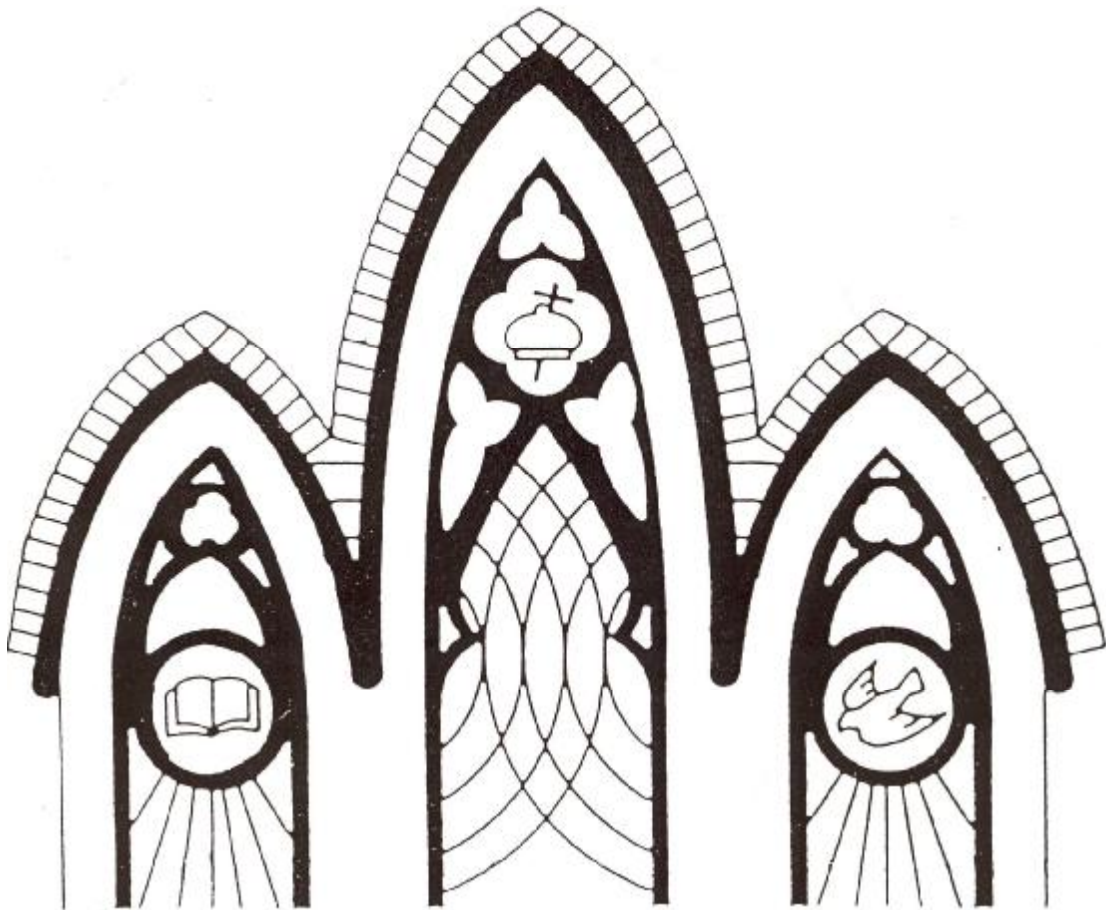


**First Church of Christ, Congregational
Middletown, Connecticut**



**Annual Reports
2010-2011**

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Exciting, challenging times are here, and there's no doubt things are changing radically! First Church's adaptability, steady faith, dedication to service, healthy sense of humor, prudent self-governance and loving, brotherly behavior proved to be enough to keep us going through this past year of uncertainty and upheaval. First Church continues to diversify, often stepping outside the box, to keep up with the times in areas such as membership and activities, and has developed to be a welcoming port on the stormy seas of modern religious life.

This past year, budget issues were again front and center as the world's economy fluctuated. The persistent question of whether First Church would be able to afford more than one minister was ever present. Despite our attempt to maintain 2 personnel in ministerial roles, staff changes loomed and eventually it was decided for us. Sue Latourette, the Assistant Minister, bravely held out in the reduced role, leading our youth program, outreach committee and more but finally left us in February for a full time position elsewhere. Soon afterward, John Hall, our Senior Minister, announced he too would be leaving First Church – in June 2011. John has aptly led this church for 21 years, leading us into new territories and enlivening the congregation with his warm congeniality and creative thinking. He will be sorely missed! A committee has been formed to begin the search for new an interim minister, and eventually we will search for a “Settled” minister. We avoided a third resignation by expanding the hours for the Office Manager. Incorporating some of the administrative duties previously performed by a minister, the position became suitable to retain Lorel Czaka in the renamed role of Church Administrator. Lorel has proven to be a valuable asset in the office and we are fortunate to have her youthful energy, positive drive and organizational skills.

Our faith, hope and positive expectations remain and miracles appeared. One such case involved repairing the elevator, which went from being a possible \$30,000 bill to a \$3,000 fix. While the future of the elevator and the organ are uncertain, we expect they will both be in need of major work in the future. While we wonder about our aging building, signs of thinking outside the box abound as we contemplate ways to survive. We look ahead to creatively using our building, collaborating with other organizations, and continuing to attract new members through strong congregational commitment and character, perseverance and new initiatives.

Our congregation has proven to be our biggest asset, by way of generous and dedicated people too numerous to list. Sadly we lost long-time members, Warren Vigeant and Barbara Maceachern. Two new activities were the return of the Supper Club, re-established by Greg Brooks, and the videotaping/ TV posting of our services by Larry Shobe and Dave Oliveria. With the official addition of the Congo Bongo Committee for Attraction and Growth, we expect to continue to grow as a “Vibrant church family thriving and prospering in God's love.”

It has been a privilege, a joy, an honor and an interesting, educational adventure serving as First Church's Vice-moderator and Moderator over the past two years. I hope to remain a vital part of First Church and grow along with the congregation in the joyful service of God.

Respectfully and gratefully yours in God's love,
Anne-Marie Cannata

**FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL
Middletown, Connecticut**

**Minutes of the 342nd Annual Meeting
May 23, 2010**

Moderator Greg Brooks called the 342nd Annual Meeting of First Church's congregation to order at 11:30 am. Janet Silver offered the opening prayer.

Annual Report and Nominating Committee's Report

Greg Brooks asked for acceptance of the Annual Report, except the Nominating Committee's Report. Cynthia Wilcox-Smith made a motion to that effect; Cyndi Sanders seconded the motion, and the floor was opened for discussion. There was no discussion, and the Annual Report, except the Nominating Committee's Report, was accepted unanimously.

Cynthia Wilcox-Smith presented the Nominating Committee's Report. Cyndi Sanders made a motion to accept the Nominating Committee's Report; Jo-Ann Hansen seconded the motion, and the floor was opened for discussion. Most of the positions on boards and committees are filled, but there are still some vacancies. The most pressing are four vacancies on Deacons, two on Trustees, two on Stewardship, and two on Tidings. It was noted that Charlie Smith will fill out Bill Bynum's term on the Personnel Committee. Richard Sanford's name should be added to Sunday Morning Fellowship. Cynthia Wilcox Smith then opened the floor for nominations. There being none and no further discussion, Greg Brooks made a motion to instruct the Clerk to cast one vote in favor of the Nominating Committee's report; Cynthia Wilcox-Smith seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Changes in Membership

The following have been added to the church's membership in the past year: Calli Conway, Jeremy Floryan, Christine Holley, Richard Mathew Sanford, Robert Schaff, Linda Scott, and Sharon Sharpe. Larry Shobe made a motion to accept these additions to the membership; Curtis Weybright seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. The church has gained 15 members in the past year and lost 3. Evie Hickcox noted that in previous annual reports there was a page of statistics indicating members added and subtracted, the number of pledging units, etc. Evie made a motion that future annual reports include membership statistics; Linda Fish seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Trustees Budget—Early Warning

The Trustees gave an early warning that they may need to ask for additional money in their budget. The church must install a water pressure regulator to cope with the greater water pressure in downtown Middletown, and the Trustees have had other unexpected expenses. The budget is all right for now but may need additional funds later in the year.

