

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



**ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021**  
**Written Committee Reports**

[www.FCCManchesterNH.org](http://www.FCCManchesterNH.org)

603-625-5093

# First Congregational Church

## Written Reports 2021

Interim Senior Pastor .....	<i>Rev. Carolyn Keilig</i> .....	page 2
Associate Pastor .....	<i>Rev. Barbara Papagian</i> .....	page 3
Director of Music Ministry .....	<i>Adam Peithmann</i> .....	page 3

### Ministry of Spirituality

Ministry of Spirituality Coordinator...	<i>Jeanine Finefrock</i> .....	page 4
Board of Deacons.....	<i>Jeanine Finefrock &amp; Peter Perich</i> .....	page 6
Communion .....	<i>Jeanine Finefrock</i> .....	page 7
Connecting the Congregation .....	<i>Rev. Barbara Papagian</i> . .....	page 7
Greeters .....	<i>Ethel Parker</i> .....	page 7
Altar Design.....	<i>Terri Pattee &amp; Pam LeBlanc</i> .....	page 8
Audio Committee .....	<i>Peter Perich</i> .....	page 8
Open and Affirming Committee .....	<i>Carol Soucy</i> .....	page 8
Parish Visitors .....	<i>Rev. Barbara Papagian</i> .....	page 9
Knitting Ministry .....	<i>JoAnn Ward</i> .....	page 9
Quilt Ministry .....	<i>Carolyn Wilson</i> .....	page 10
Hospitality.....	<i>Cheryl McKenney</i> .....	page 10
Members in Discernment .....	<i>Jeanine Finefrock</i> .....	page 11
Children & Youth Ministry .....	<i>Jennifer Longval</i> .....	page 11
Pastor/Parish Relations.....	<i>John Curtis</i> .....	page 11

### Ministry of Mission and Outreach

Ministry of Mission and Outreach Coordinator.....	<i>John Rowe</i> .....	page 12
Outreach .....	<i>John &amp; Kathy Rowe</i> .....	page 13
H.O.M.E.....	<i>Liz Verity</i> .....	page 14
In-House Missions.....	<i>Linda Bonetti</i> .....	page 15
Membership .....	<i>Eleanor Stetson &amp; Bill Jones</i> ..	page 17
Senior Citizens' Fellowship .....	<i>Kathy Payne</i> .....	page 17
Women's Connection .....	<i>Pam LeBlanc</i> .....	page 18
Memorial Reception Team .....	<i>Pam LeBlanc</i> .....	page 19
Holly Berry Holly Berry Christmas Fair.....	<i>Pam LeBlanc &amp; Peggy Neveu</i> .....	page 19
Interfaith Women of NH .....	<i>Liz Verity</i> .....	page 20
Elliot Hospital Representative .....	<i>Dr. Paul W. Hoff</i> .....	page 21
NH Conference UCC Annual Meeting ...	<i>Barbara Papagian</i> .....	page 21

### Ministry of Sustaining Our Church Home

Board of Trustees.....	<i>Scott Thornton</i> .....	page 22
Stewardship Committee .....	<i>Dan &amp; Cheryl McKenney</i> .....	page 23
Scholarship .....	<i>Eleanor Stetson</i> .....	page 23
Building Manager .....	<i>Peter Perich</i> .....	page 24
Grounds Care Report .....	<i>Peter Perich</i> .....	page 24
Memory Garden.....	<i>Liz Verity</i> .....	page 25
Friends of the Office Support (FOO's) .....	<i>Pat McCarrick</i> .....	page 25

## Interim Senior Pastor's Annual Report

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear,  
though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;  
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns.*  
(Psalm 46, selected verses)

The first four months of my interim time with you are now past. As you are aware, I also had served as the Interim Senior Pastor from 2013-2015 and was anticipating that some things would “be the same” and there would also be some differences in who you are and the practical “how” you do things. Additionally, we are still facing the challenges that come with the world being in the grips of the pandemic, and the need to adapt and change probably more than any of us like.

While some in-person activities have had to be curtailed due to health and safety reasons, I was able to re-orient myself with relative ease. It was wonderful to be able to greet those I remember and to meet new people.

It has been a joy to collaborate with Rev. Barbara and Adam once again in worship. We quickly found our footing preparing for worship, especially during the Advent and Christmas seasons. My first Sunday in September was also a time of readjustment for the church as we returned to regular in-person worship. The guidance of the Reopening Task Force and the implementation of livestreaming of our worship services (thank you Dr. Paul Hoff, Dr. Karen Hawver and Tom Wilkes for your time and dedication) have allowed for greater flexibility in worship, allowing us to move away from the sole dependence on prerecorded services as safety dictated. What a gift to offer our members and friends the ability to worship live with their home congregation over the holidays. We were able to offer the Sacraments of baptism and communion and receive new members.

Rev. Barbara has been very helpful in the area of pastoral care. I was able to be in touch with many people, through email, phone calls, cards, and notes, and even in-person, during my first four months.

In the Church office, things are well taken care of by the administrative staff. I am immensely grateful for the organizational skills of both Linda and Lauren that keep communication, finance, membership information, and a multitude of other details well in hand with incredible competency. This allowed me to step in and chair our weekly staff meetings without missing a step, and to begin a review of job descriptions and how we function together as a team.

Through ice and storms, pandemic surges, and unexpected building issues, I am grateful for the steady and sure presence of Sokhom and Peter. It is truly wonderful to be able to count on both in keeping the building and grounds ready for all of us when we come to FCC.

As you might expect, I attended many of the various committee meetings that were held in the Fall – Church Council, Deacons, Trustees, Membership, Stewardship, Outreach, Reopening Task Force, Connecting the Congregation, Search, and others as needed. It is always good to work with such excellent leadership.

While it sounds like everything has fallen into place – and in significant ways, that is true – there is much I look forward to working with you on in the coming year. Some of the learnings from both the 2019 Vital Signs study and the CL21 Leadership initiative have yet to be implemented. The work of the Search Committee invites them (and us) to ask: “Who is God calling us to become? Who are we now? Who is our neighbor?”

As we move forward through this interim time, I am thankful for this opportunity to be in ministry with you.

Blessings,  
Rev. Carolyn H. Keilig

## Associate Pastor's Annual Report

I was ordained on May 16, 2021; and called to be Associate Pastor on the same day. Prior to that I was a Commissioned Minister in Pastoral Care and Director of Parish Care.

Due to COVID, I was unable to make a lot of in person visits, although when the weather permitted, I had lawn chairs in my car and would visit with people outside in their yards.

There was one nursing home that had a long table set up outside on the patio, and I was able to visit someone there, each of us sitting at far ends of the table. I make phone calls every day and people are now starting to be more comfortable having in-home visits since vaccinations and the church opening up. I coordinate the Parish Visitors group, although this year there were few visits made because of COVID, but the visitors were all involved in making phone calls and writing notes to the congregation.

I took part in most Sunday worship services, doing the welcoming, Call to Worship, and Opening Prayer as well as the Pastoral prayer, Prayer Concerns, and The Lord's Prayer. I preached 10 times, performed one Baptism and four Memorial Services, and assisted in 5 Communion Services and led one Communion Service. I led the Ash Wednesday service and the Blue Christmas service. I lead the Morning Watch two days a week.

The church committees I sit in on are Connecting with the Congregation, Reopening Task Force, Membership, Open and Affirming, Outreach, Church Council, and Deacons. I also write a monthly column for the Window and help plan, contribute to, and put together the Friday Link.

I attend staff meetings and meet with Carolyn during the week to coordinate our visitations. Outside of FCC I belong to The Greater Manchester Clergy Association and sit on the Supporting Small Churches Committee of the United Church of Christ. I am attending a workshop group for newly ordained Ministers, facilitated by two United Church of Christ Ministers and Counselors.

I attended the Annual Meeting of the New Hampshire Conference - United Church of Christ and the Annual Meeting of the Hillsborough Association of the United Church of Christ.

I am continuing work on my Master's Degree from Sioux Falls Seminary, although I had to take a break from that work during the transition from Kevin's leaving until Carolyn arrived. I am so grateful to be Associate Pastor at FCC, and I am enjoying working with Carolyn, all the Lay Leaders, and the wonderful congregation.

God bless you all,  
Rev. Barbara Papagian

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## Director of Music Ministry's Annual Report

He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly I will sing your praises."  
- Hebrews 2: 12

Before the pandemic, how often did we take singing in the assembly for granted? Who could foresee that singing in a confined space would be labeled a risky activity? And additionally, extra precautions such as vaccines, distancing, and face masks would be needed to provide a safer environment. Though we are clearly not out of the woods yet and have a way to go, there is hope at the end of the tunnel for brighter days ahead. FCC has been privileged to experience some bright moments during these darker times, and I couldn't be more thrilled.

