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**THE UNITED CHURCH OF ROWAYTON**  
**60<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, February 5, 2012**

**OFFICERS FOR 2011**

Moderator	Bill Peltz
Clerk	Michael Ziegler
Financial Secretary	Billie Anker
General Treasurer	Peg Mullaney
Business Manager	Lou Froelich

**STATISTICAL REPORT**

Adult Members on rolls as of December 31, 2010 (active members and inactive members in membership database)	383
Confirmation Graduate Members on rolls as of December 31, 2010 (active members and inactive members in membership database)	98
<b>Total Adult and Confirmation Members on rolls as of December 31, 2010</b>	<b>481</b>
Inactive Members Removed from Church Records During 2011	36
Transfers Out During 2011	2
Members Deceased	8
Members Received During 2011	12
Confirmands Received in 2011	7
Adult Members on rolls as of December 31, 2011 (active members and inactive members in membership database)	351
Confirmation Graduate Members - on rolls as of December 31, 2011 (active members and inactive members in membership database)	103
<b>Total Adult and Confirmation Members on rolls as of December 31, 2011</b>	<b>454</b>
Baptisms	8
Weddings	4
Funeral and Memorial Services	9

***Members and Friends who have died in 2011***

Carol Anderson	Margaret Robinson
Marie Clare	Michael Simeon
Robert Geoghegan	Alan Ward
Joan LaClair	Christine Welton
Ruth Noble	Florence Wyland
Jack Ritchey	





*Build a better world said God and I asked how?  
The world is such a vast place and so complicated now  
I am small and useless what can I do?  
God in all God's wisdom said, "Just build a better you."*

*One song can spark a moment; One flower can wake the dream  
One tree can start a forest; One trickle can start a stream  
One smile begins a friendship; One handclasp lifts a soul  
One star can guide a ship at sea; One word can frame the goal  
One vote can change a nation; One sunbeam lights a room  
One candle wipes out darkness; One laugh will conquer gloom  
One step must start each journey; One word must start a prayer  
One hope will raise our spirits; One touch can show you care  
One voice can speak with wisdom; One heart can know what is true  
One Life can make a difference, you see it's up to you!*

Year after year, I believe, The United Church of Rowayton is here to help individuals become better people and to encourage us all to make a difference in this world. Judi and I are so grateful that we celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> year here and my heart is filled with gratitude.

I am grateful for the daily ministry of our Associate Pastor, Carla Dietz. Carla's spirit, support and inspirational leadership, for all ages, touches so many lives.

I am grateful for the music ministry of our Director of Music, Marsha Hall. Year after year Marsha lifts our souls and strengthens our faith through the sharing of her musical gifts and talent. This year I am grateful for the collective talents of so many who provided the very special musical evening in May - "Somehow, Someday, Somewhere." I am grateful to our choir singers and bell ringers who inspire us throughout the year.

I am grateful for the members of the Board of Deacons and all the spiritual support they give to me and our Family of Faith. I am especially grateful for the wonderful 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration we shared in October. A special word of gratitude to Roger Wachnicki, chair.

I am grateful for the strength provided to so many by the people in our Caregiving Ministry. A special word of gratitude to Joanne Brown and Ann DiLeone, co-chairs.

I am grateful for the daily work and ministry of our Office Manager, Kris Jenkins. Kris brings such light and vision to the everyday tasks we face, keeping the Church so vibrant.

I am grateful for all the unique gifts shared by so many of our Family of Faith; flower arranging, preparing times of Fellowship, helping at the Tag Sale, serving and helping organize 2 X 4 luncheons and taking photographs in such creative ways.

I am grateful for Joy Hetherington and all the joy she brings to our hearts through her music for worship and 2 x 4 luncheons.

I am grateful for the members of the Board of Household Concerns and their vision as we plan together, doing the work of God. A special word of gratitude to Frank Jenkins, chair.

I am grateful for the work and effort of John Carroll, Nancy Loomis and Brian Anderson who led our Stewardship Drive for 2011. I continue to be grateful as they are leading us into 2012 - Stewardship is

HEART work and they have given their hearts to this year's Stewardship Drive encouraging us all to fly together. These are very difficult economic times and we need everyone's support if we are going to be able to maintain the ministry we offer.

I am grateful to all the knitters of our Prayer Shawl Ministry, often called the "Knitistry" A special word of gratitude to Judi Livingston, for her leadership.

I am grateful to the members of the Board of Christian Outreach. Through their dedication and effort so many lives feel God's peace and presence. A special word of gratitude to Bob Green, chair.

I am grateful for the members of the Board of Christian Education who sustain and create such vital relationships within our Family of Faith. A special word of gratitude to Craig Stansbury, chair.

I am grateful to our newest staff member, Sarah Sykes, who brings spirit and energy to our Youth Group program.

I am grateful for all the Church School teachers who are so devoted to the children of our Family of Faith. Through their time and care our children are discovering life and faith.

I am grateful for Susan Ackerly who bakes our cross-shaped bread for Holy Communion every month - such nourishment and such dedication.

I am grateful for our Business Manager, Lou Froelich and all the encouragement and positive energy he brings to our office each and every day, helping to balance all aspects of our ministry.

I am grateful for our Maintenance Manager, Wayne Gamache for taking such good care of our facilities. God's love is seen through Wayne's everyday effort to keep everything well maintained.

I am grateful for the work and ministry of our Officers: Billie Anker, financial secretary; Michael Ziegler, clerk and Peg Mullaney, treasurer. God is truly working through them as they serve our Family of Faith. They are so dedicated and devoted. They give so much of their time to our Church program. Their excellent and faithful work is so valuable and appreciated.

I am grateful for our Moderator/Lay Leader, Bill Peltz. He has given himself fully for the past three years to our Family of Faith and has been such a tremendous help to me and our Boards and Committees. Bill has helped to strengthen our ministry with his insight, wisdom, patience and leadership of our Church Council.

I am grateful for all the support and love I receive from my adult children, Kelly, Samantha and Michael.

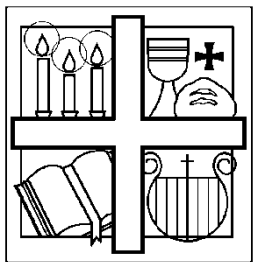
I am grateful for Judi - for everything she does for our Family of Faith - Children's Choir Director and Prayer Shawl leader and so much more. More than this all the personal support and love she gives to me is amazing. Without Judi I could never be the faithful Pastor I strive to be.

