

*The Congregational Church
in South Glastonbury*

Annual Report 2017



The Congregational Church in South Glastonbury

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Senior Minister

2017 has been a marvelous year for me! I have felt support from every direction. Rev. Larissa Forsythe is a fabulous partner in the Gospel. We have formed an excellent working relationship. For this, I am truly thankful.

In May, I traveled to Malawi with three young women who had studied with me in Confirmation years earlier. It was one of the best mission trips ever because of their eagerness to be involved with our mission partners. I watched their lives and their perspectives changing day by day. Our Malawian partners are still talking about Siobhan, Dana, and Kelsey. For this, I am truly grateful.

Confirmation Education continues to be my delight. Enabling sophomores to wrestle with their deep, theological questions is satisfying to my soul. I look forward to Wednesday nights anticipating the kind of discussions that lead to maturity of faith. For this teaching ministry, I am truly thankful.

Early in the year, it became apparent that our Muslim and Jewish neighbors were being bullied in new and disturbing ways. Thus, I agreed to meet monthly with Islamic and Jewish leaders to work on strategies to reduce the fear. I found this to be personally rewarding. To spend an afternoon each month with people of faith who care deeply about peace and justice is spiritual food for me. For this, I am truly thankful.

There was a lot of grief in the church family this year. We lost so many loved ones. I never left home without a hankie. What I witnessed is the way this church responds to grieving families. We show up for each other. We hug. We weep. We bake and deliver casseroles. We write letters. We share a cup of tea. We celebrate life. For this, I am truly thankful.

Rev. Dick Allen

Associate Minister

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?” Isaiah 43:19

As we close the calendar year (and start the church year) in Advent, I find myself reflecting on the new things that God is doing at South Church. New things can be exciting, invigorating, and life giving. They can also bring grief, exhaustion, and burn out. New things are both joyful AND painful and we have experienced both together as we have journeyed through the “new thing” of my first year at South Church as your Associate Minister.

You have welcomed me with such hospitality, such openness, such affirmation that I have often found myself overwhelmed with joy and gratitude. We have shared worship together. We have shared ministry in mission, pastoral care, youth support and empowerment, and prayer. We have shared music together; singing, listening, and dancing our hearts out. We have shared meals and laughter and tears together. We have shared ideas and dreams and heartache together.

In our short time together, we have seen a lot of “new things”. We’ve seen new members join, new babies baptized, a new worship project we’ve dubbed “Out of the Box”, new ministries spring up, and new staff join our team.

However, almost every new and exciting thing also brings a certain degree of grief and anxiety. Sometimes, ringing in the new means saying goodbye to the familiar and beloved and goodbyes are never easy. It is my firm belief that, as we continue to deepen our relationships with one another, we will move into the new things that God continues to do in and through us in a spirit of togetherness.

I am so fortunate to be here with you at South Church. I cannot think of another group of people that I would rather be with as we watch God’s New Things unfold.

Wild Blessings,
Rev. Larissa Forsythe

Director of Discipleship Education

“To be more childlike, you don’t have to give up being an adult. The fully integrated person is capable of being both an adult and a child simultaneously. Recapture the childlike feelings of wide-eyed excitement, spontaneous appreciation, cutting loose, and being full of wonder at this magnificent universe.” ~ Wayne Dyer

The theme for this year was WONDER and AWE ~ looking for God all around us and in us as we ask questions and learn and grow in our faith. A starting point was the popular book, “The Three Questions” by Jon J. Muth.

We started our program year in August, with children, youth, and adults from our church and the surrounding community, sharing “Maker Fun Factory ~ Created by God and built for a purpose” Vacation Bible School (VBS). This was a meaningful experience for all involved ~ experiencing God’s love with all of our senses remains one of my very favorite “God sightings”!

Our Nursery Ministry continues to offer a safe and loving environment for our littlest friends to explore and play. Our Church School Teaching Team lovingly provides lessons and activities that foster our growth as disciples. We continue to focus on mission. In support of our Global Mission Church Action Plan, we again “sponsored” a child through Global Ministries. Our Church School offerings support 12-year old Lady Margareth Ornales from the Kalauman Development Center in the Philippines. We have developed a meaningful relationship with her through the exchange of letters. Additionally, we participated in “Operation Christmas Child” and packed and shipped a record 76 shoe boxes for children who would otherwise have no gifts at Christmas. In creating more than 250 ornament tags for the “Gift of Giving Trees” and learning about some of community outreach partners, we shared our love in creative ways. Our love for animals, helping those in need, and caring for the Earth was evident in the Heifer activities that we share during Lent. We are also sharing a three-part communion program that helps us grow in appreciation for the gifts that God offers us; especially belonging, being nourished, and being loved. We will share in a special communion with our entire faith family in March.

I am so grateful to all the volunteers who teach, serve on the Church School Team, and to the families who participate in and support our programs. Especially I am grateful to the children and youth, with their wonder and awe who keep my ministry feeling very joyful.

With love and gratitude, Tracy

Director of Music

“Make a joyful noise to the Lord..... Come into God’s presence with singing....” From Psalm 100

Once again, I happily report that the musicians in our church family are talented, dedicated, hard-working and more than willing to contribute to the spiritual life of South Church! But even more important, they do indeed “make a joyful noise” in so many ways! We are an ever-expanding family that finds great pleasure in singing and playing the wide variety of music that expresses our faith. This very act of learning, perfecting and sharing our music with others is a spiritual experience. I am constantly gratified by everyone’s amazing generosity of time, commitment and enthusiasm!

While the personal time constraints on our busy families have presented some challenges, this year has still seen the addition of several new singers to the Senior Choir and a number of new younger members to the Youth Choir. We are always hoping to welcome anyone who wishes to join us!