Conversation for the Good of the Church

Senior Minister John Hall noted that the congregation is aware of efforts to bring new people and visitors to the church. Congo-Bongo was formed to spearhead this endeavor and has done a great job. What has been most successful has been to create events like the African Dance Sunday and Susan Campbell's presentation and publicize them extensively. These events are not easy to do, but they work. The church's by-laws need to be changed to officially make Congo-Bongo a committee of the church. Right now it is a task force. Perhaps we can make this change in the by-laws at the next Mid-Year Meeting so that the Nominating Committee can add individuals to this committee as people rotate off. In the discussion that followed, several people mentioned that they had come to the church because of special events. Janet Silver and Cyndi Sanders urged that we also focus on nurturing existing members. Cynthia Wilcox-Smith mentioned that we need to publicize our wonderful church school better. The congregation, in general, was encouraged to undertake a "ministry of hospitality," like talking to church visitors and inviting them to coffee hour. Associate Minister Sue Latourette offered to organize a Caring Team to reach out to people in the congregation and make monthly visits.

Passing of the Gavel

John Hall paid tribute to Greg Brooks for his great leadership as moderator this past year, and Sue Latourette thanked Susan Brown for her many years of service as clerk and welcomed incoming clerk, Jennifer Ide. Greg Brooks passed the gavel to incoming moderator, Anne-Marie Cannata, who asked for the congregation's help and support in the coming year.

There was no further discussion. Cyndi Sanders offered the closing prayer, and Anne-Marie Cannata adjourned the meeting at 12:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Brown
Clerk

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL

190 Court Street
Middletown, CT 06457

**Congregational Meeting
January 9, 2011**

Moderator Anne-Marie Cannata called the meeting to order at 11:40 pm. Chuck Bates offered the opening prayer.

Committee and Membership Changes

Additions to committees

Suzanna Barrett – deacons

Andrea Roberts – assistant treasurer

Removed from membership

Kelly DeRosier

Kathleen Ellis

Cheryl Fogg

Rick Willson

David and Susan Grant

Vera Grant

Luke Higgins

Oressa Krebsler

Jamie Lundell

John and Teresa Lundell

Patricia Maines

Debbie Manning

Stan and Debbie Michnowicz

Raymond and Barbara Plum

Carol Precourt

Pat Przywara

Steve and Amy Rand

Martin Rouse

Cynthia Schloss

John and Wendy Shiel

Tom Truskowski

Roxanne Yarrow

Sharon Kupiec

Skip Parker

Howard Thody

Overview of Budget Process

An overview of the budget process was given by Bill Bynum. Three meetings were held requiring over one hundred hours. Considerations of the committee focused on several areas:

Can we afford to continue to be a two clergy church?

How should the endowment be managed to insure its future financial health?

How will we foster and handle the change facing our congregation?

How do we compensate our staff?

Proposed Budget for 2011

Stewardship campaign

Thirteen more pledges were received this year than the previous year. Thirty-nine pledge units increased their donation and sixteen pledge units decreased. Forty-three pledges remained at the same level. There has been improvement in the fulfillment rate of pledges. The overall pledge income has remained flat.

Endowment status

The endowment has seen some growth after the previous withdrawals. Future withdrawals will be made using the lower of two guidelines; 4.5% of the 12 quarter moving average or 5% of actual value.

Personnel Compensation

The Personnel Committee recommended 3% raises for all staff. This was voted down by the budget committee. A set amount of \$800.00 for each staff member placed in the budget.

Budget Committee

Maintaining the current staff provides the best opportunity for growth. The committee made a proposal to have an ongoing deficit reduction campaign by providing deficit reduction envelopes.

Questions and comments from the congregation:

Why is the music minister paid more than the associate minister? Answer: It is more difficult to find a music minister. Compensation is comparable to what the market will bear.

Trustees need a larger budget to insure upkeep of the church.

Monies in the preschool budget are used to pay the sitters. Sitters are paid alternate weeks.

A motion to approve the budget was made by Jim Miller. Seconded by Ginny Houghtaling. Motion approved.

A closing prayer was offer by Anne-Marie Cannata.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Ide
Clerk

Report of the Senior Minister

As I wrap up 21 years of ministry at First Church, I think it is probably more fitting to look over my entire tenure than to focus solely on the past year. As I said in my May Tidings article, I am in a summing up mode of thought. It has been an enormous joy and privilege to serve as the Minister of our congregation. We have had our struggles, of course, but that comes with life. I hope that my leadership has enriched the spiritual lives of all who worship at First Church and who enjoy our community of faith, as members or as non-members.

Here are what I consider to be the main events or developments in our life together since 1990.

Worship Life. Over these years, we have developed a more liturgical style of worship than is the custom in New England Congregational Churches. By “liturgical” we mean worship that includes more sung and spoken congregational responses. Our practice regarding Holy Communion has evolved significantly. The aim of all this is to make church feel more like church to people from the Roman Catholic, Episcopal, and Lutheran traditions. We also introduced practices like the “Passing of the Peace” to make our worship services feel warmer; the “ritual of fellowship” pads to record the names and address of guests so we can follow up by mail or email; the printed “prayer list” and a time during the prayers of the people for everyone to speak names of those for whom we are praying. Our worship service now includes a wider variety of music, including gospel and contemporary anthems, and African drumming. Hymn-singing continues to be strong. We purchased the New Century Hymnal when it was published, and now tend to use it on most Sundays. The number of adults who sing, play hand bells, or drum has grown dramatically. Unfortunately, for a variety of complex reasons, we have no music programs dedicated to children and youth. We ring the bell each Sunday to recognize those who have died in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. More people serve as “liturgists” leading various parts of the worship service. Over the years, several questionnaires have helped shape our worship life in a way that is meaningful to the congregation.

The Open and Affirming Covenant. First Church was one of the first congregations in Connecticut and in the entire United Church of Christ to invite all people into the life of our community, regardless of their sexual orientation. This move was considered “risky” by some at the time, but it has been a reason that many people, most of them heterosexual, have chosen to join our congregation. In the early part of the new century, we again took a leadership role through the Connecticut Conference of the UCC in advocating legal same-sex marriage in our state.

Outreach. First Church has developed and engaged in exciting partnerships with many local organizations and institutions, including Connecticut Valley Hospital, the Connecticut Juvenile Training School, Covenant to Care; the Connection (Hallie House for Women and Pilots Program), and St. Vincent DePaul Place (Sunday evening dinners, Amazing Grace, and Community Assistance program). Our free Community Christmas Day Dinner is a major event every year that we joyfully host. In all of these areas, we provide hands-on assistance and financial support. We assist many other local groups by providing meeting space at rates that do not cover all our utility and repair costs, but we do this because such groups make a difference in people’s lives. We are asking nonprofit groups that use our building to assume more of the cost than they have contributed in the past.

Capital Campaign. By the mid-nineties, our building was badly in need of basic work to repair the “envelop” (roof and walls) to keep out water and protect the interior. We raised \$485,000 to repair the roof, repoint the stonework outside, repair and repaint the sanctuary, purchase new carpeting for the Upper Room, buy new tables and chairs for the Parish Hall, repave the driveway and parking lot, cover and protect stained glass windows, and we contributed \$45,000 of the funds to various outreach programs. Now our building is again in need of major maintenance and upgrades that were not completed by the last campaign. Our heating system is very old and inefficient, Parish Hall windows are in a sad state, and within a few years our organ will require a major overhaul. Our floors, doorways, driveway, bathrooms, exterior wood around windows take a huge beating. We should have at least a unisex, handicapped accessible bathroom near the Court Street entrance to the sanctuary.