The beginning of 2021 looked much different than the end of 2021. From January through the Spring, we still were worshipping solely online and utilizing our pre-recorded virtual worship model. One of the high points of this period was our Easter service which featured the New England Brass, our virtual choir, and a whole host of FCC people proclaiming "He is Risen, indeed! Alleluia!" What a moving service! As exciting as that was, however, much more was in store for us.

As we moved into the Spring and Summer months, it became clear that a reopening was soon upon us. During this period, I continued to produce virtual services along with playing for in-person services. After consulting with the Chancel Choir via Zoom, we decided to resume singing in the Fall using a modified schedule and safety precautions. Soon after, the Sabbath Bells also resumed rehearsals using the same protocols. Though not everyone was ready to return, it felt wonderful to make music once again with one

another in the assembly. I give thanks to God and for all members of the Chancel Choir and Sabbath Bells for all the faithful service and dedication they provided during this time.

In addition to our reopening being a bright spot, we also received several more in the form of new people! We welcomed new and returning members into the Sabbath Bells which included Jennifer Jenkins, Kim Cashin, and Rev. Carolyn Keilig. Moreover, we welcomed two new musicians who also became full-fledged FCC members: Susan Wilkes and Elizabeth Blood. All of these folks were game changers for 2021. Their efforts along with returning choir and bell members made all things possible. In fact, I would venture to say that we not only survived but flourished. And not many churches would be able to make such a statement.

Towards the end of the year, we continued flourishing by learning new music, participating in special services such as the ONA Sunday, Thanksgiving Sunday, our wonderful “Harmony” Advent Sunday, and Christmas Eve service. Though it is easy to be ungrateful and cynical at times, we have a lot to be thankful for. We have certainly come a long way this past year, and I hope with God’s help that we will continue that journey with energy, enthusiasm, and grace. May we forever make music together for God and one another.

Respectfully submitted,  
Adam Peithmann, Director of Music Ministry

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## **Reports from the Ministry of Spirituality**

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### **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.

2021 continued to be a year filled with changes and challenges. Covid continued to wreak havoc in our personal and church lives. The church continued to be closed and Sunday services were pre-recorded on Facebook. Thanks to Adam Peithmann for his dedication in producing our services each week along with all of the others who volunteered their time and talents. The ebb and flow of the virus eventually led us to a soft opening in June gradually increasing the number of weeks per month we offered in-person worship over the summer with a full opening in September. This was made possible with the introduction of a vaccine that helped bring the numbers down, along with the Covid protocols set forth by the Reopening Task Force. After discontinuing the pre-recorded online option once we fully opened in September, it became evident of the need to resume an online presence. Towards the end of November, we started to experiment with a livestreaming option for those who were not able to attend in person for various reasons. Unfortunately, by years end, we found ourselves with two new variants (Delta and Omicron) that brought about concerns as we hit record numbers of positive cases.

Rev. Kevin notified us in May of his decision to retire. His last Sunday with us was on July 11. This was an in-person service week and we had a small outdoor gathering for him. In June, the Interim Minister Search Committee met with Rev. Carolyn Keilig and she was willing to come out of retirement to become our Interim Minister with September 12 as her first Sunday with us. We had numerous guest preachers fill in the gap between Rev. Kevin’s departure and Rev. Carolyn’s arrival.

If the past two years have taught us anything, it is that we have become adept at adapting to whatever situation we were presented with. Every group, committee and Board that fall under the Ministry of Spirituality continued to be impacted by the pandemic in one way or another.

With the church still closed during Lent the Deacons organized a Palm Cross Drive-By in the driveway on the Saturday before Palm Sunday. They handed out about 60 palm crosses to members and visitors. The on-line Easter Service was spectacular! With the reopening in September, we were able to resume baptisms and communion following certain protocols.

May brought the much-anticipated Ordination and Installation of our very own, Barbara Papagian. How we wish we could have been in person for this special event but Barbara was supported by many, many members online via zoom. Barbara's Members in Discernment team honored her with a small reception after her ordination but we are awaiting a time when we can formally get together in person to celebrate this milestone.

The Open and Affirming Committee, led by Carol Soucy, was very busy throughout the year. Carol was a panelist for the NHCUCC Open and Affirming Conference in February. The Committee in conjunction with the Outreach and Music Committees hosted a Mark Miller Lecture in May. They also participated in the Annual Queen City Pride event in June. They worked with Barbara to create a meaningful service for the 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Open and Affirming vote. Carol, thank you does not even begin to convey the appreciation I have for all you have done to keep the group working towards finding ways to live into the Open and Affirming Covenant.

The Quilt Ministry was active this year under the leadership of Carolyn Wilson and created 11 quilts. The members of the group all worked from home and only got together in person to bind the quilts. The quilts were displayed in the Sanctuary and blessed during the service on September 26. Thank you, Carolyn, for organizing and working unselfishly to make sure each step of the process went smoothly. Many thanks to all the quilters who worked on the quilts.

The Holly Berry Fair had its share of uncertainty this year. Over the summer the coordinators, Pam LeBlanc and Peggy Neveu, started to have in person workshops to work on crafts for the fair. As Covid numbers started to fluctuate and rise, a decision was made to postpone the fair for another year yet again. After further discussions and reconsideration, it was decided that it was not wise to open up to the public but offer an option to sell crafts to our members and friends after the church service on December 5. It was an extremely successful event and was exactly the normalcy that we all needed. Thank you to Pam and Peggy for your unwavering dedication through all the ups and downs over the course of the year and seeing the fair through. I'm looking forward to seeing what next year will bring!

Thank you to Peter Perich, Co-Chair of the Deacons, for his steadfast leadership through this challenging year. Thank you to the Deacons who will be stepping down after fulfilling their terms – Lisa Allen, Donna Willey and Tom Irving. All of you have played an integral part on this committee, and you and your contributions will be missed. 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.

Many thanks to the Usher Captains: Steve Payne, Kathy Nelson, Grant Dugan, Tom Irving and Sam Knowles and the ushers and greeters for working under the new protocols to make everyone feel welcome and safe each Sunday.

Pam LeBlanc and Terri Pattee continued to exhibit flexibility in decorating the altar for the Sunday morning services whether it was for a pre-recorded services or in-person services. 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 Peter Perich, Chair of the Audio Committee, for your faithful work recording the CD's each week for members of the congregation. In this second 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 Sunday News and/or Friday Link to keep members updated and connected.

Thank you to the Pastor/Parish Relations Committee (PPRC), chaired by John Curtis. They were very active earlier in the year as they continued to support Kevin with the challenges brought on by the pandemic, Pam's passing and through his retirement decision.

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 on the final steps towards Ordination. This group has transitioned to become Barbara's Pastor/Parish Relations Committee (PPRC).

The Memorial Reception Team led by Pam LeBlanc was put into action one time this year for Barbara Hebert's off-site reception. Barbara was a valued friend of many and will be missed.

Thank you to Jennifer Longval, Chair of the CYM Committee. The committee has not been very active this year due to the fact that the children have not returned to in-person. The committee has been supporting Kelda York, Children's Ministry Coordinator, who has been reaching out to families and children online.

Thanks also to Jennifer Longval, Becki Krueger and Joan Currier for serving as representatives on the Church Council from the Ministry of Spirituality area. Jennifer is finishing up her second term. It has been a pleasure to serve alongside you.

As always, I appreciate the support of Rev. Kevin Pleas, Rev. Barbara Papagian, Rev. Carolyn Keilig, 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. I also worked with Rev. Carolyn to create the new Covid Baptism and Communion protocols.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanine Finefrock, Coordinator of the Ministry of Spirituality

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## Board of Deacons

The Board of Deacons continues to develop and refine its role under the guidelines of the Ministry of Spirituality. The main objective of this eleven-member board is to collaborate closely with ministers, the former senior pastor Rev. Kevin Pleas, our current senior interim pastor Rev. Carolyn Keilig, and our associate pastor & director of parish care, Rev. Barbara Papagian in organizing and planning worship services, preparing for serving Communion, and assisting with baptisms. The Board of Deacons will continue to collaborate with the Director of Music Ministry, Adam Peithmann, when choosing music for the weekly services as well as the seasonal doxologies. Thank you to all our Pastors and Directors.