Once again, I offer a huge “thank you” to everyone who has in any way contributed to our efforts! Jim Mirakian heads the list that includes our Senior Choir, our Children and Youth along with their parents, musically gifted adults, high school and college students, small groups like “Joyful Noise” led by Liz Smith as well as everyone who supplied weekly music during the summer months. Youth Choir mom, Faith Farrell has provided invaluable support to me and assistance in “rallying the troops” again this year. Another enormous “thank-you” goes to our wonderful, creative Church and Support Staff and the very active Music Ministry Team. These are the people who make my “job” such a joy!

Faithfully,

Lisbeth Davis

President's Report

A few days before Christmas, Rev. Larissa led one of her monthly "Out of the Box" services at South Park Inn. There were perhaps 10 clients from South Park and a similar number from South Church attending. Listening to the brief but very personal faith stories many folks recounted, a short but meaningful message from Larissa and the singing of carols accompanied by Paul DeMaio on guitar, the service struck me as being very emblematic of what South Church represents; listening and interacting with intention, giving and receiving hope, active new members, intergenerational events and beautiful music.

Last year's Annual Meeting was Larissa Forsythe's first day as our Associate Minister. I believe I can speak for the church in saying that she has quickly proven to be a great match, if not the perfect choice for our community. Kudos to the Search Committee which was led by Diane Korntheuer. Larissa has jumped in with both feet, from Wednesday School, youth mission and the "Out of the Box" worship, to her passionate sermons exhibiting her theatrical background, and everything in-between. We are so very fortunate that she and Tom chose South Church and Glastonbury as their new home.

Another significant change was the implementation of the Long-Range Plan with regard to the nature and scope of the roles of the office staff, incorporating a much greater use of technology and social media. Realizing the sensitive nature of this course of action and the potential impact on the office staff, the Office Transformation Committee pursued a very intentional and lengthy process in managing the changes. As a result of this process, church member Lynne David was hired as the Financial Manager, and Marie Ferguson, a non-member, will be our Communications Manager. Polly LaBombard, Julie Larkin and Sue Butler Woodward have defined the South Church office for years and South Church, especially the ministerial staff who worked with them daily, will miss them sorely. Polly's years of contribution to the financial management of South Church were celebrated one Fall Sunday after church, and Julie and Sue's long-time dedication and service were celebrated this January.

Physical changes were happening this year as well. An initiative led by Don Peterson secured a \$50,000 grant from the Sestero Fund, as part of the Hartford Foundation, which paid for the purchase and installation of new energy efficient windows in the High Street School building. This ensures a safer and better environment for the school children and all others using the facility.

Recently, the church has been introduced to an initiative which, if accepted formally by the congregation, will perform much needed maintenance as well as significantly enhance the capabilities of the organ. A group of very dedicated members has spent a

great deal of time and effort studying the organ, its needs and how best to address them. They presented their extensive and impressive research to the Church Council recently. We agreed with their recommendations, which are now being presented to the church and will be voted on at the Annual Meeting. Our music program is one of the foundations of our church and a fully functioning and modern organ is a foundation of the music program.

One of the ways that we serve the wider Glastonbury community is to offer the use of our facilities. Several times this year, in response to the terrible incidents of mass violence in our country, our sanctuary was opened during weekday evenings to anyone who needed a peaceful, contemplative space. Maybe to find some answers, maybe to just ask why, but at the very least to simply provide a safe space in the search of solace.

A few initiatives were started which will be completed during 2018. Work on an updated church website should be concluded early in 2018. A revision and updating of the church Bylaws (as restated in 2012) will be voted on at this Annual Meeting. These revisions reflect changes in the needs of ministry teams and groups that have occurred over the last five years as well as some administrative changes. Another initiative just starting is the possibility of becoming a host church in the Family Promise program, which Larissa introduced to Church Council. This program provides shelter to homeless families, with the dual goal of keeping families together while assisting them with employment and finding permanent housing. There will be further church-wide discussions before a commitment is made.

In November, InterCommunity (Health) Inc. celebrated its 40th anniversary. Founded in 1977 by South Church members in the church basement, it was originally known as Glastonbury Mental Health Group. Since then, InterCommunity has become one of Connecticut's leading non-profits, providing health care in many forms to the underserved in Hartford and 16 surrounding towns. It still has a strong South Church presence in the persons of Mike Perry and Don Peterson, serving on the Board of Directors and the InterCommunity Foundation, respectively.

We are fortunate that South Church is bucking the nationwide trend of decreasing membership in mainline churches. During 2017, we welcomed 19 new members, a testament first and foremost to the leadership of Dick Allen and Larissa Forsythe and their ability to forge personal and spiritual connections with everyone they know and meet. But it is also a testament to the genuineness and hospitality shown by all of you, the members and friends of South Church.

Carl Bristol
President, Church Council

Adult Faith Enrichment Ministry Team

Mission Statement: The Adult Faith Enrichment Team creates and coordinates spiritual enrichment and educational opportunities for adults.

2017 started with the addition of the Rev. Larissa Forsyth to our team and we quickly put her to work continuing the theme of faith in our community and other religions. Our team meets once a month and aims to support programming for our adult population with a focus on our own spiritual beliefs and the spiritual beliefs of others in our community.

A highlight of our programs are as follows:

February 2017 Our very own scholar Kathleen Housley lead a discussion about Dietrich Bonhoeffer based on his essay *After Ten Years*. The essay was available in both print and electronic format ahead of time and about 25 people attended the event.

March and April 2017 The Team members co-lead a discussion based on the *The History of God*, by Karen Armstrong, 1994. Parts of the video were viewed and then discussed in a four-part series.

October 2017 Eunice and Pat meet with Dr. Amrutur V. Srinivasan and developed a program to continue our series on world religions. Dr. Srinivasan is a good friend of South Church and he presented a general overview of Hinduism to a packed crowd in the Social Hall.

November 2017 Larissa gave a presentation on the *Gospel of Mary*, which was started with an impromptu pot luck. Again, this was well attended by about 40 people in our social hall.

History of the Church: Laura Perry, Liz Davis (Church Historian) and Gil Tyler have been meeting about programs or opportunities to share the church history that has been collected over the years. Laura has been putting pieces written in the past by former church historians about the church in the E-Connector.

