

East Woodstock Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation
of the UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



2024 Annual Report

26 January 2025
East Woodstock, Connecticut

AGENDA

Annual Meeting

26 January 2025

A CALL TO THE ANNUAL MEETING

A call for the annual meeting of the East Woodstock Congregational Church which will be held on Sunday, January 26, 2025 immediately following our service of worship to:

1. Hear and act on officer and committee reports;
2. hear and act on the report of the Society Committee regarding the 2025 budget;
3. hear and act on the report of the Nominating Committee;
4. hear and act on any other business to come before the meeting.

Called by the Church Council
Christine Armstrong, *Clerk*

PRAYER

God of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, we thank you that you are always with us. We remember all the yesterdays and give thanks for your presence and guidance in times of joy and challenge.

We come together today as your congregation.

Help us to live and serve you as the Body of Christ. We rely on your strength so that we may share the compassion, teaching, healing, and love that Jesus first gave to us.

We look forward to whatever tomorrows our future holds.

Your faithfulness enables us to face the unknown without fear.

Be with us during our annual meeting. We gather today to learn from the past and plan for the future.

Bless our efforts that we may worship and serve you with our words, our actions, and our lives.

In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN.

A COVENANT OF WORSHIPPING & WORKING TOGETHER

I am a child of God, living in a community of God's children.

Together we face a variety of issues that we must talk about.

I will listen as intently as I wish to be heard.

I will speak honestly and openly in sharing my feelings and thoughts, in the first person.

I will speak from first-hand knowledge and only from facts.

I will not interrupt and will focus on the statements being made, not the person making the statement.

I will encourage all viewpoints to be spoken, treating other opinions with respect and dignity, understanding that some may not wish to participate.

I will ask for clarification and take time to digest and understand what has been said.

I will forgive others and myself for breaking this covenant.

I will take time for reflection and then, I will try again.

I will remember what Jesus taught.

"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you." MATTHEW 7:12

May I live up to this covenant in good faith.

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PROSPER THE WORK OF OUR HANDS

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES, January 28, 2024 (Breakfast Church)

11:14AM- Annual Meeting officially opened by Dawn Adiletta, *Moderator*

Choir sang the hymn, "God, Be In My Head".

Pastor Susan Foster led the congregation in the prayer.

The Covenant was read.

Dawn Adiletta, *Moderator*, reminded the Congregation that all are welcome to participate in the Annual Meeting, but only church members are allowed to make motions, second a motion and vote on those motions brought before the congregation.

The minutes of the January 29, 2023 Annual Meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Kerstin Forrester and seconded by DeEtta Spalding to accept the minutes from the 2023 Annual Meeting as presented in the report. The motion passed.

The Pastor's Report was given. Pastor Sue was very grateful and blessed to be Pastor of EWCC for so many wonderful years, and many thanks to the staff and Heidi Tucker for all of their hard work throughout the year.

The Nominating Committee presented their report and opened nominations up. Mark Billings gave the report and thanked everyone who has served and offers to serve on all of the various committees. A motion was made by Glen Lessig and seconded by Tom Stokes to accept the Nominating Committee's report. The motion passed.

After all of the Committee reports were presented in the order in which they were printed, Amy Hiller White made a motion and Glen Lessig seconded the motion to accept all of the Committee reports as presented. The motion passed.

The Society Committee presented the Budget. DeEtta Spalding, EWCC Treasurer, gave the report. Highlights included:

- Giving increased by over \$3000
- Jamboree did not meet its goal because of weather
- There are unfilled positions
- CE had a surplus in budget
- Repair work on the parsonage
- Surplus for the 2023 year: \$4,870.00 which is recommended to be moved to the church's Operating Reserves.
- It is thought that 2024 expenses will be less because of it being a Transition year.
- There is a new line item in the budget for "Interim Minister".
- Sue's salary is for a ½ year.
- Sue's medical coverage will be changing to Medicare
- Maybe money saved will be put into a capital set-aside account for the Parsonage.

Discussion regarding the EWCC Transition process was asked by Mark Billings with regards to the parsonage and the current tenants. It was explained that the current tenants are on a year to year lease, and the search process would begin for an Interim Minister and a permanent replacement is a long way off, i.e. up to two years. Amy Hiller White mentioned the kitchen at the parsonage that is reported to be in need of renovation. Society is having preliminary discussions and will be getting quotes to renovate the kitchen. Glen Lessig explained the next steps to take place regarding the renovation of the parsonage kitchen with the congregation.

Voting:

Motion 1: Kerstin Forrester made a motion and Alan Walker seconded to accept the EWCC 2023 Annual Report as presented. The motion passed.

Motion 2: Pam Brown made a motion and Jeff Wong seconded to accept the 2024 Budget as presented. The motion passed.

Motion 3: Lynn Looby made a motion and Kerstin Forrester seconded to allocate \$10,200 for the housing allowance for Pastor Sue Foster from January 1 to June 30, 2024. The motion passed.

Motion 4: Lynn Looby made a motion and Glen Lessig seconded to move \$4870 (surplus) to the 2024 Operating Reserve line item, and the forecasted \$15,368 to the Capital Reserve line item, if obtained. The motion passed.

A motion was made by John Davis and seconded by Tom Stokes to adjourn the Annual Meeting at 11:53am. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Armstrong, *Clerk*

CLERK'S REPORT

Number of Members who joined in 2024: 0

Number of Members lost during 2024:

By letter of transfer: 0 By Death: 5

Funerals and Graveside Services

Memorials: Richard May, 5/15/24
 Jerry Moschella, 9/21/24
 Naomi Gee, 9/28/24
 Rae Tremblay-Webb, 11/30/24
 Merton Hill, 12/14/24
 Lorene Matsen, 12/15/24

Baptisms: 8

Child Baptisms:

Phoenix Fox Mondino, 2/18/24
Connor Steven Graber, 2/25/24
Juniper Mary Elizabeth Webster, 4/21/24
Dalton Timothy Patenaude, 4/28/24
Oliva Marie Syme, 5/19/2024
Margaret Workman, 5/26/24
Becket William Thomas-Rebello, 6/9/24
Lillian Judith Rebello, 6/9/24

Weddings: 1 Megan Hebert and JD Mordasky, 10/12/24

COUNCIL

During 2024, Council fulfilled its role as a "hub" for communication and collaboration between the committees of the church to best serve the needs of each committee, the congregation and the community. The council met approximately every month throughout the year. This was a change from the prior year - as we felt it important to meet more frequently with the retirement of Pastor Sue and Heidi Tucker occurring in June. As we negotiated the major changes to EWCC, we continued to feel connected and supportive of one another. Six months later, we can look back with gratitude and pride - having met the change and challenges with grace for one another and success at moving forward. yet retaining a sense of who we are collectively. Meetings were attended by each committee chairperson or representative. When attendance wasn't possible, committee information was shared through an online platform- (a Google document). Prior to each meeting, committee chairs were invited to add information to this "shared" document which all council members had access to and could read other's contributions. This format continued to be a very successful means to broaden communication between committees and to facilitate support of one another in the different aspects and areas of the church. Discussions included ways to achieve goals and addressed the needs of each committee. THANK YOU to all for your contributions to council and for your role in our church life. Whether you are part of the spokes, the rim, or the hub - we are the wheels that make up our church. We journey together and are made stronger by our interconnectedness.

In gratitude,
Amy Hiller-White, *Council Chair*
Dorrie Scranton, *Vice Chair*

NOMINATING REPORT, Revised 1/24/25

Officers for 02/01/2025 – 01/31/2026

Council Chair: Dorrie Scranton
Clerk: Christine Armstrong
Moderator: Dawn Adiletta
Treasurer: DeEtta Spalding
Assistant: Treasurer: Lynn Looby

Vice Chair: *OPEN
Assistant Clerk: *OPEN
Collector: John Davis
Assistant Collector: Kerstin Forrester
Historian: Mary Ellen Blake

Committees for 02/01/2025 – 01/31/2026

Committee members may serve up to two 3-year terms (a total of 6 years) unless otherwise noted. Following is the list of current and proposed members for each committee noting which term and the year of that term they will be serving in the upcoming year.

Those who are in Term 1, Year 1 with an asterisk * next to their name are being proposed as members for this year.