I am grateful for all the people who are mentioned in the overall Annual Report for 2011. I encourage you to read these reports carefully and take the time to personally thank all the people who help to make this such a wonderful, vibrant Church; a church that makes a significant difference in this world - one person at a time.

*From generation to generation  
may each of us have the  
hands and hearts that can  
work together, love together  
and pray together.*

With Love,

*John*



## FROM THE ASSOCIATE PASTOR/ HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

### Christian Education

- Adult Bible Study Sunday mornings through Spring 2011
- Adult Bible Study Wednesday evenings commencing fall 2011, based on the *Still Speaking* curriculum “The Book of Acts”
- Growth in Church School attendance numbers particularly in the 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade class
- First time Church School teachers, joining many teacher veterans for a total of 25 teaching volunteers
- Hiring of Sarah Sykes as Youth Director!
- Youth Group Wednesday evenings welcoming over 20 Youth members
- Youth Group visits to Open Door Shelter, Hill Top Homes, Ludlow Common, Christian Community Action
- An all-Church Interfaith Discussion involving; an Islamic Professor from Hartford Seminary Mahmoud Ayoub (<http://macdonald.hartsem.edu/ayoub.html>), from Temple Israel, Rabbi Mark Lipson (<http://www.templeshalomweb.org/aboutus/clergy/>), and Minister of Christian Education, from the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ, Karen Ziel (<http://ctucc.org/staffdetail.php?staffmember=44>)

### Outreach

- We supplemented our website ([www.ucrowayton](http://www.ucrowayton)) with a Facebook Page and a Twitter account. All are invited to participate in these interactive sites with us for activity updates and theological sharing
- Participation in Simply Smiles fundraising and planning for service trips in 2012
- Growth in number of Board of Christian Outreach members, including first time participants and those who are considered to be “Young Adults”
- International, National, Regional and Local relief efforts including (but not limited to) emergency financial help to Turkey, Japan, a UCC church in Massachusetts whose steeple was destroyed during a massive storm
- Annual participation in “Souper Bowl of Caring,” providing financial contributions to Open Door Shelter (*formerly Norwalk Emergency Shelter*) and Christian Community Action

Much of our Church wide involvement this year, overlapped between Christian Education and Outreach. This makes sense when thinking about the mission of Jesus as both an educator (*he was called Rabbi which means teacher*) and as one who regularly reached out to those in need. Jesus was also called healer, protector, holy one, savior and king. The United Church of Rowayton is called to follow Jesus’ path and we expanded in our endeavor to do so. Throughout a difficult economy, we gave of our hearts and our resources so that the mission of the church could be felt, heard and seen in the world. My prayer would be that we continue to do so and to grow in our efforts to reach out to those in need of learning and compassion. It is a blessing to serve you all, so thank you for allowing me to work with you as I move into my 10<sup>th</sup> year at our Church. Peace be with you!

Submitted in love,  
The Reverend Carla Dietz

## FROM THE LAY LEADER

We have heard that mainline churches are experiencing declines in membership and in weekly attendance. We have heard that churches are not attracting the under-forty age group the way they used to do just a generation ago. We have heard that all churches are experiencing a drop in income. We have heard about churches that are in trouble. Some are losing their pastors and some are closing their doors. Yes, these are difficult times for churches. No church can remain complacent these days. Nor can they afford to continue doing things the same old way. The very real challenge that churches face is how to be authentic in new and meaningful ways without losing their core identity. The fastest way to lose touch with its mission and purpose is for a church to try to be all things to all people.

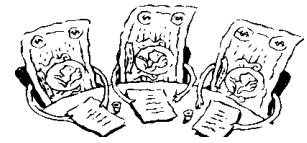
This Church that we all love, The United Church of Rowayton, is a healthy, vibrant, energy-filled Church. There is nothing static about this Church. It has a clear understanding of its identity and mission; there is no risk of fragmentation here! We are blessed to have two incredible pastors who enjoy the love and respect and approval of the Congregation. We heard in October that they are creating new ways in which people can have a “church experience.” We are blessed to have a staff, each member of which works here because they love this Church and everyone in it. We are blessed that we have a congregation that gives so much of its energy and time and wisdom to this Church. We are blessed that The United Church of Rowayton continues to offer its many programs despite the world’s highly challenging (and even frightening) economic environment. No, our United Church of Rowayton is not a place of complacency.

This Annual Meeting gives us a good opportunity to pause and to reflect about who we are and where we are headed. As we take a moment to think about the past year, we are confronted by the reality that we really are blessed and that God really cares about us. Last spring, we witnessed the confirmands as they shared their stories with us. In one of our most thrilling Congregational meetings, we became an Open and Affirming church – and we did it with a unanimous vote. In the spring, thanks to the efforts of the Board of Deacons, we also became a Stillspeaking church. Our Board of Christian Education sponsored a stimulating panel discussion in which representatives of the three Abrahamic religions talked with us. We held a musical benefit and a tag sale that raised money while giving us opportunities to reach out and minister as stewards of our church to many, many people. The Board of Christian Outreach is expanding its role and is making available to us mission experiences that offer relational service opportunities. A new adult Bible class was begun, and its ranks quickly swelled. The Board of Household Concerns has invested in socially responsible programs and significantly improved its fiscal management practices. Pledging has become a part of the more global concept of stewardship. On Rally Day, we experienced the energy that runs through every part of our Church. We heard Carla and John preach about the many non-traditional ways in which we minister, and we expanded our view of what it means to be a church. Youth Group, for example, has become a church experience. In October, the Caregiving Ministry spoke to us from its collective heart, and in a profound and moving service, we witnessed the power of love. We celebrated John’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary (my word, how we celebrated!), in a service that gave us a moment to reflect on all that he has done for us and with us. On Board of Christian Outreach Sunday and again on Thanksgiving Sunday, we were reminded how we reach out beyond our property boundaries so that we might help others. We welcomed new members to our church. We shared times of joy, and we also shared times of sadness. Yes, we at The United Church of Rowayton are a family, and this is a family that is blessed.