Though the Pandemic caused our abilities to do very few initiatives, these we did:

- Though Palm and Easter Sundays, 2021, were pre-recorded, the Deacons along with our ministers and youth director had a drive and pick up Saturday afternoon where people could pick up palm crosses and Sunday school goodie bags in our church parking lot. It also gave many church members who could not get out a chance to say ‘hi’ to other church members.
- The Deacon members each took a turn at doing a by-line for the Friday link.
- With the help of our Deacons, Rev. Barbara Papagian’s ordination took place as a zoom meeting on May 16.
- The Deacons helped man the table for First Church at the Queen City Pride Festival.
- After a soft summer reopening of our church services, our church reopened in the fall.
- The Deacon’s helped with a few baptisms this fall by distributing the baptism certificates and quilts.
- In October, the Deacons helped with the organization of a new way of distributing Communion during Sunday service and flags for worldwide Communion Sunday—Pandemic times.
- The Blue Christmas service was held in December with the help of Rev. Barbara Papagian and the Deacons.

The Board of Deacons wants to express thanks to Team Captains: Steve Payne, Kathy Nelson, Grant Dugan, Tom Irving, and Sam Knowles along with their greeters and ushers for their willingness to be the welcoming faces for our congregation each Sunday morning and for taking on many more responsibilities during this time of the Pandemic. In addition, we would like to thank our livestreaming crew for their challenging work and long hours put into this evangelistic project. Thanks especially goes to Paul Hoff, Karen Hawver, and Tom Wilkes.

Most of all, the Board of Deacons wants to thank Jeanine Finefrock, Coordinator of the Ministry of Spirituality, for her spiritual commitment, organization, and leadership during this tough, but successful year.

A special thank you to Lisa Allen for acting as Scribe and to Lauren Henderson for her support and demanding work as the Front Office Assistant with any project brought forth to her for help. **Finally, thank you to the Deacons who will be moving on to different church duties after fulfilling their six-**

**year tenures – Lisa Allen, Donna Willey, Jeanine Finefrock, and Tom Irving. They have all been excellent assets to our committee and church. Thanks again to the four of you.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Peter Perich, Co-Chair  
Jeanine Finefrock, Co-Chair

#### **2021 Board of Deacons**

Lisa Allen, Cal Bowie, Craig Finefrock, Jeanine Finefrock, Tom Irving, Becki Krueger, Sam Knowles,  
Peter Perich, John Rowe, Mark Sowa, Donna Willey

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### **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.

The Sacrament of Communion is celebrated during worship six times a year on what we call “Threshold Sundays.” These included Epiphany Sunday on January 10, the first Sunday in Lent on February 21, Emmaus Sunday on April 11, Pentecost Sunday on May 23, World Communion Sunday on October 3, and the first Sunday of Advent on November 28.

The online Threshold Communion services were celebrated by Rev. Kevin Pleas and Rev. Barbara Papagian until our reopening in September when Rev. Carolyn Keilig returned as our Interim Senior Pastor. 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. We also celebrated Ash Wednesday on February 17 and Maundy Thursday on April 1 online.

We transitioned back to in-person worship in time for the World Communion Sunday and the first Sunday of Advent implementing new communion protocols. The congregation was invited to the front of the church by Guiding Deacons where they received the elements, in individual cups, from the ministers and 2 Serving Deacons and then returned back to their seats.

Chapel Communion was suspended for the year.

It is an honor for all of us to serve the Sacrament of Communion. Thank you to all the Deacons for faithful service throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeanine Finefrock, Co-Chair of Deacons

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### **Connecting the Congregation**

Connecting the Congregation was formed for the purpose of finding ways to keep in contact with our church members during the Pandemic, while the church is closed. Out of this committee came the idea for the Friday Link, which has been so successful we will continue with it indefinitely. We coordinated with other committees to write notes, make phone calls, and think of activities we could do via zoom.

Now that the church is open, we will be meeting on occasion throughout the year to discuss ideas for the “Link”.

Thank you to all the people and committees we worked with for your caring and support of our congregation.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Barbara Papagian

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### **Greeters**

*“Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.”* Romans 12:13

Thanks to all of the greeters who have extended their hospitality to members, friends, and guests during our in-person services during this pandemic, and ensured our protocols are being met.

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. 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

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## Altar Design Committee

It's been a bit less challenging for our team this year with the return of some in-person services, but we've been blessed by having plenty of people step up to help us with the big chores as well as summer flowers. Thank you to all our volunteers. As time goes on we hope there will be less supply chain issues (this is challenging for our florist as well) and this hard time in history will run its course in due time.

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

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## 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 funeral services to the families.

Due to the recent pandemic, we have been recording Sunday morning services from home on Facebook. Many thanks to Larry Dearborn for standing by to help as these duties transition to me. If you would like an audio CD or DVD, please call the church office.

As we close out 2021, we have ordered new hearing assistance equipment so we will be ready for when we can gather together again.

Respectfully submitted,  
Peter Perich, Building Manager

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## Open and Affirming Committee

*You are a child, a child of God...*      From the words Mark Miller's anthem

FCC's Open and Affirming Committee efforts during 2021 supported the words of our Covenant, that **everyone is worthy of God's love**. We worked with other groups in the Ministry of Spirituality area to ensure that First Church is a place of spiritual sustenance and growth for all who are on a faith journey, seeking meaning and purpose in life. The Open and Affirming Committee contributed to several worship services and offered opportunities for learning and ongoing education - through sharing "what we're reading" in *Friday Links* and continued to answer God's call through hands-on service efforts.

Several FCC members attended the *NHCUC Open and Affirming* online conference in January 2021. ONA Chair Carol Soucy served on a panel with Andy Lang, Executive Director of the national ONA Coalition and representatives from other NH UCC Open and Affirming churches. The panel's topic was *We're Open and Affirming, Now What?* Carol shared the experiences of our committee and faith community and how we actively seek to *live into* the words of FCC's Open and Affirming Covenant.

During the winter months, committee members completed a small group book study of *Anxious to Talk About It: Helping White Christians Talk Faithfully about Racism*. The congregation was invited to tune into a related podcast, *Be the Bridge*, on the topic of building what Civil Rights leader John Lewis

called the *beloved community*. Several members offered reflections about the podcast in *Friday Links*. We also proudly invited our congregation to attend a lecture-recital with committee member, Elizabeth Blood. "**Celebrating Piano Music of Black Composers**" was offered by the Manchester Community Music School with Elizabeth as pianist, joined by Sean Parr, musicologist.

In May, FCC's Music Ministry, Open and Affirming, Outreach Committees, and the Church Council jointly sponsored **Draw the Circle Wide: An Evening with Mark Miller** on Zoom. Mark is well known as a worship leader, teacher, composer, and performer of sacred music. During 2021, Chancel Choir shared two of his most beloved anthems, "Christ Has Broken Down the Wall" and "Child of God." *We hope that our committee and our congregation will continue to mirror Mark Miller's passion – to help change the world through music and build God's beloved community - extending welcome and love to all.*

Selected elements of the June 13 worship service highlighted **Pride Month**, to reaffirm the promises of FCC's Open and Affirming Covenant. The words of Associate Pastor Barbara Papagian's prayer called each of us to embody the "spirit of power and love," and "to be courageous and stand strong." On November 17, the committee joined with clergy, the Deacons, the Chancel Choir, and readers to observe the fourth anniversary of the congregation's vote to become an Open and Affirming congregation. These anniversaries remind us that there is more work to do to build the "beloved community" and let everyone know that they can find a spiritual home at First Congregational Church Manchester.

Our faith community joined hands in service and was well-represented with a booth at the **Queen City Pride Festival**, held at **Arms Park in June**. **We appreciated the participation and support of volunteers and committee members, who spoke with hundreds of people that day. With the help of office staff and Membership Committee, print materials about our church and FCC-labeled water bottles were distributed to many of the attendees.**

We also supported the ongoing efforts of the *Connecting the Congregation Team* to support members and friends during the months apart due to the pandemic. Committee members sent notes, delivered CDs, and participated in online fellowship and social activities. The committee met regularly on Zoom. That video conferencing tool allowed our group to remain active and engaged throughout the year.

Thanks to Pastor Kevin, Interim Pastor Carolyn Keilig, Associate Pastor Barbara Papagian, Director of Music Ministry 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 another unprecedented, challenging time. We ended the year with renewed commitments for faith-based study and action in 2022 and will continue to ask ourselves and our congregation how to enact God's love in our world. The words of Micah 6:8 offer inspiration and guidance for our shared faith journey.

*"...And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Micah 6:8 (NRSV)*

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Soucy, Chair

#### **2021 Open and Affirming Committee**

Elizabeth Blood, Jeanine Finefrock, Jeffrey Frye, Karen Hawver, John Rowe, Kathy Rowe,  
and Carol Soucy, Chair.