Endowment Policy. Looking back, one of the smartest things we did was to adopt a long-range endowment management policy. Rather than invest for income, we invested for growth and “harvested” capital gains by withdrawing each year a certain percentage of a 12-quarter moving average. We adopted this policy, fortunately, before the stock market boom of the 1990s. Our endowment had grown from about \$600,000 to \$1.2 million at its peak before the crash of late 2008 took it back down to a 15 year low. We have experienced some recovery over the past 2 years. First Church has received only 1 significant bequest over the past 20 years, and that was from a non-member. I hope that current members have provided for First Church in their wills.

First Church’s website, electronic communications, and record keeping. Over the years, we have gradually built a significant website presence so that people seeking a church can learn about us through words and pictures. This has required a significant investment of time to develop the design and content. Our office and record-keeping practices have evolved through many database platforms and we now rely heavily on email communications.

The Jonah Center for Earth and Art. In 2004, a small group of members launched a separate 501I(3) nonprofit organization for environmental education and advocacy in Middletown and in our region. This endeavor has raised the visibility of First Church significantly and it has attracted a number of new members. Through the salary that I have received from the Jonah Center and then returned to the church, plus the use of the building for Jonah Center meetings and events, the church has also received about \$8000 in annual revenue for the past few years. Since I must be absent from the church following my departure, the Jonah Center will have to relocate within Middletown and hold public meetings elsewhere.

Staff reductions. When I came to First Church, we had 2 full time ministers, a part-time minister of visitation, 2 part-time music professionals, a full-time office manager, a part-time sexton, and a part-time Sunday sexton. Over the past 21 years, through 3 major recessions and many changes in our society, we have reduced our staff to its present configuration: One full time minister, one 80% FTE Church Administrator, one half-time Minister of Music, and a very part-time Church School coordinator. Instead of a sexton, we now employ a cleaning service. All of this puts more pressure on the existing staff, and fortunately our excellent staff has risen to the occasion. But I expect these pressures to continue.

Youth Ministry. The Initiation to Adulthood Program and the Pre-Initiations Group (PIGs) have changed a lot over the past decades. We were able to keep the Initiates group strong and vital through the nineties, but then a rapid decline started as teenagers' lives became even more intensely programmed for after-school and weekend activities. This is a sad development, because our programs offer a path for emotional and spiritual growth that are badly needed and now quite lacking in our society of texting and Facebook. The basic structure of Initiation to Adulthood is still more or less in place, but the frequency and number of meetings has declined dramatically.

Congo Bongo Committee for Attraction and Growth. This committee has found and implemented successful methods to increase Sunday worship attendance and to attract new members. It is hard work, and we never attract as many new people as we would like, but the special Sundays and events planned by the Congo Bongo group and the publicity that goes with these events has definitely increased the "visitor stream" we experience on Sunday morning.

The work and role of a minister has changed a lot since I was ordained in 1979. Today, there is more need for marketing, publicity, and outreach into the community. People don't automatically come to church as they did years ago. Electronic communication helps ministers be more accessible to the congregation, which is a good thing. But it also takes vast amounts of time and keeps ministers tied to their offices and computers. The volume of email and web-based communication that is required has grown exponentially. In short, it's a different world with patterns of social interaction and spiritual exploration that are changing fast.

Some statistics that may be of interest. In my 21 years at First Church, I have officiated at 57 weddings; 133 funerals; and 83 baptisms. During this same time period (August 1990 to present), 307 new members and confirmands have joined First Church. Today, 87 of those are active participants and supporters of the congregation, though others are still on our membership list. In 1990, we received \$143,000 in pledges. In 2010, we received about \$206,000 in pledges. Sadly, average Sunday worship attendance has declined by about 30% over these years, and our Church School and Youth programs are likewise substantially smaller.

As I write this last Annual Report, I want to thank everyone who has made my tenure at First Church such a rich and wonderful part of my life. I have grown tremendously and found much support and strength from our congregation as I have gone through major changes in my own life. I can only hope that some of you feel that your lives have been enriched and that you have come to know God's presence in your lives. I look forward to returning to First church as a regular member — sitting in the pews on Sunday mornings — after the approaching transition has taken place and my successor is truly settled and accepted.

Yours in Christ.

John C. Hall

First Church Statistical Report

It was presented and approved to include a statistical report listing the following information at last years Annual Meeting. The information below is what is on record.

2010

Number of people joined – 15

Lost – 3

Requested removal through a concerted effort to remove non-active members – 31

Weddings –2

Baptisms – 1

Funerals – 8

Pledging Units – 122

Board of Deacons 2010-2011
Annual Report

Deacons

Julie Hurlburt	2013
Robin Reynolds	2013
Linda Fish	2013
Suzanna Barrett	2013
Pam Miller	2012
Jim Miller	2012
Alisha Tagnon	2012
Ginny Houghtaling	2011
Jan Palmer	2011
Jo-Ann Hansen	2011
Lyn Shaw	resigned
Howard Thody	resigned

Many thanks to Jan Palmer and Jo-Ann Hansen for their Deacon service. They have been loyal and invaluable assets to the board. We will miss you.

Mission of the board of Deacons

The board assists the clergy in planning and carrying out worship experiences that shapes the spiritual life of the congregation. During monthly meetings in the upper study we share in the details of worship service organization; at that time we also take responsibility for various, regular Sunday duties. These include greeting(both in the Narthex and at the side entrance of the church); setting up the alter space; delivering flowers to home bound members after worship; monthly preparation and service of Holy Communion; and Parish Hall Shepherd, the welcoming of new people during coffee hour. We also assist the clergy whenever Saturday Inquirers Classes are held.

The 2010-2011 Year

Monthly meetings are held in the upper study, beginning with devotions by the Deacon of the month and ending with prayers. Each month one deacon (Ginny Houghtaling) attends Executive committee; one Deacon chairs meetings (Julies) one deacon takes minutes (Pam) and one deacon coordinates communications (Robin). We worked out some new systems for altar setup and are reviewing the Deacon duties document to update our practices. A website was setup to help prepare and deliver meals to those with illness, loss or other needs. We were unable to have a Deacon retreat due to scheduling conflicts but a future date is available at Killam's Point for us.

Deacons assisted at Inquirer's classes during the year. These are meant to be informal introductions to First Church with rich discussion and generous sharing. Deacons also attended 1st Saturday communion at CVH to assist their chaplain with the service – a moving experience.

Deacons have special duties to help with beautiful Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy week and Easter service and traditions. There is much to do and much joyful sharing.

Deacons have also been introduced during worship each Sunday giving visibility and being available to assist folks who have needs or questions.

Deacon means dedication and continuous work to enliven the life of our church. We are so grateful for each Deacons dedication, loyalty, good ideas and energy.

At the end of each meeting we light three candles and offer prayers. We light a candle of
HEALING
HOPE
and
THANKSGIVING

Join us in your own prayers for those in need, for the deepest longings we have and thanks for the many blessings we are given.

Yours in Grace –
Ginny Houghtaling
- for the Deacons

Annual Report 2010-11 Board of Trustees
C. Weybright-Chair 2011, Jay Wilson - 2011,
Jeremy Floryan - 2012, Jen Cho - 2012
Dave Oliveria - 2013, Alton Sanders - 2013

Rental Income: This source of revenue continues to receive much thought by the trustees and an informal rental committee. In spite of notable fluctuations, income from these rentals continues to be somewhat steady. In considering a church position of hosting numerous recovery and other groups at far less than the market value for the space, notices have gone out to those groups to more closely bring them in line with an appropriate fee structure. The office manager, Lorel Czajka actively seeks out additional tenants, both in the short and long term.

Maintenance/Repairs: The aging facility continues to require constant attention over the short and long terms. The cost for the maintenance and repairs for the infrastructure of the building (to include monthly maintenance, utilities, major equipment, organ restoration, security and more) continues to increase beyond the designated allotments from the budget. The most significant repair that is imminent is the repair of the elevator. There was a major leak in the hydraulic fluid from the elevator shaft that required several thousands of dollars in remediation. Due to the skillful and diligent efforts of Otis Elevator technicians, a major overhaul was averted for the immediate future. As always, it is prudent for the congregation to look ahead, prioritizing and plan for many costly long term repairs, to include; windows, further driveway/parking lot repairs, front signage, side entrance reconstruction, elevator and boiler replacement and sealing exterior brick and stone along with trim painting.