On a personal note, I have been your Lay Leader and Moderator for three years. I enjoyed serving you and the Church, and I thank you for the privilege.

Respectfully submitted,  
William H. Peltz, Lay Leader/Moderator

## BOARD OF HOUSEHOLD CONCERNS



The Board of Household Concerns is responsible for finance, setting of budgets, raising revenue, monitoring and limiting expenses, managing the endowment and maintaining the Church's physical plant. Several committees report to the Board: Investment Committee, Stewardship Committee, and Planned Giving Committee.

The Board ordinarily is made up of twelve individuals; each serving a three-year term. In 2011 we had only ten members: Jim Ackerly, Pat Begos, Julie Edwards, Loretta Goeller Frank Jenkins, Nancy Loomis, John Massey, Cole Palmer, Dave Short and Duff Stokes. Church Officers with financial responsibility also attend the meetings: Billie Anker, financial secretary; Geoff Beringer, representing the investment committee; Lou Froelich, business manager; Peg Mullaney, treasurer; Bill Peltz, moderator; and John Livingston, our pastor.

The committee oversees the Church's annual stewardship campaign, which was led by John Carroll, Brian Anderson and Nancy Loomis for a second year. On behalf of the board, I wish to both thank them profusely and praise their tireless efforts and creativity. With the U.S. economy still showing only minor and occasional signs of improvement, the 2011 stewardship campaign was challenging. While the 2010 pledge drive had a very strong final leg, which actually lifted total payment \$26,000. above the pledged amount, the 2011 drive went out like the proverbial lamb. As of year's end, giving has totaled \$348,096, slightly more than the \$342,200 pledged, but substantially lower than the budgeted amount of \$408,000. On the other side of the ledger, actual expenses came in \$11,000 under budget due to diligence and belt tightening. The balance of the deficit was covered predominantly through drawing down funds in account from prior years – a luxury the Church will not be afforded in 2012.

The 2012 Stewardship Campaign, with its valiant goose mascot, has seen pledges of \$281,200 by the end of December. The Stewardship Committee has not heard from an important group whose combined giving amounted to \$83,800 in 2011. If this group matches their prior-year pledging, total pledges will be \$365,000. This figure is well below the budgeted amount in the prior year budget. The Board will soon bring a budget before the Congregation for its approval. The budget will reflect no increase in compensation for the United Church's staff, and across-the-board reductions in funding for programs – a necessary reality in the current environment but one that we hope to overcome in the course of the new year through a brighter climate and increased giving.

The Investment Committee did a commendable job of caring for The United Church of Rowayton's funds. Through the end of November, investment results were a 1.7% loss, but this compared favorably to the S&P index, which was down 5.0%. The results were helped by a strong performance from our fixed income investments. Total withdrawals totaled \$76,000.00 including \$30,000.00 transferred to the operating budget. The majority of other amounts went to capital projects including resurfacing the Church parking lot and driveway and long overdue repairs to the Parsonage.

The Board wishes to sincerely thank the Officers who do so much to keep the Church's affairs in order – Billie Anker, Peg Mullaney, Lou Froelich, Bill Peltz and, of course, Pastor Livingston for his support and guidance. Many thanks to Kris Jenkins for her efforts on the Board's behalf. Most importantly, we thank all who gave to the Church in 2011 and those who will nurture the Church's myriad efforts in 2012 and beyond. All of the wonderful programs the Church supports, including Youth Group, Adult Education, Outreach, our fabulous music program and Confirmation Classes, can only exist and thrive through the stewardship of the Congregation. We recognize that these are extremely difficult times economically, but we believe that every dollar given to The United Church of Rowayton returns genuinely meaningful benefits to the Congregation and to the broader community.



Respectfully submitted,  
Frank Jenkins, Chairman

## 2011 FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPORT

### Total Receipts

Pledges Paid	\$239,127
Unpledged Contributions, Plate, Church School	25,641
Rentals	47,465
2010 Pledges	3,030
Fundraisers	30,769
2012 Pledges paid in 2011	82,050
<b>Total</b>	<b>428,082</b>
2011 Pledges Paid in Advance	109,375
Endowment Income	45,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$582,457</b>



### TREASURER'S REPORT as of December 31, 2011

Fairfield County Checking Account		\$100,407.79
Fairfield County Money Market Account		\$3,944.02
Amerprise Financial		\$12,201.09
Benevolence Checking		\$17,470.94
Deacon's Fund	\$3,430.33	
Mission Trip	\$3,657.44	
Outreach Fund	\$3,609.84	
Sabbatical Fund	\$6,773.33	
Capital Checking		\$11,335.29
Capital Fund (Depreciation)	\$8,103.89	
Memorial Gifts	\$3,231.40	
Flower Fund		\$2,622.20
Memorial Garden Checking		\$8,492.00
Schwab Unrestricted Account		\$104,434.90
Schwab Restricted Account		\$44,671.46
Schwab Investment Account		\$124,697.27
(Includes Rainy Day, Memorial, Other Unrestricted Dollars)		
Schwab Endowment		

## PROPOSED Budget for 2012

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>ACTUAL 2011</b>	<b>BUDGET 2011</b>	<b>PROPOSED 2012</b>
Actual Pledges Received	\$351,500	\$408,000	\$323,000
Anticipated Pledges based on 2011			\$40,000
Building Rental	\$25,200	\$34,500	\$25,000
Endowment and Interest Income	\$45,600	\$45,000	\$47,000
Nursery School	\$22,300	\$22,500	\$24,000
Plate/Unpledged Contributions	\$25,600	\$30,000	\$25,000
Fundraisers	\$30,800	\$28,900	\$29,900
Other Revenue as Per Goal			\$43,800
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$501,000</b>	<b>\$568,900</b>	<b>\$557,700</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
<b>Board of Christian Education</b>	\$6,000	\$8,000	\$6,100
Class Activities and Curriculum, Youth and Confirmation Programs, Special Events, Child Care, Adult Ed			
<b>Board of Christian Outreach</b>	\$52,900	\$52,900	\$47,900
<b>Board of Deacons</b>	\$8,700	\$11,100	\$8,800
Spiritual Development, Sabbatical, Music Program Development, Supplies, and Special Programs			
<b>Salary and Housing Allowance</b>			
Senior Pastor	\$74,800	\$74,800	\$74,800
Associate Pastor	\$51,500	\$51,500	\$51,500
<b>Benefits</b>	\$77,700	\$80,000	\$80,000
Senior and Associate Pastors Health, Pension, Professional Development Auto, Self Employment Tax			
<b>Salary</b>	\$123,600	\$127,600	\$125,600
Staff (Director of Music, Children's Choir Director, Office Manager, Business Manager, Maintenance Manager plus Health Benefits)			
<b>Administration</b>	\$45,000	\$60,000	\$58,000
Office Expenses, Communications (Telephone, Website), Payroll Taxes, Legal and Auditing, Insurance, Advertising Stewardship and Social Committees			
<b>Plant and Facilities</b>	\$108,600	\$97,000	\$100,000
Heating Oil, Electricity and other Utilities, and General Maintenance of House of Worship, Meeting House and Parsonage			
<b>Capital Repairs</b>	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$5,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$554,800</b>	<b>\$568,900</b>	<b>\$557,700</b>