Christian Service Ministry Team

The Christian Service Ministry Team continues to service the Congregational Church at South Glastonbury members, friends, who are experiencing life changing events. The primary function of the team continues to be providing funeral receptions for families of loved ones. In addition, we provide means to members and loved ones during illnesses and hospital stays. We also send cards for condolences, celebrations, birthdays and get well.

Christian Services met once a month throughout the year with the expectation of July. Our communications with each other are through the church builder website (primarily), but also regular email and phone.

A summary of our ministry for 2017 is as follows:

- We arranged and staffed 9 receptions throughout the year following memorial services for 40 to 200 people.
- We prepared and delivered meals to families with illness
- We sent cards, made phone calls and personal visitations to families
- We planned, organized and staffed the Homecoming Picnic for approximately 130-150 people. I raised \$714.00
- We prepared and serviced a meal during the month of March at South Park Inn. In December we met at the home of Kelly Mehiel to share a meal and stuff tins with cookies for delivery to members who are house bound or could use a visit.

Respectfully Submitted

Co-chair Kelly Mehiel and Susan Noe

Church School Team

We continue to support the Congregational Church in South Glastonbury's children and youth through the Church School program, MY (Middle Youth) Group 7th and 8th Grade Program, Nursery Ministry, and Vacation Bible School (VBS). Our focus is on the safety and spiritual growth of the children and youth in the church's care.

The church school calendar includes a combination of "regular" Church School, Intergenerational Worship Services, and large group activities which bring together youth of all ages. We have a new rotation curriculum from Sparkhouse which is based on Old and New Testament stories. It provides multi-sensory and developmentally-appropriate options for teaching the stories. While we are challenged with fluctuating ages and attendance, this curriculum has allowed us to really dig deep into all aspects of the stories. We have supplemented the curriculum with wonderful children's literature, as well.

This year's VBS program was successful, bringing together youth and adults from our church and the surrounding community. In addition, the Nursery Ministry continues to be well received by visitors and the church community.

Our team supports the Church School's focus on mission. In support of our Global Mission Church Action Plan, we continue to "sponsor" a child through Global Ministries and appreciate the relationship the children have developed with her via letters. Additionally, we had a record amount of support from our entire faith family for "Operation Christmas Child" Shoe Boxes. We look forward to participating in "Heifer Project" again during Lent.

In addition to supporting our youth programming, the team has an ongoing goal of offering family programs to promote faith development. Family and community programs have included VBS, and movie nights. We look forward to offering additional family programming the second half of the program year.

Faith Ferrall, Chair

Deacon's Annual Report

As we reflect on the past year, we are reminded of the rich diversity of gifts that we have at South Church that enable our ministry to help us care for each other and the entire congregation.

We started the year with our traditional potluck by welcoming Larissa and thanking Al Martino, Colleen Mulkerin, Kevin Savage, Lauren David and Pat Sconzo for their dedication and help to serve the congregation, welcome the new Deacons and get to know each other better. Our theme for our annual Deacon's Retreat in March was "What it means to be a Deacon" which was a wonderful exchange that helped to enrich and build on our own personal views. As a follow up to our retreat, we had intentional training on our responsibility as Deacons including the reading of Joys and Concerns, serving communion and what it means to extend hospitality to visitors.

We continued our participation in the monthly services at Salmon Brook, served at South Park Inn, oversaw the Maundy Thursday service and the Prayer Vigil, the Service of Remembrance and Laity Sunday. We coordinated summer punch (with helpful punch recipes!), connected with other ministry teams through assigned liaisons, and assisted the ministerial staff at memorial services throughout the year.

One of the highlights was our participation in the amazing Faith Statement conferences with our Confirmands and their sponsors as they took the next steps in their own personal faith journey. These conferences were instrumental in our commitment to write our own faith statement and share it with our team. This work will continue into next year.

Other special events, activities and accomplishments included:

- Collaboration with the Search Committee to support Larissa's ordination celebration
- Provided support to Tracy Bausum in her pursuit of a commissioned minister of faith formation for children and youth within the United Church of Christ
- Support for Larissa in her efforts to explore alternative worship in alignment with the Long-Range plan
- Began, with collaboration from Membership, some initial ideation surrounding the formation of usher teams to support both the 8:30 and 10:30 services.
- Began discussions associated with the replacement of the pew bibles

The past year has been very active and rewarding for our team. We are indebted to Dick and Larissa for their spiritual guidance and support throughout the year along with the office staff, countless members and friends that make this South Church a special and caring place.

With blessings and fellowship,

Matt MacEwen, Co-Chair, Peggy Reduker, Co-Chair

Delegates Ministry Team

This was an exciting and historic year to be a Delegate!

CCSG Delegates represent South Church at various gatherings of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ throughout the year, sharing ministry ideas and fellowship with local churches and our Hartford East Association.

During the past two years the CTUCC was engaged in an intentional process of collaboration with the UCC Conferences of Rhode Island and Massachusetts. We entered into a year-long “season of discernment” to determine if the increasing connections among us were leading toward the creation of a new Conference of the UCC in Southern New England. South Church held two meetings to inform the congregation of events. In January 2017 the Boards of Directors of the three conferences voted to approve a resolution calling for the development of a merged conference.

UCC Historical Tri-Conference Meeting – June 15 & 16, 2017

The UCC Conferences of the three Southern New England states, CT, RI and MA, met in Hartford to share worship, a keynote address and various breakout sessions. At separate business sessions all three conferences voted to approve the resolution, and to move forward with a proposal to form a new unified conference. Details are being developed in 2017 and will be shared at the 2018 Tri-Conference meeting.

Hartford East Association Events

1. **September 13** – Ecclesiastical Council was held at Marlborough UCC to hear the paper and vote on the candidacy for ministry of Denise Peterson.
2. **October 1** – Installation of the Rev. Nina Barlow Schmid, to become Pastor at the First Congregational Church of South Windsor.
3. **October 15** – Installation service for the Rev. Fredd Ward at the South Congregational Church, UCC, in East Hartford.
4. **December 3** – Service of Ordination and Installation for Rev. Elizabeth Kathleen Gleich, at the First Church of Christ, Congregational, in Glastonbury.