Endowment Funds: As a result of changes in the financial advisement for this fund and a changing financial climate, the value of the fund shows a steady climb upward. It is the intention of the Trustees to continue to seek a conservative policy and to reduce the withdrawals from the fund for budgeting purposes to protect the capital investment. The value of the account has edged over the \$800,000 mark recently, a gain of 30% over its historic low mark during the height of the investment collapse. The fund continues to grow despite the 'harvesting' of funds to support the general budget.

Beautification and public image: The Court Street gardens, lawn and the rear parking areas and gardens have been maintained by volunteers along with the cleaning contractor. Michael Cho, a member of the church and a Boy Scout is planning to do his Eagle Scout project as a part of enhancing the appearance of the Court street gardens. A decorative fence system of post and chain is being planned with powder coated colors to compliment the liturgical colors of the front signage. The rebuild of the side porch entrance continues with the replacement of the carpet.

Summary concerns: Due to a record snow fall and continued emergency repairs, funds allotted to the Trustees do not cover the patchwork maintenance of the church building. More ownership in and financial support of the church by individual members is needed to make significant improvements in these aspects of building ownership. A major capital campaign will certainly be required to address most of these expenditures.

Budget Committee: 2010-2011 Annual Report

This committee includes members of the executive Committee plus representatives from Christian Outreach, Personnel, Education and Stewardship. Other members of the congregation also participated.

Participants included: Bill Bynum, Anne-Marie Cannata, John Hall, Sue Latourette, Ginny Houghtaling, Jennifer Ide, Bill Grady, Evelyn Hickcox, Greg Brooks, Curt Weybright, Andrea Roberts, Jim Miller, Steven Crabtree, Catie Olinski.

The 2011 Budget Process:

The approach to finalizing the budget for 2011 was accelerated and the committee met its goal to present a final recommended budget to the congregation at the mid-year meeting on Jan 9. The process was more efficient than recent years when the congregation first approved an interim budget at January meetings and work continued into March to get to a final budget.

The committee met three times from early November into December. Then a budget preview was presented at a second hour. The congregation had the opportunity to participate and comment at all meetings.

The final budget recommendation was presented, discussed and approved by the congregation without dissent on January 9, 2011. The full budget is included at the end of this report.

Highlights of the 2011 budget as approved include:

- A total budget of \$322,500 for all expenses (appx. \$4,000 less than 2010 actual)
- A budgeted overdraw from the endowment of \$9,300
- An increase in salaries of approximately 3% including the first clergy increase in 3 years.
- A planned furlough for the Senior Minister to save \$4,800
- An opportunity for voluntary donations to reduce the furlough and overdraw

The 2011 budget is slightly smaller than total expenditures in 2010 which were \$326,418.

2010 Results:

Expenses for 2010 came in at \$326,418, higher than budgeted by approximately \$8,200. This was largely due to unplanned costs to maintain the building. Total 2010 income of 318,369 essentially met the budget. Details can be viewed in the full budget at the end of this report.

The endowment value ended 2010 at \$790,000, up by \$36,600 from \$753,400 for the end of 2009 along with improvements in the stock market from.

Going forward:

Soon after the 2011 budget was approved, both Sue Latourette and John Hall announced their ending their ministries at First Church. Sue left at the end of February for her new Senior Minister position in Stonington. John is retiring effective July 1, and is taking July as vacation and his last month on the payroll.

These major changes have a large but not yet specifically defined impact on the budget. This is likely to be more of a shift in details than a reduction in total costs. As interim staffing measures, Sue Springer has taken a paid position to coordinate Sunday school and Lorel Czajka's position has been expanded to Church Administrator, taking on hours and administrative duties performed by clergy. The church will be seeking an interim minister to start in August – September. Questions of clergy and staff roles going forward will be handled in planning meetings during the interim ministry. This transition offers a rare opportunity to plan anew. From the financial perspective, a key is to plan spending within the resources the congregation will support.

We plan to restate the 2011 budget at the May 17 annual meeting to reflect current expectations of costs as adjusted for a new interim minister and part time staff in lieu of an associate minister. The budget will continue to be one aspect of consideration for planning for staffing as the church moves through the process to eventually call a new senior minister.

One final word:

2011 will be my last year as treasurer for First Church. This has been a great experience and I recommend it highly. I especially thank Chuck Bates and Lorel Czajka. Chuck is incredibly supportive and a great source of knowledge and wisdom regarding church operations and computing over many years. Lorel's diligence and careful attention to finances of the church add value well beyond her bookkeeping duties.

Andrea Roberts who is now the Assistant Treasurer will become Treasurer on January 1, 2012. She has already dug into the details and is well qualified to handle this important task. So we should all thank Andrea for accepting this role and support her as she takes on the challenges of planning and budgeting for all the changes the church will be undertaking.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bill Bynum, Treasurer and Budget Committee Chair

Christian Outreach Committee 2010-2011 Annual Report

Members of the Committee: Catie Olinski, Jennifer Jasenski, Bonnie Brooks (treasurer), Laurie Ladr, Cocomo Rock, Sue Latourette, Avis Devine.

The goal of the Christian Outreach Committee is to continue to maintain First Church's commitment to involvement in the local community. The Christian Outreach committee administers and selects the organizations for the monthly Green Envelopes including local Middletown organizations and UCC sponsored giving opportunities/charities. See detailed financial summary for specific contributions for green envelopes and the committee's regular outreach donations.

Community Involvement:

- Sunday meals at St. Vincent de Paul Place
- Christmas Gifts to benefit DCF, CT Juvenile Training Ctr, Pilots Program, Hallie House
- Amazing Grace Food Pantry - various events including "Grinders for Grace" and Soup for Amazing Grace
- Visits to the boys at CT Juvenile Training School through Covenant to Care including support such as art supplies and Xmas gifts
- Make a Home partnership with Ron Krom at St Vincents. We furnished an entire apartment in April 2011 for a homeless individual.

Education Opportunities

- Sold Fair Trade Coffee and Tea in Parish Hall during Coffee Hour (UCC Coffee Project)
- Homeless Awareness Event (joined with other Middlesex UCC's)

Global Awareness

We continue to pray for and be in contact with our Sister Church **Misión Las Delicias** in Ibague, Colombia.

Gratitude

Thanks go to all who contribute time and creativity to continue our good work within and beyond our walls. Without YOU there would be no community outreach!

The committee would like to recognize the following: Pam Miller for recording and delivering the donated cereal and peanut butter to Amazing Grace Food Pantry and her significant involvement in the Make a Home project. Ellie Gagnon for establishing the Easter Basket giving and Julie Hurlburt for organizing and continuing the work for this year and Ellie's work coordinating the "coffee breaks" for Middlesex Habitat for Humanity.

Our committee is grateful for the significant leadership role that Rev. Sue Latourette played in leading our committee and representing First Church in the greater Middletown community. We will miss her enthusiasm and her passion for social justice and community involvement. We know that the North Stonington community will be blessed to have Sue's commitment to Outreach.