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## **Parish Visitors**

Since COVID, the Parish Visitors were unable to make in-person visits, but they were all active in making phone calls and writing notes. Members also took part in the Blue Christmas Service.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Barbara Papagian, Associate Pastor

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## **Knitting Ministry**

The knitters were home again this year making our usual projects and ones for the Fair. We hope that the people who received our work were warmed in body and in spirit and those of us who knit were truly warmed in spirit. This year we donated:

- 3 Full-Size Prayer Shawls to FCC family
- 22 Pocket Prayer Shawls to FCC family
- 24 Balaclavas to be delivered to the New England Seafarers Mission
- 57 Children’s hat and mittens sets to Bakersville, Beech St, and Jewett St. Schools, FCC food closet, and New Life Home for Women and Children
- 74 Adult Hats to Dismas Home, FCC food closet, Helping Hands Outreach Center, Liberty House, Manchester Mental Health Home on Brown Ave, and New Life Home for Women and Children
- 5 Scarves to Longmeadow Church for Manchester homeless people
- 185 total items

Who were “we”? This year, in alphabetical order, we were Ruth Allen, Diane Brown, Ellie Campbell, Carla Hickman, Pat McCarrick, Kathy Rowe, JoAnn Ward, and Donna Willey. We would welcome anyone else with some time to give for this very worthwhile mission and we continue to knit for future editions of our Fair. Completed items can be dropped off with Lauren at the church office, or at my home. Thank you to Lauren who is gracious as our go-between.

Many of us buy our own yarn, but some of us depend upon the generous people who donate yarn. In 2021 they were, again in alphabetical order, Jeanine Finefrock, Dick Jarvis & family, Carol Klardie, Peggy Neveu & Longmeadow Church, and the FCC Outreach Committee.

Thank you, and may our gifts help people feel the spirit of Jesus Christ and our church community.

Respectfully submitted,  
JoAnn Ward, Knitting Ministry Coordinator

## **Quilt Ministry and Dress A Girl**

The FCC Quilt Ministry continues to receive fabric donations from our wonderful parishioners, despite COVID-19 again altering our sewing together efforts!

This year 11 quilts kits were made with fabrics and patterns coordinated by Carolyn Wilson and Jeanine Finefrock. Once the kits were sewn, we coordinated backs and bindings and brought them to the quilter. We gathered once over the summer to complete the sewing of bindings and labels. Our congregation, when in need, has truly loved receiving this lasting heartfelt reminder of our love and faith.

Dress A Girl discontinued our sewing circles, too. Although we aren’t sewing, Linda Bonetti continues to receive boxes of dresses made by individuals from all over NH. It is wonderful to report that since we started these efforts, we have provided over 350 dresses for destitute girls around the world who are potential victims of predators and abusers. Linda delivered all our dresses on hand to Jackie Dewey, Ambassador for Dress A Girl of Southern Maine/NH, where they were shipped to Africa and many given to Vision International for 2022 mission trips to Guatemala, Ghana, Haiti and Zimbabwe. Sewers are encouraged to continue to create at home until we can reunite, offering a creative outlet during this time of isolation.

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 item 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 again 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

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## 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.*

Barbara Papagian was approved for ordination at her Ecclesiastical Council on October 25, 2020. The next step in the process was for her to receive a Call from the church. Her Member in Discernment team worked on the Call, which was approved, and an ordination date was scheduled for May 16, 2021. Due to Covid, this took place online via zoom where she received support from many in the congregation. Her Member in Discernment team honored her the week after her ordination. We are still waiting for a safer time to celebrate as a congregation with her. Barbara is continuing to pursue her Masters in Divinity degree.

During the year, Rev. Barbara led worship on Sundays, assisted with Communion, performed 3 funerals (2 graveside only) and 1 baptism, led the Ash Wednesday and Blue Christmas services, and led Bible Study and the Morning Watch. She stepped up and took on more responsibilities during Rev. Kevin’s absence and subsequent retirement and was a bridge until Rev. Carolyn arrived. We all owe her a debt of gratitude for her dedication in helping us through a challenging year. Thank you, Rev. Barbara!!

**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.

**Barbara’s FCC Pastor/Parish Relation Committee (PPRC):** Ellie Stetson – Chair, Pam LeBlanc and Tom Irving.

For the first time in a number of years, we currently do not have anyone in our care.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeanine Finefrock, Ministry of Spirituality Coordinator

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## Children and Youth Ministry

During 2021 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 and Kelda York to our meetings. Meetings for year 2021 were held via Zoom.

The majority of 2021 did not provide for in-person church / Sunday school lessons for your children. Again, as in 2020, Kelda York has gone above and beyond, putting together weekly email/remote Sunday School lessons and special activities our church families can share in at home. Kelda sends our families special themed activities, videos and lessons to keep a church connection while we are still apart. Our annual Advent Workshop and Luncheon was postponed again this year, however, Pam and Kelda made every Sunday in December an Advent Workshop Sunday for kids in attendance to make ornaments for the sanctuary tree.

Thank you Kelda and Pam for all your hard work keeping families connected this year! Here’s hoping 2022 will allow for the return of Children’s Sunday, Ice Cream Socials and Advent Workshop!

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Longval, Chair

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## Pastor/Parish Relations

The Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) was comprised of four members – John Curtis, Grant Dugan, Bill Jones, and Carol Soucy. The committee typically met quarterly or 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.

The group met with Pastor Kevin in spring 2021, when he announced his plan to retire. We continued to meet and communicate – with Pastor Kevin, church staff, and Moderator Selma Naccach representing Church Council, to plan for the transition in pastoral leadership as well as Kevin’s retirement reception on his last preaching Sunday, July 11.

Bill Jones and Carol Soucy also served with Church Council members Fred Simmons and Jeanine Finefrock on the search for our interim pastor. We appreciate the faithful service of church staff, lay leaders, and the support of the congregation during the time of change. Once Rev. Carolyn Keilig began her tenure with FCC, the committee disbanded per the process established for our PPRC.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pastor Parish Relations Committee  
John Curtis, Grant Dugan, Bill Jones, and Carol Soucy

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## Reports from the Ministry of Mission and Outreach

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2021 has been a year of loss and adaptation. The loss of our pastor, the deaths of several members, the continuing need for most meetings to be on Zoom, and the difficulty in worshipping as a whole community without opportunity for fellowship have left many of us anxious and depressed. Nevertheless, the committees of the Ministry of Mission and Outreach have found ways to remain active and to carry out their mission of bringing the church to each other and to the community.

The Senior Board was forced to cancel two of the senior banquets including a celebration of their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They did hold the Christmas banquet, which was enjoyed by a large number of our seniors.

The Women’s Connection has adapted remarkably well as can be seen by their annual report below. They have planned a number of events on Zoom and others that allow for more social distancing. Attendance may have been lower for some of the events than in past years, but the opportunity for connecting with each other seems to have diminished some of the isolation imposed on us.

The Membership Team has welcomed new members to the church, a most welcome development. They have also worked very hard to provide us with an on-line photo directory which is now available to church members. This is something that has been wanted for some time and we congratulate the team on their accomplishment.

The H.O.M.E. team and the Meal Train team, organized by Liz Verity and Peggy Neveu, have continued their marvelous work with providing meals, writing cards and visiting. They have included cookies, some of which have found their way to the food closet where mothers with young children have been delighted to receive them.

Liz Verity as our representative to the Interfaith Women of New Hampshire has helped in organizing Zoom events that have contributed to a greater understanding between faiths in our community.

Although unable to meet in person, the knitters have managed to produce 185 items, including hats, mittens, prayer shawls and more. They continue to meet by Facetime every week.

Outreach has maintained a high level of activity in the community. In response to the closing of Hallsville School after several years of partnering, they have begun a new relationship with Bakersville. They have developed new relationships with Dismas Home. They have explored several avenues for providing assistance to the homeless and have begun supplying needed items to Shepherd’s Way.

Despite a second year of closings and isolation, the committees of the Ministry of Mission and Outreach have continued to bring to the church members and to the community the good news that they are cared for. We are grateful to all of the individuals who together make up this wonderful congregation.

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

## Outreach Committee

2021 has resembled 2020 more than we had hoped. Both our church and our community have suffered. Nevertheless, our congregation and our Outreach committee have risen to the occasion, working to maintain those projects we can and looking to find new ways to help.

The food closet has been inconsistent. There are several families that rely on us to supplement their nutritional needs. For a time, we were giving bags of food that required no preparation to the homeless. Unfortunately, this contributed to the misuse of the church grounds and we were forced to discontinue the practice. We still receive lots of requests for food, including many mothers, and have been able to meet the demand. Many thanks to members who have brought in donations and to the Meal Train who have contributed soup and cookies. Special thanks to Lauren Henderson who manages the donations with caring and compassion; she is one of our church's greatest assets.

In February, we again participated in the Greater Manchester Clergy Association's Souper Bowl. Instead of asking church members to go to supermarkets unvaccinated during a pandemic and then bringing them to church, we decided to ask for cash donations and to count each dollar as one food item. We raised \$1497, a new record. The GMCA has requested, however, that this year we collect food items.