Gratitude for years of dedicated service to Jean Partridge, Charlotte Stacey, and especially Esther McCune, who will be leaving this team to be of service to other Ministry Teams. In faith and fellowship, Peggy Reduker, Chair

Investment Team Ministry

The restricted funds of the Church are invested with the Connecticut Conference UCC Consolidated Trust Fund. The overall goal of the Consolidated Trust Fund (“CTF”) Total Return Fund is to maintain the inflation adjusted market value of assets while providing a relatively predictable, growing stream of revenue. The objective, therefore, is to earn a total return (net of all fees and expenses) equal to or exceeding the churches targeted spending rate, currently 4.5%, plus the inflation rate – as measured by the Consumer Price Index. In addition, funds are managed according to the guidelines for socially responsible investing established by the Board of Directors and annual meetings of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ.

At the Investment Team November meeting, the team set the 2018 spending plan limits for the invested Funds, based on a total return spending policy. The spending policy uses a 20-quarter rolling average and a 4.5% annual spending cap.

Monthly performance reports from the CTF are kept in the Church office in both paper format and on a disc created annually at the end of January each year.

Information about the Consolidated Trust Fund and quarterly performance summaries are posted on the Connecticut Conference UCC website <https://www.ctucc.org/ctf>.

Rob Brewer, Jim Breen, and Jim Funderburk, chair

Membership Ministry Team

The mission of the Membership Ministry is to serve the members of South Church and the wider community with exuberant hospitality. Our focus continues to be on the timeliness of follow up with visitors that complete a yellow card. A commensurate priority in 2017 was to formally recognize our tenured members that have devotedly served South Church for many years. It was a busy year with many accomplishments.

Highlights are:

- Connected with 95 visitors to South Church
- Initiated 19 New Members
- Sponsored 2 New Member Exploration Meetings
- Sponsored 2 New Member Dinners graciously hosted by the Hecker Family
- Sponsored 3 New Member Sundays
- Provided the flowers on the front steps of the Main Street entrance. Thank you to Janet Feldman for keeping the flowers hydrated with frequent watering this Summer.
- Purchased 6 high top tables for the social hall. This will increase the ability to mingle and socialize at events hosted in the Social Hall.
- Recognized 25-year members with Silver Anniversary Candle.
- Purchased family parking signs located in strategic locations around the property for easier access to the building for families with small children.
- Implementation of the multifold brochure located in the Connector hallway, with the name tags and added to the new member packet.

In 2018 the Membership Ministry team will continue to focus on fellowship and begin to implement the use of multiple social media platforms to highlight our congregation and missions to the extended community.

Faithfully,

The Membership Ministry Team 2017

Membership Statistics

Number of active members as of 1/1/2017	679
Active members lost through death	5
Inactive members lost through death	3
Letters of Transfer of Active Members	1
Inactive by own request	1
Confirmands moved to inactive by vote of Deacons (12/17)	32
Confirmation Class, June 2017	23
Moved to active by vote of Deacons	2
New members	20
Number of active members as of 1/1/2018	685
(includes Confirmands from last 7 yrs.)	
Funeral services performed by ministers	22
Baptisms performed by ministers	14
Marriages performed by ministers	15

In Memoriam—Members who died in 2017

Judy Snow

Ellen Goddard

Lois Field

Sidnee Lohman

George Towle

Donald Field

Lucille Bahnsen Schubeck

Jane Adams

Carol Kirsheman

Church Clerk

Mission Ministry Team

The Mission Ministry Team strives to carry out the goals of South Church and the UCC by providing help and hope to those in need; by working for justice and peace; and by taking actions that improve people's lives in our communities and throughout the world. This is a privilege that we have been granted by the generosity and vision of our church congregation. We hope you feel joy when looking at the list of mission partners that our church has helped this year.

The Mission Ministry Team works through direct partners of our choosing and through Our Church's Wider Mission contribution. Half of OCWM money supports needs in Connecticut and the other half goes to national and global UCC mission efforts. CCSG has been recognized as the largest giver to OCWM in Connecticut. We are glad to also be recognized as a "5 for 5" church, meaning that we give to OCWM plus 4 special offerings during the year - One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need and the Christmas Fund.

This year we were pleased to further increase the congregation's understanding of the work and commitment of our mission partners by hosting a Mission Fair on Sunday, October 15th. The Fair was advertised frequently in the e-Connector and in the Glastonbury Citizen. During both coffee hours the social hall was a colorful and dynamic hub of interaction, learning and networking. It was a great success with 25 partners exhibiting and providing information about their work. Many of our partners participated in the worship services which helped to deepen our bond with these people who are doing God's work in the world.

We helped the Stewardship Committee with the pledge campaign letters by sharing information about our mission partners and the impact of our donations, and by providing mission speakers on some Sundays. The Mission Team enjoyed serving dinner at South Park Inn in May.

The Mission Ministry Team has been able to fund all our ongoing mission partners this year (see attached chart) and was also able to respond to two disaster situations by donating to the UCC's funds for hurricane victims and for famine relief in Central and East Africa.

With private foundation funds we have sponsored a disabled student for summer camp at Sunrise Camp, funded camp activities at Adelbrook for children with autism and developmental disabilities and provided a specialized bike for a local child with cerebral palsy.

The Mission Team has been blessed to have three youth members who added greatly to the functioning and outlook of our committee. As these youths have graduated and gone off to college, we are fortunate to have three new youth members who will be with us during 2018.

The mission work of our church is much wider than just the Mission Team. Our mission outreach includes projects by our Sunday School children, youth mission trips, the Refugee Family Committee, monthly meals at South Park Inn, Adults on the Level, Arm 2 Arm Mission trip, Endowment Committee donations, the Golf Tournament proceeds and the everyday kindness afforded by the Minister's Discretionary Fund and the individual acts of kindness of church members. We all feel grateful that our church has been able to make a difference in so many ways for so many people this year.

