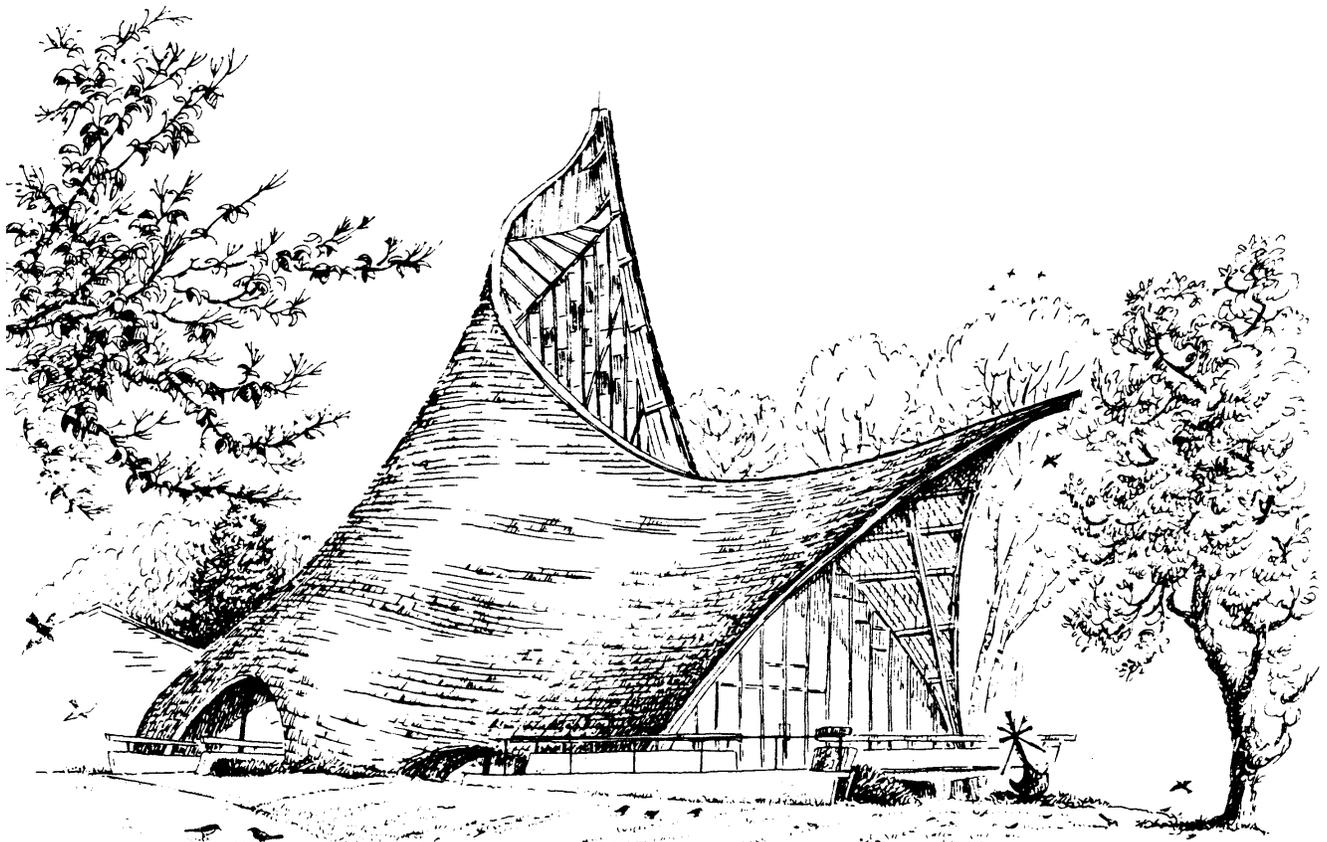


**THE UNITED CHURCH OF ROWAYTON
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

ANNUAL REPORT

2021



United Church of Rowayton

J. M. Patterson Craig

The United Church of Rowayton Mission Statement

We are a Christian community, dedicated to welcoming all who seek a relationship with God, to sharing God's Word and love, and to nurturing all in their journey of faith.



Open and Affirming Statement

The United Church of Rowayton is an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ, which renews and strengthens its commitment to advocate justice and equality for all people. Therefore, led by God's Spirit and with consideration of our brothers and sisters in faith, we declare that we welcome, respect and care for people of every gender, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, economic circumstance, and physical and mental ability into the worship, rites and sacraments, fellowship, and leadership of our church. We recognize and love each and every individual as a child of God. With God's grace we therefore covenant to grow and practice a unity of faith that transcends our differences and celebrates our lives.

