sunday (the second Sunday of Easter), Pentecost and World Communion Sunday.

During 2020 the only Threshold Communion that were able to be held during a Sanctuary worship were Epiphany Sunday on January 12th and Lenten Communion on March 1st.

As we transitioned to an online worship format, the remaining Threshold Communion were celebrated by Rev. Pleas and Commissioned Minister Barbara Papagian during the online worship. The congregation was encouraged to participate by having the elements of bread and juice gathered in order to partake together at home as the ministers lead us in communion.

The Board of Deacons wanted to bring a sense of reverence to the online communion service. Therefore, on World Communion Sunday, October 4th, the elements of juice and breads of the world were carried to the Communion Table by Deacons Sam and Ruth Knowles and Craig and Jeanine Finefrock. During the Advent Communion on November 29th, the Communion elements were presented by Lisa Allen and Becki Kruger.

It is an honor for all of us to serve the Sacrament of Communion whether during Sanctuary worship or by presenting the Communion elements to the Communion Table in a pre-recorded format.

A special thank you to Deacon Donna Willey and Serving Deacon, JoAnn Ward for coordinating the Sanctuary Communion Sundays.

Respectfully submitted,
Ruth Knowles, Chair of Deacons

Parish Visitors

The Parish Visitors continued to visit people at home, in the hospital, and in nursing homes before the pandemic. Once the pandemic hit, we have been making phone calls and writing notes to people.

We were still able to do a Blue Christmas service this year using the same venue that we do the church service on. Everyone took part in the service.

Thank you to Becki Krueger, Ruth Knowles, and Lucia Carlisle for their compassionate caring.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Papagian, Commissioned Minister of Pastoral Care

Altar Design Committee

Since we last submitted a report the world has turned upside down. Plans for an elaborate Easter display turned into 20 lilies on the altar in the chapel and from there Pam and I decided we would try to

make the altar look as “normal” as possible for the virtual services. There were plants donated for the children on what was scheduled for a Sunday School celebration, so many of you volunteered to provide the summer flowers that we were able to extend that into the fall.

We didn’t want to call upon our dedicated committee to gather for Thanksgiving and Christmas displays and we were able to put these up with the help of the church staff and our spouses. Thanks to all who donated the poinsettias and for being willing to pick them up to grace your homes for the holidays. Many thanks also for the help that we’ve received from the staff for keeping us in the loop as to what Sunday was currently being recorded so the altar would be appropriate for the season. Definitely looking forward to things being more normal and being able to have fellowship with the church in person.

Respectfully submitted,
Terri Pattee and Pam Leblanc, Co-chairs

Knitting Ministry

The knitters were busy this year and fulfilled all requests. The people who received our work were warmed in body and in spirit and those of us who knit were truly warmed in spirit. It’s no surprise that this year we knit at home, instead of gathering at the church. This year we donated:

- 3 Full-Size Prayer Shawls to FCC family
- 12 Pocket Prayer Shawls to FCC family
- 20 Balaclavas to the New England Seafarers Mission
- 60 Premie & Infant hats for Project 10,000
- 77 Children’s hat and mittens sets to Bakersville, Beech Street and Hallsville Schools, FCC food closet, and NewLife Home for Women & Children
- 74 Adult Hats to FCC food closet, Helping Hands Outreach Center, Manchester Mental Health Home on Merrimack St, and New Life Home for Women and Children
- 11 Scarves to Longmeadow Church for Manchester homeless people
- *257 total items*

Who are “we”?... This year, in alphabetical order, we are Ruth Allen, Linda Bonetti, Diane Brown, Ellie Campbell, Peggy Neveu, Kathy Rowe, JoAnn Ward, and Donna Willey. We would welcome anyone else with some time to give for this very worthwhile mission. We are also working on projects for sale at our *Holly Berry Christmas Fair*, this coming autumn.

Many of us buy our own yarn, but some of us depend upon the generous people who donate yarn. In 2020 they are, again in alphabetical order, Joan Funke, Dick Jarvis & family, Carol Klardie, and Nancy Simmons. Thank you, and may our gifts help people feel the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Respectfully submitted,
JoAnn Ward, Knitting Ministry Coordinator

Quilt Ministry and Dress A Girl

The FCC Quilt Ministry continues to receive donations from our wonderful parishioners, despite COVID-19 bringing our sewing together to a screeching halt!

Unfortunately, baptismal quilts were not needed as all formal baptisms have been cancelled until we can join together again. Early on a few lap quilts were brought to shut-ins, though, thanks for Barbara Papagian. We hope that in 2021 we can reunite and begin quilts again.

Dress A Girl discontinued our sewing circles, too. It is wonderful to report that since we started sewing we have made nearly 200 dresses for destitute girls around the world who are potential victims of predators and abusers. We were able to distribute some through early 2020 mission trips by Vision International; and hope to deliver our supply on hand through them in 2021 to Guatemala, Ghana, Haiti and Zimbabwe. Sewers continue to create at home, offering a creative outlet during this time of isolation.

In October, Linda joined JoAnn Ward during the Stewardship Moment to explain Dress A Girl and the Knitting Ministry, both with a display of our dresses and blankets and hats.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Wilson, Quilt Ministry Coordinator
Linda Bonetti, Dress A Girl Coordinator

Hospitality Committee

The Hospitality Committee at First Congregational Church is normally 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. In the summer we usually ask individuals or families to sign up for individual weeks to bring a light, refreshing snack for Fellowship Hour.

Due to circumstances this past year none of this occurred. Hope you were able to share a cup of coffee or tea as we watched worship together from our homes. Looking forward to the time when we can worship together in our beautiful Church and eventually gathering for some fellowship again.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl McKenney, Hospitality Chair

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.

We currently have one member of First Congregational Church, Barbara Papagian, continuing to pursue her respective call to authorized ministry. During 2020 she achieved numerous milestones along her journey.

Barbara Papagian - At the beginning of the year, Barbara continued her online coursework with the Sioux Fall Seminary program in S. Dakota. By June, her Committee on Ministry determined that Barbara had fulfilled her educational requirement for Ordination. She completed and submitted her ordination paper to the Committee on Ministry. Her Ecclesiastical Council was held with the State Conference on October 25th via Zoom. After a lengthy series of questions by ministers and pastors from NH, and review of her ordination paper, she was approved for Ordination. The next step is for Barbara to receive a call from the church prior to her Ordination. She continues her studies at Sioux Falls Seminary, which included attending her “intensives” via Zoom at the end of October, to complete the requirement for her Master of Divinity Degree.