We have added to the agencies that we support this year. One of them is Dismas Home on the west side of Manchester. This is a home for women who have been incarcerated for drug related problems, have completed their sentence and now want to overcome their addictions. It is a small, intensive residential program with only 8 beds. The women receive counseling and education in organizing their lives. We have donated funds and have included them in the Angel Tree program.

Another agency is the Elliot. In June we sponsored a drive for children's books that the Elliot gives out to parents to read to their children. The committee, using Manchester Fund monies, was able to match the donations two to one. We were able to present around 275 books. We are grateful to Paul Hoff for introducing us to Kelly Rafferty and this program.

Like last year, many activities could not be held in person. They include the Walk Against Hunger, Christmas in July, the ENA dinner and Church World Service Mother's and Fathers' Day programs. We did donate financial support, gift cards and donations from the congregation. We will be pleased when we can participate in person again.

In the spring we received word that Hallsville School would be closing, and their students sent to other schools. We held a luncheon for the teachers to say goodbye and to thank them for their dedication to the children. After some discussion and exploration, we formed a new partnership with Bakersville School. We have provided them with Market Basket gift cards for families with emergency inadequate food supplies. The preschool program connected with the school expressed a need for booster seats for some of the families. We have provided 11 to date. The biggest need identified was for sneakers and boots for the children. To date we have supplied them with close to 40 pairs, about half coming from donations by church members. We are so grateful to have such a generous congregation.

As if Covid19 were not enough of a disaster, there have been earthquakes, hurricanes, fires, floods, refugees and a lot more. We have sent additional funds to the UCC for disaster relief.

In November 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 Jewett Street Schools. We provided 10 gift cards each to the social workers at Christmas. One of the social workers told us that she had been especially worried about one family for whom, she feared, there would not be enough just before receiving our email that we would be delivering the cards.

We structured the Angel Tree differently this Christmas. Instead of asking for a particular gift for a specific individual, we handed out stockings to members of the congregation. They were asked to fill the stocking with small gifts and toiletries for a male or a female at one of the agencies. Members reported that they enjoyed shopping for the gifts and feedback was positive from the agencies.

Our exploration of ways to assist the homeless in our community has taken some time as we want to be sure that the funds we spend are put to the best use. The increased presence of homeless individuals on and around church property has added some urgency to our quest. The search has been an education in the complexity of the situation. A subcommittee, chaired by Justin May, has taken the lead and worked very hard and very well. Presently, we are exploring working with an organization named Shepherd's Way

which provides items directly to the homeless. We have purchased and they have distributed items like thermal underwear, tents, and other items. We plan to continue to explore ways to assist this project.

The committee would like to express our gratitude to Lucia Carlisle for her invaluable assistance and advice in our efforts for due diligence in evaluating the financial reports of organizations that we have considered adding to the list of those to whom we donate. The Outreach Committee is grateful to FCC and to all of the members of the congregation for the tremendous support we receive for our work. Together we bring God's love to those most in need of it. The committee chairpersons also wish to express our gratitude to all of the members of the committee who work incredibly hard throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,  
John Rowe, Chair

### **2021 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 Jespersion, Justin May and Susan Stiles.

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## **H.O.M.E.**

In 2021, as a result of Covid -19, all usual outside volunteering opportunities for us have not taken place, even the work we did last year at the Hollows Garden did not happen this year as the FIT/ New Horizons organization decided not to open the garden this year. Hopefully, UpReach will start again in March, followed by more opportunities by the end of the year.

H.O.M.E. made a \$300 donation to Little Farms Church, in River Ridge, Louisiana, towards their recovery efforts after damage incurred by Hurricane Ida earlier this year. This was one of the churches that were our hosts when a group from FCC took part in recovery efforts after hurricane Katrina in 2005.

### **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 working with the students but have been able to continue our connection with the program with the help of the Outreach Committee who donated grocery gift cards which were given to students by their teachers along with cards with a holiday message from FCC.

### **FCC Meal Train**

Peggy Neveu and Liz Verity continue to co-ordinate the FCC Meal Train, which provides a connection between those who receive a meal or special treat, and those who prepare and deliver. Taking the time to say "we care about you" in this way is proving to be rewarding for the preparers, and much appreciated by the receivers.

Peggy and I would also like to thank Joan Currier, Martha Perich, Nancy Simmons and Jim Fogle who have helped us during 2021 with weekly notes and birthday cards, another way for us to continue connecting. We hear just how these notes and cards brighten someone's day!

We thank everyone who has provided food, delivered meals and goodie bags. This year we have delivered 31 individual meals and provided a weekly vegan meal for Sue Curtis during her Chemo treatments. Cooks had fun learning vegan recipes, always good to learn a new skill.

Other Meal Train deliveries included 40 goodie bags (containing soups, cookies and muffins) and cookie bags to those whose meals are provided for them.

In appreciation of the exceptional job they did, we sent Valentine cards to those who participated in virtual choirs, and cookies in September to choir members and musicians when they started to perform live for us. Cookie bags have also been given to members of the FCC staff as a Thank You for all they do.

Over the course of the year, cookie bakers from FCC have provided approximately 1,500 cookies for the UpReach Therapeutic Riding School in Goffstown as a Thank You from FCC to the essential workers taking part in a program called Caring Connections. It proved to be a popular Outreach among the bakers at FCC who lovingly baked cookies in huge quantities.

New Scholastics books were donated by Tiny Tot's Preschool in Auburn to First Congregational Church's Meal Train. These were given to UpReach Therapeutic Riding Center for kids ages 8-17 years who are taking part in their *Resilience Reins*, a program for kids at risk in the city. Thanks to Peggy for making this happen!

We also have given extra cookies and muffins to our Food Closet and to Liberty House with numerous different donations the Meal Train received, items such as fresh fall apples, Ensure drinks and a large quantity of Depends.

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

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## **In-House Missions: Outside Groups Using the Building**

We continue on our long road out of the Covid-19 pandemic. We've been on a roller coaster of open then closed and now open again with protocols to the many groups who house their programs at FCC: English for New Americans and the tutoring/citizenship programs, AA, scouting groups, Korean Church, NH Gay Men's Chorus, and the food closet. Some committees meet in person, but many continue to meet on Zoom. We all follow the guidance of our Re-Opening Task Force and clergy.

**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 17 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, and tutoring. Teachers continue to be innovative with their approach, paying close attention to protocols, with many doing virtual learning. Where there's a will, there's a way with ENA!

The 16th Annual ENA Holiday Dinner was cancelled in December again this year, but gift cards were given to teachers for their students from FCC. We hope to have a celebration in 2022 welcoming back everyone.

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

**Korean Presbyterian Church:** For over nineteen 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. Pastor Jang and a small handful of his members have used the chapel 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. In 2022, a new AA group coordinator will be taking 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 continue to use our space for their Tuesday meetings as protocols allow, keeping the Girl Scouts' values and traditions alive.

**New Hampshire Gay Men's Chorus:** It's a joyous place on rehearsal nights when the NHGMC practice for their biannual extravaganzas! Luckily they came back to rehearse for their Winter 2021 concerts, and continue with a strong schedule for 2022.

**Special Olympics Young Athletes:** In our fourth year, the Special Olympics Young Athletes program for 2-7 year olds with and without disabilities started up again in September. Students from SNHU teamed up with 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 the SNHU Hospitality Center. Eight youngsters and their parents followed strict protocols to participate in the first 8-week session unfortunately cut short after only 4 sessions due to Covid-19.

Certificates of completion and medals were mailed to all participants who proudly displayed them to family and friends! We all look forward to getting back together soon when protocols are lifted again. The growth has been amazing...for all of us!

**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.

Local outreach was very active throughout these tough times. The Blessing in a Backpack program was cancelled when Hallsville School was shut down, however our Outreach team continues to work with social workers at Bakersville School, giving Market Basket gift cards to families, along with a shoes and boots drive in the fall. They also met the call for 11 booster seats needed for their partner preschool Bishop O’Brien. Due to Covid-19, Helping Hands was provided with gift cards for a virtual Christmas in July. Angel Tree took on a new twist this year under the guidance of Justin May and Sue Clement making up Christmas stockings to be filled for New Life Home, Helping Hands Outreach Center, Dismas Home, Liberty House and the 3 group homes from Manchester Mental Health Center. UpReach Therapeutic Riding Center had to cancel their in-house therapy group at which we cooked and served meals for participants, but we did supply cookie bags for the Caring Connections program for First Responders. Unfortunately, we were unable to host the CAM dinner again this year which is traditionally held here every October.

**Miscellaneous:** Unfortunately, the Chapel and Sanctuary have had limited availability for public use due to the pandemic. But everyone is looking forward to the day we hold fellowship and the Summer Picnic again!