Darlene Allen (Chair)

Mission Partners
GLASTONBURY
Glastonbury ABC House
Naubuc Back Packs
Glastonbury Youth & Fam Svs (WACY)
InterCommunity Mental Health
Glastonbury Food & Fuel (money made from golf tournmt)
HARTFORD/STATE
Adelbrook (formerly Cromwell Children's Home)
Christian Act. Council Freedom School
CT Conference/UCC Dues
Hartford Hospital Spiritual Care Department
Hands on Hartford
Hartford East Association Dues
Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective
Hartford Seminary Black Ministry Program
Hartford YMCA Youth/Family Center
Immacare
MARC
Open Hearth
OCWM (one half of tithe for regional/national)
South Park Inn (plus \$894 from Souper Bowl Collection)
True Colors
Zeppo House
UCC Emergency USA Relief Fund (hurricanes)
CT Coalition to End Homelessness
NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL
Crosby Fund Haitian Education
Malawi Orphanage
Medical Aid to Haiti (MATH)
SAMALA
Sioux Indian YMCA
Mozambique Orphanage
UCC International Emergency Relief Fund (famine)
OCWM (one half of tithe for international)
DONATIONS FROM PRIVATE FUND
Adelbrook (Autism & Dev. Disabilities program)
Summer Camp & Adaptive Bike (for special needs kids)

Music Ministry Team

As we lead the church in the Music Vision, we are led by two able musicians - Lisbeth Davis, Director of the Music Program who leads the Senior and Children's Choirs, and Jim Mirakian, who contributes a special spirituality as first service pianist and is our Church Organist for the second service.

As in the past, our Easter Music was provided by our Senior Choir and Brass from Yale. We continue to be blessed by our own instrumental group, "Joyful Noise" led by Liz Smith. This talented group of church members participates throughout the year in special services.

Lis Davis arranged for special music throughout the Summer Services. Many talented musicians enriched our worship. During the year, Charlotte Stacey substituted on the organ for Jim Mirakian for his vacation.

The Music Team Ministry has continued with diverse programming for the Second Sunday Music Series. This ministry is not funded through the church budget. Instead, donations are received using special envelopes now located in the pews to enable modest payment to the musicians.

During 2017 we had programs presented by Carin Wiesner, violin, with Eric Ouellette, piano; soprano soloist Nina Allbert, accompanied by Joan Burr, piano; Laurentiu Rotaru's beautiful bass voice, accompanied by Jim Mirakian; Paul Bisaccia in April for the Barbara Barnes Memorial Concert; Opus I, Glastonbury High School String Ensemble; Hot Cat Jazz Band, always a congregation favorite; Belery Duo, saxophonist Kendra Emery with percussionist Daryl Belcher; and our choir-led Messiah Sing-along to end the year.

The Annual Carol Sing, organized by Tracy Bausum and the Deacons led by Lis Davis, unfortunately had to be cancelled this year due to an early snowstorm. We look forward to this tradition of singing around the piano (decorated with sparkling lights), cocoa, cookies, storytelling and tree lighting continuing next year. A wonderful multi-generational event, hopefully the weather will cooperate.

The Organ Enhancement Committee, an ad hoc committee of the Music Ministry Team, has been working diligently this past year exploring ways to address the pressing needs of upcoming required repairs and maintenance of our Schlicker organ and, at the same time, to investigate adding some desired enhancements. After researching many possibilities and interviewing several organ companies, the Committee settled on a proposal that was brought to the Church Council in

November. The recommendation was to contract with Austin Organ of Hartford to rebuild our organ, replacing the console, adding digital sounds and other technological advancements. The Council approved a motion to present the proposal to the Congregation for a vote to move forward and authorize a capital campaign to fund the project.

Faithfully yours,
Nancy Semeraro, Chair

Salmon Brook Ministry

When many of us think of South Church, the term “hospitality” comes to mind. Our church has always been known as a friendly church that goes out of its way to show hospitality to all those it encounters. This may certainly be said of the residents of Salmon Brook Center where South Church has had a meaningful presence for over twenty years. Whether it has been hymn sing-alongs conducted by our former Director of Christian Education, Lois Harwick, visits from clergy and the Visitation Ministry team, or the worship services conducted on the fourth Sunday of every month by the Salmon Brook Ministry Team, our church has been a familiar friend to the good folks at Salmon Brook. That tradition of monthly worship services continued throughout 2017.

More than just a monthly worship experience, and perhaps even more important than the lectionary texts read and interpreted, and the hymns sung, is the time spent by the worship team members with the residents on a personal basis—many of whom have little interaction with people outside of the convalescent home environment. Some casual conversation, a gentle touch, or a warm embrace is just as important to these folks as the more formal worship service, and it represents an extension of South Church’s hospitality beyond our doors and into the local community with a segment of our population that at times appears to have been largely forgotten.

The highlights of the worship services are the communion services which are conducted twice a year. Team members take turns serving the elements to each resident individually, including the sharing of a prayer and the laying on of hands. These sacred moments are truly appreciated by the residents, and the team always receives very positive feedback following these services.

In 2017 we continued the initiative begun in 2016 of having two youth members from our church family participate in the worship services during the months of the school year. The South Church youth have readily embraced this ministry, including bringing the residents from their rooms to the worship area and returning them to their rooms following the service, and assisting with the serving of communion. The residents always respond very positively to having the youth present, and the youth have taken away great experiences from their involvement. We also have a member of the Deacons Ministry Team present at each worship service as a way of ensuring that we remain better connected to the larger South Church congregation.

In 2017 we welcomed the addition of Ward Doering to our team, and he has become an integral part of our monthly worship experiences at Salmon Brook.

In an ever-continuing effort to improve upon the worship experience we provide to the residents of Salmon Brook and based on past observations that some residents have difficulty hearing team members during the worship services, we acquired by donation a portable sound system with several microphones which enable everyone to better hear and deliver the spoken word.