Outreach Budget 2010				
Date	Recipients	Collected Funds	Expenditures	Fund Balance
	Opening Balance			\$6,000.00
January	Christmas Giving - St Vincents - purchases completed in 2009 but not reimbursed until 2010	\$0.00	\$54.48	\$5,945.52
	Haiti Relief	\$2,235.00	\$2,235.00	\$5,945.52
	Blankets Donation	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$5,945.52
February	Book For Habitat	\$28.79	\$30.52	\$5,943.79
	Super Bowl of Caring	\$78.74	\$78.74	\$5,943.79
March	Heifer Project Church School Donation Matching Funds	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$5,843.79
	Fair Trade Coffee For 2nd Hour Event	\$162.75	\$197.35	\$5,809.19
	Community Assistance	\$0.00	\$100.35	\$5,708.84
April	Silver Lake Golf Tournament Tee Sponsorship	\$0.00	\$150.00	\$5,558.84
June	Scholarship for Diamond Wynn	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$5,058.84
	Scholarship for Kamila Bukowski	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$4,558.84
	Community Assistance (A&P)	\$0.00	\$26.01	\$4,532.83
	Crop Walk	\$963.18	\$963.18	\$4,532.83
September	Pilots Program - School Supplies	\$0.00	\$67.67	\$4,465.16
	Pilots Program - Gift Cards for back-packs	\$0.00	\$400.00	\$4,065.16
	CJTS Art Supplies	\$0.00	\$193.85	\$3,871.31
	191914 Ministries - Donation for truck repairs	\$0.00	\$400.00	\$3,471.31
October	Donation for Habitat For Humanity Restore (added to October Green Envelopes to equal \$500 donation)	\$0.00	\$124.00	\$3,347.31
November	Thanksgiving Baskets	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$3,247.31
December	Christmas Gift	\$0.00	\$44.37	\$3,202.94
	Community Assistance - Walmart	\$0.00	\$30.35	\$3,172.59
	Bibles For Habitat	\$0.00	\$68.98	\$3,103.61
	Move \$1.00 to Green Envelopes to balance MLK scholarship for December 2010. Received \$399 but distributed \$400	\$0.00	\$1.00	\$3,102.61
	Move \$106.04 to Green Envelopes to balance Christmas Gift purchases. Received \$600.25 vs \$706.29 spent	\$0.00	\$106.04	\$2,996.57

Outreach Budget 2011				
Date	Recipients	Collected Funds	Expenditures	Fund Balance
	Opening Balance		\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
January	Christmas Gift Pilots - purchased in December	\$0.00	\$39.82	\$5,960.18
	Community Assistance - Walmart	\$0.00	\$133.58	\$5,826.60
	Food for St. Vincent's	\$0.00	\$20.17	\$5,806.43

Green Envelopes Logbook 2010				
Date	Recipient	Collected	Dispersed	Balance
January	Martin Luther King Scholarship Fund	\$181.00	\$181.00	\$0.00
February	North End Action Team	\$170.00	\$170.00	\$0.00
March	Habitat For Humanity	\$264.00	\$264.00	\$0.00
April	One Great Hour of Sharing	\$760.00	\$760.00	\$0.00
May	Catales (children's choice)	\$276.00	\$276.00	\$0.00
June	Shepherd Home	\$148.00	\$148.00	\$0.00
July/August	Amazing Grace	\$558.00	\$558.00	\$0.00
September	Church World Srvice - Haiti/Pakistan	\$824.00	\$824.00	\$0.00
October	Habitat For Humanity Restore ((\$376.00 collected and \$124.00 from Outreach Budget)	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$0.00
	Neighbors In Need -(Ct Conference)	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$0.00
November	FCC Christmas Gift	\$600.25	\$0.00	\$600.25
	CJTS & Pilots Gifts	\$0.00	\$215.55	-\$215.55
	Pilots Gifts	\$0.00	\$281.75	-\$281.75
	Pilots Gifts - 2 winter coats	\$0.00	\$69.95	-\$69.95
	Pilots Gifts	\$0.00	\$139.04	-\$139.04
	Total Christmas Gifts \$706.29 - but only collected \$600.25. Moved balance of \$106.04 from Outreach	\$106.04	\$0.00	\$106.04
December	MLK Scholarship (Credit \$1 from Outreach to equal \$400)	\$399.00	\$400.00	-\$1.00
	Outreach contribution to balance MLK scholarship distribution	\$1.00	\$0.00	\$1.00
Total		\$4,817.29	\$4,817.29	\$0.00

Green Envelopes Logbook 2011			
Date	Recipient	Collected	Dispersed
January	Middletown Fuel Bank	\$392.00	\$392.00
February	Amazing Grace	\$313.00	\$313.00
	Japan Relief Fund	\$975.00	\$975.00
March	Eddy Shelter (via The Connection)	\$361.00	\$361.00
April	One Great Hour of Sharing (UCC offering)		
May	Birthday Celebration for Disadvantaged Children (children's choice)		
June	Habitat for Humanity ReStore		
July & August	Pilots Program (Donate for back-to-school items)		
September	New Horizons (24-hour shelter through Community Health Center)		
October	Neighbors in Need (UCC offering)		
November	First Church Christmas Gift		
December	Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarshp		

MEMORIAL FUND COMMITTEE
2010-2011

Committee members

Evelyn Cameron
Nancy Wilcox
Mary Lou Brady

The Memorial Fund Committee purchased 20 New Century Hymnals for the choir in memory of Joan Field, Ruth German, Joseph Merriam and Minetta Paddock.

Pam Miller will add the following names to the Memorial Book:

Donna Mae Borrelli
George V. Borrelli
Barbara E. MacEachern
Suzanne Fall
Warren Vigeant
Helen E. Dutcher
Donald Umba

The Memorial Fund balance as of April 0, 2010 was \$2, 411.73 and Memorial Gifts of \$650.00 were received during the year. Disbursements totaled \$465.00 leaving a balance of \$2,596.73 as of April, 30, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Evelyn Cameron

ANNUAL REPORT - MUSIC - FIRST CHURCH of CHRIST, MIDDLETOWN
June 2010 - May 2011

It has been another wonderful year of music making and worship for our church. Here is a rundown of our music groups:

Senior Choir - sang almost every Sunday, except for the summer months of June, July and August. The group also sang on Good Friday (with the South Church choir).

Celebration Singers - sang about once a month.

Heart in Hand Bell Choir - played in the fall, Christmastime, Palm Sunday and in May.

African Drumming Ensemble - meets about two times a month. A highlight for the year was the African Sunday with Aly Tatchol Camara in January.

Other highlights:

One Sunday in November concentrated on the hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God".

The annual Christmas Concert was given by all the music groups in December.

The Senior Choir and Celebration Singers joined forces to sing a Comcast in October.

They also sang together on Easter Sunday for the piece "Shout for Joy" with Ruth LeBar being the speaker.

The Heartbeat Dixieland Jazz Band played during worship in January.

Shari gave a second hour presentation of the church's organ in October.

Bill LogoZZo gave a second hour presentation about his band and foundation in April.

Shari gave a second hour presentation of hand chimes in May.

A season end music party was held for all groups in June.

Budget items:

New folders were acquired for the Senior Choir and Celebration Singers.

New music was purchased for all groups.

The organ had a full tuning in September and a half tuning in May.

The pianos were tuned in the fall and spring.

An organ fund has been started. Monies are being set aside for the eventual revamp of the organ. The organ is actually overdue for a revamp at this point. The cost for a rehaul will be in the area of \$100,000.00.

Member Curt Weybright has graciously offered to tune the pianos gratis. Money saved will be put into the organ fund.

Summer music and soloists:

First Church is blessed with a number of musicians who are willing to contribute their solo vocal and instrumental talents through the year. They are Chuck Bates, Ruth LeBar, Curtis Weybright, Susanne Fusso, Mary Anne Diamond, Karl Scheibe, Greg Bynum, Beth Wilcox-Smith, Katie Wilcox-Smith, and Michael Cho.

Respectfully submitted,

Shari Lucas, Minister of Music

Personnel Committee

Members

Charles Smith	1 yr	(2011)
Evelyn Hickcox	2yrs	(2012)
William Grady	3 yrs	(2013)

At our meeting in late May concerns from some members of the congregation were reported and discussed. Over the summer and into September these concerns were acted upon in various ways and by mid September these members felt their ideas had been heard and that progress to address their concerns had been made.

In October staff evaluations were discussed. First Church was extremely fortunate to benefit from having a talented, dedicated, experienced, effective and stable staff. John Hall, Sue Latourette, Lorel Czajka, Shari Lucas and Bill Bynum are caring and capable people who work well together. John Hall had returned from his sabbatical with renewed energy and ideas for several new programs. Our staff salary recommendations were sent to the Budget Committee. The Personnel Committee was represented at all the budget meetings held in November and December.