Ministers to the Community: *The Congregation*

Senior Pastor: *John Livingston* Founding Pastor: *Donald W. Emig*

Director of Music: *Marsha Hall* Children's Choir Director: *Judi Livingston*

Director of Christian Education: *Val Harden*

Director of Communications: *Bill Peltz*

Office Manager: *Kris Jenkins*

Treasurer and Business Manager: *Bill Sarr*

Premier Property Management: *Dileep Chandran*

Office Hours: Tuesday through Friday 9:00am – 3:00pm

210 Rowayton Avenue, Rowayton, CT 06853

Telephone: 866-1415 Fax: 838-2067 Website: ucrowayton.org

E-Mail: john, kris, billsarr, billpeltz, Dileep, Val, or christianed@ucrowayton.org

Marsha Hall: mjharmony@aol.com Judi Livingston: jliving53@aol.com

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THE UNITED CHURCH OF ROWAYTON
70th Annual Meeting, February 6, 2022

OFFICERS FOR 2022

Moderator	Gehr Brown
Clerk	Bill Peltz
General Treasurer	Bill Sarr
Business Manager	Bill Sarr

STATISTICAL REPORT

Total Adult Members on rolls as of December 31, 2020	364
Inactive Members Removed from Church Records During 2021	0
Transfers Out During 2021	15
Members Deceased	1
Members Received During 2021	0
Confirmands Received in 2021	13
Adult Members on rolls as of December 31, 2021	348
Baptisms	10
Weddings	5
Funeral and Memorial Services	5

Members and Friends who have died in 2021

James Steele Hopkins
Jean O'Connor
Joseph Smilancsky
Joan Typermass
Arthur Typermass
Cinda Cartee

CHURCH ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS – 2021

In lieu of an annual history and because church records are now archived digitally, this year the congregation decided to include a short list of highlights in the Annual Report.

Because of COVID regulations, church activity this year was significantly restricted.

Special Events

May 16 Our first live (outdoor) worship service since the pandemic began

June 13 Jonathan P. Wildman Memorial Scholarship recipients announced and high school

Senior graduates congratulated

September 12 Rally Day service

September 19 Lou Froelich Appreciation

September 22 Pastor John Livingston submitted his letter of resignation

September 26 Confirmation Sunday

October 6 Anchors met for first time since beginning of the pandemic

October 7 Bible Study Group met for first time since beginning of the pandemic

October 24 Blessing of the Animals

December 5 Christmas Tree Lighting

December 12 Living Nativity



*The old year is worn and tired.
Time now to kiss it goodbye.
Take with you its wisdom and all that you have learned.
Remember the past year with love,
but let go of its despair.
Live the year that lies ahead
with fresh energy and hope.
Be strong, have courage.
It is time now for something new.*
(Source: Contemplative Monk, Facebook post)

As I reflected upon 2021 this poem seemed to capture the meaning of this past year. Personally, as I approached 2021, I was worn and tired following the end of 2020. Along with all the stress caused by COVID-19, I was beginning my recovery from the stroke I had on October 8, 2020. My physical and occupational therapy schedule was rigorous and exhausting. Throughout the year I have made significant progress and learned a tremendous amount about how the body and mind and soul work together to strengthen one's whole being. I am continuing to work hard to re-gain my strength and confidence trying to maintain my courage and hope. The love and support I have received from my family and our Family of Faith has kept me moving in a positive direction.

2021, for our Family of Faith, has been a year of hopeful frustration. By this I mean, we have faced all the frustration caused by the continuing pandemic with as much hope as we can possibly have given the circumstances. We began having in-person worship in May. We, then, went back to just offering virtual worship for the summer and came back to the sanctuary in September hoping to keep moving forward with improving conditions. However, with a new variant surging, as we approached Advent and Christmas, we were becoming more and more aware that we needed to be cautious once again, therefore, hopeful frustration!

As you read these reports you will see that, through it all, our Family of Faith as remained strong! Strong and steady financially; strong and active lay leadership (Boards and Committees); strong and inspiring music program; strong and enthusiastic youth involvement (20 in Anchors, 25 in Confirmation); strong and caring Outreach; strong and compassionate Caregiving and Prayer Shawl ministry; strong and inquisitive Bible Thursday Study Group (30 participants); strong and creative Flower Committee and keeping all of this together a strong and dedicated staff: Director of Music, Marsha Hall; Office Manager, Kris Jenkins; Director of Christian Education, Val Harden; Director of Communications, Bill Peltz; Business Manager/Treasurer, Bill Sarr; Assistant Treasurer, Lou Froelich; Property Manager, Dileep Chandran; Children's Choir Director, Judi Livingston. In so many ways and because of so many committed people we have remained strong! This is so important to me as I announced my plans to retire in 2022.

The Board of Deacons is preparing for the future by securing an Interim Pastor who will help the church evaluate its' ministry, programs and opportunities, and create a search committee to find a new Settled Pastor.

With 2021 behind us I encourage you to:

*Live the year that lies ahead with fresh energy and hope. Be strong, have courage.
It is time now for something new.*

I believe the most appropriate way for me to end my last Annual Report, is to share, once again, the letter I wrote in September:

Dear Members and Friends,

On Sunday July 20, 1986, I accepted the call to become your Pastor. In September of 1986, Judi and I, together with our daughters Kelly and Samantha, moved to Rowayton. Our son Michael became part of our family four years later. During these past 35 years, you have been our Family of Faith. We have been so blessed to have been a part of your lives and the life of this church and community. We have seen in the United Church the strengthening of the commitment to sharing God's love and the growth and deepening of its' worship, music, education, and outreach. We have felt your love and support during the challenges of life that we have endured.