During the year, Barbara led worship on ten Sundays, assisted with Communion, performed a funeral, participated in the Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service, led the Ash Wednesday and Blue Christmas services, and led Bible Study on Psalms 23 and the Parables as well as filled in for Kevin while he was out.

We look forward to the day when she can be Ordained and we can celebrate that milestone with her, hopefully in the spring!

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanine Finefrock, Ministry of Spirituality Coordinator

Barbara’s FCC Ordination Support Committee

Ellie Stetson, Pam LeBlanc and Tom Irving with Pastor Kevin as her Spiritual Advisor and Carol Soucy as her Personal Advisor

Children and Youth Ministry

In 2020 the Children's Ministry Committee had 5 members: Lucia Carlisle, Scott Thornton, Kathy Nelson, Pamela Leblanc and Chair Jennifer Longval. We also welcomed Ellie Stetson, Kelda York and Rev. Kevin Pleas to our meetings.

Since a large part of our committee's function is creating activities and programs for the children of church, not having in-person church made that much more difficult. Kelda York has gone above and beyond, putting together weekly email/remote Sunday School lessons to share with our church families. A great way for us to connect with our families, and our families to connect with each other. We couldn't have our annual Advent Workshop and Luncheon this year, however, Pam Leblanc put together fabulous DIY ornament kits for our families to do at home!! Thank you, Kelda and Pam for extending our committee beyond our church walls!!

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Longval, Chair

Pastor/Parish Relations

The Pastor-Parish Relations committee typically meets three to four times per year. Beginning in June 2020, the group met with Pastor Kevin monthly, as we sought to support Kevin, Pam, and the congregation during the time of Pam's illness and passing. Thanks to Selma Naccach Hoff for joining us in a number of these meetings.

Committee members endorsed Pastor Kevin's sabbatical during November. It offered him time and space for rest, reflection, and spiritual renewal. We appreciate the ongoing efforts of Pastor Kevin, Barbara Papagian, Adam Peithmann, the Deacons, Selma Naccach Hoff, other lay leaders and church committees, church staff, and the congregation as we joined together and lived out the 2020 stewardship theme, *Faithful and Strong...Together or Apart*.

The committee is comprised of four members – John Curtis, Grant Dugan, Bill Jones, and Carol Soucy. PPRC will continue to meet regularly and on an as-needed basis to offer support and counsel, seeking to maintain open communication channels and foster understanding between the congregation and our senior pastor.

Respectfully submitted,
John Curtis, Chair

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 s for shut-ins or anyone requesting them. We also will record any other special services if requested. It is our pleasure to supply CD's of worship services and funerals services to the families.

Due to the recent pandemic we have been recording Sunday morning services from home on Facebook. If you would like an audio CD or DVD, please call the church office.

Respectfully submitted,
Larry Dearborn (Chairman) & Bob Koehler

Reports from the Ministry of Mission and Outreach

The major theme for the year 2020 at First Congregational Church of Manchester has been, “The church building is closed, but the church is open.” The necessity of closing the building was a major blow to our congregation, but one from which we recovered quickly and discovered new ways to be a light in the heart of the city. Worship services took on new life and meaning, staff found new ways to provide services, we learned how to Zoom and rediscovered how important FCC is in our lives.

The pandemic hit mission and outreach hard at first, but most of the groups are now functioning and responding to the impact of the shutdown on church members and the community. The social groups have had particular difficulty. The men’s group was new and dependent on in-person gatherings and has been unable to meet. The Senior Board has been unable to hold any of the senior banquets, a major loss for our seniors, but they have met by Zoom regularly and have sent out cards and gifts. The Women’s Connection had to cancel several events but has held some events where social distancing was possible and has begun using Zoom in creative ways.

The Membership Team has been unable to attend to the essential task of recruitment, but has met regularly and continues to send out cards to show care, concern and celebration. CL21 was slowed by the shutdown. One event needed to be cancelled, but the classes have resumed using Zoom and the FCC team has been discussing ways to move forward.

The H.O.M.E. (Hands on Mission for Everyone) team and the Meal Train team, organized by Liz Verity and Peggy Neveu have responded in magnificent fashion. With the shutdown and the need for social distancing they were unable to volunteer at New Horizons kitchen nor to deliver meals. Instead, they have made meals available for the food closet and others, sending cards to members less able to remain in contact via the internet plus many other activities. Likewise, the knitters, led by JoAnn Ward, who had been meeting every week in the church parlor, moved to a Facetime meeting and, along with others who knitted at home, produced 200 items that were given away.

Outreach responded with some caution, withholding donations to several organizations believing that there would be an initial surge in donations and government support that might not last. It now looks like it will be a hard winter with much assistance needed by the homeless and unemployed. We will discuss at our January meeting how we can best use the funds available to us. The food closet has been increasingly busy. Lauren Henderson deserves special credit for her dedication to serving hungry people who come requesting food.

Overall, the response of the church and the congregation has been very positive. It has been very difficult, and everyone longs for the time when we can be together in person again. Still, the increased donations to the food closet, to the angel tree and the hats and mittens programs have surpassed our expectations. One of the school social workers wrote to us, “Through your generosity we have been able to provide food for our neediest families during an unprecedented difficult time. The families are appreciative of the gift cards and we, the staff, are thankful for your congregation's willingness to help. Your kindness has helped alleviate stress for many of our families and for that we are grateful.” May we continue to be a light in the heart of the city.

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

H.O.M.E.

H.O.M.E. (Hands on Mission for Everyone) continued to provide volunteers from our church family for **New Horizons/FIT (Families in Transition)** and the **UpReach Therapeutic Riding Center**, until the middle of March when all volunteer opportunities were cancelled.

FCC Meal Train

Peggy Neveu and Liz Verity co-ordinate the **FCC Meal Train**, which still provides a connection between members and friends in our community, taking the time to say “we care about you” with notes and phone calls. Jim Fogle, Martha Perich and Nancy Simmons have joined our note writing efforts, added hands for which Peggy and I are very grateful. We have a 4 week rotation of about 100 names and try to keep our message current with happenings at First Church, especially helpful for those who are unfamiliar with using our social media connections. Joan Currier and Peggy have also continued sending birthday cards out to seniors, using the church office’s senior list as a guide; this mission helps put smiles on faces and in their hearts.