## BOARD OF DEACONS

The Board of Deacons, by definition, shall have general supervision of the spiritual interests of the Church and public services of worship. As such, each Board member took the responsibility of being “Deacon of the Month,” finding ushers for each Sunday, preparing and assisting with Communion services, being available to assist the pastors and serving as a Committee chair on one of the following Committees: Altar, Caregiving Ministry, Christian Education, Membership and Social, Memorial Fund and Scholarship, Music and Financial/Stewardship.

The dedicated and caring individuals who served with me on the 2011 Board of Deacons were Brian Anderson, Stephanie Close, Tobe Johnson, Ellen Steese-Mulhearn, Neville Peltz, Petrea Poler, Marcia Smith, Carolyn Ripp-Snyder, Sarah Starkweather, Bev Viele and Chris Wittstock.

At the Annual Meeting in February 2011, the Church Membership unanimously approved and adopted our Open and Affirming Statement. This declaration, along with our Mission Statement, firmly defines this Church as a caring and welcoming community and place of worship.

Upon being recognized as an Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ, the Board of Deacons and Bill Peltz, Lay Leader, explored and reflected on the many ways we have become a more friendly, welcoming and hospitable Church to each other, newcomers and outsiders. In an effort to further identify The United Church of Rowayton as a welcoming Family of Faith, the Board of Deacons requested and was granted designation by the United Church of Christ as a “Stillspeaking Church.”

Throughout the year there are many different worship services and educational opportunities offered to our members and the community including early morning worship services during Advent and Lent and the “Living the Questions “ series of videos and discussion with John and Carla on Sunday evenings.

Our special “Worship in the Park” summer services, held at the gazebo in Pinkney Park continue to grow in popularity averaging over sixty attendees during the months of July and August. In October 2011, the entire Congregation gathered in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of John Livingston as Pastor of the United Church of Rowayton. The efforts and talents of many members in this Family of Faith helped make this a truly warm and memorable special service and event.

In November the Board of Deacons hosted a breakfast for twelve new members prior to their formal welcome by the Congregation during worship.

I would like to thank Neville Peltz for all her efforts in the organizing and planning of John’s celebration and also Sarah Starkweather who was always available to cover meetings when I was absent.

This has been a year of growth and many blessings. I am honored to have served as chair of this Board of Deacons. As we are about to start a new year, may we always be mindful of each other and know the shelter of one another as we continue to grow in our faith journey together.

Respectfully submitted,  
Roger Wachnicki, Chair





## ♥ CAREGIVING MINISTRY ♥

The terms “informal caregiver” and “family caregiver” refer to people who are not paid to provide care. We are fortunate to have 15 caregivers in our Church who give unselfishly of their time caring for the wellbeing of the Church Family. Our love and thanks go to those in the Ministry: Diane Albano, Billie Anker, Stephanie Close, Debbie Douglas, Diane Glover, Carol Haskell, Heather Hopkins, Ray Meurer, Graham Powell, Caroline Robinson, Linda Scull, Sarah Starkweather, Donna Wachnicki, Roger Wachnicki, and Michael Ziegler.

This summer, Caroline Robinson invited the Ministry and their spouses to an evening at Roton Point. We were able to socialize in a “non-meeting” atmosphere and enjoy good food, fun and fellowship. Thank you Caroline!

On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, our Church service was dedicated to *Caregiving Sunday*. Members of the Ministry ushered, lead us in prayers and hosted coffee hour. Jim Mulhern and Roger Wachnicki volunteered to share their personal experience as care receiver and caregiver in a very moving message to the Congregation – our thanks to Jim and Roger.

In the fall, we sent “notes to freshmen” our new college students, wishing them well and letting them know they have the love and support of their Church Family. We also sent cards to new parents for *Baby’s First Christmas*, notes to our new members and notes to those experiencing their first Christmas following the loss of a loved one. During the year, rides to Church, visits to the homebound, sharing with those who have experienced difficulties as well as celebrated birthdays and holidays have been part of our Ministry.

All of our work is strictly confidential.

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Caregiving Ministry of The United Church of Rowayton is dedicated to utilizing its spiritual gifts in a shared ministry that provides for the wellbeing of God’s people.

Caregivers are caring Christian friends who listen, understand, accept and pray for and with care receivers who are experiencing the joys and sorrows of life.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joanne Brown and Ann DiLeone  
Co-chairs



## MUSIC DEPARTMENT

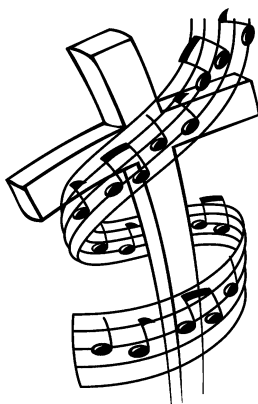
The music program with the continued dedication of singers and ringers continues to flourish. The Children's Choir and Youth Bell Choir performed during services throughout the Church year. As much as it is about performing, it continues to be about fellowship through music.

The Adult Handbell Choir has been a diligent group, continuing to expand repertoire and grow in expertise. Their dedication is a real tribute to their love of music and their Church. This group again traveled to The Christian Alliance of Bell Ringers in Pennsylvania. It was a full day of challenges, success and fellowship with other bell ringers from the northeast.