DIACONATE (9)

	Term	Year
Valerie Law	1	2
Sherry Magnan	2	3
Jennifer Griffin	2	3
Susan Converse	2	1
Mark Billings	1	3
Anne Sorensen	1	3
Taryn Tomkins	1	3
*Stacy Vogt	1	1
*OPEN	1	1

SOCIETY (9)

	Term	Year
Rick Place	2	3
Judith Wong	2	1
Calvin Neely	1	3
Glen Lessig	1	2
Dawn Adiletta	1	2
Andy Hescheles	1	2
Kerstin Forrester	1	2
*Allan Walker	1	1
*Dave Brown	1	1

STEWARDSHIP (6)

	Term	Year
*Dawn Morin	1	2
Jaime Boisvert	2	3
Dee Harless (FRIEND)	2	2
Valerie Law	1	3
*Anne Sorensen	1	1
*Beth Baron	1	1

AUDITORS

(Max. 1 3-year term)

	Year
Jeff Wong	3
Kerstin Forrester	2

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE (NO LIMIT)

Judy Schumacher
OPEN

UCC ASSOC. DELEGATES (2)

*Christine Lessig
*Mary Oliver (JOINING EWCC)

OUTREACH

	Term	Year
Andy Krofina, <i>Chair</i>	2	3
Lynn Hescheles	2	2
Tom Stokes	2	2
Christine Lessig	2	2
Kerstin Forrester	2	1
Cris Waldron	2	1
Donna Baldyga	1	3
Barbara Hackett	1	3
Peter Green	1	2
Karen Ryker (FRIEND)	1	2
Melanie LaMountain	1	2
*Dee Harless (FRIEND)	1	1

MUSIC (5)

	Term	Year
Laurie Edwards, <i>Chair</i>	1	2
Dennis Kelly	1	3
Windsor White (JOINING EWCC)	1	2
Jess Reed	1	2
Lucy Bousquet	1	3
Charlotte Davis	1	3
*Pam Brown	1	1

CHRISTIAN ED. (6)

	Term	Year
Karen McFarlin	1	3
*Diane Billings	1	2
*Kerstin Forrester	1	2
Vickie Noë	1	2
*Dorrie Scranton	1	2
Jessica Weaver Boose, <i>CE Director</i> , (EMPLOYEE)		

ALTAR GUILD (NO LIMITS)

Karin Tourtellotte
Judy Schumacher
Laurie Edwards
Mary Ellen Blake
Susan Converse

JAMBOREE (NO LIMITS)

Donna Baldyga
Lynn Looby (NOT CHAIR)
DeEtta Spalding (NOT CHAIR)
Judith Wong
Angela Young
OPEN
OPEN

HOSPITALITY (NO LIMITS AT THIS TIME)

Laurie Edwards, *Co-Chair*
Diane Morin, *Co-Chair*
Nancy Young
Mary Ellen Blake
Marion Hollowell
Barbara Morse
Gail Lorentzen
Lynda Higgins
Beth Baron
Charlotte Davis
Jill Sherman
Marilyn Rath
Barbara Hackett
Windsor White (FRIEND)
Christine Lessig

NOMINATING (6)

(COUNCIL APPOINTS MAX. 3-YEAR TERMS)

	Term	Year
Bob Rath, <i>Chair</i>	1	2
Valerie Law	1	3
Dorrie Scranton	1	2
Jess Reed	1	2
*OPEN	1	1
*OPEN	1	1

PASTORAL RELATIONS

SUSPENDED PENDING NEW SETTLED PASTOR.
(TRANSITION #1 COMMITTEE NOW PASTORAL
RELATIONS COMMITTEE FOR PASTOR GARY)

REPORT ON SPECIAL COMMITTEES - Revised January 26, 2025

The Nominating Committee (Bob Rath, Dorrie Scranton, Jess Reed and Val Law) began work in November 2024 and solicited volunteers and a representative mix of people for both committees with an emphasis on Transition #2 since its work would start in February. Happily, EWCC Members stepped up and volunteered.

Transition #2 Committee (T2) - 10-12 people

Bob Rath
Jess Reed
Anthony Reed
Kaylynn Converse
Phil Parizeau
Tom Stokes
Pam Brown
Lynn Hescheles
Peter Green
Jessica Weaver-Boose (JOINING EWCC)

Search and Call Committee (SCC) - 7-9 people

The Reverend Dr. Denise Esslinger
Sherry Magnan
Jaime Boisvert
Marilyn Rath
John Davis
Pam Brown
Jeff Wong
Emily Hayden

Transition #2 and Search and Call Committees Expectations

The Transition #2 (T2) Committee of EWCC will take the hand-off from the Transition #1 (T1) Committee. The T1 Committee orchestrated the search and selection of the Interim Minister, Pastor Gary Shahinian. The T1 Committee will continue as the Pastoral Relations Committee for the Interim Pastor for the length of his ministry at EWCC. The T2 Committee will be the bridge with the T1 Committee and produce the Church Profile. The T2 Committee will be the bridge with the Search and Call Committee (SCC) who will identify and present the Settled Pastor candidate to the EWCC Congregation. Both Committees will be approved at the January 26, 2025 EWCC Annual Meeting.

The T2 Committee will develop the EWCC Profile which is a high stakes document for EWCC and will make our community of faith come to life for prospective pastors. The T2 Committee (10-12 members) will divide itself into teams to develop multiple perspectives on EWCC. (Possible perspectives include: The Village of East Woodstock, Life of the Church, Youth, Online and Remote Congregants, Visitation and Institutional Knowledge, Community Connections). The committee members, and teams, will engage Pastor Gary and others in the church and community with knowledge of these areas. Information will be gathered by 1:1 or group conversations, surveys, or other means of gaining details, so that the development of each perspective is thorough. The EWCC Profile must be approved by the Congregation by June 30, 2025 and the Area UCC Conference and the UCC National by September 15, 2025.

The Profile will be posted by October 1, 2025 within the UCC communication framework for review by UCC sanctioned pastors. The SCC (7-9 members) will start their review following a handoff meeting with T2 in the fall of 2025. Pastors that are interested in EWCC will notify us through the UCC communication framework and then the SCC will review those pastors profiles to identify candidates for further consideration. It is anticipated that the optimum time for the widest choice of candidates will occur between January and May 2026. The SCC will periodically report status to the congregation while maintaining candidate confidentiality. The SCC will narrow the search to one candidate and then orchestrate a "candidating" weekend for the candidate and their family including a social opportunity with the congregation, a worship leadership opportunity and vote on the Settled Pastor by the EWCC Congregation before the end of June 2026. The SCC will coordinate with Society to finalize the call agreement, compensation package and contract for the Settled Pastor plus congregational vote (as required by IRS) before the end of June 2026. The SCC will orchestrate the on-boarding of the new Settled Pastor beginning in late August 2026.

Respectfully submitted
for the Nominating Committee
Bob Rath, *Chair*

PROSPER THE WORK OF OUR HANDS

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

During 2024, the Pastoral Relations was reformed according to guidance received from the UCC and the Southern New England Conference regarding the transition process for churches as they navigate the time from a retiring pastor to interim pastor to new settled pastor. According to that guidance, the Transition Team that was charged with finding and hiring the interim pastor would then become the Pastoral Relations Committee for the hired interim for the duration of his/her time with EWCC. The Transition Team/Pastoral Relations Committee has met with Pastor Gary Shahinian twice since his starting date in September 2024. Our charge is to be a conduit of information and feedback between Pastor Gary and the congregation. We anticipate continuing to meet regularly throughout the interim process. We wish to express our gratitude to Pastor Gary and to the congregation for their flexibility, resilience and willingness to learn, evolve and grow throughout this time of significant change and exploration.

In gratitude,
Amy Hiller-White, Dorrie Scranton, Taryn Tomkins
Jen Griffin, Bob Rath, Chuck Warinsky

WORSHIP, PRAISE & CARE

PASTOR'S REPORT

As I write this report, I will have completed four months as the Intentional Interim Pastor of the church. That has been enough time for me to see that the East Woodstock Congregational Church holds great significance in the lives of its members. I am very impressed with the commitment to the church that I see among many of you. Such commitment bodes well for the future of this congregation. You have embraced me with open hearts and open minds and I am thankful to be here to minister alongside you.

Fundamental to the life of any church is the worship service. We are blessed with a very talented pianist/organist, Nancy Ducharme, whose opening preludes transport us into the right mood for worship. Our faithful choir members splendidly lead the congregation in its praise to God, often singing challenging pieces with ease and enthusiasm. Andy Tomkins masterfully directs our Bell Choir which always adds inspiration to the worship service when they play. Our broadcasting and sound team of Val Law, John Davis, Karen Ryker, and Tom Stokes produce quality videos of the services that can be watched at any time.