When we reflect on the activities and vast successes in 2021, despite the pandemic and being closed to the public much of the time, 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 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](mailto:bdellorusso@snhs.org)

*January 3, 2021*

*First Congregational Church  
508 Union St.  
Manchester, NH 03104*

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

*This will be my seventh 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.*

*This year we were able to, again, have classes back in the church. Students and teachers are very happy to be back in person. Many precautions have been implemented including temperature taking at the door, wearing masks, staying home if sick, and helping teachers sanitize tables, etc. Purell available in every classroom and table space.*

*Our classrooms have also cut the number of students in half to help with social distancing. Some of our classes for the higher level students are being done remotely.*

*Once again, Liz Verity and her team remembered our students with holiday gift cards that are typically given out during the Holiday dinner party. We miss the Holiday party for our students! Thank you! Teachers and students were very appreciative of these cards this year. ENA also added to the gift card distribution. Many were given out for good attendance and games during small in-class parties in December.*

*This year our student numbers are still cut in half from what we had before the big shutdown. We continue to test a student here and there as students in general are having a difficult time with mandatory job schedule changes and we have some morning class openings. We are hopeful to add 2 more teachers for much needed beginner night classes in January.*

*We hope by fall, 2022, we will once again begin to have as many ESL classes as we did before March of 2020. We will see what this year brings!*

*Our ESL program will be looking for consistent classroom volunteers by next fall if we are able to normalize by then. If you, or someone you know, are interested, please let me know.*

*We wish all of the FCC community a positive year ahead.*

*Thank you with much appreciation,*

*Barbara DelloRusso*

*Program Director*

*[bdellorusso@snhs.org](mailto:bdellorusso@snhs.org)*

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## **Membership Committee and Member Development**

The Church Membership Team has welcomed new members to our church during the fall of 2021. We welcomed Elizabeth Blood, Susan and Tom Wilkes, and Regina Kinney. For the past year, the development of a picture directory has been underway, with members and friends of the congregation contributing their photographs or had their pictures taken by Pam Leblanc or Bill Jones. The directory will be published right here at First Congregational Church under the skillful hands of Lauren Henderson. You will be instructed about how to set up a password to access the directory from our church website. Changes to the directory with pictures will be updated regularly. You can submit your changes directly online.

We pray for the members and friends of the congregation as we all journey through the difficult time of the Covid-19 pandemic. We are saddened by the grief of those who have lost friends and family members and other loved ones. With faith and love, we look forward with hope for the time when the virus that is ever present now will be under control, so we can worship safely together once more.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellie Stetson and Bill Jones, Membership Team Co-Chairs

**2021 Membership Team**

Joan Currier, Marsha Neubert, Pam LeBlanc, Liz Verity, Diane Clement, Ellie Stetson and Bill Jones

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## **Senior Citizens' Fellowship**

The Senior Citizens Fellowship Board held its Christmas Luncheon and belated 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party on December 7, 2021 at the Manchester Country Club. Since the pandemic, there has not been a luncheon since December of 2019 so the Board was unable to celebrate their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2020. Everyone in attendance was glad to see friends in-person once again. In addition to the delicious meal, the 68 seniors in attendance were entertained by the musical performers from "A Christmas Carol" that was performed at the Palace Theatre and a presentation from John Clayton from the Manchester Historic Association on downtown Manchester during the 60's. Tickets from the Palace Theatre and the table centerpieces were raffled off.

As has always been the custom of the Board, they delivered many Holiday Gift Bags to several senior members.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Payne, President

## 2021 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.

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### 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.*

Women's Connection has had a busy year planning and working with COVID in mind. We have tried very hard to plan activities that were safe and fun. Here is a monthly report of what we did in 2021.

**January-** We held our very first Zoom BINGO Game Gathering. BINGO cards were emailed to the ladies who signed up to play and they filled in their own numbers by following the chart that was given. We had some great social time and a lot of laughs! Our BINGO Queen for the evening was Jeanine Finefrock. She now has bragging rights and a crown to wear whenever we play BINGO.

**February-** February 13th at 9:30am we had our Ninth Annual Valentine's Day Breakfast by Zoom Gathering. Our Gathering included three time zones in the United States. We had a special guest from the Pacific Time Zone in CA., Barbara Smith-Delahunt; Terri Pattee who was in FL in the Central Time Zone; and the rest of us in the Eastern Time Zone. We were eleven ladies in total.

Doing Zoom does have some advantages and seeing people from other areas is one of the perks. We had a short business meeting where we discussed donating \$75.00 from the WC funds to the Memory Garden in memory of Deana Dubois, Eldena Lard and Pam Pleas. Other ladies donated \$130.00 with our total donation to the Memory Garden was \$205.00.

The activities for the Valentine's Day Gathering were a Scavenger Hunt and a painted Mason jar decorated for Valentine's Day. There were a lot of laughs, talking and catching up on what everyone had been doing since we didn't see each other at church on Sundays.

**March-** On March 10th at 10:00am eleven ladies joined the "Free 1 hr. Zoom Seated Yoga and Meditation Class" offered by instructor, Jennifer Jean, BA, CYT200 ([www.chairyoganh.com](http://www.chairyoganh.com)). This was a special class just for our group. Many of the ladies who attended enjoyed it so much they have committed to doing it a couple of times a week.

**April-** On the 20th another Zoom BINGO Gathering happened. Jeanine Finefrock attended and had her crown on trying to defend her title as Queen. But the numbers didn't line up for her this time and Barbara Papagian became the new BINGO Queen gaining bragging rights with a crown.

**May-** We took May off to plan for our Ninth Annual Mystery Ride. However, Terri Pattee had a couple of small gatherings of ladies in her backyard making bracelets for the Holly Berry Christmas Fair.

**June-** June 5th was our Ninth Annual Mystery Ride. Fifteen ladies traveled in 6 cars to Bedrock Gardens in Lee, NH. The weather was beautiful and so were the gardens, views and sculptures. Everywhere you turned there was another picture that had to be taken. The second leg of the trip was lunch in Epping, NH at The Beach Plum. The ladies enjoyed ordering from the menu and choosing to eat inside or outside. We usually end our trip with one more stop at an ice cream stand, but we were so comfortable at The Beach Plum we decided to order ice cream and continue socializing.

Beginning on Thursday June 17th through Saturday the 19th a playground was constructed to honor the memory of Wesley Belisle, Denise and Ron Beurivage's grandson. A WC email went out to ask for volunteers to bake several dozen muffins, and breakfast breads. We had many ladies jump to the challenge and in a few days there was plenty for all the many workers who were at the playground build.

**July and August-** We took a break from WC but some of the ladies began gathering in the dining room for crafting for the Fair on Thursday mornings.

**September-** Crafting for the Fair on Thursday mornings continued through September. Big plans were in the works for the Fair but with the COVID numbers going up again the decision was made to not

have it. But with so many hours of craft making by many people and not wanting to store all of the items, we were able to have a small sale that was called the Overstock sale. Many ladies were working and planning for this.

On September 23rd we had a Zoom BINGO Gathering in memory of Barbara Hebert. Nine ladies joined in to share stories and play a special game in her memory. We decided to put \$25.00 from the WC balance toward the Memory Garden in Barbara's name. We also left it open for others to donate. The total came to \$100.00.

Many other games were played and at the end of the evening Terri Pattee became our next BINGO Queen with bragging rights and a handmade crown.

**October-** On the 3rd there were five ladies who braved the misty rainy weather apple picking at Mack's Apples. They brought their own lunch and ate at a picnic table along the river before heading to the orchards to pick.

**November-** This year we joined in on the Holiday Card Challenge for Soldiers run by Laura Landerman-Garber. Christmas cards were placed on the tables in the back of the church for anyone to pick up to write a small message in, sign them and return to the same place. Two hundred twenty-seven cards were collected and dropped off at a collection spot.

**December-** On Saturday December 4th from 9-noon was the annual College Cookie Mailing. We had ten student addresses and 12 ladies donating at least 3 dozen cookies, some snacks, candy and money to help with the mailing. This is one of the oldest traditions we have continued in our church. It is the best way to let the college students know that FCC hasn't forgotten about them.

Terri Patti sends out an email to the WC email list at 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 .

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 and Denise Beurivage, Co-chairs

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## Memorial Reception Team

The Memorial Reception Team is group of 15 ladies who can be called upon to organize a memorial reception here at church. This year on October 9th we helped organize a reception for Barbara Hebert. It was held at Camp Foster in Bedford, NH, an outdoor venue, and the Kitchen On River Road catered it. We had five ladies arrive at Camp Foster early to help set the tables and arrange the food. We worked together with many of Barbara's friends and family. We are ready to help out where ever we can in this time of Covid. We have to think outside the box to make things happen.