The time has now come for Judi and me to begin a new journey. I will retire from being the Pastor of The United Church of Rowayton on May 1, 2022. The Board of Deacons will be presenting a plan for the appointment of an Interim Pastor until a Search Committee is formed to find a new Pastor.

It will not be easy when we leave. Our children have grown up here and we all have established such loving friendships and caring relationships. We have created heartfelt memories that will live in our hearts forever.

Judi and I are so grateful for all that you have been and are to us. The greatest honor to the ministry that we have shared will be to continue to keep this Family of Faith strong and growing and thriving holding an important place in the city of Norwalk and surrounding communities. I pray that you will continue to make a difference in many lives sharing God's love and grace known and felt in the Spirit and name of Jesus the Christ.

*The way is long, let us go together.
The way is joyful, let us share it.
The way is ours, let us go in love.
The way opens before us, let us begin!*

With much gratitude and love,

John

FROM THE LAY LEADER

As I end my (four year) term as Lay Leader/Moderator, I look back and wonder how so much can happen in the space of four years! But I will just focus on the past year—where many good things happened despite our struggles with Covid.

First of all was Pastor John's progress in recovering from his stroke last October and then his announcement that he will be retiring May 1 of 2022. We know the physical therapy, etc. was difficult and were so happy to see that he has been able to lead services this year—both virtual and in-person. His retirement is a milestone event in that the Church has only had two ministers for its entire history! That he will be terribly missed by all of us goes without saying!

On the positive side, a small group of us worked on revising the Volunteer Handbook and we trust that it will be approved at the January 2022 Council meeting. Work is also underway to revise the Employee Handbook and we hope to have it completed early in 2022. Bill Peltz developed welcoming materials for our new “Welcome Table”, new signage for the Church and a two-way PVC stand where we now place banners regarding special events at the Church. Thank you Bill!

Pastor John put a “Revision” committee together in April to plan for our return to in-person services. Due to Covid, Pastor John's need for some R&R and other factors, we did not hold summer services in Pinkney Park. However, Pastor John put together a wonderful series of recorded services complemented by some beautiful photography and music from Marsha Hall and guests musicians.

A lot of work went into solidifying the Church's relationship with the Nursery School and I think I can safely say that we are back to where we were at the formation of the the Nursery School in 1966. The Church's role as “Fiscal Sponsor” puts the Church back in an oversight role and Council members were provided with a review of the Nursery School's finances and operations at the November meeting. We anticipate several benefits from the new relationship—not the least of which will be savings in a combined insurance program with one broker. These changes were formalized at a Special Meeting of the Congregation in June—where we also approved some changes in the Church's Constitution and By-Laws. As part of the Nursery School project, the Board of Household Concerns concluded that it would be prudent to contract with an attorney to assist us in various matters. Happily, we reached an agreement with a local attorney (Stamford) who has extensive experience with non-profits, including many houses of worship.

Despite Covid, the Board of Christian Outreach's “drive through” projects were all highly successful.

Due to Covid (again) and some other issues, the Board of Household Concerns was unable to complete some scheduled projects. Patrick Steele will cover these, the projects that were completed and what is being done to “get back on track” in his report.

Val Harden and the Board of Christian Education kept the Sunday School and the Anchors program running. Plus, Val is now assisting Pastor John with confirmation.

Thanks to Kris Jenkins—our Office Manager Extraordinaire who keeps administrative order; Bill Sarr for handling our finances; Marsha Hall for our excellent music program and Dileep Chandran

for his “can do” attitude. And special thanks to Bill Peltz—whose counsel and guidance made my job so much easier over the past four years.

Finally, as I have done in prior years' reports, I urge those of you who have never served on a Church Board or Committee to consider doing so. The Church is entering a period of major transition and we need new leaders. Your participation will ensure that the church of the future will continue as the vital institution that it is.

With much gratitude and appreciation,

Gehr Brown, Lay Leader/Moderator

BOARD OF HOUSEHOLD CONCERNS



The Board of Household Concerns is responsible for all aspects of the Church's finances including the setting of budgets, revenue and support, and expense monitoring; overseeing the Church's endowment and other invested funds; and maintaining the Church's physical property.

Sub-committees that report to the Board of Household Concerns include: Investments; Stewardship; and Property, Plant and Equipment.

BUDGET: The Church's revenue budget for 2021 was \$517,500. Actual revenue was \$456,896 including \$420,055 in pledge contributions versus a 2021 goal of \$400,000. The major cause of the shortfall in revenue to budget was a decision to not transfer any funds from the endowment; the budget assumed such a transfer.

Actual expenses for 2021 were \$520,998 and were essentially on budget despite unanticipated legal costs incurred in formalizing the nursery school fiscal sponsorship agreement.

Despite the continuing disruptions caused by the pandemic that affected rental income, plate collections, and certain costs, the Church had a good year financially.

STEWARDSHIP: The stewardship campaign for 2022 began in November 2021 with a goal of \$400,000. Pledged contributions typically represent 80% of the Church's annual revenues. We count on every family to participate on whatever level is appropriate for their situation. The theme for this year's campaign is

**Building on the Past!
Celebrating the Present!
Preparing for the Future!**

If you have not made your pledge for 2022, please do so now!