Members of the worship team continue to believe that this ministry at Salmon Brook is a true blessing to all—to the residents of the facility that we serve and perhaps even more so to all of us who plan and conduct the worship service each month!

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Atherton
For the Salmon Brook Ministry Team

Stewardship Ministry Team

The Stewardship Ministry Team met in early February to welcome new members Liz Whynacht, Charlie Whynacht, and Paul DeMaio. Returning members were Dave Tiffin, Chris Gullotta, David Waldo and Sandy MacGregor. The team reaffirmed the responsibilities of the Stewardship Ministry:

1. Educate the Church regarding a theology of stewardship
2. Plan, direct and execute the annual pledge solicitation from members and friends of the Church
3. Coordinate with the Church Council and Finance Advisory Committee on the annual budget

A theme for the 2018 Pledge Campaign was established based on the song from the musical *Godspell*, “*All Good Gifts*.” The song is taken from a Thanksgiving Hymn “*We Plow the Fields and Scatter*.” The team adopted a green giving tree as a symbol of the campaign.

All Good Gifts



The team established the following communication plan to educate the congregation on Stewardship:

- Ask members to speak about their love of South Church and what SC means to them
- Ask Mission partners to share about their programs with the congregation
- Bi-weekly E-Connector articles on stewardship and giving
- Bulletin board focusing on the theme of the campaign

The annual pledge campaign kicked off on September 24th:

- Pay it Forward began on September 24th and continued for 4 weeks with members and guests of the church accepting the \$50 bill from Reverend Allen and reporting back to the congregation the following week on how they helped others with the money.
- A schedule was established for members to provide testimony on their love of South Church and why they pledge
- A similar schedule was established for our mission partners to share with the congregation about their programs and the value of our Church's contribution.
- The team revised the pledge card and updated the brochure and annotated budget
- Pledge packets were created including a letter to Church members and friends along with a pledge card and brochure.
- The team decided to take a more personal approach to the pledge packets and set aside October 1st following the 10:30am service to hand out the packets. Paul DeMaio created a beautiful slide show showing all the programs and services provided at South Church. All packets not handed out were mailed.
- On Gratitude Sunday, October 22nd the congregation were able to present their pledge cards in the offering plates.
- The Stewardship team provided regular updates to the congregation on pledges received and total pledged.
- A follow-up letter was mailed to encourage members and friends to send in pledges.

On November 22nd the team hosted an ice cream social to thank the congregation for their pledges.

Respectfully submitted,
Team members

South Church Preschool Team Ministry

As we reflect upon the operations of the South Church Preschool during the previous year, we cannot help but be extremely grateful for the mission and outreach of this program.

It is a joyous experience to walk the halls of the preschool when it is in session and hear laughter and learning. One can't help but think how the sights and sounds of today would be very similar to those of High Street School back in the '50's and '60's. The walls are papered with artwork, much like they would have been when High Street School operated as a Glastonbury elementary school. We can't help but feel truly blessed that this building, which housed so many children in days gone by, is alive with the youngest children of Glastonbury and surrounding communities. But as with any aging building, there comes a time when repairs simply must be made.

The windows were showing their age as we could no longer lock some of them and screens were missing or damaged in others. The cold winter wind could be felt blowing through the cracks where the windows didn't quite fit their frames. The bathrooms, which had been updated in the early '90's, were also showing wear and tear. Rust was forming on the radiators and stall dividers and tiles were becoming loose and needed replacement.

Thanks to a few dedicated South Church members who pursued a grant from the Hartford Foundation, the Sestero Grant was enough to replace all the windows in the building. This very generous grant will be greatly appreciated for years to come as the children participate in preschool activities, safe and warm in their classrooms.

Another blessing bestowed upon the High Street School building was to renovate the two existing bathrooms, so they would be safe and up to current code. They are as beautiful as they are functional!

As if that wasn't enough, the Trustees decided it was time for a facelift in the classrooms and proceeded to give them a fresh coat of paint. The care and kindness extended toward this facility and the preschool program from the members of the South Church congregation are cause for rejoicing!

Reverend Allen once challenged us to find the face of Christ in everyone we see. It doesn't come any easier to do this than to look upon the faces of our caring congregation, our dedicated preschool staff, our preschool parents, and especially, our preschoolers themselves. Their faces are aglow with the excitement of learning and socializing. Our teaching staff is one of the most kind and caring staff any school could be blessed to have, and the results can be seen in the success of this program and the successes of our preschoolers as they continue their education beyond preschool.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl MacEwen, Chair

Trustees Ministry Team

In 2017, the Trustee Team Ministry practiced conscientious stewardship of the physical plant and property of the Congregational Church in South Glastonbury. The South Church campus continued to be a place of hospitality and support for our congregation and the wider community. AA groups, Meetinghouse Poets, business networking groups, music recitals, church meetings, memorial services and weddings are just some of the activities taking place regularly throughout the year.

High Street School continued to house both the South Church Preschool and YMCA summer program. In addition, the High Street School building underwent more major improvements in 2017.

The Trustees wish to thank Don Peterson and the Finance Ministry Team for their support in writing a grant to the Sestero Fund from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. As stated on the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving website, “this fund was created through the estate of Natale and Norma Sestero, longtime residents of Glastonbury, with the goal to benefit the people and institutions from the Town of Glastonbury, Connecticut.” From this grant, funds were secured in the amount of \$50,000 to replace and upgrade the windows at High Street School with new energy efficient models. The windows were installed by Chuck Monzeglio Jr. of CFM Construction. We are so grateful to the Sestero Fund for their generosity!

Thanks to a fortified maintenance reserve and the generosity of the South Church Preschool, the Trustees are pleased to report that we were also able to renovate the bathrooms at High Street School. South Church again partnered with CFM Construction to complete this project. A special thank you to trustee Mike Sheehan for donating his time and talent to paint the hallways and classrooms making the building look like new.