In addition to Sunday morning services, we hosted a Quiet Christmas service for those who feel sad or overwhelmed during the holiday season as well as two Christmas Eve services, one displaying the musical talents of our children and youth and the other depicting a more peaceful candlelight service. I have also presided over funeral services for Jerry Moschella, Naomi Gee, Rae Tremblay-Webb, Merton Hill, and Lorene Matsen. And I have officiated at the wedding of J. D. Mordasky III and Megan Hebert. Christine Lessig and I attended the installation service of Rev. Pam Briddle, the recently settled minister of the Congregational Church of Putnam, which was a very festive celebration for our neighbor church. Christine also attended the Greater Putnam Interfaith Council Thanksgiving service hosted by the B'nai Shalom Synagogue in Putnam, which drew attendees from several religious houses of worship. It is important that we gather with sister churches in the United Church of Christ (UCC) as well as with other churches and faith traditions. The UCC has chosen as its motto "That They May All Be One," which we need always to keep in focus. Ecumenical and interfaith relationships are a very important aspect of our testimony to others of our Christian faith.

I am indebted to Mary Oliver, the church's Office Manager, who is a great help to me in carrying out the church's day to day operations. As the face of the church, Mary does a wonderful job at greeting those who come to the church building, call the church on the telephone, and email the church. She is very efficient at handling all kinds of clerical work and keeps the church's operations running smoothly. I am also very thankful for Diane Billings, who accompanies me on visits to those who are unable to gather with us on Sundays. Diane keeps in continual communication with members of the congregation and informs me of those who would like a visit.

I also very much appreciate Windsor White who attends all the Confirmation classes and leads the class once a month when I am in New Jersey" to "I also very much appreciate Windsor White who attends all the Confirmation classes and leads the class once a month while I attend the Diaconate meeting. Windsor contributes much to the

class and everyone appreciates his wry humor. And I cannot forget to thank Glen Lessig who is always on duty to fix the toilets when they are not functioning properly. Also special thanks to Jeff Wong for his expertise in making sure that our office computers are working the way they should (and in stamping out fires!).

The committee meetings run very smoothly in this congregation and the chairs are very effective in setting the agendas and directing the meetings. I clearly see that this congregation's lay leadership is very capable. That's a very good sign in showing the church's strength. Especially during the interim period, many in the congregation are stepping up to the plate to assume leadership positions in making sure that the ministries, missions, and programs of the church continue.

I am also excited by what is going on in the Sunday School. We should be thankful that we have had as many as 15 students attending classes on Sunday morning. That may not sound like a lot but it is. Quite a few churches, even some larger than ours, do not have a Sunday School because they don't have any children. Director of Christian Education Jessica Weaver Boose does a marvelous job of educating the young ones, which you see every Sunday morning during the worship service. Many of you witnessed the Sunday School Pageant on December 15 and saw the enthusiasm of the children and their desire and love for Jesus Christ. Continuing to attract young families is very important and should be seen as a priority. The educational ministry of the church is not an option. Every church is called to be a school. We are a school devoted to making disciples of Jesus Christ.

I very much enjoy teaching the Confirmation Class on Sunday morning following the worship service. We have a class of very bright young people: Henry Griffin, Haven Magnan, Gabby Santos, Adian Vuillemot, and Gigi Young. In addition to attending class, the group prepared and brought 50 lunches to Worcester Fellowship, a ministry to people experiencing homelessness, and attended their worship service on January 5 outside All Saints Episcopal Church, a renowned Worcester congregation. The class will also be traveling to Boston in March on a CityReach Mission Trip, where they will spend overnight learning about homelessness.

I very much enjoy teaching our enthusiastic group of "scholars" who attend our weekly Bible Study. We started at the beginning of October on the topic of "How to Read the Bible" and are still discussing this most important issue, not because I am long-winded (I hope that I'm not!) but because of the many thought-provoking comments generated by the subject. I am heartened that we have such a dedicated group of women who eagerly desire to learn how to read and understand the Bible, the treasure trove of our faith. We always welcome newcomers to the group (especially guys, who are inexplicably absent)

I'm also amazed by the many missions that our congregation supports and how much we give to missions, locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

I very much enjoy the visits that I am having with individual members of the congregation, whether at their homes or in my office. I look forward to having many more of them. You don't need to wait until I contact you for a visit. You can get in touch with me first. These visits are very valuable not only in my becoming familiar with you but also because you share with me your views of the church and your hopes and dreams for it. This information needs to be articulated during this interim time because all of it will go into the Church Profile that will be written by the Transition Team 2 and read by prospective ministerial candidates for the position of Settled Pastor.

The heart of any church is its people. The people of our church are devoted followers of Jesus Christ who are involved in ministering to other members and engaged in the local community and beyond with a vibrant Christian witness.

A lot of work needs to get done in this year. I am confident that the congregation will face the challenge constructively and dutifully. Change is very difficult for many. But from what I have seen thus far, this congregation is confronting the prospect of change admirably with courage and conviction as you seek to discern what God is calling you to be and to do as a community of faith pledged to promote God's kingdom in your midst and in the world.

Blessings,
The Reverend Dr. Gary R. Shahinian

WORSHIP, PRAISE & CARE

DIACONATE

The primary role of the deacons became increasingly significant in 2024, as they navigated the transitional period leading to the retirement of Pastor Sue Foster in June. Upholding the values and mission of the East Woodstock Congregational Church, the deacons played a pivotal role in ensuring continuity and stability during this time. A key focus was facilitating “knowledge transfer,” with Pastor Sue sharing essential details about the church’s daily operations, many of which were undocumented formally.

In preparation for Pastor Sue’s departure, the deacons arranged for visiting pastors to provide pulpit coverage during the summer months and attended shared summer services at the First Congregational Church of Woodstock to provide a welcoming and familiar presence. Their responsibilities also included leading prayers, reading scripture, and offering spiritual guidance during services. Additionally, the deacons supported the church community by assisting with an increased number of memorial services throughout the year, reflecting their commitment to compassion and care.

The efforts of the deacons in 2024 exemplify their dedication to the spiritual health and organizational well-being of the church, particularly during times of change and growth. Their work ensures the continued strength and vibrancy of the East Woodstock Congregational Church community.

Throughout the year:

- Assisted in the planning and execution of worship services including in person and online Sunday services as well as special services.
- Assisted pastor in the administration of sacraments, particularly in the celebration of Communion on the first Sunday of each month and key holidays.
- Coordinated and assisted with special services, such as baptisms, weddings, and memorial services.
- Supported the church’s mission through active participation in church governance and serving as a resource for both clergy and congregation.

January – March

- Accepted the retirement announcement of Pastor Sue Foster after 36 years of service to East Woodstock Congregational Church
- Hosted second annual Breakfast Church in conjunction with the annual meeting
- Supported Jazz Sunday with music, soups, and fellowship
- Assisted with Ash Wednesday in conjunction with the First Church of Woodstock and Church of the Good Shepherd
- Added the role of “exit deacon” to the Assistant Deacon of the Day’s responsibilities to assure there was a greeter after church for those who did not exit through Fellowship Hall
- Assisted with the blessing of the prayer shawls
- Continued to work through increased “Safe Church” measures on how to keep the church community safe during worship
- Hosted Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Services
- Three deacons attended the New England Conference for Congregational Churches to learn more about how to help during the expected transition period

April – June

- Assisted with multiple baptisms as families looked to plan for baptismal services prior to Pastor Sue’s departure
- Participated in Pastor Sue’s final service and all took part in the release of her vows
- Secured visiting pastors from June 23 – July 28 and assisted visiting pastors in leading service
- Assisted in the coordination of Confirmation Sunday

July - September

- Partnered with The First Congregational Church of Woodstock ("The Hill Church") for summer services.
- Hosted welcome dinner and introduction meeting on Pastor Gary Shahinian's first official day at EWCC
- Assisted with Rally Day to kick off the start of the new Sunday School Year.
- Served as lay readers for the month of September while Pastor Gary met with church members and got his bearings.
- Worked with Pastor Gary to get confirmation class started with five confirmands
- Implemented church attendees wearing name badges for the month of September to assist Pastor Gary in getting to know new people
- Celebrated World Communion Sunday by providing samples of various forms of bread from across the world and having confirmands provide a description

October - December

- Supported Pastor Gary and congregation during transitional period as people get acclimated to a new style of service
- Assisted with an increased number of memorial services
- Continued to work through security measures during church services by locking the doors of Fellowship Hall and the Chapel during the prelude each Sunday
- Assisted with Christmas Services including Quiet Christmas and two Christmas Eve services

2024 Deacons include: Mark Billings, Susan Converse, Jennifer Griffin, Sherry Magnan, Valerie Law, Anne Sorensen, and Taryn Tomkins

ALTAR GUILD

Do you want to serve your church in a minimal amount of time? A wonderful way to do this is by giving a couple of months during the year and at other times when the Pastor may need the help for a service or a special event. We are responsible for the setup and cleanup of communion, the care of the candles used for various services and Sunday, changing of the paraments (altar and lectern cloths) for the different seasons, special services, ordering and set up of the flowers for the Easter and Christmas seasons, seeing there are flowers for the Sunday Service, and the use of the candelabras.