INVESTMENTS: The Church relies on our Investment Committee (Jim Clark, Geoff Beringer, Mallory Close, and Charlie McIlvaine) to oversee our investment portfolio. Most of the portfolio is invested with United Church Funds that produces competitive returns while focusing on socially responsible investments.

Investment results increased again by 9.5% from 2020 not including net deposits. The investment portfolio increased to \$2,902,896 at 12/31/2021 from \$2,664,511 at 12/31/2020.

PROPERTY, PLANT & EQUIPMENT:

The major projects this year were to:

- 1) Stain the upper portions of the Sanctuary. Unfortunately, this was not completed as the Contractor was unable to provide the needed insurance certificate. BOHC plans to compete this project along with possible other work on the upper reaches of the Sanctuary which will need scaffolding in due course.
- 2) HEATING and HVAC: We changed our oil supplier to Gault Energy as they allow us to buy oil at a fixed price for 12 months, rather than the rate at the time of delivery.

HVAC: The Congregation gave approval for the Board to spend \$150,000 for upgrades to the HVAC system to improve air circulation and filtration in the Sanctuary and Undercroft, as well as upgrading the Air Conditioning for the Nursery School.

HEATING: We asked Gault to inspect the furnace which is more than 20 years old. Unfortunately they found an oil leak as well as three holes. Given the price quoted to repair the furnace to extend its life by only a couple of years, BOHC decided to it would be better to replace with a new unit(s) to get maximum efficiency and modern design.

This has become our top priority. With the help of Frank Mullaney coordinating with our Engineer and Suppliers, we will be looking replace the existing furnace before Fall.

Consequently we will be spending the \$150,000 referred to above on replacing the furnace, and have added a further \$25,000 for contingencies.

The HVAC project will be postponed for the time being.

I would like to thank our entire board for their service this past year: Bob Eydt, Kate Davies, Pat Begos, Penne Weicker and Jim Clark.

Our board could not function without the constant assistance and input from Gehr Brown, Bill Sarr, Bill Peltz and, of course, John Livingston whose perspective and counsel is truly appreciated.

As I complete my term on the Board I am grateful to Pat Begos who will take over as Chair, and to Bob Eydt who will assume the responsibilities as Project Manager as we move forward with maintaining and updating the Property, Plant and Equipment.

I am especially grateful to Gehr Brown whose unfailing support, attention to detail and good humor have led us all through a particularly challenging four years.

And I would be remiss if I did not mention the help given by Dileep Chandran who maintains the plant and equipment so cheerfully and efficiently.

Lastly, it is the generosity of YOU the Congregation that allows the Board of Household Concerns to maintain and improve the property, plant, facilities, and general operations of The United Church of Rowayton. Thank you for your generosity!

The Board of Household Concerns can only succeed if it has members with a variety of skills and talent. If you have a gift to offer our board, please let us know!!

Respectfully,

R. Patrick Steele
Board Chair

2021 FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPORT



Total Receipts (as of December 31, 2021)

Pledges Paid	\$351,930
Unpledged Contributions, Plate, Church School	5,225
Rentals	28,190
Fundraisers	243
Total	\$385,588
2021 Pledges paid in 2020	\$63,398
2020 Pledges paid in 2021	1,700
2022 Pledges paid in 2021	106,249
Transfer from Endowment	0
Grand Total	\$556,935



TREASURER'S REPORT as of December 31, 2021

UNITED CHURCH OF ROWAYTON TREASURER'S REPORT

<u>Bank Balances</u>	<u>December 31, 2019</u>	<u>December 31, 2020</u>	<u>December 31, 2021</u>
Fairfield County Checking	146,058	120,091	119,316
Fairfield County Money Market	89,692	89,657	89,693
Ameriprise Financial	18,200	40,253	31,069
Total	253,951	250,001	240,077
Benevolence Checking			
Deacon's Fund	8,910	9,800	10,625
Outreach	6,420	9,381	13,282
Sabbatical	11,776	10,426	10,426
Total	27,231	29,607	34,333
Capital Checking			
Capital	2,420	299	990
Emig Fund	-	1,200	1,200
Lois Paul Fund	-	10,000	-
Memorial Funds	3,085	3,835	4,260
Total	5,505	15,334	6,450
Flower Fund	6,101	7,203	9,405
Memorial Garden Checking	2,827	3,262	7,738
Schwab Memorial Garden	28,175	34,795	38,230
Total Bank Balances	323,790	340,201	336,234

2022 PROPOSED CAPITAL BUDGET

<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>BOHC Approval Only</u>	<u>Congregation Approval</u>		<u>Total</u>
		<u>Already Approved *</u>	<u>Additional Requested</u>	
Boiler Replacement	-	-	175,000	175,000
Sanctuary Staining	-	35,000	-	35,000
Parsonage Refresh	-	20,000	5,000	25,000
Building Replacement Cost Analysis			8,500	8,500
HVAC Replacement		-150,000		-150,000
Unforeseen	-	25,000	-	25,000
Total Expenditures	-	\$230,000	\$188,500	\$268,500

*November 14, 2021 meeting of Congregation.