The Senior Choir, our musical foundation, performs each Sunday. The Senior Choir continues to perform a variety of repertoire from Baroque through Contemporary, from acappella to extended works with orchestration. The Senior Choir has formed an unbreakable bond, musically and in fellowship together. Once again, the Choir headed to St. Birgitta's in Darien for a day of music, beauty, renewing energy and time to spend with our Pastor, John. An exceptional day -- an exceptional year.

The Church and its music program is only as strong as the commitment of our Congregation. We pray for continued growth and thank God for the ability to continue to honor Him through our music.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marsha Hall



## ALTAR COMMITTEE

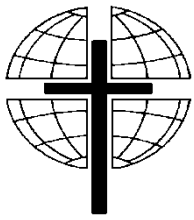


The Altar Committee continues to provide Altar flowers for Sunday worship as well as carnations for Mother's Day. We also care for the plants in the sanctuary. We decorate the Sanctuary at Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving with plants, flowers and greenery as the season requires. We provide and care for the Advent wreath as well as all the outdoor wreaths. Our funding continues to come from the Congregation throughout the year in form of memorial flowers for loved ones or in celebration of a particular joy. We do not receive funding from the annual Church budget. Any surplus monies from these gifts, particularly at Christmas and Easter, make up the base for our regular expenditures.

Our Committee members are the same as last year, namely Stephanie Close, Kate Davies, Kathy Draper, Lynne Pratt, Caroline Robinson, Beverly Viele and myself, June Strubinger. The Committee took charge of the Harvest Festival this year and did a splendid job. Everything except the floral plants and Altar arrangement was donated for the occasion by members of the Committee. We enjoy making the Church look festive. Plant care has been shared by Lynne Pratt and Stephanie Close. The plants are replaced as needed to keep the planter attractive. There are extra plants to care for at Christmas and Easter which are later given away. I'm still trying to get one person to take charge of the whole job as my back problems have not improved.

We thank the Congregation for its contributions throughout the year. Their gifts allow us to provide a pleasant setting for worship each Sunday.

Respectfully submitted,  
June Strubinger  
Altar Committee Chairperson



## BOARD OF CHRISTIAN OUTREACH

Change occurred this past year as we continued to broaden our mandate within our mission statement. Although our emphasis remains local, we have begun to investigate an international program called Simply Smiles which will be a hands-on project. It will be self-financed by participants in the program of all ages from our congregation. Our interest is primarily the work being done by this organization in Oaxaca Mexico. Simply Smiles also works with extremely impoverished people on a Sioux reservation in South Dakota. . Mike Harden has graciously volunteered to act as the liaison on these trips for The United Church of Rowayton. In this past Church year the Board of Christian Outreach did a number of routine things as will be seen from the attached schedule of beneficence: Easter Baskets, food drives and white doves are all maintenance types of things which are so appreciated by the recipients. As Jesus said, “the poor are always with us,” although some try to deny it. These things just impact the everyday quality of life of the poor which can be a bit bleak at this time of year.

In the next category are things which meet needs of people on a continuing basis. Here we have fuel bank, family re-entry, Elder House, Appleby health centers, to name a few. These needs are ongoing and we are just grateful that our Church makes such an effort to meet them. Many don't. One program which doesn't seem to fit nicely into a category is our partnership with Family and Children Agency Campership program. This year we provided for 31 campership scholarships. These are screened for need by FCA and are directed to very low-income families, usually single parent. The other parent may have fallen into addiction, may be in jail or has just cleared out. This leaves the remaining parent under a lot of stress, particularly in the summer when it is so important to keep kids busy. It should also be noted that this program is significantly leveraged in that parents and others are usually able to provide some matching funds that is they have skin in the game.

There is attached a schedule of Beneficence which provides more information.

I would like to thank the other members of the Board for their help during this period of transition.

Respectfully submitted,  
William H. Peltz, Chair, pro tem  
Robert G. Green, Chair

## BOARD OF CHRISTIAN OUTREACH BENEVOLENCE 2011

<b>Americares Free Clinic</b>	1,000.00
Provides walk-in care for underinsured clients	
<b>Appleby School-Based Health Clinics</b>	6,000.00
Provides on-site physical and mental health services to adolescents at local schools	
<b>Child Guidance Center of Mid-Fairfield County</b>	2,500.00
Provides comprehensive mental health services to local children and their families	
<b>Christian Community Action</b>	1,000.00
Provides food, clothing, and financial assistance to needy families	
<b>Domestic Violence Crisis Center, Inc.</b>	2,500.00
Helps those involved in physical, emotional, and sexual abuse	
<b>ElderHouse, Inc.</b>	2,000.00
Provides Seniors with a safe and supportive environment	
<b>Emig Foundation - General charity in name of Founder</b>	1,000.00
<b>Family and Children's Agency – operating expenses</b>	2,500.00
Offers services in adoption, family support, counseling	
<b>Family and Children's Agency – summer camp</b>	8,000.00
This fund sends approximately 35 pre- and early-adolescents to summer camps	
<b>Family ReEntry, Inc.</b>	1,000.00
Works with those who are incarcerated and the recently- released to re-integrate into society	
<b>Fuel Emergency Fund</b>	5,000.00
Funds are used to pay fuel bills and other expenses	
<b>George Washington Carver Center</b>	1,500.00
Helps children read, post-secondary level education	
<b>Keystone House</b>	1,000.00
Helps people with mental illnesses remain in society	
<b>Liberation Programs</b>	1,000.00
Provides drug treatment and rehabilitation	
<b>Mid-Fairfield AIDS Project</b>	1,000.00
Provides care and assistance to those living with or affected by HIV/AIDS	
<b>Open Door Emergency Shelter</b>	3,000.00
Addresses the needs of the homeless and working poor	
<b>Norwalk Meals on Wheels</b>	2,000.00
Provides 2 meals/day to Norwalk residents not meeting their nutritional needs	
<b>Our Churches Wider Mission</b>	2,000.00
This contribution to Basic Support is sent to our Conference	
<b>Pilgrim Towers</b>	2,000.00
Provides independent living for Seniors	
<b>PIVOT Ministries</b>	1,000.00
Comprehensive, Christianity-based addiction treatment	
<b>Silver Lake Campership</b>	1,000.00
Serves up to 1,300 youths	
<b>Silver Lake – UCR Scholarship</b>	300.00
<b>Senior Lunch Program</b>	1,000.00
Provides sociability for UCR seniors	
<b>Sexual Assault Crisis Center</b>	1,000.00
Helps victims of sexual assault and counsels the courts and police	
<b>Simply Smiles</b>	1,000.00
Dedicated to providing brighter futures for children specifically in South Dakota and Oaxaca, Mexico	
<b>Visiting Nurse</b>	1,000.00
Provides home health and hospice care services	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$56,667</b>

The Souper Bowl raised \$490, which was donated to Christian Community Action and Norwalk Emergency Shelter. One Great Hour of Sharing raised \$1977 and Neighbors in Need was given \$400 to Our Church's Wider Mission. Thanksgiving gift certificates totaling \$1,000 were given to DCF. In addition, \$500 was sent to Munsen, MA UCC to help with storm repair.



## BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

During the spring semester of 2011, the Board of Christian Education hosted its traditional Easter egg hunt and held a teacher appreciation day. This year we used hand-made posters and gave out engraved pens as a way to say “thanks.” The event was also used to encourage teacher sign up. It was during this event that our new Youth Group leader, Sarah Sykes, was recruited.

The Board worked to redesign the Youth Group program this year. It was determined that the addition of a lay Youth Group Leader would make the program more manageable. It was also decided that the program going forward should put more emphasis on Christian values vs. being purely a social group. Children and parents are required to sign a contract indicating their responsibility to the program, its directors and other members.

The Board hosted a special education hour on the three-Abrahamic faiths this semester as well. We invited speakers representing Christianity (Karen Ziel – Minister of Christian Education for the Connecticut Conference of UCC), Judaism (Rabbi Mark Lipson of Temple Shalom Norwalk) and Islam (Mahmoud Ayoub, Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary) to discuss topics forwarded to them in advance. Fouad Onbargi served as our panel moderator. The event was well attended by the Congregation as well as a number of persons from the general community.

The Board saw the departure of an able chairman in Fouad Onbargi at school year-end. We also said goodbye to Pam Skidmore and George Close. We welcomed new members Alison Jacobson, Greg Jacobson and Donna Wachnicki.

For the School year 2011 – 2012, there are 25 teachers and 180 students from toddlers to 10<sup>th</sup> grade (inclusive of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade Confirmation classes). Youth Group has 20 members. An inventory of Church School supplies was taken early in the fall. We are making an effort to advise teachers what supplies are available to support their lessons.

To close out 2011, the Board of Christian Education again hosted an annual Advent party for the Congregation. We enjoyed a good turnout of parishioners who came to enjoy a meal together and to welcome in the season with carols. The Board again presented a brief lecture on Christmas traditions from around the world focusing on Africa, Asia and South America. Board members and other volunteers (including some children) presented the information prior to leaving to sing carols by the tree and to meet Santa. We gave thanks to those who year-after-year string the lights on our Christmas tree and to Santa, too.

For 2012, Board of Christian Outreach is working on a “Perspectives Class” for all Sunday schoolers on January 22. The point of the class is to teach students to recognize and appreciate as God’s grace the many “gifts” that they have. It is envisioned that the Middle Schoolers will help guide the class in an artistic response to thank God “for the dirty dishes, because that means we have all eaten well”.

Respectfully submitted,  
Craig Stansbury, Chairman

## **LAY DELEGATE TO THE CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AND FAIRFIELD-WEST UCC ASSOCIATION**

It has been very educational to serve as the Church's lay delegate to the 2011 Spring and Fall State Conferences. In addition to me, other UCR members attending one or both of the conferences included Bill Peltz, UCR moderator, and The Rev. Carla Dietz. The conferences serve as opportunities to hear talented keynote speakers and attend topical workshops throughout the day. More important they are superb venues for networking with other UCC delegates and attendees. One always returns home with new ideas and knowledge of what is happening at sister churches in the state. Conference participation is not limited to ministers and lay delegates. Any member of a UCC church may attend and I encourage UCR congregants to attend in 2012. Spring Conference is May 12 and Fall takes place October 20.

Respectfully submitted,  
John Carroll  
2011 Lay Delegate

### **THE MINISTRY OF THE CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, IN 2011**



The year of 2011 was one of storms in Connecticut: Record-breaking snowfalls in January, more snow and ice in February, tornadoes just north of the border in June, the second warmest summer on record, and then the one-two punch of Tropical Storm Irene in August and the “Halloween snowstorm” of October, both of which left thousands of people without electric power for days at a time. A volatile economy took its toll on church members’ lives and livelihoods, and on the value of local churches’ investment portfolios, before coming back more or less to where it all started by the end of the year. In cities around the United States, including Hartford and New Haven, the protests of the Arab Spring found an echo in the Occupy movement, raising awareness of economic disparities.

Despite it all, members of UCC churches continued to give. They gave thousands of dollars to aid survivors of the March earthquake and tsunami in Japan, then those flooded or wind-struck by spring storms in the U.S. Through the First Congregational Church in Wallingford, New England recipient of the “Imagine What’s Possible” award from the United Church of Christ, they sent tons of coffee to U.S. military chaplains overseas for their Holy Joe’s Cafes. They supported three Connecticut UCC churches which suffered major damage to their facilities: Plainville Congregational Church after the collapse of its social hall roof in February, Saugatuck Congregational Church UCC in Westport after a major fire damaged meeting and rehearsal spaces in November, and the Somers Congregational Church after a blaze destroyed its 1842 worship space on New Year’s Day, 2012. Silver Lake offered thanks for its most successful Annual Fund ever. And the denomination as a whole collected over 1.4 million food items, over \$270,000, and over 37,000 letters to Congress in November through the fantastically ambitious and successful Mission:1 effort.

Appointed in April, the Conference Minister Search Committee got to work, holding scores of listening sessions and generating hundreds of pages of information. At year’s end, chair the Rev. Gordon Rankin wrote church leaders that they would discuss their findings with the Board of Directors in February, and with their input turn to work on the position description and Conference profile. The Committee reports its direction and progress at [www.ctucc.org/cmsearch](http://www.ctucc.org/cmsearch).