We oversee the Flowers list which is in the office.. This is for individuals to place flowers on the altar for a Sunday Service. These flowers may be in memory of, or in honor of a loved one or a group of individuals.

Thank you to all who served and dedicated your time and energy to a special activity of the church.

Members: Mary Ellen Blake. Lucy Bousquet, Susan Converse, Laurie Edwards, Karin Tourtellotte, Judith Schumacher

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

With love and appreciation, we acknowledge those members and friends listed in our Memorial Book in 2024: Richard May, Harold Bishop, Jerry Moschella, Naomi Gee, Merton Hill, and Lorene Matsen.

MUSIC COMMITTEE

2024 started off a little slow and first step was to start by having monthly meetings to discuss what is needed, what is going on, and new ideas.

What is needed: More storage space for music and we were given a room with shelving. Lucy Bousquet is working on organizing this project. **What's going on:** Jessica Reed is working on the master inventory of the music. Getting "Gift of Music" info circulating again. **New ideas:** We have talked about having a couple of lead singers for August Union worship. Having children involved in music and maybe the Choir sing more songs during worship. Anyone is welcome to join us on the last Sunday of the month at 11:30 in the Kindergarten Room for our monthly meeting. **Music Committee:** Lucy Bousquet, Pam Brown, Dennis Kelly, Ann LaMountain, Barbara Morse, Jessica Reed, Leslie Sweetnam and Windsor White.

Joyfully Submitted by
Laurie Edwards, *Chair*

LEARNING & GROWING IN FAITH

Children are ~~the future of~~ the Church!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

2024 was a joyfully busy year!

January through June we often had 15 students in Sunday School, ranging from age 4 to 14. The patterns of the children attending communion on the first Sunday of the month and having children's chapel on the last Sunday of the month, were balanced with classes for older and younger kids or one room schoolhouse gatherings. We had multiple new families visit during the spring, often as attendees of a family member's baptism, and some came back multiple times.

Also in January, Jessica led the confirmation class in participating in CityReach. CityReach is a 24 hour service experience with the homeless community of Boston, led, and created by common cathedral. We had a preparation lesson, gathered donations, did the actual experience of CityReach, then one Sunday the confirmation students brought the experience back to the church by creating and producing a special fellowship. This was appreciated by many and will hopefully be repeated in 2025.

During the winter and spring months a few lessons were highlighted with clips from the movie *Godspell*. They studied the lesson from Matthew where Jesus tells us we are the salt of the earth and we are to shine our light in the world. This was all shared in multiple ways during Children's Sunday and Pastor Sue's last worship at EWCC.

We continued Vacation Bible School (VBS) meeting once a week on Wednesday evenings in July. We had a wonderful demonstration of how to be a church by multiple volunteers helping with the meals and the classes each week. The campers created a large mural over the course of the four weeks and they enjoyed making beaded bracelets each week. Every activity was tied into the theme of Pray and Play. Attendees ranged from First through 8th grade graduates and in total there were 12 campers, over the 4 weeks.

This fall Dorrie Scranton stepped in as CE chair and pulled together a CE committee. Having a committee has led to discussions of how to attract and retain new families with multiple suggestions being implemented.

At least once a month we offer classes divided by age groups, with the plan of making it happen twice a month for 2025. We have ages 3 to 13 start together for our own worship rituals and then divide for age appropriate Bible lessons and conversations. We have studied the sacrament of communion, service (creating and serving fellowship), how Jesus taught us to love everyone, and the Christmas Story.

In 2025, Lynn Looby will be stepping down as the manager of our background checks. We are so appreciative of all the work she did to help us live into the UCC's safe church best practices over the past decade. Emily Murphy will be taking over this task.

The children appreciate being an active part of the church family and serving the congregation by occasionally presenting lessons, such as the Christmas Pageant and on Children's Sunday.

Our EWCC Christian Education programming would not work without the input of many. I do not trust myself to remember everyone here. The support, input, ideas, activities, supplies, and time have made 2024 a solid and cheerful year of Christian Education for the youngest participants of the EWCC.

Cheerfully submitted by
Jessica Weaver Boose
Director of Christian Education
January 12, 2025

CRADLE ROLL

Our Cradle Roll includes all children under the age of 4 (as of the beginning of Sunday School) who have been baptized in our church. There are nine children presently in our Cradle Roll:

Graber, Connor Steven 10-12-23
Hannon, Wyatt James 07-08-23
Lurvey, Axel Hanson 08-14-21
Mondino, Jaxson Sky Myers 11-27-20
Mondino, Phoenix Fox 12-15-22
Patenaude, Dalton Timothy 04-21-23
Thomas-Rebello, Beckett William 11-11-23
Webster, Juniper Mary Elizabeth 12-09-22
Workman, Margaret 05-23-23

Parents of 4-year-olds are invited to come to Rally Day. There they can learn more about our Sunday School Program, register their child, meet the teachers and talk with the Director of Education.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Converse

HISTORIAN

This year, an interesting year as we have to go in a new direction. Our church has seen people begin to return to Sunday services. We have the availability of the Sunday service, Facebook. The advantage is that those that can't come can still feel a part of it.

January we were back in the Sanctuary for Communion and the celebration of Epiphany, which is the end of Christmas. This is the beginning of God's light shining through with the reminder that the light shines in the darkness with the promise that the darkness cannot overcome it. It encourages to be in awe of God's work. At this time we are given our new Star Gift for the coming year. Our Sanctuary was graced with beautiful Poinsettias for the holiday. LBS 's Holly Fair fund has voted monies to get new tables, replace upright freezer, fund breakfast for Annual Meeting, and allocate approximately \$12,000 for paint and refurbishment of the Sanctuary and Narthex at some point. Wyatt James Hannon, son of Bryana Graley and Tyler Hannon, and grandson of Jim Graley were baptized. The Outreach continues it's First Friday Food Fair with donations of non-perishable food items.

February we opened the month with Communion and a very quiet month. Our hand bells having now permanently moved up to the west side balcony really is quite a lovely sound. On the 14th we celebrated Ash Wednesday with the first Sunday of Lent on the 18th . This month we celebrated the baptisms of Phoenix Fox Mondino, son of Jeanna Mondino and Connor Steven Graber son of Jacquelin Lee and Matthew Graber.

March opened with monthly Communion the announcement that Pastor Sue would be retiring after having served 36 years on June 26th. Many mixed emotions amidst the congregation. A transition team of four women from Council and Deacons were appointed. The women had their retreat at Camp Wightman. We celebrated our Heidi Tucker's own at EWCC as Office Manager and the announcement that after 22 years she would be retiring on June 28th. We had the blessing of some lovely shawls, some of which would be given to the Confirmands. The Youth had their Baked Potato Bar which had all kinds of toppings for the top. Outreach Committee keeps busy with donations to various wishes. The 24th we celebrated Palm Sunday with the men annual singing of The Palms. Easter was celebrated on the 31st with the lovely array of Tulips, Daffodils, and Lilies.

In April the cold weather has left us somewhat as we celebrate Communion. It was announced that the Jamboree will be back and committees start meeting. Two scholarships for seniors were announced. There were two Baptisms, Juniper Mary Elizabeth Webster, daughter of Caitlin and Michael Webster and Laurel Hope and Dalton Timothy Patenaude twins of Rachel Eddy and Walter Patenaude and grandparents Tim and MaryAnn Eddy.