UNITED CHURCH OF ROWAYTON 2022 PROPOSED BUDGET

	2020 Actual	2021 Budget	2021 Actual	2022 Proposed	Comments
REVENUE					
Pledges	441,772	400,000	420,055	400,000	
Building Rental	6,080	5,000	2,160	5,000	
Transfer from Endowment	-	71,500	-	89,900	
Proceeds from PPP Loan	48,500	-	-	-	
Nursery School	27,772	29,000	29,513	30,600	New Facilities Fee Agreement
Plate/Unpledged Contributions	3,738	12,000	5,025	12,000	
Fundraisers, Net	188	-	143	-	
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 528,050	\$ 517,500	\$ 456,896	\$ 537,500	
EXPENSES					
Board of Christian Education	2,077	7,000	3,500	7,000	Return to more normal expense
Class Activities and Curriculum, Youth and Confirmation Programs, Special Events, Child Care, Adult Ed					
Board of Christian Outreach	45,900	45,900	45,900	45,900	
Board of Deacons	6,867	9,100	3,635	9,100	Return to more normal expense
Spiritual Development, Sabbatical, Music Program Development, Supplies, and Special Programs					
Salary and Benefits	271,148	284,000	289,472	284,000	Assumes 3% salary increases but no bonuses; Judi for 4 months; interim pastor for 8 months at current pastor salary & benefits
Clergy and Staff including Communications Director, Director of Music, Children's Choir Director, Office Manager, Business Manager, and Director of Christian Education					
Administration	59,715	57,000	67,677	71,000	\$3K added for new retained legal counsel; \$4K added for insurance
Office Expenses, Communications (Video, Broadband, Telephone, Website, Social Media), Payroll Taxes, Legal, Insurance, Stewardship and Social Committees					
Plant and Facilities	101,326	107,000	103,314	113,000	Inflation on heating oil and some services
Heating Oil, Electricity and other Utilities, and General Maintenance of House of Worship, Meeting House and Parsonage					
Capital Repairs	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 494,533	\$ 517,500	\$ 520,998	\$ 537,500	

BOARD OF DEACONS

The United Church of Rowayton's Bylaws charge the Board of Deacons with the general supervision of the church and public and special worship services. In addition to serving as Co-Deacons of the Month, each Deacon is available to support Pastor Livingston's work in nurturing the spiritual growth of the Congregation as a whole, and persons on an individual, one-on-one basis. During 2021, the following members served as Deacons: George Albano, Rob Ayala, Sue Guarcello, Frank Jenkins, Jessica Knowles, Des McLaughlin, Neville Peltz, Chris Sabol, Lisa Sandstrom, Jody Sattler, Roger Wachnicki and Meg Warren.

2021 was a unique year for the Board of Deacons, with two profound events shaping our agenda. The ongoing pandemic was an overriding consideration as we discussed how and where we worship, and on September 22nd, Pastor Livingston notified the congregation of his decision to retire on May 1st, 2022.

The Board of Deacons, with guidance from Reverend Doctor Michael Ciba (Area Conference Minister and Team Leader of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ), will begin the process of choosing an Interim Minister in January. A search committee has been formed, comprised of Lynne Pratt, Neville Peltz, Rob Ayala, Roger Wachnicki and Frank Jenkins. This Interim Minister will be trained in assisting congregations as they engage in the thoughtful, prayerful process of choosing a new "Settled Minister" to lead our congregation. The Interim Minister will not be a candidate for our Settled Minister.

The task of searching for new spiritual leadership for our congregation is all the more daunting as Pastor John is, well – Pastor John. He has been with the United Church of Rowayton since July of 1986 and is only the second Pastor to lead our congregation since its founding. Ensuring that our congregation acknowledges all of the gifts that Pastor John, Judi and the entire extended Livingston family have blessed us with and celebrating John's legacy will be a wonderful aspect of the Board's work during the first four months of 2022.

Regarding the pandemic, the Board deliberated at length over the timing of a return to in-person worship, working within the guidelines imposed by the City of Norwalk while trying to balance the spiritual needs of our congregation against our responsibility to provide a safe environment for worship. Outdoor worship in the spring was followed by virtual worship over the summer. Rally Day saw the joyous return to worship in our beautiful Sanctuary indoor worship. Virtual services have continued throughout the year, thanks to the tireless efforts of Pastor John, Marsha Hall and Bill Peltz, the producer of our virtual offerings.

The Board of Deacons wishes to thank the Altar Committee who provided altar flowers, beautiful holiday floral displays, and tended to the permanent plantings in the Sanctuary that lifted our spirits and provided a sense of continuity. We continue to be grateful to the Prayer Shawl Group for creating literal expressions of warmth in baptismal and adult shawls especially important during this unprecedented year. We are grateful to the Caregiving Ministry and the group that prepares healthy "comfort food" meals for our seniors for their important, selfless, and discreet work.