Before the church closed in March we delivered 15 soups, cookies and muffins bags, 4 cookie bags. and 4 individual meals. In February for Community Outreach, we had a Valentine cookie baking and decorating morning with ladies from the church, which were distributed by those involved spreading Valentine cheer!

To help out, we delivered a once a week meal to Rev. Kevin and Pam, made with the help of members of the congregation. This was greatly appreciated by the Pleas family, and some of us learned to cook vegan meals. We also provided 2 meals for people recovering from surgeries to say “we are thinking of you.” Through the fall we picked up our Soup Bag mission and gave out 15 bags.

Our volunteers stepped up after Thanksgiving and with a request for goodies in the FCC Friday Link. The outpouring of soup, cookies and muffins has been phenomenal from our generous FCC family. We have successfully given out 20 soup, muffin, cookie bags during the first 3 weeks of Dec. We had some help in delivering the soup bags from members of the congregation, and Rev Pleas. As a highlight in December, we traveled roads we didn't know existed in Goffstown, Hillsboro, Weare and even Manchester; having been met by smiling faces of the FCC family. Fortunately, the weather has been good for our adventures.

We are still providing the Food Closet with homemade goods when requested. We were also able to add grocery store gift cards to some people in their December notes. Six gift cards were donated to us by generous members of our church community.

THANK YOU to those who have been working together this year! You have made our Meal Train projects such a success.

Hollows Community Garden and Learning Center

In late spring the Families in Transition/ New Horizons **Hollows Community Garden** at 401 Spruce Street in Manchester opened for volunteers to work in the garden one day a week. Karen Hawver, Carole Valavane and myself helped weed overgrown beds, plant spring flowers and vegetables.

When completed, the Hollows Community Garden and Learning Center will serve as a community garden, learning center, and park. Produce grown in the garden will supplement meals served at The Family Place Resource Center and Shelter, as well as provide the opportunity for the community to learn where food comes from through interactive programming and cook with fresh fruits and vegetables. Participants will be able to learn to grow their own food and enjoy the literal fruits of their labors. Karen, Carole and I will return in the spring, and hope for others to join us.

English for New Americans Program

Due to Covid -19 our activities with the **English for New Americans Program** have not taken place this year. As volunteers we have missed not working with the students and many of us this year lost the feeling of community we share when we work together in the kitchen at the ENA dinner. However, we were able to continue our connection thanks to the Outreach Committee who donated grocery store gift cards, which were sent to students by the teachers, along with cards from FCC.

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

2020 has been difficult year for our church and even more difficult for our community. This has had a strong impact on our work of outreach to the community. We began the year with another strong response to the Souper Bowl, although we did not reach our goal of setting a new record for the number of collections.

The closing of the church building created a new and difficult challenge. We decided to hold off on sending many of our usual donations until we knew more about the situation in the community and we could send the money where it would do the most good. There was an initial response of increased donations from the community to charities helping the needy and a strong response from the federal government which we feared would not last. We were also concerned that there would be less response from the congregation to our programs that have been heavily subsidized by donations from the congregation such as the angel tree and coats and boots program. There seemed good reason for concern as we had been unable to run the Church World Service Mothers' and Fathers' Day blanket and tools program and we had a much smaller collection of food for the Religious Response to Hunger drive. As a result, we reserved our sending of donations to several agencies until the end of the year.

Other casualties of the lockdown included the annual March Against Hunger, although we did send the usual donation to New Horizons, Christmas in July, although we did send gift cards to the residents at Helping Hands, the ENA dinner, although, again, we sent gift cards to ENA participants, and our annual summer retreats and social get together.

As it turns out, the generosity of members of the congregation has greatly manifested itself this fall. The food closet has seen a large increase in requests for food, especially for families with children and the homeless. We had to change the way these requests are handled to permit social distancing. We now make up bags of food ahead of time to hand out. Some bags have items that do not need to be cooked for the homeless and others have meals that can be prepared in a home. The bags are supplemented at times with soup and other goodies from the Meal Train. We have, fortunately seen an increase in food donations. The Reverse Advent calendar sponsored by Outreach and the Connection task force were a big help for this.

Early in the shutdown we developed a program for those who were unable to listen to services on the internet. Larry Dearborn agreed to make copies on CD of the sermons that were broadcast on Facebook. Members of the committee volunteered to deliver them to those who indicated they would like them. We also provided a CD player to someone without one. Carolyn Lane has been coordinating this program.

We had feared a decrease in donations for the Angel Tree and the Coats and Boots program; instead, we received 3 times as many coats as we did last year and spent only \$417 compared to the \$1500 we spent last year. We were able to deliver 30 coats and 15 pairs of boots to Hallsville School. A similar success was enjoyed with the Angel Tree, organized by Sue Clement, every tag was taken from the Angel Tree for the first time in our tenure as co-chairs. This has enabled us to give more holiday gift cards to school families for Christmas – we provided a total of 15 Thanksgiving baskets consisting of hats and mittens and a \$50 Market Basket gift card to families at Bakersville, Beech Street and Hallsville Schools and a total of 30 gift cards at Christmas. We are blessed to have so many so generous members of our congregation.

As described above, we had discussed making donations to local agencies that deal with homelessness and hunger because we wanted more awareness of where we stood and where the need would be the greatest. We anticipate that the need will be the greatest this winter. The ending of much of the assistance from the federal government, the resumption of evictions and the continuing spread of the Covid-19 virus will make this an extremely dark winter in our city, state and country. At our first meeting of the year, we will explore how best to use the funds that remain.

Respectfully submitted,
John and Kathy Rowe, Co-chairs

Outreach Committee Members

John & Kathy Rowe (co-chairs), Sam and Ruth Knowles (Treasurer), Marsha Neubert, Sue Clement, Devin Clement, Elizabeth Robertson, JoAnn Ward, Linda Bilodeau, Zane Knoy, Eric Gagnon, Karen Hawver, Sue Curtis, Carolyn Lane, Maggie Jesperson, Justin May and Susan Stiles.

First Church Special Olympics Young Athletes Program

We had just concluded the 2020 Winter Term at the Manchester Community Music School in early March and were looking forward to the start of the Spring Term in April when the Covid-19 virus appeared. At that time, we had 18 athletes and 15 church coaches, plus 10 student coaches from SNHU. As a result of the virus Special Olympics NH announced that all activities involving athletes were cancelled, and that is still the case as we close out 2020.

We are hopeful that with improvements in 2021 we will be able to resume the Young Athletes Program with the Fall Term in 2021.