May found us celebrating communion ,the following Sunday found us worshipping in the Celtic tradition. Next our Confirmation class led worship. Music Appreciation Sunday was the following Sunday. The LBS ladies did a "Garden Swap", interesting plants. Congratulations to our Confirmands Kaylynn Converse, Matthew Dearborn, Karoline Noë, Anthony Reed, Blake Robida, and Adelise Young. We celebrated Baptisms of Olivia Syme, daughter of Rachel and

LEARNING & GROWING IN FAITH HISTORIAN, CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Daniel Syme. Margaret Workman, daughter of Alana and Chris Workman, granddaughter of DeEtta and Seth Spalding.

June opened with the celebration of Communion on a nice spring day and that of our confirmands completing their year. The following Sunday was Children's Day with the celebration of the baptism of Beckett William Thomas-Rebello son of Melissa and Jared and Lillian Judith Rebello daughter of Ashley and Nick Rebello, granddaughter of Diane and Todd Morin also Dianna and Arthur Rebello, grandparents of Kerstin and Richard Forrester. This is the time of year when we hear about all the young members who are graduating. This year we have five from the Eighth Grade, one from high school, seven from college, one with a masters. The Jamboree's Attic Treasures has started its collection of items to sell. The Outreach Group is busy with the Food Pantry, Sponsorships for a child, and Card Ministries. They will again help with the TEEG school supplies for the coming fall. The 16th was the Farewell Celebration Service of Ministry for Pastor Sue and the wonderful Reception that was given along with power point moments. We have welcomed Mary Louise Oliver who lives in Putnam as our new church office manager.

July/August is split with the Hill Church, they in July we in August. Communion is served the beginning of each month. Vacation Bible School is held jointly with the Hill Church in the evening. Jamboree was on go with the scheduled events and as always great time!

Our last Union service was held in September before Labor Day. September Communion Day was the last celebrated with the Hill. The following Sunday was Rally Day, to sign up for Sunday School and the introduction of our *Intentional Interim Minister*, Reverend Gary Shahinian. Pastor Gary who is originally from New Jersey now resides in Worcester Mass. His wife Linda is a native of Worcester and is a retired radiology technologist. He holds a Ph.D in Philosophy and has taught courses in philosophy and theology and is presently associated with Assumption University in Worcester. His title indicates that we as a church must be intentional about the tasks we must undertake in preparation for the call of a "Settled" Pastor. It explores the past, reviews the present, and looks into the future with a spirit of intentionality. Men's breakfasts are starting up again. Outreach Committee keeps busy. There has been a Refurbishment committee for the sanctuary called together and a new look of restoration is coming after much research is done.

October is World Communion Sunday with the sampling of the many breads from other locations done by our new confirmands. Pastor Gary had a meeting with folks to start the process of transition. NEW! If one cannot arrive prior to the start of service you must go to the front door to get in, as other doors will be locked. Holly Fair requests have started to donate goods.

November started with Communion on Sunday and the following Sunday was Pledge Sunday to make outreach and ministry possible for our church, there also was a potluck supper the night before.

Food Pantry is busy with First Friday, card ministry, transportation, freezer meals, and other needs. The following Sunday was Jeans Sunday with all taking time to do a little cleaning after the service. The Holly Fair was a success and the ladies will give some of the money for the refurbishment. Development of a Security Team to help in times of an emergency until ambulance arrives is going well. LBS continues to be vibrant with delight programs.

As we enter the month of December we celebrated the first Sunday of Advent with communion and the lighting of the first candle in the wreath. A Quiet Christmas Service was done again this year. The sanctuary was decorated with gorgeous Poinsettias all in red and though it was cold they helped to create a warmth. Hand Bells add a beautiful sound to the Christmas services. Youth did a lovely small but well done Nativity. We again did the CWS Blanket Program for those around the world.

As we close out the year, we stop and give thanks for those that have departed this earth for another journey. They'll be dearly missed though there are many great memories that will linger for each of us. Those in our thoughts and prayers are Harold Bishop, Richard May, Rae Tremblay-Webb, Mert Hill, Lorene Matsen, and Jerry Moschella.

In any travels that may await us the Church on the Village Green wishes all our community a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Ellen Blake, *Historian*

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

HOSPITALITY

The Hospitality Committee continues to serve our church family and community when the need arises. This past year we were asked to help with Pastor Sue's retirement party and Heidi Tucker's retirement party. We also served over 500 people at 4 different funerals held for Dick May, Harold Bishop, Mert Hill and Lorene Matsen. We are very appreciative of the members of the Hospitality Committee and the members of our church who step up to offer their help with making food, helping in the kitchen, setting up and cleaning up. Many hands DO make light work.

Laurie Edwards and Diane Morin
Co-Chairs, Hospitality Committee

JAMBOREE

This year the Jamboree was well attended and the weather was nice for the event. Unfortunately, the rain showed up just in time for clean up but that didn't damper any of the volunteer's spirits. The church is truly blessed to have so many people offer their time and talent to make this event a success and offer our community a wonderful way to celebrate Independence Day.

The Jamboree had another successful year. \$15,523.71 was raised with food bringing in \$8,299.80, Attic Treasures \$5,961.51 and Books at \$2,638.72. A record-breaking year for baked goods at \$1,259.00.

This year's Jamboree offered something for everyone. The food booths offered tasty meals, beverages, desserts, and snacks. Those looking for that "unique" item or their next "good read" were at Attic Treasures and the Book Tent. The Silent Auction offered many donated items to bid on. People would sing along while enjoying entertainment from the talented community musicians. The Hayride was always busy with people chatting and getting to know each other while standing in line. The children enjoyed the games, bouncy house, face painting, and Noodles the Clown making balloon animals. The cake walk was the largest one in history with the circle of people covering the entire Common hoping to get one of the delicious cakes. The parade was spectacular. We had the East Woodstock Cornet Band marching, fire trucks, antique cars, floats, and lots of children riding their decorated bicycles and scooters. Many families in the community look forward to marching in the parade.

As always, the Jamboree offers the opportunity to make memories and create new traditions. Every year we hear from the attendees how much this event means to them and those "newbies" that say they'll be back next year. The hard work and enthusiasm of all the volunteers who make this event a success is greatly appreciated. Thank you to those that help with the months of planning and the work that goes on before, during, and after the event. Because of all of you, the tradition continues and we are able to offer the community (and beyond) a day of celebrating not only the country's birth but reconnecting with friends and family.

Lynn Looby and DeEtta Spalding

LADIES BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

LBS held 8 meetings during 2024 with a steady increase in average attendance to 20. We do not schedule meetings for January, February, July, or August.

Our first meeting for 2024 was on March 20 and we welcomed 18 women to a brief business meeting before we listened to a presentation by Pam Brown and Mark Cotnoir. They presented the Roseland Park Legacy Campaign which is a fundraiser to restore our beloved park to its early glory.

On April 17 we enjoyed a virtual trip with Christine & Glen Lessig from Woodstock, CT, through New York State and several other northern USA states into Canada and north to Alaska. They provided a lot of information about the places they camped and visited along with beautiful photos.

Our May meeting was a presentation by Ellen Duzak titled "Visionary Women" that focused on celebrating gardening.

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

LBS, CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

On June 12, twenty-two women gathered at Point Breeze on Webster Lake for our annual luncheon. We got to welcome back a couple of our “snowbirds”. Since it was also Pastor Sue’s and Heidi’s goodbye to the group, it was a bittersweet occasion. Pastor Sue was a very strong supporter of LBS which is the oldest on-going committee at EWCC.

We came back together after a summer hiatus and enjoyed a pot-luck luncheon in Fellowship Hall on September 18. During the summer, LBS purchased an upright freezer for our kitchen, which was installed on August 19! We also purchased some new kitchen utensils. We elected officers for the coming year: Kerstin Forrester, *President*; Charlotte Davis, *Vice President*; Susan Converse, *Treasurer*; Barbara Fitzgibbons, *Secretary*. *Special thanks to Marian Hollowell for her many years serving as Secretary for LBS.*

On October 16 we started our planning for the Holly Fair. Following our business meeting, Christine Lessig and Carrie Walker presented beautiful pictures and commentary of their trips to Newfoundland (Christine) and Nova Scotia & PEI (Marilyn).

Our November 20 meeting focused on our very successful Holly Fair! We had a record year, with a net profit of \$10,726.29. This was truly due to everyone who contributed in any way to this effort! We have decided to use the funds to help fund the upgrade of the church’s smoke detectors. Our special event for the meeting was a delightful virtual trip on the Danube presented by Karen McFarlin. She had some great pictures accompanied with informative history.