Respectfully Submitted,
Frank Jenkins, Co-Chair

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

2021

- Our virtual worship services helped keep our Family of Faith together during the pandemic, when we could not worship together. An online, virtual congregation started following us. We will continue to offer these services to our virtual congregation and to those who cannot attend a live, in-house service.
- Communications worked with the Board of Deacons to improve signage around the church and to create a strategic welcome plan, the most visible part of which is the Welcome Table. We are a welcoming and caring congregation, and this plan is designed to convey that message beginning when a newcomer pulls into our driveway.
- We partnered with David Snyder Group to redesign our website.
- Thanks to the Board of Household Concerns' support, banners announcing special events were designed and displayed on the front lawn, giving us more of a community presence.
- Pastor John's messages were re-purposed and put on YouTube and in a blog on our website, and the audio tracks of the virtual worship services were converted into weekly podcasts. Because they are available 24/7, we now minister to an online congregation for the other 167 hours of the week.
- Meetings of the congregation, boards, and committees were held on Zoom, and we continued using Zoom after we returned to live meetings for those unable to be present in person.
- Our primary social media channels are Facebook and Instagram, and we use Nextdoor to share events with our more immediate community. Facebook boosted ads were taken out to announce special events, such as the Blessing of the Animals and Christmas services. We kept Google My Business (and Yelp) up to date because they are the first place most church hunters turn to.
- And many thanks for the help given by Olivia Begos and Meg Schwanhauser and by the current Communications Committee member, Alyssa Shapiro.

Bill Peltz
Communications Director

♥ CAREGIVING MINISTRY ♥

Dedicated to listening and keeping in touch

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 well-being 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.

The year 2021 was another challenging year for all of us. However, being able to gather again for Church service was a blessing. The Ministry was able to give rides to Church for people who otherwise would not have been able to attend. Telephone calls, cards and notes are other ways to keep in touch with church family, which is so vital, especially to those who live alone. I encourage everyone to be a "caregiver" and remember those who would love to hear from you.

This past year Ann DiLeone retired from her position as co-chair of this ministry, however, she continues as a caregiver. Ann had such an important role in the continued success of this ministry. I personally am so thankful for her ideas, guidance, and dedication and best of all her friendship. Thank you so much Ann.

As always a big thank you to the members of the caregiving ministry:

Diane Albano, Joanne Brown, Stephanie Close, Ann DiLeone, Debbie Douglas, Petrea Poler, Lynne Pratt, Caroline Robinson, Marcia Smith, Patrick Steele, Shawn Sullivan, Donna and Roger Wachnicki.

****All of our work is strictly confidential****

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Brown and Ann DiLeone
Co-chairpersons

Caregiving Ministry



MUSIC DEPARTMENT



An annual report in the middle of Covid 19 surges is difficult at best. The music department at the United Church remains willing and able as soon as it is safe!

The Adult Handbell choir has met throughout this last year. The faithful members have rehearsed and performed as a mainstay of worship. The Senior choir began singing masked throughout Advent and Christmas. The Children's choir rallied for Christmas Eve and sang Silent Night. Even masked they brought the glory of the holiday season through their lovely voices.

Throughout the year with the continued support of the church, we have been blessed to have wonderful instrumentalists augmenting worship services.

It is my hope that the Annual Music Report for 2022 will be filled with all the musical opportunities this church has offered year after year.

Respectfully submitted,
Marsha Hall
Director of Music



ALTAR COMMITTEE

The Altar Committee was able to continue to provide floral arrangements for the altar, enhancing the videos of the services which we could not attend in person during so much of this SECOND pandemic year. The regular weekly arrangements are a joyful opportunity not only for our committee members to express their interests and talents with the lilies of the field, but also for members of the congregation and more distant friends to make donations for memorials for loved ones or to celebrate happy events.

We felt it was important that passing traffic still see that the Church was actively celebrating the seasons. For Easter we again decorated the outside Cross with spring flowers. But in time for our Harvest celebration we did both inside and outside as we were able to worship back inside the sanctuary. For Advent and Christmas there were 17 wreaths on all the doors to the Sanctuary and Meeting House, plus the large wreath behind the pulpit, and the beautiful Advent wreath with candles which in recent years has been Kathy Draper's particular effort. We had the usual red and white poinsettias in the planters, plus around the altar there were white poinsettias, red cyclamen, plus fabulous red amaryllis that June Strubinger had brought to peak bloom under heat lamps in the bath tub at her home. Lynne Pratt did extra leg work getting us sufficient lengths of roping for the traditional roping and bows. We are very grateful for the extra labor Dileep cheerfully takes on, cleaning up the needles after our decorating.

The Altar Committee also usually provides the carnations for Mother's Day. We take care of the green plants in the planter, a job which Stephanie Close has taken on for the last several years.

Our funding comes entirely from donations to our separate account. We do not receive any funding from the annual church budget.

The committee members are: Stephanie Close, Barbara Currie, Kate Davies, Kathy Draper, Lynne Pratt, Caroline Robinson, Kathy Siever, June Strubinger and Bev Viele.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Davies
Altar Committee Chairperson

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN OUTREACH 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