The Young Athletes Program continues to be a wonderful outreach opportunity for First Church, while providing a much needed opportunity for children with special needs. Please contact Bill Jones if you want more information about the program, or if you are interested in becoming a volunteer coach.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Jones, Young Athletes Coach & Coordinator

In-House Missions: Outside Groups Using the Building

Our building started the year bustling with activity from English for New Americans and the tutoring/citizenship programs, AA, scouting groups, Korean Church, NH Gay Men's Chorus, the food closet, and Special Olympics; then suddenly March and Covid-19 were upon us with tough decisions ahead...open or closed?

Immediately, staff was working from home, worship services and committee meetings went virtual...and we all had crash courses in Facebook and Zoom. A Re-Opening Committee was established and our lives turned upside down as we all coped with what we now know is a long road ahead.

English for New Americans and Citizenship Classes: Sponsored by Southern New Hampshire Services. We are a proud partner in this enterprise, which serves the Greater Manchester area. Barbara DelloRusso continues as Coordinator, and together with her dedicated staff, they do a remarkable job helping immigrants to assimilate into our society. The space for 12 English classes has been provided by FCC for 16 years now and this program continues to serve well over 200 foreign-born persons, Monday through Friday all year long. In addition to the English classes, the program includes multiple Citizenship classes, tutoring, "Welcoming Manchester" citywide and the FCC specific "conversation cafés". Unfortunately, in March we needed to close the building to students. For the last 9 months, teachers have conducted classes virtually, plus some meeting students in parking lots or drive-bys to pick up work papers. Where there's a will, there's a way with ENA!

The 16th Annual ENA Holiday Dinner was cancelled in December, but gift cards were given to teachers to mail to their students from FCC. We hope to have a celebration in 2021 welcoming back everyone.

Southern New Hampshire Services offers a monthly reduced building space donation to help defray costs.

Korean Presbyterian Church: For over eighteen years on Sunday afternoons, Pastor Jang has led a group of Koreans in worship, education and fellowship meals. Pastor Jang's congregation may be small, but they are truly committed to their faith. Although the building was not available for most of the year, Pastor Jang and a small handful of his members have used the chapel this fall for less than 5 people. 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 a building space donation.

Alcoholics Anonymous: When Covid-19 forced the closure of our building to the public, unfortunately AA was one of the victims. Queen City AA, coordinated by DT Lewis, is the oldest AA group in NH, so it was a difficult decision for DT to step down as he follows the seas of change, literally, sailing into the southern sunset...a lifelong dream. We hope that once the pandemic is in our rearview mirror, that a new AA group coordinator will be able to take advantage of our space.

Girl Scouts: All of our dedicated Girl Scout leaders deserve a huge thank-you for nurturing and grooming the young people of America who are the future! Girl Scout troops continued to use our space for their Tuesday meetings until March. They are still meeting virtually and in homes to keep the Girl Scouts' values and traditions alive. We can't close this year's chapter of the Girl Scouts without recognizing the amazing dedication of our own Deana Dubois to the Girl Scouts and her leadership role in living by example and coordinating the schedules. Unfortunately, her passing in August has left a huge void in the hearts of many area girls and families, and her FCC family.

New Hampshire Gay Men's Chorus: It's a joyous place on rehearsal nights when the NHGMC practice for the biannual extravaganzas! Unfortunately, their concerts have been cancelled until further notice, so we await the excitement and fellowship as new dates unfold.

Songweavers: Unfortunately Songweavers was also unable to perform this year, however we did promote an online version of "BRAVE!" on November 20th, and look forward to seeing them in 2021.

Special Olympics Young Athletes: In our third year, the Special Olympics Young Athletes program for 2-7 year olds was in full swing until March. Students from SNHU teamed up with over 15 volunteers from FCC, under the amazing leadership of Coach/Coordinator Bill Jones, to introduce these kids to an exercise program to teach teamwork and increase physical skills. We met at Manchester Music School. Thirty kids and their parents have participated in the 8-week sessions. The growth has been amazing...for all of us! We are eager to start again in Fall 2021.

Neighborhood Ministry: Thank you to all who contribute to the FCC Food Closet so that we may help those less fortunate. Visits this year are exponentially higher due to the pandemic, unemployment, homelessness, and greater need in general. Lauren Henderson has become our liaison and coordinator for the Food Closet and done a remarkable job organizing it. 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 for the purchase of food. We have removed the "every 30 days" rule and only ask for a name at the door – we then leave a pre-packed bag of non-perishables for them to pick up – many times including surplus muffins or cookies from the Meal Train. The "Reverse Advent Calendar" was a bonus as enumerable families collected non-perishable goods and dropped them at the FCC door to augment our Food Closet! Also, Wesley's Way Foundation generously donated "homeless specific" foods to build bags for the unfortunate who still live on the streets and are unable to cook or prepare food.

The Blessing in a Backpack program was cancelled when schools were shut down, however our Outreach team continues to work with social workers at Hallsville, Beech and Bakersville Schools, giving Market Basket gift cards to families, along with hats and mittens made by the congregation. In addition, coats and boots were again given to needy Hallsville students. FCC is there to help in any way.

Angel Tree took a new twist this year. The Church Office coordinated with Outreach to still have a tree in the lobby, receiving nearly 100 \$25 gift cards for residents of the Manchester Mental Health Center, New Life Home, and Helping Hands. We also helped with a virtual Christmas in July at Helping Hands; and prepared and served meals at UpReach Therapeutic Riding Center for the therapy group until the program closed due to the pandemic. Unfortunately, we were unable to host the CAM dinner which is traditionally held here every October.

Miscellaneous: Unfortunately, the Chapel and Sanctuary have been closed to public use due to the pandemic; however we were able to host a private family-only funeral service for our beloved Priscilla Robinson in the chapel, and a lawn memorial service for Pam Pleas in October.

When we reflect on the activities and vast successes in 2020, despite the pandemic and being closed to the public, 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 as witnessed during Christmas week with the sanctuary shining brightly 24 hours a day...the Light in the Heart of the City.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Bonetti, Church Administrator



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

December 27, 2020
First Congregational Church
508 Union St.
Manchester, NH 03104

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

This will be my sixth year here as Director of the English for New Americans program. My teachers, staff and I are very thankful for the FCC community's thoughtfulness and kind words throughout the year.

In particular, this year when we have not been able to hold classes in the church for the last 10 months - the kindness and flexibility of Linda and Lauren through this time has been so helpful to our teachers as we treaded through how to best serve our students remotely.