Immediately after the congregational meeting in January our staff stability was up-ended as we experienced weekly announcements of staff changes. Sue Latourette announced that she had been called to become the sole pastor at the North Stonington Congregational Church and would be leaving at the end of February. Shortly thereafter, John Hall announced that after 21 years here, his pastorate with us would end at the end of June. A week later, Lorel Czajka expressed her intention to leave for a better paying job as soon as we could replace her. As of this writing Pastor Sue has assumed her new position, John Hall is preparing to leave, and interim and settled search committees are in the process of being formed. Happily, however, Lorel Czajka is staying with us. Her hours have been extended and her duties expanded to include more non-pastoral organizational details formerly taken care of by Sue L. and John. Consequently, her title has been changed to Church Administrator to reflect this added responsibility. Lorel is currently becoming more familiar with her new multi-faceted position. Should the church at some time decide to become a single pastor church, and even during the interim period, having an extremely knowledgeable and organized Church Administrator will be crucial.

One other staff addition must be noted. Church member and public school teacher Susan Springer has agreed to become our Church School Coordinator through the end of the school year in June. At that time it will be determined if she will continue on next year.

Finally, at the urging of Treasurer Bill Bynum, the Personnel Committee will undertake in the coming months a thorough review of our personnel policies, which don't seem to have been altered in 20 years or more. Pastoral Compensation, vacation and sabbatical policies, health and pension benefits, educational allowances, etc., will come under scrutiny. The present economy has forced many changes in the business world in regard to employee compensation and employer responsibility. For our own present and future well-being First Church has to bring some policies up-to-date. Input from the congregation is welcomed.

Stay tuned.

Evelyn Hickcox, Chairperson
Personnel Committee

Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ
Annual Meeting – October 22-23, 2010
Report by Chuck Bates

(Since the meeting was last October, the material may be a little dated.) Friday of the meeting is kind of a whirlwind. A lot happens to clear the decks for Saturday morning. We reviewed the resolutions to be voted on. Nothing too controversial:

1. The Connecticut Conference is seeking to be a “Global Mission Conference” and would like all member churches to consider become Global Mission Churches. I have some documentation about what this means.
2. A group is endorsing a resolution that asks that we make efforts to keep our holy day holy. This would involve going to organizations that use Sunday like any other day of the week and telling them that we can’t participate, nor can our children, because we go to Church. Some felt that we were simply trying to buck a societal and cultural tide that can’t be stopped, but the resolution felt that it would be worth the effort.

Other items involved some constitutional changes required by changes to the national constitution, and a report from the Special Commission on Conference Sustainability.

We dealt with the budget. As expected, OCWM income for 2010 is down about 6% below budget, and the projection for next year is another decline. 2009 income was \$1.95M, 2010 will be \$1.81M, and the budget for 2011 is \$1.7M. The deficit will be made up partially by an increase in per capita from \$6/member to \$8/member. While this seems like a large increase, we found out that we have the lowest per capita rate of all the Northeast states – MA \$16, RI \$17, NY \$14. The increase will add about \$100,000 in income.

The other big item for Friday evening was the Interim Conference Minister’s Report. The Rev. Charles Wildman gave a stimulating talk and proved himself to be quite witty. He kept us awake even though the hour was approaching 10:00 PM.

Saturday was another full day, but the highlight was the keynote address given by Dr. Robert Orr, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Planning and Policy Coordination. His talk was informational, stirring, challenging, etc. His main points were (and the biggest things the United Nations is working for):

1. In our lifetimes, we can end extreme poverty. In 2000, they set a goal to reduce it by half, and at the current rate of progress, this will happen by 2015.
2. In order to achieve #1, we must eliminate war. The majority of the “bottom billion” in extreme poverty is in or just emerged from war.
3. We must save the globe. People need to change their lifestyles to accomplish this. We need to understand that what we are doing to God’s creation affects ALL of God’s people.
4. We must overcome intolerance. Discrimination is rampant in the world today – note the current “Islamophobia” that is in the news almost every day.
5. Disarmament (the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons) must happen.
6. To do all this, we must mobilize our full global human resources, including especially women. They are the largest under- and un-utilized block of human beings in existence.

Dr. Orr reminded us that we (UCC Church People) were instrumental in the establishment of the United Nations in 1948. We flooded our congress people with letters and phone calls in support of the UN founding. Tens of millions of letters were sent. He believes that without us, the United Nations very well might not exist. And it needs us now, to help mobilize the people, especially of this nation, in support of what the UN is trying to do. We need to get louder. We need to lead. The United States is the worst part of the equation right now. Other countries, especially the European Union, are going ahead with initiatives without us. But without the US, the worst of the issues can't be controlled, solved or reversed.

It was very sobering to hear what Dr. Orr had to say. But his call to action, if we can answer it, offers me some hope. These problems can be solved, but not without sacrifices and lots and lots of work. We need to do our part, however small is might be. And we need to push our government to get to the real work that needs to be done.

Saturday afternoon was more procedural items, thank you's, recognitions of those who have done good things for the conference. I was tired enough, and did not stay for the whole thing.

The Bee and Missionary Society Annual Report – 2010-2011

The Bee and Missionary Society is an organization for all women of the church. It has become an important part of the older women's lives as a time to socialize and share life's experiences. Membership continues to be low, but we feel it is needed.

There are no definite projects this year, but the organization continues in promoting the spiritual, social and financial welfare of First Church. We continue to help with collating of Tidings. Members donated Christmas gifts for patients of CVH and donated \$100.00 to the annual Christmas Dinner; donated \$50.00 gift certificate for the service auction, and helped with the green arrangements, baked goods, jewelry, etc at the annual Holly Fair.

Members continue loving pennies for the Fellowship of the Least Coin – a global project of the Conn. Women of the United Church of Christ.

Next year the Bee's will be headed by Minnie McDonald, president.

Respectfully submitted
Nancy Wilcox
(outgoing Secretary)

Initiation to Adulthood 2010-2011

Katelyn Macrae

It has been an exciting and transitional year for the *Initiation to Adulthood* group. Now in our second year of a two-year cycle, the Initiates are in the final stages of the program and are currently working on preparing their Statements of Faith to share with First Church and South Church on May 22, 2011 at a Pot Luck Dinner at First Church. You are gladly invited!

The Initiates meet on the second and fourth Sunday of the month in the Initiates Room at First Church. Our year began with a Barbecue in September at Robin & Dan Reynold's house, and continued with an overnight retreat at Deer Lake Reserve in October where the group participated in team building activities including a high ropes course. In preparation for the November elections, the Initiates participated in the Social Witness Rite in late October. Each Initiate spoke about candidate or topic relevant to the election. In January we prepared and served a meal at St. Vincent De Paul Soup Kitchen. Many Initiates also participated in the Homelessness Awareness Event held at South Church, which brought together almost 100 youth from around the area to learn about homelessness and hunger in our community. A few brave souls slept outside! In February, we held a goodbye ritual for Rev. Sue Latourette. In March, our group participated in the Penitential Rite, where we offered up their prayers and intentions to God as we prepared for Lent. On Palm Sunday in April, four Initiates traveled to New Haven where we visited the Crypt at Center Church UCC on the Green, attended Chapel on Green, a worship service ministering to New Haven's homeless population, and helped serve lunch. It was a beautiful day! Looking ahead, the Initiates are currently preparing their Statements of Faith and finishing up the program. The final rite of Initiation into Adulthood and Confirmation will be held on June 5 at First Church and June 12 at South Church.

From September 2010 through February 2011, the Initiates Program was lead by Sue Latourette, with assistance from Karen Trekell, adult leader and member of South Church, and myself Katelyn Macrae, seminary intern at South Church. At the end of February, we said goodbye to Sue and thanked her for our presence and ministry with us. Beginning in March, I stepped into the Initiates leadership role. Sue left big shoes to fill, and the past few months have been a wonderful learning experience.