<p style="text-align: center;">MISSION & PURPOSE</p> <p>The mission of the Board of Christian Outreach is to improve the lives of those in need in the greater Norwalk area with love and compassion. It accomplishes this primarily by benevolently disbursing funds to agencies and individuals, offering mission and service programs, holding drives and collections, and providing educational opportunities and information for our Family of Faith. It can extend its impact worldwide by participating in programs approved by this Board.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BENEVOLENCE - ALLOCATIONS</p> <p>BOCO allocated \$45,900 to 24 agencies, the majority of which were Norwalk-based. In addition, material evaluated at approximately \$8,500.00 was donated to drives.</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Children/Education:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">36%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Food, Material & Shelter:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">19%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Health:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Human Rights</td> <td style="text-align: right;">14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Social Welfare</td> <td style="text-align: right;">12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Other:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1%</td> </tr> </table>	Children/Education:	36%	Food, Material & Shelter:	19%	Health:	20%	Human Rights	14%	Social Welfare	12%	Other:	1%
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<p style="text-align: center;">EDUCATION</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #add8e6; border-radius: 10px; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p><i>Updated Volunteers Opportunities</i></p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid #add8e6; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Due to the ongoing pandemic this past year there was no Volunteer Fair.</p> </div>	<p style="text-align: center;">EMIG FUND</p> <p>The Emig Fund was new in 2019. It is a special fund to be used to allocate grants of up to \$10,000 each year to local agencies and individuals in support of special projects that fall within BOCO's mission and purpose. This fund is independent from BOCO's annual budget.</p>												
<p style="text-align: center;">OUTREACH</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ffcc99; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Due to the ongoing pandemic, Open Door Shelter had to pause in-person volunteering.</p> </div>	<p>Due to the pandemic in 2020, BOCO was unable to meet based on the procedures created for the administration of the Emig Fund Grant program. When we opened up this fall we met and decided to allocate \$20,000 this year. We will announce the recipients in February.</p>												
<p style="text-align: center;">DRIVES & COLLECTIONS</p> <p>Due to the ongoing pandemic, 2021 was again a year of drive-thru Drives. We held six drives this year the same as 2020.</p>	<p>We, the 2021 Board of Christian Outreach, thank you for supporting our activities this year.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Board: Kristen Nilsen, Ginny Pitman, Sarah Ritchey, Carolyn Snyder, Wendy Blattman and Melanie Lynch</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Laura O'Brien (Chair)</p>												

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” Proverbs 22:6

Having the students back, in person, learning and engaging in Christian fellowship, was the brightest moment in 2021 for our Christian Education programs. With sunshine and ice cream, Rally Day September 2021 was a great kick-off to the academic year 2021-2022. Thanks to the Board of Christian Education members and a few former members for all their help in making it a success!!

Before we could get to that point though, through the first half of 2021, we continued sharing God’s word to our children by sending encouraging messages to the families, including lessons and links to crafts that the children could have fun with at home. They also enjoyed hearing a few children’s books during some of our virtual services to bring messages of love and hope directly to them while watching service at home. Calls to the families to check-in and stay connected were appreciated.

And then there was the annual Easter Egg Hunt! With over 30 children and their families participating, that event brought a glimmer of hope that we were coming closer to being able to worship together soon, and at the very least gather together outside in the fresh air for fun, family, friendship and fellowship. It also strengthened our relationship with the United Church Nursery School members as they were of course invited to join in the hunt.

Our first communion class enjoyed their special day with their families despite masks and social distancing...and being “on camera” for the virtual service. It was such a relief to have worked out the logistics so our children could continue on their faith journey, accomplishing this important milestone without missing a beat...and being able to share it with their extended family and Church family that could not attend in-person.

As in-person worship resumed, it seemed reasonable to re-engage in-person Sunday School, the Anchors youth group and confirmation classes. Although we were limited by masks and social distancing, all the programs launched successfully in the fall and are continuing even with a short pause during the most recent surge.

Sunday School - The Sunday School children enjoyed more focused shorter messages, crafts, and their own individualized kits of crayons, scissors and glue sticks to minimize contact issues if any. Social distancing was implemented, and masks and hand sanitizer were also provided if needed for each class. Wearing their Halloween costumes and decorating pumpkins for the October 31 service was especially memorable!

Anchors - Gospel messages, fellowship, a trip to Skyzone, and the Christmas ornament swap are the highlights for the Anchors this year. We are considering virtual bingo and trivia night for this next session as a precaution this month. To date, 15 anchors meet on average twice monthly.

Confirmation - Congratulations and Blessings to the Confirmation class of 2021, celebrating their Confirmation in September. Pastor John continues to guide the second-year students towards their confirmation which is scheduled for March 27th. I am in training, assisting him with the first-year students to be sure they too will continue their two-year journey towards Confirmation in similar fashion as years past. In early December, the First and Second-year students shared a fun holiday

tradition, working together in teams to shop for toys for the children and their families who are assisted through Person to Person. They spent their funds perfectly within the budget-a small Christmas Miracle! In mid-December their performance in our Living Nativity was flawless and stellar. Can't say enough about this wonderful group!!

The BOCE closed 2021 with our annual Christmas Tree Lighting event. Families gathered around our tree outside to light up our Christmas spirit, warm our hearts with carols and hot chocolate, and bring smiles to our faces as we snapped selfies with Santa. What a great way to prepare for the season celebrating the birth Jesus and renewed life!

Administrative updates included improved access to Christian Education information on our website, the teaching sign up calendar, related forms, and our revised safe church policy.

Referring to our stewardship theme for 2022 offers an appropriate close to this summary: Building on the Past, Celebrating the Present, Preparing for the Future!