Liz Verity and her team remembered our students with holiday gift cards that are typically given out during the Holiday dinner party. Thank you! Teachers and students were very appreciative of these cards.

Last year I had mentioned how our program had been expanding. This year, what students were able to continue remotely, has cut our student population in half. We continue to test a student here and there. It is difficult, especially for our beginner students to do any kind of remote program.

We hope by next fall, we will once again begin to have as many ESL classes as we did before March of 2020. Our Adult Learner Services program's funding was cut in June. This program was located in the basement and we appreciated the time and effort the Coordinator, Pauline, did for the students that attended.

Our ESL program will be looking for consistent classroom volunteers in the fall, especially in our adult beginner classes (morning and night). If you, or someone you know, is interested, please let me know.

We wish all of the FCC community a better year ahead.

Thank you with much appreciation,
Barbara DelloRusso
Program Director
bdellorusso@snhs.org

Membership Committee and Member Development

The Membership team continued to send cards to the people mentioned in the Sunday News each week with messages of care, concern, or celebration.

We hope that these messages bring comfort and support to all who receive them. Church orientations for church membership and membership joining Sundays have been suspended until we can meet and worship together again. Contact has been made with new people who have joined us for Facebook Live worship, bible study, or made contacts with the church. We look forward to new beginnings, new connections, and new members as we transition to worship in our church sanctuary.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellie Stetson and Bill Jones, Membership Team Co-chairs

The Membership Team
Joan Currier Marsha Neubert Pam LeBlanc Liz Verity
Lindsey Goodrich Rev. Pleas Ellie Stetson Bill Jones

Senior Citizens' Fellowship

It is unfortunate that the Senior Luncheons for the year 2020 had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 Epidemic. It has been a stressful time for many of the seniors, being confined to their home and not being able to see each other in person except through Zoom and Skype. Many are touched by the personal phone calls that are made and encourage everyone to keep busy by reading, doing puzzles, playing games and watching old movies.

We hope to move onto a better and healthier 2021 with future plans to have our 60th year celebration in May. We will see how the restaurant re-openings and the current health issues are before a final decision is made.

The Board agreed to donating \$250 to the Pam Pleas' scholarship in Exeter. Also \$500 was given to H.O.M.E. (Hands on Mission for Everyone), a mission group that supports the Meal Train and does not have a source of income. Due to the lack of 2020 luncheons, the Board returned \$5000 to the Endowment – Campbell Fund, the source our of income.

“Thinking of You”, “Get Well” and “Sympathy” cards were sent out to members and friends of the church throughout the year. There were 16 gift bags along with a personalized card, made by Pam Leblanc, delivered to some of our seniors during the Christmas Season.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Payne, President

The Senior Citizens Fellowship Board Members

Kathy Payne (President), Elizabeth Robertson (Vice-President), Lucia Carlisle (Treasurer), Joan Currier (Corresponding Secretary), Nancy Simmons (Recording Secretary), Cecile Adams, Pip Adams, Cal Bowie, Larry Dearborn, Marsha Neubert, Marion Palmes, Steve Payne, Liz Verity and Donna Willey.

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.

Everyone knows that this has been a very different year. We began with all good intentions to do many activities but COVID -19 took over. Here is a monthly report of what we did do in 2020.

January- We began with Movie Day to see Little Women. Before going to the theater, we called out for pizza to be delivered at church. Thirteen ladies enjoyed the social time and then we drove to the Hooksett Cinemagic for the movie. We had a great time enjoying everyone's company.

February- Our eighth annual Valentine's Day Breakfast had a little twist to it this year. It was changed to the “Ladies and Gentlemen's Valentine's Day Breakfast”. We collaborated with The Men's Group. The men did the cooking in the kitchen and the ladies brought all the extra egg dishes, fruit and goodies except for one: a coffee cake was made by Tom Irving that was very good. Thank you, Tom; and thank you to Fred Simmons, Pip Adams and Peter Perich for cooking, cleaning up the kitchen, and making it all happen. We had a total of thirty-one people attend. Eighteen ladies and thirteen gentlemen. Everyone enjoyed the fellowship while enjoying the delicious food. After eating Pam LeBlanc and Peggy Neveu announced the date, November 21, 2020, for the All Church Christmas Fair. Then the men went to the Parlor to do their activity, while the ladies stayed in the dining room for a demonstration of how to decorate heart shaped cookies, Jeanine style. Yes, our own Jeanine Finefrock prepared a fabulous presentation for us.

March- Here is where everything fell apart. These were the activities we had planned: March 28 - “Memory Wire” with Terri Patti. April 19 and the 26 - Coffee Hour. April 25 - Palace Theatre to see “The Bodyguard”. Also the NHCUC Women's Fellowship Spring Gathering. May 30 - The 8th Annual Mystery Ride!

June- Since everyone was home cooking their own meals and desserts, we decided to have a contest using our Bon Appetit Cookbook. We asked the ladies to try something new from the cookbook and e-mail Pam or Denise a picture with the title of the recipe and who entered it into the book. There were unlimited entries. Once Pam or Denise got the email, that person's name was put into a hat. We had 5 ladies participate and on June 15 we pulled the name. Jeanine Finefrock was the lucky winner. She received a \$10.00 voucher to use on whatever WC event she would like.

July- We continued to try and figure out what we could do to help keep the ladies to stay interested.

August- We tried to have the Jewelry Making with Terri but with COVID still a big issue it wasn't possible.

September- On September 18th we planned a surprise "Drive By Parade" to Pam and Kevin's house. We organized at Denise's house and drove to Kevin's house tooting our horns with signs on the cars for well wishes. Barbara Papagian was our in. She contacted Pam's mother, Joann, to give us the best time to arrive. After parking in front of the house we got out of the cars carrying a dozen red heart balloons, then tied some on the front bushes and some on the back deck. We wanted to show our support for Pam and Kevin. Every time they looked out the window they would see the balloons that showed our love for them. As Liz Verity described it, "I think it was good for all of us to feel like we can support them with our prayers and cards, and best of all in person!"