The exterior of our beloved sanctuary also saw some maintenance improvements. The 8 large windows, fascia and steeple were cleaned, scraped and painted as well as the front rod iron rails.

New grass was added to the area between High Street School and the Church allowing for easier maintenance and a welcome appearance. The grounds of our campus have never looked better thanks to our landscaper, James Honiss of Personalized Lawn Care and especially Cheryl Edison for overseeing every aspect of grounds maintenance.

We also would invite all of you to thank our sexton, Natalie Gonzales for her continued care and dedication to keeping our facilities spotless! She is hardworking and diligent, we are so lucky to have her.

Finally, the Trustees wish to thank the entire congregation for their gifts of time, talent and treasure. Without you, none of this would be possible!

Yours in Faith,

2017 Trustees

Visitation Ministry

The Visitation Ministry mission statement is: “To provide caring connections among all members and friends of our South Church family, especially reaching out in love to those who are homebound, in care facilities, hospitalized, and bereaved.” Inspired by our faith and sense of church community, our team endeavored to extend the caring of South Church to those in need.

We are always ready to welcome new members to our team who would like to share in this worthwhile service.

We are happy to have Rev. Larissa Forsythe joining us as our clergy support. She strongly believes in maintaining connection to those of us no longer able to attend services and keeps it as an important priority – as did Rev. Allen.

We seek information from the congregation to help us keep abreast of those in our church community who would benefit from receiving visits, calls, or cards from our team. Inspired by the teaching of Jesus, we seek to reach out to those folks. The joy our team members feel from making connections is fully equal to the happiness they receive from our visits.

Thank you, Rev. Larissa, for your support and guidance and thank you to members of the team who have lovingly ministered to our congregants.

Youth Mission Support Team

OVERVIEW

Youth Mission Support (YMS) is a school year program that is open to all interested students in grades seven through twelve in three groups, Middle School (MSYM), High School Freshman and Sophomore (FRSO) and High School Juniors and Seniors (JRSR). A highlight of the program is a mission immersion experience (the Mission Trip). To qualify for the Mission Trip, the youth attend mission meetings held about once per month and participate in a minimum of two fundraisers and two service projects which we have tagged for the families as “2+2”.

The Youth Mission Support Team plans those fundraising and service opportunities as well as providing some general planning support for the youth in mission programs. YMS is a vital and growing part of our church. Our goals for YMS are:

- Provide fellowship opportunities
- Engage our youth in meaningful exploration of their own gifts
- Enrich their experience of Christian community and service
- Engage our youth in meaningful experiences of being called into the world

FUNDRAISERS

Fundraisers help defray the cost of the Mission Trips. The 2016-2017 fundraisers were:

- Cookie Dough Sale
- Pasta Supper
- Thanksgiving Pie Sale
- Valentine’s Chocolate Pop Sale
- Pancake Breakfast
- Quiche Winter Good-bye Sale
- Vendor Fair
- Easter Bake Sale

SERVICE PROJECTS

Service projects enable the youth to demonstrate servant leadership and build community and commitment to the program. During the 2016 – 2017 program year the youth:

- Helped with the Vacation Bible Camp run at church for a week over the summer.
- Provided support for the Fair-Trade Coffee Hour.
- Helped provide a church service for the residents of Salmon Brook. Cooked and served a meal for an elderly community member.
- Took the leftovers from the Confirmation Rite Reception, made 100 sandwiches, a trail mix and packed donations of personal care products and snacks for those experiencing homelessness in Middletown.
- Made baked goods and delivered to a local Habitat for Humanity build team.
- Helped with Hawkwing’s Annual Holiday Giveaway. They packed boxes and loaded an 18-wheeler with Christmas gifts of new toys, books, warm clothes and personal items for some 2600 youth of the Cheyenne River Lakota Reservation.
- Gathered and prepared a nutritious meal for a senior member of our community delivering and sharing that meal as well as special and memorable conversation.

- Raised awareness of the plight of the homeless by bearing witness on the front lawn for 27 hours in January. Coats and cash were collected, with a portion donated to agencies supporting the homeless in Hartford. The Homeless Awareness Sleepout also brings in funds for the program which does focus on serving those experiencing homelessness while much of the money earned is donated for the cause in the community.
- Assisted Rev. Allen by setting up for and breaking down everything needed for the sunrise Easter service.
- Supported Arm2Arm by collecting medical and personal items and working at the annual fundraiser. In July, youth and adults from South Church participated in the annual medical Mission trip supporting Haitian refugees in the Dominican Republic. Arm2Arm fundraising is deposited into the YM account and disbursed in full to Arm2Arm with a net zero impact thus it is not considered for the Youth Mission Support Financial Report.

MISSION TRIPS

The Mission Trips entail a significant commitment on the part of students, parents, and adult advisors. Approximately 79 youth and 20 advisors participated in mission trips in June. The 7th and 8th grade youth led by Jane DeMaio and Jim David went to Boston, Massachusetts, for five days providing youth service to a variety of agencies substantially focused on hunger and homelessness. The 9th and 10th grade youth led by Pam Reale went to Brooklyn where they did “face-to-face” service work again focused on hunger and homelessness. The 11th and 12th grade youth led by Paul DeMaio spent a week working for Habitat for Humanity in Buffalo, NY. The cost for the three trips was just over two-thirds of the cost funded via tuition paid by the youth participants and a third funded through a variety of fundraising opportunities. Net fundraising and giving for the year were comprised of youth mission fundraising and miscellaneous contributions.

OTHER

The Youth Mission Program made donations to Open Hearth, My Sister's Place and Outreach Ministries and provided Merit Awards to 5 graduating seniors of South Church, in addition to funding a portion of the annual Mission Trips. The Senior Merit Award recipients were Ethan Cumiskey, Lauren David, Julia Benner, Isabelle Grande and Matthew Jennings who were nominated for their active participation in YM programs and demonstrated leadership in furthering the mission of South Church. The students were selected among nominations from the congregation by a subset of our team that did not have graduating seniors in the program.