Amidst all the generosity, local churches, the Conference and the national setting of the church all felt the strains imposed by an economy that continued to struggle. At year's end, the Conference has not yet closed its books, but gifts to Our Church's Wider Mission Basic Support, local churches' primary means of contributing toward Conference and UCC ministries, had been down most of the year, continuing a trend disturbingly longer than the poor economy. The Board of Directors and Interim Conference Minister, the Rev. Charles Wildman, expressed their confidence in the vitality of the churches and the importance of Conference ministries in March and April, increasing the Regional Ministry positions in Fairfield County and the Eastern Region, plus the Minister of Christian Education position, to full-time.

The Conference's Regional Ministers — Michael Ciba, Ineke Mitchell, Mike Penn-Strah, Susan Tarolli (then Tom Clough) and Sarah Verasco — offered much of the Conference's covenant presence throughout the year. They worked with churches in transition and pain, they stood outside the damaged buildings, they supported association committees on the ministry, they preached and taught and comforted.

The Conference experienced several staff transitions during the year. At Silver Lake, Jennifer Kronholm Clark became Registrar and Office Assistant after the departure of Jenn McBurney. Site Manager Dave Kobersmith left in late spring, and as the year closed the Conference celebrated the appointment of Greg Arifian, to arrive in mid-January.

After the departure of Susan Tarolli, the Eastern Region welcomed its new Interim Minister, Thomas Clough, in October. Mia Douglas was appointed part-time Coordinator for Sacred Conversations on Race. The expansion of the Conference's youth and young adult programs brought in two new part-time leaders: John Ramos for Young Adult Ministries in Service, and Debby Kirk for Giv<sup>2</sup>. Sadly, several former members of the staff left this world in 2011, amidst much grief: Ruth Gilchrist Addison, Richard Griffis, William Inderstrodt, Joseph Neville, and Alden Tyrol.

In May, Andover Newton Visiting Professor of Worship and Preaching J. Mary Luti gave a dynamic and inspiring address to those assembled in Naugatuck for the Spring Meeting on "Worship Remix!" "Christian worship gains strength, beauty and transformative power in any style," she told them, "when it brings the wisdom of the ancients into creative conversation with the culture of our own day."

Inspired by a Holy Week visit to South Korea, Interim Conference Minister Wildman brought new energy to the partnership with the Kyung-Ki Presbytery. Drummers from the Conference's newest church, the Storrs Korean Church UCC, emphasized a poignant and moving prayer led by their pastor, Chang Ho-Jun, at the Fall Meeting in Guilford, and Wildman celebrated communion with the pastor who had hosted him in Korea, Gwak Seonkeun. HOPE, Inc.'s Marilyn Graham received the Living Waters Award for lay ministry.

In July, delegates from around the UCC came to Tampa, Florida, for a momentous 28<sup>th</sup> General Synod. They voted the Constitution and bylaws revisions recommended by the Unified Governance Task Force — chaired by the Rev. Bernard Wilson, pastor of the Norfield Congregational Church in Weston — which will significantly streamline the national structures of the denomination. The changes now must be ratified by the UCC's Conferences. Synod delegates also approved a major agreement on mutual recognition of baptism and enjoyed a well-choreographed "flash mob" that raised energy, spirits and awareness of the virtues of exercise.

Ten churches participated in the Crossroads Project during the year, which helped them assess their situations and make decisions about their future. Twenty-eight clergy and lay professionals used a new grant program for spiritual and educational enrichment thanks to the generosity of the Linden family. New worship, programming, and resources emerged from the five churches in the Threshold Project, which is now being evaluated for its next iteration. In addition to YAMS and Giv<sup>2</sup> activities, young people gathered for an inaugural Youth Revival the night before the May Conference meeting, and over a hundred signed up as Members of Thinking About Working for God for a Living. Preparations are now under way for next summer's National Youth Event.

976 young people from 146 Connecticut UCC churches received the life-changing benefit of a summer session at Silver Lake — and some received more than one — coming to "love God, love their neighbor and love themselves." 2,722 people enjoyed a retreat experience during the winter, spring,

and fall. Renovations began on the Retreat Center, and “high ropes” participants found a new cooperative challenge helping each other up the Jacob’s Ladder.

*ConnTact* published four “themed” issues in 2011, with CTUCC.org, the *CTUCC ConferenceCast* podcast, and *CTUCC This Week* email assuming the task of keeping the Conference up-to-date. The weekly *Spirit Calendar* continued to offer reflection and prayer via email, website, Facebook and Twitter each Monday.

2012 will likely be a year of some decision. The Search Committee will engage in the active phase of their task to identify the Conference’s next leader; the Board of Directors will seek to address the support of Conference ministries in light of declining Our Church’s Wider Mission contributions. Amidst it all, the Conference will continue to strive, in Interim Conference Minister Chuck Wildman’s words at the Fall Meeting, “To empower the churches, from the smallest to the largest, to fulfill their Christian mission.”

As clergy and churches of the Connecticut Conference, he said, “We are not alone. We are the servants of Christ’s Church, and we have a covenant ministry together.”

## **MEMORIAL COMMITTEE**

The Memorial Committee has received gifts for the year of 2011 in memory of the following:

Rolly Maury  
Marge Robinson  
Carol Anderson  
Michael Simeon  
Florence Wyland

Respectfully submitted,  
Lois Froelich

## **MEMORIAL GARDEN COMMITTEE**

The Memorial Garden, created 17 years ago, is for past and present members of The United Church of Rowayton and their immediate families: spouse, partner, siblings, children and parents. Applications for a reservation are available in the Church Office. Any member of the Memorial Garden Committee will be happy to answer any questions that may arise.

Last year, 2011, there were 17 new reservations and nine interments. The Memorial Garden now has 211 members, with 91 interments and 120 reservations. With the current Garden configuration, there are 78 available spaces.

All of the Memorial Garden funds have come from reservations of Church members and contributions specifically designated for the Garden. The Memorial Garden continues to be financially responsible for its maintenance and upkeep.

Once again the Memorial Garden Committee thanks our Church Family for their continued support for this beautiful project.