We ended the year with our Christmas party in Fellowship Hall. Marilyn Rath, Carrie Walker and Kerstin Forrester hosted this fun event. We played Christmas Trivia and a couple of games of Bingo. Then Marilyn accompanied us on her accordion as we sang several carols. We ended with desserts and conversations! As we do every year, all brought a gift card for either food or gas. These cards were given to Pastor Gary to use at his discretion to help community members in need.

All are welcome!

OUTREACH

The mission of the Outreach Committee is to share God’s love, hope and healing, and to support our neighbors. We serve as the outreach arm of our Church, soliciting, gathering, and distributing support of all kinds according to the needs of the members of our Church, the community, and the world. We believe in effecting change through hands-on community involvement, engaging our congregation to share in the joy and grace of generous giving.

OUTREACH MISSION STATEMENT - ADOPTED JANUARY 29, 2023

The loving hearts, listening ears, and willing hands of our congregation make it possible for the Outreach Committee to fulfill its mission each year. For your compassion and generous giving, we thank you.

A record of the local, national, and international charities supported through the Outreach Committee can be found in the report of the Outreach treasurer, following this report. In addition to these gifts, Outreach’s on-going projects strive to share God’s love, hope, and healing.

Once again, in 2024, a great deal of energy and many resources were devoted to food support through the following activities:

First Friday Food Fair continues to be used by the community. We offer this service on each first Friday of the month from 9:00 to 10:00. We have a consistent number of patrons who come to receive non-perishables, and meat and vegetables when available. We appreciate food donations from the congregation which keep this program in operation.

The Caring Continues provides food for families of children in the Woodstock school system who are in need of

food assistance. Dave Magee of the Evangelical Covenant Church is the coordinator of this program, which is made possible through the efforts and donations of East Woodstock Congregational Church, South Woodstock Baptist Church, Faith Bible Church, Woodstock Covenant Church and United International Foods. Our church generously responds to an ever changing need for certain food items which helps to keep the Caring Continues Pantry well stocked. Lynn Hescheles and Donna Baldyga go to the Woodstock Academy South campus every six weeks to pack bags of food which are delivered to the Middle and Elementary schools for the children to bring home.

Community Kitchen - EWCC provides one meal a month for community kitchen at First Congregational Church. We are now serving between 80-90 each week. Special thanks to Kerstin Forrester, who has retired as our coordinator after years of service. We also thank Barbara Hackett, Donna Baldyga and their "crew" for coordinating and cooking.

Freezer Meals - Outreach maintains a supply of meals in our freezer that can be delivered to those experiencing illness or difficult circumstances. We stock the freezer by preparing meals as need dictates. Meals are available and used by Pastor Sue, and now available to Pastor Gary when visiting community members at home who are sick or would appreciate a meal and a visit!

Take Them a Meal - With the help of the "Take them a Meal" web site, our congregation provided meals for one person who was undergoing challenging circumstances this past year.

TEEG (Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group)-Supporting Wellness at Pantry' (SWAP) - Our Church generously partners with TEEG In two major missions, in addition to our donation to support the Woodstock Fuel Assistance Fund. Our springtime "Bring Your Cooler to Church" was held on April 28th providing hundreds of pounds of food from ground beef and pork to fresh vegetables, cheese and eggs. It was an inspiring sight to see the TEEG truck being filled by a continuous line of our parishioners laden with gifts of food.

Thanksgiving Baskets - Baskets full of food donated by the congregation and supplemented by Outreach were delivered to Covenant to Care (26) and local families (3).

OTHER ON-GOING OUTREACH PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Covenant to Care for Children - Liaison Pam Brown worked with social workers Ana Rodriguez and Matt Gilbert to facilitate several activities that provided for children and families in this program:

- Easter Baskets were provided for 30 children
- Thanksgiving Baskets were provided for 26 DCF families and 3 members of our church community.
- Christmas gifts were provided for 18 children
- Furniture/storage for a foster child was provided
- A new foster child was provided with a birthday gift

WAIM (Windham Area Interfaith Ministries) - Andy Krofina continues as our liaison with the organization and volunteers frequently at the office there. We had a workday in May at WAIM staffed by our confirmands. Andy continues to bring items to WAIM from our congregation.

Emergency Shelter/No Freeze Shelter - Liaison Diane Billings continues to work with the shelter manager to help with their needs. There is a constant need for personal care items, so we appreciate items donated by the congregation. At Christmas the congregation provided \$25 gift certificates so that the staff of the shelter could provide Christmas items for the adults and children/teens who are in the Shelter.

Support Team – Christine Lessig continues to coordinate church member volunteers who assist church members with rides and other unusual or emergency needs.

Domestic Violence Shelter – Cris Waldron coordinated the provision of Easter buckets for 7 children at Easter and gifts at Christmas for 7 children. They are still waiting for renovations to take place at the shelter. New or gently used towels can always be used by them.

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

OUTREACH, CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Prayer Shawls made by members of our congregation continue to provide comfort and support to those going through difficult situations. Many shawls were distributed this year. Thank you to Barbara Hackett for her leadership on this project, and our talented knitters who work throughout the year creating beautiful shawls.

The Card Ministry continues under the capable leadership of Karen Ryker, Pam Brown, and Diane Billings. An average of 35 cards per month are sent out to members and friends who are homebound, ill, mourning a loss, or just needing some cheer. Their encouragement is deeply appreciated by the recipients.

TEEG - In August, knowing school bells would soon be ringing, we once again partnered with the First Congregational Church of Woodstock for our "Back to School Supplies" drive. Getting children off to a great start armed with the supplies they need is paramount to their success...and we did just that! Boxes upon boxes of supplies, from notebooks, binders and loose-leaf paper to pens, pencils and backpacks, were delivered to TEEG for distribution to those in need. Once again, an amazing response was made possible by the generosity and caring nature of our congregation.

LGBTQ – We continue our support of the LGBTQ community with display of two banners—one hangs outside on our church building and the other on the inside in Fellowship Hall. In addition, we have a small table in Fellowship Hall with a small lending library of books about LGBTQ issues; a listing of books that are available at Woodstock Libraries, and a list of support resources in the community.

On May 4, over twelve EWCC members attended the First Gay Pride Day (in Northeastern CT) celebration in near-by Putnam, at Rotary Park. Our booth had all the supplies to make Friendship bracelets, bottles of water, rainbow lollipops and brochures of EWCC mission and programs. The entire day was a huge success. The entire team wore Pride banner t-shirts with the words "A just world for all". We continued our financial support for the Woodstock Academy "Gender and Sexualities Alliance" (GSA). We have heard from community members how supportive this group has been to LGBTQ students and their families. We also have continued our financial support of the Hadwen Park, UCC in Worcester, that provides a safe haven for LGBTQ folks around the world who are fleeing persecution, injury, and death threats due to their sexuality.

World Vision - Our congregation continues the sponsorship of Inne, a four-year old child from South Africa. Our contributions benefit both Inne and his community. Melanie LaMountain is our committee liaison to World Vision and Inne. She has been communicating with Inne and has sent him letters about our life in Woodstock and sent the most recent picture of our congregation that was taken in June.

Kiva – Under the leadership of Christine Lessig, we continue to support four agricultural micro-businesses with \$25 loans through KIVA to low-income/underserved female entrepreneurs in Kenya, Sierra Leone, Guatemala, and Bolivia. These loans are paid back and reinvested to help alleviate poverty.

The needs in our church, our community, our nation, and our world are real. We stand ready and willing to listen, to help, and to share God's love. Thank you to the congregation for partnering with us to make this possible.

Respectfully submitted,
Andy Krofina, *Co-Chair*, Pam Brown, *Co-Chair*
Donna Baldyga, Diane Billings, Kerstin Forrester,
Peter Green, Barbara Hackett, Lynn Hescheles,
Melanie LaMountain, Christine Lessig, Karen Ryker,
Tom Stokes, Cris Waldron

A FIRM FOUNDATION

AUDITOR'S REPORT

On March 3, 2024, Kerstin Forrester and Jeff Wong met with DeEtta Spalding to review 2023 financial for EWCC general budget and the financial process. We focused primarily on an extensive list of questions regarding internal control of areas such as: Software used; Budgeting; Reporting; Cash and pledging; Journal entries; Bank account reconciliation; Special funds; Property & Equipment; Liabilities; Restricted Gifts; Payroll; and Computer System. There were no issues with any of these areas and we commend our Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer for their diligence in performing their duties for our Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Kerstin Forrester, Jeff Wong

COLLECTOR'S REPORT

Pledge Offerings 2024	157,675.00
General Offerings 2024	23,686.49
Prepaid 2025	17,000.00
Outreach (1)	1,955.00
Memorials	1,425.00
Christmas Offering 2024	825.00
Music	490.00
Hospitality	450.00
	<hr/>
	203,506.49

Respectfully submitted,
John M. Davis, *Collector*

(1) Of this total, \$1,275.00 went directly into the Outreach Account, rather than the Church's General Fund.