On September 26th our 8th Annual MYSTERY RIDE went on! Eleven ladies arrived in the church driveway at 10:30 with 125 food pantry items. Dick Jarvis was nice enough to be at church to let us bring the food in and put it on the pews. He was thanked with a couple dozen handmade cookies, which he loved. Thank you again, Dick, for all you do around the church every day! We did social distancing and wore our mask while giving out the directions to our destination. Everyone got back in their cars to drive to south Manchester to Denise's house. Once everyone arrived we set the lawn chairs up in the driveway six feet apart, and had a great social time getting to know each other a little better. Then we moved to the back of the house where tables were set up for each lady to either have their own table or sit two, one on each end of a large table. At this time we began the craft for the day. The ladies were asked to bring a mega roll of toilet paper. They had no idea what they were going to do with it. They soon learned how to magically turn the roll into a beautiful fall pumpkin. After craft time, we enjoyed a fabulous lunch that Ron Beurivage was so kind to go pick up for us at The Kitchen on River Road. More social time went on while eating and a good time was had by all. Everyone went away remembering the Mystery Ride of 2020!

October- We had our first Zoom Gathering. We had 8 ladies join in at 10 am on October 12. We gathered to talk about what we could do on future Zoom calls and also to see each other's faces.

November- We had our second Zoom Gathering. We tried this one in late afternoon but the attendance was low. There were 5 of us. We chit-chatted a bit and then learned a few Zentangle designs to help us gain peace and have less stress in our lives. We started a "Zentangle Round Robin" where each lady who receives the package has a turn at adding their own designs.

December- Women's Connection had a very successful College Cookie Mailing this year despite COVID-19. We had twelve very happy college students who received a box or bag with a tin filled with cookies and some snacks to fill in the gaps. Some of the packages were mailed, some delivered, and some picked up by a family member. We had fifteen bakers baking at least three dozen cookies each. They dropped off the cookies at church on December 4 to be picked up and brought to Denise Beurivage's house to be organized and to fill the tins. We had over 42 dozen cookies and once the tins were filled the remainder of the cookies were packaged up and brought back to church for the Meal Train. The Meal Train was pleasantly surprised to see so many cookies and gave us a big thank you. Their cookie supply was down to almost zero and needed to be replenished. Along with the college mailing we signed and mailed ten cards to members and friends that Barbara Papagian has in her care, to wish them a Merry Christmas. Terri Patti sends out an email to the WC email list usually in the beginning of each month. In the subject it has Yahoo! Mail... WC. This email includes ladies' birthdays that happen that month and any other information that might have to be announced at any given time. If you are not on the list and would like to be, send your info to Terri Patti at seamstressed@yahoo.com.

Women's Connection Book Club- The book club was a little different this year as well. It was more of a book study done on Zoom with Barbara Papagian as the leader. The 2 books studied were "The 23rd

Psalm” by Rabbi Kushner and “The Parables”. Also “In His Steps” by Charles Sheldon was read by the group. John Rowe led a book study of “Candide” by Voltaire. This club is open to anyone interested in reading the book that the club chooses. It was meeting about once a month on a Sunday afternoon but with COVID-19 the meetings have been sporadic. Contact Barbara Papagian if interested in joining.

Denise Beurivage and I want to thank Terri Pattee for being our e-mail technician. 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, growing in faith and the camaraderie that we all enjoy.

Respectfully submitted,
Pam LeBlanc Co-chair

Memorial Reception Team

The Memorial Reception Team is a group of eighteen people who can be called upon to organize a memorial reception here at church. This year our services were not needed because the Church has been closed for COVID-19. As soon as the Church re-opens, we will be ready when the need is there.

Respectively submitted,
Pam LeBlanc

Holly Berry Christmas Fair

Peggy Neveu and Pam LeBlanc are co-chairs of the all-church Christmas Fair after many years of not having a fair. This fair will be all in house. All the tables, activities and food will be made and created by church members and friends of FCC. Information went out in the Church Window and Sunday News, with the different Shoppe names. Many people had lots of interest to either help out or be organizers of the Shoppe of their choice. Once COVID-19 happened we continued planning and some people began making items as we were all home staying safe. As time went on and the date got closer, the fair couldn't go on the way that was planned so the decision was made to hold off until 2021. All the handmade items are being stored and will reappear when the time comes. We are all looking forward with enthusiasm to November 2021. Hope that it will be greater than ever once we can all get back to doing the things that we love so much.

Respectfully submitted,
Pam LeBlanc and Peggy Neveu, Co-Chairs

Interfaith Women of New Hampshire

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

We held three events this year, one in person and two virtual ones by Zoom. Our monthly meetings have been held by Zoom, it took us a little time to get organized, but are pleased with the response from attendees to our switch to virtual events.

In July we were all able to meet in person, in the garden at the Manning House. Socially distanced and wearing masks we said goodbye and good luck to Barbara Lantiegne (founding member of IWNH) who moved to Warwick, NY, with her family in the Hudson Valley area. We thanked her for her years of dedication to developing programs and serving IWNH.

EVENTS:

Interfaith families: Joys and Challenges.

Temple Adath Yeshurun hosted this live event for IWNH on March 2nd. Three presentations were given by Ruth Kleinfeld, Veronica Molloy and Liz Verity, all members of the Leadership Committee.

Veronica, shared historical data from the Pew Research Center, and the challenges in her grandparent's marriage of 1913, how the blending of their Lutheran and Roman Catholic faiths affected the family in many ways.

Ruth, being raised in a Jewish home with an observant father and a mother who converted from Catholicism, shared her own experiences of learning respect for various religions, despite many conflicts, especially around Christmas. She felt further blessed with grandparents who spoke Yiddish and who literally lived in an apartment that adjoined a church, and by assorted Protestant relatives.

Liz, presented her own experience, based on a grandparents' response within a cross denominational marriage of her daughter Lucy, and her Greek son in law. She shared her own reflections after the Greek Orthodox infant baptism of her grandson (Anglican, Greek Orthodox).

Round table discussions and refreshments followed. The freewill offering taken was given to hunger relief.

Women, Faith and Art:

On October 5, 2020 Interfaith Women of New Hampshire held their first Zoom event: a private art tour online of sacred works in the collection of the Currier Museum of Art.

Our program was co-ordinated by Carolin Sanchez, adult tour co-ordinator for the Currier Museum of Art, and facilitated by docent, Nancy Baker. Nancy has been with the Currier for 10 years and has a passion for sacred art. Her presentation was wonderful, helping the Zoom audience take a special look at the long history of religious art through works in the collection, with an emphasis on the female perspective. Starting with works from the 11th century thru contemporary works of today. The selection Nancy showed us also included a pictorial quilt by Harriet Powers, currently at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Sacred art is powerful as it touches the deepest spiritual longings of the men and women who create and view it. We see possibility and promise in both the subject and the artist. Religious art traces the story of faith in every culture. Its motifs, symbols, and allusions help us uplift our minds to the spiritual.