Many thanks to our volunteers and parents who take time out of their busy lives to invest in the lives of our bright, fun, funny, and talented young people. It has been a pleasure and joy to work with the Initiates and watch them blossom and transform over the year!

Respectfully Submitted,

Katelyn Macrae

2011 PRESCHOOL REPORT

Coordinators: Susie Dutcher and Linda Heidorn

During the school year, the first Church nursery is open on Sunday mornings from 9:45 AM to 12:15 PM. Children from infancy through age four are welcome. Parents are asked to sign their child in, fill out an emergency information card to be kept on file, and pick their child up from the nursery. Although it may be convenient to have an older sibling escort a child to or from the nursery, this causes confusion and the nursery staff has been advised not accept or release a child who is not in the company of a parent or adult guardian.

The nursery is a lively place with three bright and well-equipped rooms. In addition to toys, games, and puzzles, the nursery also has art supplies, musical instruments, and a large supply of books. These are used to promote creativity, dexterity, and small muscle development. There are also a climber and ride-on toys to enhance gross muscle development and coordination. Each child is assigned a box for his or her diaper bag or other equipment. A snack is served partway through the service.

The children of First Church are well cared for by a dedicated and very competent nursery staff. The paid sitters are Bethie Wilcox-Smith and Michael Cho. Bethie will be leaving us to attend college next year, but Michael will be back and we are pleased to announce that our able volunteers, Katie and Robbie Wilcox-Smith, will be taking Bethie's place. Seeing these familiar faces week after week comforts the children and enhances their experience in the nursery.

The nursery often receives donations of toys, books, and games. If you donate items to the nursery, please let us know so that we can thank you. Also, please be aware that there are some items that we cannot accept, such as stuffed animals or toys that are not age appropriate or have small parts. While we cannot use these for the nursery, we make every effort to pass any such donated items along to a local shelter or to a social worker who will see that another child benefits from them.

The orange striped rug under the climber needs to be replaced. If you have a large durable rug in good condition that you are no longer using, we would happily accept it.

Thank you for entrusting us with your children. In order to provide the best possible experience for your child, we welcome your suggestions.

Religious Education 2010-2011

Instruction

One of the goals of our RE program is to integrate our children, teens, and young adults into the life of the Church. We are focusing on increasing their involvement & visibility, particularly in helping with our Sunday School and Church events, so that they may take an active role in our congregation and help them think of church as part of their greater Christian family.

Our **Nursery** continues to be a warm and welcoming place for infants and toddlers. Please see more details in the Nursery Annual Report.

This year our **Sunday School** consisted of different types of class models which emphasize transformation rather than simple assimilation. Students were very enthusiastic during these lessons and the teachers felt they achieved a deep understanding and retention of the stories.

- **First Sunday/Communion Sunday:** *Sue Latourette* led K-5 group discussions September-March. On May 1st, *Cathy Zack* led a music session focusing on engaging the children in active movement activities and songs that helped the children make a connection between familiar children's tunes and Christian worship experiences and hymns sung during worship. The children return to the sanctuary to join their families for Communion. Topics covered include: "*What is Communion?*" Special Music; and outreach projects to decorate Easter containers and cards.
- **Second Sunday/Powerful Play:** *Linda Heidorn* continued with monthly Powerful Play presentations that engage the children in hands-on activities. The session begins each month with a focus on building relationships and a "mini church". The children welcome each other by greeting each other with "Peace be with you" as they shake each other's hands and make eye contact. There is time each week for reviewing names and making any necessary introductions. Through the use of props, costumes and active use of imagination, the children K-5 are taken on journeys through time to "experience" bible stories. The children "Walked to Jerusalem" "Exodus" "The Last Supper" "Walk to Bethlehem". Discussions centered about "wondering" questions as we tried to imagine how different characters would have felt throughout their experiences with Jesus.
- **Third Sunday/Peacemaker Club:** Using Literature, this K-5 group processed the idea of conflict resolution in a Christian context. Working together, building community and outreach were the central themes with *Julie Hurlburt* as instructor.
- **Fourth Sunday/Grade Level Classes:** *Jane DiMauro* K-1, *Jeremy Floryan* 2nd and 3rd graders, and *Susan Glass* 4-6th graders. The children are now able to hand in their offering before leaving for their class to an usher at the door of the sanctuary. Topics covered include: *Bible Study:* The Birth of Jesus, Luke 2:1-20 Advent begins: Isaiah 9:2, John 1:5 *How the Church Tells Time*, Levit. 23:1-3 *The Mustard Seed*, Matthew 13:31-32 *Lenten Puzzle (Godly Play)* *Jesus and the Children*, Matthew 19:13-15

Special Activities for Fellowship and Outreach:

- **Sept:** The Religious Education Committee sponsored a Pancake Breakfast/Registration on September 12th for “Rally Day”. We had a large number of children registering for Sunday School this year; share in the Pancake Breakfast and meet the teachers.
- **October:** A family night including campfire, sparklers and s’mores was held at Ken and Linda Heidorns’ home. A pumpkin painting event was also held at church during Sunday school for all children and families. The Brooks Family organized pumpkin decorating and pizza dinner. The children decorated pumpkins together and then enjoyed pizza and snacks. Families then watched a Veggie Tales movie together in the Memorial Room. It was well received by everyone.
- **Special Church School Project: COINS FOR KIDS** is a project of the **Children’s Home in Cromwell**. It is one way in which our children can help other children get their lives back together. Most of the boys and girls who live at the Children’s Home have experienced trauma in their lives. Many times they are unable to express how it affects them. The Children’s Home works diligently to help these young people appreciate their communities, to appreciate those that support them, and mostly to appreciate their own abilities.
- **Advent Creche & Candle Ceremony Sign-ups** Adults and children were invited to be readers and candle lighters for the Advent Candle ceremonies and to carry the crèche figurines forward at the start of the service.
- **Nativity Pageant** All ages are welcome to take part in our “instant” pageant. The service will also include a short homily for adults. Gifts will be collected for the Hallie Center for Women and Children.
- **January Intergenerational Fun for All!** Sponsored by the RE Committee The newest VEGGIE TALES “It’s a Faithful Life!” Pizza, games and the newest movie. All ages welcome! Donations for pizza welcome.
- **Indoor Campfire and Storytelling Pajama Party:** Once again, come in your pajamas and stretch out on your blanket around the “campfire”. We’ll have snacks and we invite people to bring a favorite short story, riddle, or song to share.
- **Hallie House/Pilots Program:** Social workers from these agencies created a list of names of children in need. Members of the congregation purchased items for individual children. Easter baskets were purchased and the collected items were packaged in the baskets. The children made cards and tags for the gift baskets.
- **Palm Sunday:** Walk with the donkey. The children carried banners as our donkey led procession walked through downtown Middletown with palms in remembrance of Jesus’s journey.
- **Easter Service:** The children of the church had an opportunity to carry Easter Lilies down the aisles of the sanctuary during the processional. The Lilies were purchased/donated by individuals in remembrance of a loved one.

“Second Hour” programs for Adults that follow our worship services. Members and friends of the congregation have offered meaningful and thought-provoking topics. These programs have been arranged by our clergy.

- **Sept.** Religious Life and Social Change
- **October:** Intergenerational Program: History and Stories of Halloween November: 191914 Ministries and Cocomo Rock celebrate the granting of non-profit status to this artistic and imaginative ministry. Iglesia Hermana: Keeping a Relationship Thousands of Miles Away.
- **November:** Make a second “Fabric of our Lives” Banner as a gift. Sustainable Living — What Is It? What Are We Trying to Sustain? How Can We Do It? Celebrate Advent! Intergenerational Advent Wreath-Making Workshop
- **December:** “Holly Fair Reprise”. "The Attention Wars" and "Is It Art?" Special Christmas Presentation:
- **January :** Budget Workshop; 9th Annual Budget Meeting; The “Other” Exile; Prepare Meal for St. Vincent de Paul Place; “Churches in Transition”;
- **March:** Debt & US Economy; Zumba; Goods & Service Auction

RE in Transition: The following position was created to fill the role left by Sue Latourette’s resignation at the end of February. **Christian Education Coordinator:**6-10 hours per week **Primary responsibilities:** **Coordinate** teachers, lessons and weekly church school. Main responsibility, time-wise, will be on **Sundays**. Connect with **nursery coordinator(s)** to assure babysitters are qualified and scheduled. **Recruit**, train and schedule teachers and substitutes. **Communicate** with congregation through newsletter, email and phone calls. **Sue Springer, church member and former deacon, is stepping up to be our Church School Coordinator** until at least the end of the program year! Sue is well-qualified, as she is an educator, and she has a wonderful, warm presence.