LBS TREASURER REPORT

Receipts:

Holly Fair Net Profit	\$10,726.20
Monthly Meeting Donations	120.00
Donations	400.00
Withdrawal from mature CD	5,000.00
	<hr/>
	\$16,246.20

Expenditures:

EWCC General Fund	3,000.00
Refurbishment	7,000.00
Annual Meeting Breakfast Church	699.97
Children's Day Flowers	178.47
Confirmation Class Flowers	44.48
Pastor Sue Retirement Party Expenses	3,278.72
Kitchen Upright Freezer	660.00
Kitchen Supplies	443.75
	<hr/>
	\$ 15,305.39

Grace Harmon Memorial Fund	\$ 1,200.00
CD Value	7,474.16

The LBS has made these commitments for upcoming year 2025: Donation for Annual Meeting Breakfast \$ 800.00, funds for upgrading/replacing smoke alarm system, painting of the Sanctuary \$ 5,000.00

Susan Converse, *LBS Treasurer*

JAMBOREE FINANCIAL REPORT

	Tues 2024 - Rain at 4:30			Thur 2023		
			Best out Past 10yrs	Major Storm		
	<u>INCOME</u>	<u>EXPENSE</u>	<u>NET Profit</u> <u>(Loss)</u>	<u>Inc/Dec</u> <u>over</u> <u>Prior</u> <u>Year</u>	<u>Highest Amt/Year</u>	Did Jamboree 2.0 the next evening very nice
Attic Treasurers	\$ 6,059.35	\$ (97.84)	\$ 5,961.51	-32%	\$8,770/2023	\$ 8,769.90
Baked Goods	1,259.00	-	1,259.00	75%	\$1259/ 2024	718.91
Beverage Station - See Taco	-	-	-	0%	\$1,139/ 2017	-
BBQ Pulled Pork	1,687.00	(794.98)	892.02	-27%	\$1,445/ 2021	1,228.41
Books	2,638.72	-	2,638.72	150%	\$2,764.15/ 2017	1,054.00
Cake Walk	120.00	-	120.00	-28%	\$336/ 2011	166.00
Games/Contests	510.00	(7.99)	502.01	-658%	\$1,005/ 2013	(90.00)
Hot Dogs, Sausage (prior Hambrg)	2,485.00	(1,119.06)	1,365.94	411%	\$2,029/ 2019	267.20
Hayrides	402.50	-	402.50	0%	\$272/ 2009	-
Ice Cream Social	686.00	(250.00)	436.00	-325%	\$738/ 2011	(193.85)
Jewelry	-	-	-	0%	\$769.7/ 2016	-
Silent Auction	278.00	-	278.00	-38%	\$1008/ 2009	447.00
Strawberry Shortcake	3,052.00	(681.71)	2,370.29	43%	\$2,606/2022	1,654.03
Tshirt & Bags	-	-	-	0%		-
Snow Cones	526.00	(24.79)	501.21	274%	\$624/ 2022	134.00
Walking Tacos & Beverage	1,613.51	(258.17)	1,355.34	105%	\$1,355/ 2024	660.72
Sub Total	\$ 21,317.08	\$ (3,234.54)	\$ 18,082.54	22%		\$ 14,816.32
Donations, Cash	1,836.52	-	1,836.52	41%		1,302.48
Donations, Ads	1,220.00	(566.40)	653.60	10%		596.00
General Expenditures						
Porta Potty	\$ -	\$ (675.00)	(675.00)	-18%		(825.00)
Paid Entertainers	-	(725.00)	(725.00)	0%		(725.00)
Constable Security	-	(857.52)	(857.52)	-32%		(1,269.86)
Rubbish Removal	-	(425.00)	(425.00)	21%		(350.00)
Tents	-	(1,162.50)	(1,162.50)	29%		(900.00)
Picnic Tables	-	-	-			-
Commerative Totes/T	-	(630.91)	(630.91)	26%		(499.95)
Permits/Misc	-	(489.00)	(489.00)	121%		(221.02)
Ambulance Coverage	-	-	-	-100%		(750.00)
10x10 Tent	-	(84.02)	(84.02)			-
	\$ -	\$ (5,048.95)	\$ (5,048.95)	-9%		\$ (5,540.83)
Total	\$ 24,373.60	\$ (8,849.89)	\$ 15,523.71	39%		\$ 11,173.97
BUDGET - Per ANNUAL CHURCH REPORT			15,000.00			15000
SURPLUS/(SHORTAGE)			523.71			(3,826.03)

OUTREACH COMMITTEE P&L

2024

	ACTUAL 2024	Budget 2024
<u>INCOME:</u>		
Church Budget	\$ 12,300.00	\$ 12,300.00
OGHS Collection	\$ 858.00	
Abba's Army Collection	\$ 801.00	
CWS Blanket Program	\$ 70.00	
Individual Donations	\$ 1,275.00	\$ 1,500.00
TOTAL INCOME:	\$ 15,304.00	\$ 13,800.00
<u>Recurring Payments</u>		
TEEG - Woodstock Fuel Assistance Fund	\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00
ACCESS No Freeze Shelter & Homeless Shelter	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
Quiet Corner Cares	\$ 300.00	\$ -
Back Bay Mission	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00
IHSP Daily Bread	\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00
Abba's Army (2/11/24 collection + donations)	\$ 801.00	
OGHS (Collection)	\$ 858.00	
KIVA (as needed)		\$ 25.00
SWBC - Guatemala Mission	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00
Day Kimball Healthcare (Palliative Care, Hospice, & Homecare)	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00
World Vision (Sponsored Child)	\$ 312.00	\$ 312.00
Camp Quinebaug	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00
East Woodstock Cemetery Fund	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00
East Woodstock Library	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00
Scholarships (2)		\$ 1,000.00
Treehouse Foundation (Tom Stokes)	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00
Why Me & Sherry's House	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00
Lancaster Seminary	\$ 150.00	\$ 150.00
The Underground CT	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00
Community Café at Putnam Methodist Church	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00
NE CT Salvation Army	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00
WAIM	\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00
Gay-Straight Alliance Club at WA	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00
Heifer International	\$ 120.00	\$ 120.00
Danielson Veteran's Coffeehouse	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00
Flying Free Therapeutic Riding Center	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
LGBT (Hadwen Church)	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Northeast Placement Services (NEPS)	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Silver Lake Campground	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Hospice (Tree of Life Ceremony)	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Muddy Brook Fire Department	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Windham County 4-H Foundation	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Central Village Congregational Church (Community Kitchen)	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
St. Luke's Guesthouse (Southbridge)	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00
Thanksgiving Baskets	\$ 529.21	\$ 750.00
First Friday Food Fair		\$ 200.00
Community Kitchens, Inc. (EWCC)	\$ 1,458.54	\$ 1,900.00
Covenant to Care / Shelters		\$ 150.00
Meal Ministry		\$ 250.00
Miscellaneous, Postage & Cards	\$ 416.70	\$ 550.00
Prayer Shawls (& Cards)	\$ 185.75	\$ 1,000.00
UCC Disaster Relief Fund	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 2,000.00
CWS Blanket Program	\$ 70.00	
EWCC LGBTQ Books & Display & Pride Putnam	\$ 75.00	\$ 100.00
Domestic Violence Shelter		\$ 125.00
Homeless Shelter		\$ 650.00
Community Gifts/Needs	\$ 315.19	\$ 2,000.00
Jasmin Floyd Disability Trust	\$ 500.00	
World Central Kitchen	\$ 200.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 14,741.39	\$ 18,232.00
Difference (Income less Expenses)	\$ 562.61	\$ (4,432.00)
Starting Balance	\$ 3,214.73	\$ 4,544.60
Ending Balance	\$ 3,777.34	\$ 112.60
Special Donation for Community Emergencies (Estimate)	\$ 10,500.00	\$ 10,500.00

SOCIETY COMMITTEE

The Society committee met monthly throughout 2024 for detailed discussions and review of our church's various financial and property management issues. Thanks to the efforts of our committee members and many, many volunteers, we were able to address these issues. EWCC is fortunate to have a strong financial team led by Treasurer DeEtta Spalding, Assistant Treasurer Lynn Looby, and John Davis Collector. We are indeed fortunate to have the support of these qualified and dedicated volunteers.