Respectively submitted,

Pam LeBlanc

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## Holly Berry Christmas Fair

Since our very successful sale after worship on December 5<sup>th</sup>, we've demonstrated "why" we have diligently worked on trying to have a fair for the last two years! What was our purpose in doing it? The simple answer is we wanted to foster the sense of community within FCC by having an old fashioned Church Fair.

Two years ago at the Annual Meeting we announced our plans, not knowing that a month later Covid would close our church. The immediate response for it was overwhelmingly positive. We all remember the Fairs of days past and wanted to bring together our church family in a fun experience and build upon our strong sense of community. Our thought was encouraging the camaraderie of our friends in a fun activity with our weekly workshops involving people who had never crafted to the seasoned crafters of our

congregation. It was a resounding success in work, fun, and laughter! If you came to the Dec 5th sale, you witnessed first hand the pure joy and fun of the event. The talent in our church is amazing!

This year, thanks to the suggestion of Rev Keilig, we were able to show and sell crafts to people who attended worship on Dec 5th. We are hoping next year to welcome the public in for a real old fashioned Church Fair! Beyond our wildest dreams we made over \$3,000. To some it is a symbol of our success. We rejoice in the smiles and laughter. As of now there isn't a goal for the money. That will be determined by Women's Connection before our next event. The money is in a separate Women's Connection account. We want to "thank" all the volunteers and crafters who generously contributed to accomplishing our goal of community with the laughter and smiles that resulted. You know who you are who helped – we are so very grateful to all of you!

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

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## 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](http://www.interfaithwomennh.org) and our email address [interfaithwomennh@gmail.com](mailto:interfaithwomennh@gmail.com).*

Our monthly meetings have been held by Zoom which took us a little time to get organized, but are pleased with the response from attendees to our switch to virtual events.

### EVENTS:

Our spring 2021 Zoom event **Let's Talk Faith and Race** was held on March 22nd and drew an audience of over 50 participants. Much has happened in our world to raise questions and concerns about how we interact and respond to each other as people of faith. Our program brought guidance to us from leaders of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths.

Featured speakers were:

Rabbi Beth Davidson: Temple Adath Yeshurun, Manchester

Robert Dunn Esq: Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester

James McKim: Episcopal Church of Manchester

Beyza Sariaydin: Turkish Cultural Center of Connecticut

The IWNH Leadership Committee is grateful to the NH Council of Churches and to the Turkish Cultural Center of Connecticut who have provided access to these prerecorded videos. Participants in the event were invited to discuss 3 questions in virtual breakout rooms, each lead by a member of the IWNH's Leadership Team. We thank all who took part in these thoughtful discussions.

Our fall 2021 Zoom event was held on Nov 15th and drew an audience of over 40 participants. Our program, **FAITH INSPIRED STORIES: teaching tolerance, overcoming prejudice, acting from faith**, offered a continuation from IWNH's March program, 'Let's Talk: Faith and Race', sharing our thoughts, concerns, and response to each other as people of faith. The event was presented by video with life stories from the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths showing respect for the humanity of all peoples, making choices related to tolerance issues, taking action to better people's lives regardless of race, religion or nationality.

Our presenters were:

Zaheeda Hamza: Respecting human equality and anti racism: The story of Hazart Bilal

Rachel Spierer: Sharing life together with respect for "the other"

Veronica Molloy: Racial Justice: Living faith in a Secular Society

Following the presentations, the audience was invited to join "break out room" discussions facilitated by the IWNH Leadership Team to share their related thoughts and lived experience regarding the matter of faith and race. The IWNH Leadership Team would like to thank all those who participated in these events, and a special thank you to Ali Athar whose technical expertise brought all our presentations together

Respectfully submitted,  
Liz Verity, Interfaith Coordinator

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

This was the year of Covid-19. Its impact on the operation of the Elliot Hospital has been truly profound. The Elliot has cared for over 50% of all the Covid patients in the State of New Hampshire requiring hospitalization which has placed a huge strain on resources, such as the available beds and space in the critical ICU (Intensive Care Unit). As the virus waned over the summer, normal operation and elective procedures resumed, but the virus and its variants have returned with a vengeance. The number of cases at the end of 2021 is a factor of 2x higher than anything previously seen. The ICU was completely filled requiring a surge unit to be established. The strain has been the greatest on our healthcare providers who have had to work very long shifts as the number of critically ill patients grew and grew. Also, the Elliot Emergency Department, the busiest in the State of New Hampshire, has been overwhelmed during this pandemic with very long wait times and the need to tend to patients requiring hospitalization while awaiting an opening in the hospital. It was also recognized that other medical services could not be postponed since this would only cause greater medical risks for the population going forward.

Recognizing the strains on the Elliot, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the State of New Hampshire designated the Elliot as the first hospital in New Hampshire to receive a Health and Medical Task Force (HMTF) from the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS). This 24-member team of health care professionals made an immediate impact on the Elliot operations. Examples include the opening of a Clinical Decision Unit aiding in respiratory therapy services, a four-fold decrease in our number of patients who leave the Emergency Department before being treated, and 35 ICU patients were able to be supported.

Despite Covid, two other significant events occurred at the Elliot this year. The new Elliot Regional Cancer Center was completed and opened. 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. Also, the construction of an Emergency Room expansion which will double its capacity has commenced.

The Elliot Hospital has completed over 130 years of support to Manchester, and during this time our church has always played a key role in the Elliot. Mary Elliot was a congregant of First Church and established the Elliot as a non-sectarian hospital in the city of Manchester. The first 24-member federal HMTF team has left but the impact on the morale of the healthcare providers remains. When the team arrived, they wrote their mission statement on a whiteboard for all to see. "Mission: Help the healthcare providers at Elliot Hospital catch their breath while you are here, so they can return to the fight when you leave." As the second team arrives, may we at FCC support all the healthcare providers and the ill in our prayers. 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

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## **NH Conference UCC Annual Meeting**

The annual meeting of the New Hampshire Conference was presented on October 16 & 17, 2021, via Zoom this year due to the pandemic. The meeting opened with a worship service and reports. There was a video report on the outdoor ministries showing the campers at Horton Center taking part in many fun activities. The Summer Director, Tivvi Pare and the Horton Center Executive Director, Tim Hughes, narrated the video and their enthusiasm and love for Horton Center was evident. There were sessions on the General Synod where people who attended talked about their experience there. There was also a budget hearing and conversation with the Conference Minister.

There were two keynote speakers, The Reverend Dr. Sarah Lund and Rev. Chad Everett. Dr. Lund spoke about mental health through sacred storytelling and Rev. Everett spoke about mental health through sacred listening. They were very interesting and have published books on these subjects.

The New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ oversees all UCC churches in New Hampshire. If you have any questions about the Conference please see me or Carolyn.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Barbara Papagian, Associate Pastor

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## Reports from the Ministry of Sustaining Our Church Home

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### 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 2021, the nine Board members were: Cal Bowie, Lucia Carlisle, Greg Goodrich, Steve Payne, Selene Lyons, Allen Pattee, Kathy Nelson, Elizabeth Robertson, and Scott Thornton. Non-Trustees who regularly attend meetings of the Board included Reverend Kevin Pleas, Interim Pastor Carolyn Keilig, Church Treasurer Jeffrey Frye, Building Manager Peter Perich 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 2021 continued life as the “new normal”, with effects of the COVID-19 pandemic lingering in all aspects of church life. Financial markets recovered from their previous year’s drop and continued improvement throughout the year. FCC alternated between pre-recorded services and in-person services between July and September with an in-person format retained in September. This coincided with the return of Interim Pastor Carolyn Keilig to FCC in September, as Reverend Pleas left FCC in July.

Staff at FCC has continued to support operations of the church building, our church family, and the Manchester community. Linda Bonetti and Lauren Henderson have worked tirelessly to supply and coordinate materials for the various committees so that members can continue their mission of service. Sokhom Sar has replaced flooring and repainted many of the rooms and classrooms in the building, while also maintaining the lawn and grounds of the church. Peter Perich has continued to ensure that the systems at FCC are sufficiently maintained, and has obtained bids for heating system repair, windows, sanctuary lighting, and gates to keep our church secure. We should consider ourselves truly blessed to have all of these conscientious individuals working for the good of our church and our congregation.

I wish to thank all the Board members for their work this year, especially Greg Goodrich for his willingness and ability to step in as Vice-Chairman, and Jeffrey Frye for his diligence in reviewing of the church finances. I also wish to thank all of the church staff, and in particular Linda Bonetti, Lauren Henderson, Sokhom Sar, and Peter Perich, for their faithful efforts and ministry towards the FCC family and facilities. I also wish to extend a special thanks to Lucia Carlisle, Cal Bowie, and Kathy Nelson, all of whom will be stepping down from the Board at the end of the 2021 term.