At the completion of the tour we were able to have discussions about the works in various breakout groups.

Many Thanks go to Nancy Baker, Carolin Sanchez and the Currier Museum of Art for helping us present this wonderful program.

Home for the Holidays

A special Zoom event held on December 14, 2020. Members of IWNH Leadership and friends presented familiar and new holiday-related music, traditions, and perspectives as experienced while we have been, are and will be 'Home for the Holidays'. We shared in some faith-based celebrations and worshipful observances from Muslim, Jewish and Christian women who together provided an evening of joy and light through a virtual gathering.

Special thanks go to:

Director: Dr.Masooma Athar Video Editor: Merziya Hussain Tech Support: Ali Athar

Our Presenters:

Abby Curtis– Liz Verity– Olga Haveles– Sadaf Athar & Zaheeda Hamza
and The Choir of Congregation Beth Elohim of Acton, Mass, with Cantor Sarra Spierer.

A virtual discussion session followed, and the charities chosen for our free will offering were Meals on Wheels and the Alzheimers Association.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Verity, Interfaith Coordinator

NH Conference UCC Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the New Hampshire Conference was presented on October 17 and 18, 2020, via Zoom this year due to the pandemic.

The business meeting and keynote speaker presented on the 17th. The meeting consisted of a short opening worship time, the presentation and voting on resolutions and positions in the conference, and reports from Horton Center and the Financial report.

Tim Hughes agreed to be Executive Director of Horton Center for the next two years and is very excited about the upcoming 2021 season.

The keynote speaker was Reverend Michael Caine who is currently Pastor at Old First Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He served diverse congregations in New York City for many years. He talked about the changing world calling for changing responses from churches.

The workshops took place on the 18th and they involved Racial Justice, Ministry with our Communities, Rights of Nature, and Conversation with the Conference Minister.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Papagian, Commissioned Minister of Pastoral Care

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

This has been the year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Elliot Hospital has played a critical role for our community and our state during this pandemic. From the beginning of the pandemic until mid-January 2021, a total of 919 people in the State of New Hampshire have been hospitalized. Of those, 490 or 53% of the total statewide hospitalizations have been at the Elliot. This caused a major disruption in the operation of the Elliot. Selective procedures, such as joint replacements, were postponed. Volunteers manufactured tens of thousands of PPE gowns because of shortages. The new Emergency Room expansion was postponed, yet now the ER is handling 25% more cases than it was designed to do. The financial loss was also great. These are but a few examples, but the Elliot Hospital is rebounding. A good example is the vaccination of critical front-line workers. Vaccinations were completed in 30 days for those who opted to receive the vaccine (done before the Queen of England received her vaccination).

The other great Elliot news this year is the completion of the Elliot Regional Cancer Center. This center integrates both radiation and oncology treatments in one advanced center, so patients do not have to travel to receive the most advanced comprehensive cancer treatments. For example, the center has two of the latest, most advanced linear accelerators (Varian TruBeam) for radiation treatment. Over 12.6 million dollars was raised from the greater Manchester community for the construction of the center, named The Solinsky Center for Cancer Care at The Elliot. The overall fund raising effort was led by our own Charlie Goodwin and Ellie Goodwin Cochran. Kudos to them.

These events are a testament to the Elliot's mission as an acute care community hospital. We should remember that the First Congregational Church has played a key role in the Elliot Hospital from its inception and be pleased that the medical and charitable mission that this church played in creating it is still being continued with such dedication.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Paul W. Hoff

Representative of the First Congregational Church to the Elliot Hospital Board of Trustees
Secretary, Elliot Board of Directors

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 2020, the nine Board members were: Cal Bowie, Lucia Carlisle, Greg Goodrich, Charlie Goodwin, Selene Lyons, Allen Pattee, Kathy Nelson, Elizabeth Robertson, and Scott Thornton. 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. Scott Thornton served as Chair and Greg Goodrich as Vice-Chair.

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

The year of 2020 was like none other, as we all struggled to find ways to deal with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Financial markets dropped precipitously before rebounding throughout the year. FCC Services ceased in March and much of the activity of the Church was forced to find new ways to operate or curtailed indefinitely. As with most committees and boards of FCC (and many formerly public sessions), the Trustees switched to a virtual format beginning in April.

With no weekly church services, staff at FCC focused on expanded technology to stay connected with our church family, continued support to the Manchester community, and maintenance items at the Church. Linda Bonetti and Lauren Henderson coordinated input and materials from the various committees to provide an expanded digital presence for FCC while providing assistance from the FCC Food Closet to many of the City’s disadvantaged. Sokhom Sar and Larry Dearborn replaced lighting, flooring, and repainted many of the rooms and classrooms in the building, while maintaining the operations of the many systems in the church.

Other notable events included the completion of the rehabilitation of the stained glass windows of the church. A stained glass restoration specialist studio, Willet Hauser/Associated Crafts was contracted to repair, stabilize, and apply protective measures to all of the stained glass windows in the Sanctuary and the Chapel. These windows have truly been renovated and were visible during Christmas Week when the Sanctuary was lit during the evening hours, providing enjoyment for all passers-by during the holiday season.

The Trustees also approved the completion Phase 3 of the additional repairs to the church organ, the Swell Chorus, that were requested by Adam Peithmann. Using funds from the Memorial Trust Fund, Saigh Elias Memorial Fund, and the Graupner Fund, in September Ortloff Organ Company completed the final phase of this major refurbishment. The 3 phases were first proposed in 2016. Additional approved repairs were made to a section of the roof over the Sanctuary due to a spring windstorm, partially covered through insurance. The work was performed by Sentry Roofing.

I wish to thank all the Board members for their work this year, including Lucia Carlisle for her insight and Jeffrey Frye for his execution in fiduciary responsibilities. I also wish to thank all of the church staff, and in particular Linda Bonetti, Lauren Henderson, Sokhom Sar, and Larry Dearborn, for their faithful efforts and ministry towards the FCC family and facilities. I wish to further thank Larry Dearborn for his diligence and tireless efforts as Building Manager and is stepping down from his duties in 2021. I also wish to extend a special thanks to Charlie Goodwin who will be stepping down from the Board at the end of the 2020 term.