On behalf of myself and the Board of Christian Education, we are committed to building on the past. We especially acknowledge all that Pastor John has established for us over the years of his service. We celebrate the present, working together within our means, with flexibility and grace, despite the challenges we face because of the pandemic, to keep our faith-based education programs vibrant and our Church energized and primed to enjoy our time with Pastor John, to welcome an interim pastor in the near future and a settled pastor soon after.

The congregation's involvement in the Christian Education program is vital. We appreciate your continued support and effort through this challenging year! You are instrumental in strengthening the faith experience within this Church family for now and the future. . .and that is so critical especially these days.

Sincere and heartfelt thanks go to Pastor John, the Deacons, and the Council for their guidance, support, and faith in the BOCE to continue efforts on behalf of our children.

Kris, Bill Peltz, Bill Sarr, Dileep, Judi, Marsha and all the volunteers - Your work is invaluable!

With gratitude,

Val Harden, Christian Education Director

Brian Anderson, BOCE Chair

BOCE Members; Emma Sykes, Sarah Sykes, Leslie Borum, Sarah Whitman, and Joe Warren



**LAY DELEGATE TO THE
SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
AND TO THE FAIRFIELD WEST ASSOCIATION**

Last autumn, the Fairfield West Association held a very successful and well-attended racial justice workshop for pastors and plans to offer it again for lay leaders. We will be hearing more about the Association in the months to come; it, along with Rev. Michael Ciba, Team Leader and Southwest Area Conference Minister, will work with our Board of Deacons throughout our transition period.

The Southern New England Conference spent much of the year redefining position and hiring personnel, a process made more challenging by the pandemic. Several members of our church attended the Super Saturday workshops.

Bill Peltz

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

The Memorial Committee has received gifts for the year of 2021 in memory of the following:

Jean O'Connor
Joseph Smilancsky
Joan Typermass
Arthur Typermass

Respectfully submitted,
Lois Froelich

MEMORIAL GARDEN COMMITTEE

The Memorial Garden is for past and present members of The United Church of Rowayton, and their immediate families: spouse, partner, siblings, children and parents. Applications for reservations are available in the church office and online. Any member of the Memorial Garden Committee will be happy to answer any questions that may arise.

In 2021 there were seven new reservations and five interments. The Memorial Garden now has 269 members, with 145 interments. With the current Garden configuration, there are 15 available spaces as of the end of 2021.

All of the Memorial Garden funds have come from reservations of Church members and contributions specifically designated for the Garden. During the year the Memorial Garden transitioned the financial responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of the garden to the Church, while retaining oversight of the standards and style of the venue as well as control of the funds that have been collected for the benefit of the Garden.

The Memorial Garden Committee thanks our Church Family for their continued support for this beautiful project.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Ackerly, Treasurer, and the Memorial Garden Committee



NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Nominating Committee is responsible for enlisting the volunteer support of church members to serve on the various Boards and Committees that guide the operations of the United Church of Rowayton.

The Committee also prepares an annual Proposed Slate of candidates for presentation and approval at the church Annual Meeting held each February. The members of the Committee wish to thank all those who currently serve and those who have agreed to serve new and extended terms.

The Committee welcomes all members of the congregation who wish to participate in service to our Church and Community. If you are interested and would like to serve or recommend someone for service, please contact one of the members listed below.

Currently serving on the Nominating Committee: Meggan Douglas and Tammy Langalis

Respectfully submitted,
Tammy Langalis

UCNS AT A GLANCE

Our Mission

The preschool program at UCNS guides children on their early childhood educational journey.

Through active exploration alongside interaction with adults, peers and materials that are developmentally appropriate, our goal is the social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional growth of every child in our care.

Enrollment and Staffing

58 students enrolled: 11 in our Pre-K Fives; 12 in our Pre-K Fours; 19 in our Threes; 16 in our Twos.

We employ 12 staff and all are part-time. Gina Ely is Director, Sue Lue is the Finance Manager as well as Head Teacher. We also have two additional Head Teachers and one on the cusp of earning that distinction. The school must have two (2) Head Teachers on staff.

Licensing

We are fully licensed by the State of Connecticut's Office of Early Childhood. We recently passed our annual state inspection with an "almost perfect" score, and our license has been renewed until December 1, 2026.

In addition to the annual licensing inspection, we are required to have yearly inspections completed by: City of Norwalk Health Department, the local Fire Marshall, and a yearly lead water test.

Parent board

This consists of a four-person Parent Executive Board that mostly oversees the fund raising aspects of the nursery school in parent volunteers.

UCNS BUDGET 2021 - 22

Projected Net Income

Tuition	\$ 377,867.50
Lunch & Extended Day, Camp	\$ 20,705.69
Fundraisers	\$ 14,275.00
Grants, other income	\$ 6,015.00
	\$ 418,863.19

Projected Expenses

Compensation, Payroll taxes	\$ 303,978.19
Rent (not including camp month)	\$ 27,000.00
Classroom Expenses	\$ 19,900.00
Office	\$ 13,635.00
Property Maintenance, Playground	\$ 31,150.00
Legal, Consultants, Professional Dev	\$ 9,500.00
Family, Community Expenses	\$ 2,500.00
Insurance	\$ 11,000.00
	\$ 418,663.19