May/June 2011 Special **Mother’s Day** Project. In First Church tradition, Dads help the children put together a tea and fruit salad for all the Moms in the congregation. The children bring in fruit and the dads help them wash and cut it up. A sheet cake is also provided for an extra treat. Julie Hulbert will be on hand to help coordinate the efforts. Preparation for Children’s Day will take place on the 15th/22nd of May with a “rehearsal” on June 5th. **Celebration of Education Sundayities**

Following the Church Service on June 12th, there will be a “pot-luck” picnic at the church. Games will be organized for children and families.

The committee members are: Carri Wilson, Linda Heidorn, Julie Hurlburt, Susie Dutcher, Campbell Barrett, Debby Purvis, and specialprojects mastermind Mary Gould.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Heidorn and the RE Committee

Tidings

Suzanna Barrett, Editor

This year I have prepared all of the issues of Tidings and everything is going smoothly now that I have a template for each month and a solid grasp of what needs to be included in each issue.

In preparation for the upcoming year with an interim minister, I will prepare table of contents for each monthly issue of Tidings from the last year. The interim minister, the office manager and I can then use each month's list as a guide for preparing the contents of the newsletter each month. I will also prepare a short page of guidelines and instructions so that someone else could take the template and create an issue if the need arises.

First Church of Christ, Congregational, United Church of Christ, Middletown

Annual Report of the Ushers, May 2011

For the church year 2010-2011, Betty Barton, John Otterbein, and Joe Siry served as co-head ushers. Betty was extraordinarily generous and conscientious in making telephone calls to clarify the week-to-week schedules for the four ushers staffing Sunday services. Ushers staffed the Christmas Eve and Good Friday services, among other special events.

Among those members of the congregation who regularly served as ushers this past year, in addition to the co-head ushers, were Bert and Matthew Brock, Archibald and Evelyn Cameron, Jen Cho, Susanne Fusso, Bob Hickcox, Patrick McGreevey, Bob Parker, Irene Robinson, Al and Cindy Sanders, Richard Sanford, Earl Smallshaw, Thelma Warendt, and Nancy Wilcox.

We are greatly blessed with all these congregant ushers, most of whom plan to continue. We are also most thankful that Cathy Zack agreed to co-ordinate the usher schedules for 2011-12, taking over from Betty Barton, who kindly did this work over three years.

If anyone who served as an usher in 2010-2011 is not listed above, please let me know.

Joseph M. Siry
Co-Head Usher, 2010-11

The Archives
Earl Smallshaw, Archivist-Historian

I have been working with Godfrey Memorial Library by loaning them handwritten books to the library and they return the original book as well as bound books back to the Church. It is a win-win for Godfrey and the Church in that the originals books can be preserved and the bound books can be used as reference.

The effort to record baptisms onto a PC file has been completed with over 8,900 entries. Unfortunately, there is a 50-year gap from 1816 to 1870 when baptisms were not recorded. However, I have found a book in the archives that may have the missing data so that I may be able to complete this file. To date, I have not had the time to record the 50-year gap.

I have started the recording of marriages from 1762 to another PC file. Beyond the obvious benefit of quick access to archival data, it also preserves the old church volumes from repeated handling to reference this information, some of which are in poor shape.

The dampness in the Archives has been alleviated with the use of a dehumidifier.

The weekly bulletins are being stored, by year, in the archives. Duplicates of this material, held in the office area, have been discarded, once it was assured that a copy was in the Archives. Tidings, Annual Reports, etc. are being purged from the office area since duplicates reside in the Archives.

As I organize all of this information, I will be using the church's old PC in the Archives and develop a Master Index identifying all major items in the Archives and its location (safe, file cabinet, locked closet, etc.) for fast, easy access.

Right now, material is coming into the archives faster than I can find a space for it.

Earl Smallshaw, Archivist-Historian

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Submitted by Cynthia Sanders

Committee Members: Robert P. Dutcher 2012, Cynthia Sanders 2013 and John C. Hall, ex officio

The Nominating Committee proposes the following slate. Positions marked with an * are to be voted on. Terms run from June to May and may be 1 to 3 years. Terms are noted where term limits exist.

OFFICERS: (To serve a term of one year each)

* Moderator	Steve Crabtree
* Vice-Moderator	Trevor Davis
* Clerk	Jennifer Ide
* Treasurer	Bill Bynum
* Executive Committee Member-at-Large	Jo-Ann Hansen
* Assistant Treasurer	Andrea Roberts

BOARDS:

Trustees:

Al Sanders	2012	2 nd
Dave Oliveria	2012	2 nd
* Jen Cho	2013	1 st
* Curt Weybright	2013	partial
* Jay Wilson	2014	2 nd
* Jeremy Floryan	2014	1 st

Deacons

Jim Miller	2012	2 nd
Pam Miller	2012	1 st
Alisha Tagnon	2012	1 st
* _____	2012	
Linda Fish	2013	1 st
Julie Hurlburt	2013	2 nd
Robin Reynolds	2013	2 nd
* _____	2013	
* Ginny Houghtaling	2014	2 nd
* Suzanna Barrett	2014	1 st
* Melissa Bradbury	2014	1 st
* _____	2014	

STANDING COMMITTEES:

Christian Outreach:

Avis Devine	2012
Cocomo Rock	2012
Bonnie Brooks	2013
Catie Olinski	2013
* Jen Jasenski	2014
* _____	2014

Deposit

Burt Brock	2012
Susan Hall	2012
Mary Anne Diamond	2012
Catie Olinski	2012
Darcy Dickinson	2012
* Chuck Bates	2013
* Lisa Santangelo	2013
* John Shaw	2013
* Nancy Wilcox	2013

Memorial Fund

Nancy Wilcox	2012
Mary Lou Brady	2013
* Linda Scott	2014

Nominating Committee

Bob Dutcher	2012
Cynthia Sanders	2013
* _____	2014

Personnel Committee

Evelyn Hickcox	2012
Bill Grady	2013
* Charley Smith	2014

Pre-School Coordinators

* Susie Dutcher	2012
* Linda Heidorn	2012

Religious Education:

Linda Heidorn	2012
Debbie Purvis	2012
Campbell Barrett	2013
Carri Gosselin-Wilson	2013
* Julie Hurlburt	2014
* Mary Gould	2014

Stewardship Committee

* Julie Hurlburt	2012
* Mary Gould	2012
* Jan Silver	2012
* Anne-Marie Cannata	2013
* _____	2013
* _____	2013

Sunday Morning Fellowship

* Patrick McGreevy	2012
* Richard Sandford	2012
* _____	2012

NON-COMMITTEE POSITIONS:

Archivist-Historian

* Earl Smallshaw	2012
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Connecticut Conference of the UCC Delegates

* Chuck Bates	2012
* Trevor Davis	2012
* _____ (youth delegate)	2012

Flower Coordinator:

* Chuck Bates	2012
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Head Ushers:

* Bob Hickcox	2012
* John Otterbein	2012
* Betty Barton	2012
* Cathy Zack	2012

Librarian

* Ana Salo-Markowski	2012
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Middlesex Association of UCC Delegates

* Chuck Bates	2012
* Cynthia Sanders	2012
* Linda Fish	2012
* Hillary Sanders	2012
* Darcy Dickinson	2012

Tidings Editors

* Suzanna Barrett	2012
* _____	2012