SUMMARY

The program ended with a small operating surplus. The YM budget is managed on a fiscal year of September 1 through August 31. In 2017, the youth traveled to the Heifer Farm in Rutland, Massachusetts, Providence, Rhode Island and Rockport, Maine. We are blessed to have so many youth and adult volunteers participating in YMS and we are grateful for the generosity of a congregation who gives unconditionally in support of our youth. Submitted by:

Kimberly Meanix Miller

Chair Youth Mission Support Team

2017 Annual Meeting Minutes
January 29, 2017
Congregational Church in South Glastonbury

Opening:

The Christ Candle was lit by Rev. Dick Allen

Meeting was called to order by President, Carl Bristol, about 10:45 a.m.

Carol Kirsheman, Church Clerk, confirmed a quorum.

Carol then read the Call to Meeting.

Carl called for a motion to approve the minutes from last year's Annual Meeting.

Motion was made, seconded, and carried.

Carl welcomed Larissa Forsythe, our new Associate Minister, and her family, noting her involvement in the Homeless Sleepout last night so soon after her arrival in Glastonbury.

Recognition was given to people who have been members of this church for 50 years or more; they stood to applause from the congregation. It was noted that Carol Schmidt is our longest standing member, having joined in 1950.

Reports/Voting:

President's Report: Carl described South Church by reading from the opening paragraph of the Long-Range Plan: "As we consider Jesus's charge to his disciples (Seek first the kingdom...) we see that the Congregational Church in South Glastonbury is an active faith community grounded in worship, service and faith enrichment. In particular, South Church is known for its commitment to social justice, engaging ministries for youth and children, inspiring worship services, and as a place of spiritual growth. We strive to meet the needs of the larger community through our actions, giving, and hospitality." Over the past year we have--

- Hired Larissa Forsythe

- Sponsored the Albukaais, a Syrian refugee family

- Chosen and implemented a new church management software program

- Were recognized for our continued generosity to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)

- Welcomed 18 new members, increasing our membership

Continued a strong youth in mission program which sent out 77 youth and 22 advisors last year to a Habitat for Humanity project in Rockport, ME, the Heifer Farm in Rutland, MA, and hands on service work in Providence, RI
Sponsored three programs through the Adult Faith Enrichment Team on “Getting to Know your Muslim Neighbors”; these were well attended by the wider community.

Provided clothing, toys and other needed items to the children at the Cheyenne River Lakota Reservation

Welcomed another Confirmation Class of 20 young people

Continued to be good stewards of the High Street School, making improvements to the building; a new roof last year, and the Sestero Grant will pay for new windows this year, thanks to Don Peterson and his grant writing team.

Carl encouraged everyone to read through the Annual Report for an appreciation of how much our members and friends and ministry teams do to strengthen the church’s foundations, which are described in the LRP:

- Strong interpersonal relationships
- Inclusiveness and hospitality
- Caring, sharing, and serving
- Safe and accessible buildings and grounds.

The coming year will focus on continuing improvements in the church office in relation to better use of technology and looking into synergies between ministry teams. We continue to refine job descriptions to reflect the needs of the church and know that Larissa will be a huge help in these efforts. Highlighted throughout the LRP was better use of technology and the need for better communication, resulting in the implementation of CCB. Carl urged the congregation to go online to update profiles. We will continue to offer training sessions this year and the I Am the Church session in March will help ministry team leaders learn more about how CCB can help them.

CCB’s Goals and Objectives are to:

- Improve the efficiency of administrative tasks
- Encourage involvement and engagement
- Improve communications and awareness of church activities and needs

Assist leaders with managing activities/events/volunteers.

Carl thanked several people for their efforts in the CCB implementation: Cecile Desmarais and Alice Clive for their many hours on software selection and application. Also, Sue Bristol, David Clive, Carol Kirsheman, Betsy Bush, Rev. Dick Allen, Jill Grieveson, Tom Sokoloski, plus the staff of Polly LaBombard, Julie Larkin, and Sue Woodward.

Carl also thanked Diane Korntheuer and her committee for choosing the best candidate for Associate Minister in calling Larissa Forsythe! He thanked Lynn Blackwell and the Council for their support.

Carl invited Chris Balfanz to come forward and commended him for his great generosity to the church in settling the Albukaai Family from Damascus upon their arrival in August. Chris elaborated on all that his team has done in housing, health care, finding employment, transportation, etc. The Albukaai family is forever grateful to our church. A great thank you was extended to the whole Refugee Committee; they stood and were applauded. More people are still needed on the employment team, helping to find a permanent job on a transportation line for Mohamad.

Carl asked for a motion to approve the **2016 Annual Report**. Motion made, seconded, and passed.

Stewardship Committee Report: Chris Gullotta reported from the “small but mighty” committee. She thanked the committee and the congregation for a successful campaign, and said it was a magical year! She noted her amazement in how much people are giving of their time and treasure but reminded us to keep the momentum going as financial support is needed!

The 2017 Budget has a small deficit. Our only discretionary outlay is the Missions Budget. Tom fielded questions on the budget and then thanked the Finance Committee, especially Jane DeMaio, reading each name aloud. Carl also thanked Tom before calling for a motion to approve the 2017 Proposed Budget. There was a motion to approve, a second, and it passed. Carl announced a meeting next Wed., Feb. 1, 7:00, in the Library to discuss fundraising from the wider community; anyone interested is most welcome to come.

Nominating Committee Report: Carl thanked Cheryl Edison, head of Nominating, and asked if there were any changes or nominations from the floor. Additions were reported and accepted. Carl called for a motion to accept the nominations. Motion made, seconded, and passed.

Carl asked for any other business proper for the meeting, and hearing none, turned toward the closing.

Closing: From the Membership Statistics of 2016, Carol Kirsheman read the names of members who passed away during the past year. Larissa led the prayers of the church.

A motion to adjourn was made at 12:13 p.m., seconded, and passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Kirsheman
Church Clerk