Robert Aldrich  
Caroline Robinson

Kate Davies  
Marcia Smith

Marsha Hall  
Gerry Thompson

Respectfully submitted,  
Michael A. Poler, Chair

## **SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

The Social Committee coordinated the following events in 2011:

1. Winter Bar-B-Q on March 6<sup>th</sup>
2. "Fling into Summer" luncheon in conjunction with Church School celebration on May 15<sup>th</sup>
3. Welcome Back from Summer Fellowship Hour on September 18<sup>th</sup>
4. Fellowship Hour Cookie Exchange on December 18<sup>th</sup>

We would like to thank individual members of the Committee for their hard work and dedication in 2011: Ann Wood-Barton, Stephanie Close, Patty Genuario, Margaret Steele, Melinda Young, Donna Gauthier, Terry Machette, Amanda McAree, Carol Royce and Neville Peltz.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ellen Mulhearn and Sine DeMaio, Co-chairs



## **PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

The Public Relations Committee published six Newsletters in 2011. Members from Boards, Committees, Staff and the Congregation contributed many articles which facilitated putting together these issues. Thanks to all our contributors.

The Committee supported the Church's fundraising activities through publicity for our annual Tag Sale and celebration of John's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as pastor of our Church. Classified ads for services and sermon topics were run weekly.

The PR Committee looks forward to continuing to serve The United Church of Rowayton.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kris Jenkins



## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The Nominating Committee is charged with working with Board and Committee chairs to help find volunteers to serve on our Boards and Committees. We will present the proposed slate at our Annual Meeting on February 5<sup>th</sup>. To all of you who have agreed to serve, we sincerely thank you.

If there are any people who we may have overlooked during this process and would like to serve, you may contact any member of the Nominating Committee.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lois Froelich  
Sarah Starkweather  
Co-Chairs

## **HISTORIANS COMMITTEE**

The narrative history of our Church for 2011 has been completed for review and approval by the pastors with an eye to it being published about the time of the Annual Meeting. Copies will be available in the House of Worship for anyone interested.

Maintenance of the files continues, as does gathering of new material. We encourage anyone to offer clippings, photos or other items of possible interest for consideration and request their source and date be clearly indicated. Such items should be placed in the Church Office "slot" labeled Flowers and Historical.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michael Ziegler

## BOY SCOUTS TROOP 2



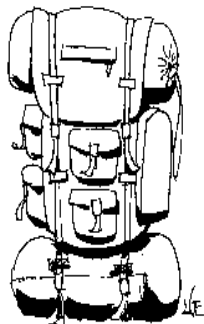
Troop 2 Rowayton is active as ever, we are over 65 scouts and growing.

We are an active, year-round outdoor troop. The Scouts, along with trained adult leaders, camp in all kinds of weather including overnights in January which have gone down in temperature below zero. We have taken historical hikes in Manhattan, Boston and Valley Forge, climbed cliffs, downhill skied and become certified in First Aid and CPR. There are almost two hundred different Merit Badges which can be taken in all aspects of knowledge and skills required.

The rank of Eagle is the highest level of Scouting and we finished two projects which require extensive planning and organization which is the final step in the Eagle process. Extensive ground work and new signs were placed on Sheffield Island and work was done on Norwalk's Historical Cemetery. Over 2,000 hours were spent in community service for 2011.

The United Church community is always invited to attend any of our meetings or an Eagle Court of Honor. The Troop appreciates the use of the facilities and we do help out at the Church Tag Sale and donate the Christmas wreaths decorating the building doors.

Any boy from the area can visit, with his parents, on a Thursday night that local schools are in session, 7 to 8:30pm. We invite boys who want to be involved in an active outdoor organization, including summer and winter camping, to learn leadership skills and be prepared for life.



Respectfully submitted,  
Tom Robinson  
Scoutmaster

## UNITED CHURCH NURSERY SCHOOL

Established by The United Church of Rowayton in 1966, the United Church Nursery School is a non-profit, non-denominational preschool for children ages two to five. We are currently in our 42<sup>nd</sup> year of providing a quality educational and nurturing preschool experience for local families. Licensed by the State of Connecticut's Department of Public Health, UCNS meets all current safety requirements. For the 2011-2012 school year, we are educating 65 children from approximately 55 families. Our enrollment has increased by almost ten percent this year with the addition of a second two's class. Approximately twenty-five percent of our families are members of The United Church of Rowayton. In addition, our treasurer reports that the school is fiscally sound.

The heart and soul of every nursery school is the teaching staff. We have enthusiastic, experienced and dedicated staff – all of whom arrive to work every day with a smile on their faces. Each of them is a valuable member of our teaching team.

**Twos** – are taught by **Loreta Juknaite**, recognized by the State of Connecticut as a Head Teacher. UCNS' Twos is a "hand in hand" program, where children must be accompanied and supervised by a parent, grandparent or caregiver. This class meets one day per week, on Tuesday or Wednesday afternoons.

**Threes** – are taught by Head Teacher **Laurie Clingenpeel** and assisted by **Peggie Rath** five mornings a week. On Wednesday mornings, we have a third teacher-assistant, **Wendy Blattman**. This program consists of two classes that meet three mornings a week, which come together on Wednesday mornings.

**Fours** – are taught by Head Teachers **Judi Livingston** and **Susan Lue**, and assisted by **Elizabeth Haskell**. This class meets five mornings per week.

**Pre-K/Fives** – are taught by Head Teacher **Karen Meese** and assisted by **Loreta Juknaite**, and this class meets five days per week.

**Extended Day** – is taught by **Susan Lue** and **Loreta Juknaite**, Monday through Friday. This program is offered to children age three to five and meets in the afternoons.

In addition, we offer many exciting and educational enrichment activities throughout the school year. In 2010-2011, children participated in field trips to Rowayton Pizza, Rowayton Library, The Rowayton Fire Department, Rowayton Market, The New Canaan Nature Center and the Five Mile River/Pinkney Park. Special visitors to the classrooms included musician Joanne Parady, artist Chris Tinnesz, the Norwalk Police Department, UCR Pastor John Livingston, Stepping Stones Museum for Children and Mad Science of Fairfield County. Our Fours class also enjoys making the 2x4's luncheon menu once a month!! In June, we have a summer camp that is open to the community.

Our program is thriving, thanks in no small part to The United Church of Rowayton, the efforts of the UCNS Executive Board and the UCNS Parent Board Committee. In addition to our outstanding staff of teachers and assistants, we are fortunate to have Wayne Gamache, who oversees the maintenance and cleaning of the school. We are honored to run this special preschool program for the benefit of our community and we will continue to care for our school with a loving, cooperative and educational spirit.

Respectfully submitted,  
Paula W. Keller, Director