Respectively submitted,
Scott Thornton, Chair

Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee consists of the following members: Bill Jones, Elizabeth Verity, Sue Clement, Vicki Tinsley, Kathy Payne, Tom Irving, Rev. Kevin Pleas as ex-officio member, Church Administrator Linda Bonetti, Anita Wolcott, and co-chairs Cheryl and Dan McKenney. The Committee meets monthly throughout the year to organize and prepare for the annual Stewardship Pledge Campaign, line up the Campaign's Stewardship Moments for the four Sundays in October and create value added "Mind, Body, and Spirit" workshops for the congregation and guests.

Due to the pandemic we didn't have any "Mind, Body and Spirit" workshops in 2020, and the Committee did not participate in the annual Salvation Army "Toy Shoppe" in December. We hope to get back on track in 2021.

In 2020 the actual Pledges, Plate contributions and Gifts received totaled \$191,712. Thanks to generous Plate and Gift giving we were successful in matching the budgeted goals for the year. The 2021 Pledge Campaign "Faithful and Strong Together or Apart" and the \$=\$\$ Matching Pledge Campaign resulted in Pledges of \$172,000. This was a 5.2 % increase over the average of the previous two year's campaigns. We thank the entire Congregation for your generosity and continued support of First Congregational Church.

God Bless.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl and Dan McKenney, Co-chairs

Scholarship Committee

Several young adult members of our church were awarded scholarships this past June.

Funding for our scholarships this year was possible because of the William P. McGuiness Scholarship Award, the Virginia Smith Scholarship bequest, and the Gordon P. Woolner Scholarship bequest. We were delighted to make these scholarship awards.

John Thornton received the *William McGuiness Award* from a fund set up by Phi Kappa for deserving high school male students and the *Virginia Smith bequest* for Church scholarships for graduating high school seniors.

The Higher Education Award 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 post graduate level or in pursuit of certificates in job training programs.

Recipients this year were:

Jennifer Irving who attends Suffolk Law School full time to begin her education there to pursue a law degree.

Abby Curtis continues her education to obtain her Master's Degree in Piano Pedagogy at the University of Southern Maine.

Emma Green plans to continue to compete her Associates Degree in Liberal Arts at Manchester Community College.

Margaret (Maggie) Thornton continues her education at Norwich University. Maggie is a junior in college at Norwich University majoring in Exercise Science and Health Studies. She is also working on her Crossfit Level 1 certification, nutrition certification. and personal trainer license.

We are so proud of our young men and women as they continue their education to help make a difference in new beginnings for themselves, our community, and the world of the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Perich

Lucia Carlisle

Dawn Gagnon

Ellie Stetson

Building Manager's Report

The following report is a summary of the more significant projects that have been worked on during 2020:

- Sentry Roofing replaced one section of roof over sanctuary and replaced a few other missing shingles on two other sections.
- Installed stair railing for sanctuary stage.
- Second floor double classroom (204 & 205) repainted and new flooring installed.
- New flooring installed in second floor hallways and restrooms.
- Stained glass windows renovation complete. New acrylic covering installed on all windows and trim repainted. Sokhom repainted all exterior doors and trim to match window trim.
- Rusted electrical conduit along wall on driveway side of building replaced by SJL Electric.
- New flooring installed in Barbara Papagian's office.
- Renovation of Sokhom's office in process (painting walls and installing new flooring).
- New signs installed on restroom doors and parking area, also new stripes painted to comply with National Accessibility Requirements.

I greatly appreciate the support that I receive from 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 as needed during growing season. Sokhom Sar takes care of this important chore including edging and trimming as needed.
- Yard waste bagged and left for pick-up by Pinard Waste.
- Lawn fertilizer applied annually.
- Volunteers take care of spring and fall grounds clean-up.
- Kathy Nelson continues to care for the three large urns. This includes purchasing and planting summer annuals, fall mums and Christmas greens.
- Winter season wreaths with large red bows hung at three main entrances.
- Rainmaker continues to service irrigation system with spring turn-on and fall turn-off. Necessary repairs are made as needed.
- Bill Bruce Landscaping now takes care of driveway plowing and sanding during winter months.
- Daily pick-up of grounds performed with trash and debris disposed in proper containers.
- Large dead branch from oak tree removed. It was a potential hazard to front walk and driveway. Sokhom cut it up and removed it to his home for firewood.
- The Memory Garden continues to thrive with thanks to Liz Verity and volunteers. Two large Burning Bushes removed under chapel windows allowing further planting and expansion of Memory Garden. Memory Garden monument installed near Union Street sidewalk.

Thank you to all volunteers who continue to care for the grounds at First Congregational Church.

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 Larry Dearborn, Dick Jarvis, Pam Leblanc, and Noel Villiard (friend of the church) all who helped with the weeding and fertilizing, keeping the garden weed free and looking beautiful.

This summer, Building and Grounds removed the two burning bushes at the back of the garden, which had become a problem. Next year we plan to replace them with hydrangea trees or something similar, which will add height at the back of the garden. It is an honor to work with those who graciously give of their time and energy to maintain this lasting memorial.

This is one of the ways you can honor your loved ones, and we are grateful to those who have made a contribution this year to help with the upkeep of this garden. Thank you notes have been sent to both donors and volunteers.

Thanks also go to Pam LeBlanc who enters the names of all donors and those honored by their donations into our perpetual “Memory Book”, which is on display in our Sanctuary.

2020 Memory Garden Donations

Donated By	In Memory Of
Charlie & Jaye Goodwin	Tyler William Carlisle
Richard W. Jarvis	Tyler William Carlisle
Steve & Kathy Payne	Al Drusendahl
Martha Finefrock	Charles F. Finefrock & Charles C. Finefrock
Peggy Neveu	
Richard W. Jarvis	Parents Elmer & Helen Jarvis
Sharon Ebol	Eldena Lard
Cal & Karen Bowie	Dr. Edward J. Robinson & Priscilla L. Robinson
Diane Brown	Donald E. Brown
Open & Affirming Committee	Bruce Attridge

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 it together and getting caught up in each other’s daily happenings. 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 shared with the staff!

This year has been particularly challenging as I went to Texas to be with my daughter and family; and Covid-19 surprised us all in March, keeping us home and separated. Lauren Henderson took it upon herself to prepare the Window each month for mailing. Recently, one or two volunteers started stopping by to take on a piece of the prep, which has helped all around! We really look forward to those days of camaraderie and laughter when we can join together again.

Thanks to all of our very reliable and fun-loving group: Joan Currier, Donna Willey, Carol Klardie, Carol Forest, Nancy Simmons, Diane Brown, Joann Van Horn, Kathy Rowe, JoAnn Ward, and myself, Pat McCarrick.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat McCarrick, Coordinator