Respectively submitted,  
Scott Thornton

### 2021 Board of Trustees

Cal Bowie, Lucia Carlisle, Greg Goodrich (Vice Chair), Steve Payne, Selene Lyons, Allen Pattee, Kathy Nelson, Elizabeth Robertson, and Scott Thornton (Chair).

Non-voting Trustees who regularly attend meetings of the Board included Reverend Kevin Pleas, Interim Pastor Carolyn Keilig, Church Treasurer Jeffrey Frye, Building Manager Peter Perich and Church Administrator Linda Bonetti.

## Stewardship

The Committee meets monthly throughout the year to organize and prepare for the annual Stewardship Pledge Campaign, line up the Campaign's Stewardship Moments speakers 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 2021, and the Committee did not participate in the annual Salvation Army "Toy Shoppe" in December.

In 2021 the actual Pledges, Plate contributions and Gifts received totaled \$205,006. The 2022 Pledge Campaign, "Faith in our hearts; Hope on the horizon; Patience well spent" resulted in pledges of \$156,734 which was just short of our \$160,000 goal.

We thank the entire congregation for your generosity and continued support of First Congregational Church. Also, a special "Thank You" to all the volunteers for their countless hours of support for the Church and community. God Bless.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cheryl and Dan McKenney, Co-chairs

### 2021 Stewardship Committee

Bill Jones, Elizabeth Verity, Sue Clement, Vicki Tinsley, Kathy Payne, Tom Irving, Rev. Carolyn Keilig as ex officio member, Church Administrator Linda Bonetti, Anita Wolcott, and co-chairs Cheryl and Dan McKenney.

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## Scholarship Committee

Church scholarship awards for 2021 were presented on June 6, 2021. Although this was done during our pre-recorded Sunday service, we proudly awarded scholarships to graduating high school seniors and the Higher Education Awards to our continuing college students both undergraduate and graduate. Their amazing essays were published in the summer edition of the Church Window.

### Our 2021 High School Graduates:

**Ethan Kruger:** Ethan received The First Congregational Church Scholarship Award with plans to attend Endicott College in Beverly MA with hopes to become a Physical Therapist or an Actuary.

**Garrison Gagnon:** Garrison received the First Congregational Church Scholarship Award with plans to attend Johnson and Wales University in Providence, RI. Garrison's planned course of study is in Physical Therapy/ Personal Training/ Nutrition Science with a likely goal of a Masters in Physical Therapy.

**Ethan Lyons:** Ethan received the William P McGuiness Award with plans to attend UNH in Durham in the Peter T. Paul School of Business & Economics to earn a degree in Business and Management.

### The Higher Education Awards to our College Undergraduate Students

**John Thornton:** After a year at Manchester Community College, John transferred to the University of New Hampshire where he has chosen to major in Neuroscience and Behavior.

**Margaret Thornton:** Margaret entered her senior year this past fall at Norwich University. She hopes to transition into the US Army where she can help soldiers work back to full health, achieving their physical and mental health goals. Additionally, she plans to work as a certified personal trainer at an athletic development facility to help young athletes and to coach high school soccer.

**Emma Green:** Emma is enrolled at Manchester Community College where she is close to finishing her Associates Degree for Liberal Arts. She plans to enroll in the teaching program there so that she can earn a teaching certificate and ideally get a degree in education to become a high school teacher.

### Our Post Graduate Students:

**Abby Curtis:** Abby continues her education for a Master's Degree in Piano Pedagogy at the University of Southern Maine.

**Jennifer Irving:** Jennifer attends Suffolk University Law School in a three-year program. She will be teaching constitutional law to high school students through the Marshall Brennan Constitutional Literary Project. Over the summer she had a judicial internship at the United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts in Boston. Her interests include Immigration Law and Constitutional Justice in Schools.

**James Irving:** James is enrolled at UNH in a PhD program in history to pursue a career in college teaching.

Congratulations to so many. We are very proud of you all!

Respectfully submitted,  
Ellie Stetson, Chair

**2021 Church Scholarship Committee**  
Peter Perich, Lucia Carlisle, Dawn Gagnon, Ellie Stetson

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## **Building Manager's Report**

The following report is a summary of the more significant projects that have been working on during 2021:

- The following work was done by Lachance Plumbing & Heating: The valves and circulators were replaced on our boiler system. In addition, we purchased parts for items that would break down first on an older system.
- New emergency lighting was installed in the dining room and the hallways around the dining room by Jon Flourde.
- A blower was installed for the basement bathroom fans.
- New flooring was installed in the classroom B14 across from the Building Manager's office. In addition, the tiles in the handicap access bathroom across from the office were worked on.
- Received bids to replace 8 windows on the second floor from Granite State Glass and Queen City Windows.
- Received bids to replace existing dimmer systems and lights to LED lights in the sanctuary.
- Received bid from Arch Painting to paint the sanctuary.
- Purchased a new air conditioner for the ENA office on the second floor.
- The driveway grates were refinished for some of the windows at the bottom of the church property.
- Because of the ongoing homeless problems, we have received a bid to put up fencing by the ramp door and the casket door steps. This project will be done in the spring.
- The church has ordered a couple of new transmitters and 8 head sets for the people with hearing needs during the service.

I greatly appreciate the support that I receive from all the volunteers especially Larry Dearborn and Steve Payne. The volunteers make a large difference in the appearance, comfort, usefulness, and safety of our Church building and its surrounding grounds which is for the benefit of all that come to our church.

Respectfully submitted,  
Peter Perich, Building Manager

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## **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. Daily pick-up of grounds performed with trash and debris disposed in proper containers by Sokhom.
- Lawn fertilizer applied annually.
- Volunteers take care of spring and fall grounds clean-up.
- Kathy Nelson, Ann Brown and Bill Jones continue to care for the three large urns, with help from Dick Jarvis. 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 Yard Works takes care of driveway plowing and sanding during winter months.
- The Memory Garden continues to thrive with thanks to Liz Verity and volunteers; this year replacing the bushes pulled last year with hydrangea trees.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Peter Perich, Building Manager

## Memory Garden

The Memory Garden continues to provide a reflective space for all members and friends, while adding 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.

What a wonderful team we had to work in the Memory Garden this spring. Larry Dearborn donated and delivered the bark mulch, and the team worked hard not only in the Memory Garden, but all the church gardens. Bill Jones edged the lawns, others weeded and spread mulch. Thank yous go to Lucia Carlisle, Larry Dearborn, Karen Hawver, Bill Jones Pam LeBlanc, Steve Payne, Peter Perich, Kathy Nelson, Sokhom Sar, Carol Valavane and advisor, Dick Jarvis. It is an honor to work with those who graciously give of their time and energy to maintain this lasting memorial.

In June two hydrangea trees were purchased and planted by Faulkner's landscaping, their blossoms added height, to the back of the garden and hopefully will continue to blossom and grow bigger each year.

Thank you to all those whose contributions have supported our Memory Garden, we are grateful. This year we have been fortunate that due to the generous donations we received in 2021, we will have the funds to consider some substantial future landscape plans. This is one of the ways you can honor your loved ones. Thank you notes have been sent to both donors and volunteers.

Special Thanks 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.

The names of those who were honored by a donation in 2021 are as follows (specifics are in the Memory Book):

### 2021 Memory Garden Donations

Donated By	In Memory Of
Martha Finefrock	Charles F. & Charles C. Finefrock
FCC Women's Connection	Deana Dubois, Pamela Pleas and Eldena Lard
Fran Hastings	Tammy St. Pierre
Martha Finefrock	Charles F. Finefrock & Charles C. Finefrock
FCC Church Council	Pamela Pleas
FCC Friends & FCC Women's Connection	Barbara Hebert
FCC Friends and Family of Genevieve Merrill	Genevieve Merrill
Nancy Ethier	Richard Ethier
FCC Friends and Family of Fred Simmons	Frederick Simmons

Respectfully submitted,  
Liz Verity, Chair

## FOO'S (Friends of the Office)

Every month a group of volunteers collate the Church Window (fold, label and sort for mailing). While working on the Window, we can get caught up on each other's daily happenings. If there are extra mailings, a few of us will help out.

With Covid-19 and now the Omicron variant upon us, things have changed. In March, Lauren Henderson kindly prepared the Window alone...Thanks, Lauren!

In the summer a couple of volunteers stopped by to help. But over the last couple of months, illness has prevented us from meeting, so Lauren and staff took over the duties. We are looking forward to being able to join one another to do the Window again.

Thanks to all of our very reliable and fun-loving group!

Respectfully submitted,  
Donna Willey

**2021 FOOS Team**

Joan Currier, Pat McCarrick, Carol Forest, Nancy Simmons, Diane Brown, Joann Van Horne, Kathy Rowe, JoAnn Ward, and Donna Willey