- Due to the retirement of our long-serving Office Manager, Heidi Tucker, our church needed a new office manager. Society has completed the recruitment process and is delighted to have Mary Oliver as our new Office Manager.
- Society supported the first Transition Team in the Interim Search contract negotiation process.
- Our children's playground is in the process of being updated. The shed has been removed, equipment cleaned, and plans for 2025 of railroad ties removed and grass reestablished.
- Kitchen maintenance continued with LED lighting, and a new hot water booster was installed to solve our long-term dishwasher issues.
- Implemented the online productivity suite Google Workspace for our church. Workspace will allow us to collaborate and share files easily, access needed cloud file storage, manage church calendars, and run online meetings.
- A Security sub-committee with the Deacons was established to consider the various security concerns of our church. The committee has met monthly and is in the process of addressing multiple security concerns. Several policies are in the development stage, including door locking, first aid, fire drills, etc. A Ring camera was installed for office staff when working alone.
- A 64" Smart TV was installed in Fellowship Hall.
- A Maintenance team was established with a comprehensive ongoing maintenance schedule. A volunteer committee was formed, including Eddie Hrysan, Peter Green, Andy Hescheles, and Glen Lessig. Many projects were completed, including rebuilding the bulkhead doors, painting the north side of the Parsonage ell, and cleaning the west and south sides of the church buildings.
- Employment contracts for all staff were reviewed and completed.
- The committee has received designs and proposals from three contractors. Currently, an RFQ is being completed, and the remodeling project is planned to begin in mid-2025.
- Proposals for an upgraded fire alarm system have been received; this is a priority for the committee to complete in early 2025.
- Judith Wong again organized a very productive Jeans Sunday this autumn. Current plans are to complete and add a Spring Clean-Up day in 2025.
- Judith Wong continued to coordinate the Refurbishment Committee, a sub-committee of Society. Please see the Refurbishment Committee report for more details.

Society would like to thank DeEtta again for her professional and tireless efforts to meet our church's financial needs.

Society Committee: Glen Lessig - Chair, Dawn Adilietta Secretary, DeEtta Spalding *Ex-Officio*, Kerstin Forrester, Andy Hescheles, Calvin Neely, Rick Place, Chuck Warinsky, Judith Wong

REFURBISHMENT COMMITTEE, A SUBCOMMITTEE OF SOCIETY

The Refurbishment Committee, a subcommittee of Society, was formed to spearhead the East Woodstock Congregational Church sanctuary and narthex refurbishment, meeting both the current and future needs of our congregation while respecting the Church's history and blended architecture.

Highlights of 2024:

This year the Committee focused on learning more about the Church's architectural history and applying for a second pre-planning 50/50 grant:

- **Research:** Historical consultant **Myron Stachiw** generously donated his time and talents to research and prepare an Historic Structures Report detailing the Church's architectural history. **Christine Thomson's** paint analysis further enriched this knowledge. Myron's findings were presented to the congregation in May. His presentation included architectural findings, and a chronology of construction and alterations of the sanctuary and narthex that will help us better understand the physical and aesthetic evolution of our Church buildings. Abundant thanks to **Myron, Christine, and Dawn Adiletta** for their efforts to uncover this rich history and their work on the grant process. Myron's presentation is available on the EWCC Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/eastwoodstockchurch.org/videos/1123426372281381>

- **Grant Application:** The committee submitted a pre-planning grant application with the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO). The Historic Structures Report was an important part of this application. While our pre-planning grant was denied, Myron's report is a treasured part of our Church's historical records, and will be invaluable for future grant applications and refurbishment recommendations presented for congregational approval.
- **Ongoing Work:** Without the grant and the lack of available Church funds, major refurbishment work is on hold through our transition period. Despite the grant denial, the committee continues its work. Plans are underway to create "as built" architectural drawings, and Society will address any potential roof repairs required by SHPO for future grant applications.
- Special thanks to:
 - DeEtta Spalding** for installing rechargeable stairway lights in the balcony stairwells for evening events.
 - Peter Green** for diligently matching and touching up paint colors throughout the church.
 - Barbara and Stewart Morse** for offering to donate an historic pewter communion set for display.
 - Dawn Adiletta** for her work in exploring additional funding sources and preparing future grant applications. SHPO's grant cycle reopens in 2025, and we expect to reapply.

Sincere gratitude to our dedicated **Refurbishment Committee members** who bring together their collective knowledge to support our anticipated refurbishments, and to **YOU, our congregation** for continued interest in shaping EWCC's future. Please consider volunteering to help run our A/V equipment during services, and consider sharing your Church historical photos, records, and memorabilia to enhance EWCC's ongoing story.

We are reminded that we are ALL stewards of our beloved sacred spaces. We pray that our Church may always be a place where the people of God may gather in worship and community and recognize God's loving presence. Our work on the Refurbishment Committee and the ongoing support of our faith community lays the groundwork for future congregations at East Woodstock Congregational Church.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Wong, *Chairperson*
Dawn Adiletta, Mary Ellen Blake, John Davis,
Kerstin Forrester, Peter Green, Amy Hiller-White,
Val Law, Glen Lessig, DeEtta Spalding

Projected Giving and Expense Summary / Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2024
Proposed Budget
Calendar Year 2025

	ACTUAL 2024 Jan - Dec	2024 Approved Budget	Actual vs Approved	Proposed 2025 Budget
Giving				
Pledges	\$ 170,388.38	\$ 160,190.00	\$ 10,198.38	\$ 153,274.00
Non Pledged	23,686.49	21,000.00	2,686.49	23,400.00
May Fund	702.55	750.00	(47.45)	750.00
Rent Other	760.00	600.00	160.00	800.00
Fund Raisers	18,093.71	15,000.00	3,093.71	18,000.00
Interest	395.32	500.00	(104.68)	500.00
Total Giving	\$ 214,026.45	\$ 198,040.00	\$ 15,986.45	\$ 196,724.00
Expenses		101%		100%
Christian Education				
Designated Funds	\$ (210.00)	\$ (325.00)	\$ 115.00	\$ (5,325.00)
Childcare Sunday	-	-	-	-
Christian Ed Director	11,408.00	11,405.37	2.63	11,750.15
Religious Education	(3.84)	725.00	(728.84)	725.00
Sr. High Youth Group	-	4,645.63	(4,645.63)	1,076.30
SR High Supplies	103.65	345.00	(241.35)	345.00
Sunday School Supplies	62.65	510.00	(447.35)	510.00
Total Christian Education	\$ 11,360.46	\$ 17,306.00	\$ (5,945.54)	\$ 9,081.45
Church				
Designated Funds	\$ (3,000.00)	\$ (3,000.00)	\$ -	\$ (7,000.00)
Capital Funding	1,500.00	1,500.00	-	-
Cleaning & Supplies	2,830.24	3,130.00	(299.76)	3,130.00
Communication	2,035.62	1,995.48	40.14	1,995.48
Electricity	3,470.73	3,600.00	(129.27)	3,600.00
Heat (C)	6,759.41	5,981.25	778.16	6,800.00
Insurance	11,080.75	10,084.00	996.75	11,084.00
Kitchen	469.27	525.00	(55.73)	300.00
Lawn care	660.00	475.00	185.00	475.00
Repairs & Maintenance	8,722.02	3,000.00	5,722.02	3,000.00
Rubbish	1,825.84	1,800.00	25.84	1,800.00
Workman comp	678.00	675.00	3.00	675.00
Total Church	\$ 37,031.88	\$ 29,765.73	\$ 7,266.15	\$ 25,839.48
Music				
Designated Funds	-	-	-	-
Gift of Music	43.68	(810.00)	853.68	(810.00)
Bell Choir	238.50	600.00	(361.50)	600.00
Music & Dues	835.25	1,510.00	(674.75)	1,510.00
Music Director Salary	8,683.42	9,409.95	(726.53)	9,692.38
Music LRP	400.00	400.00	-	400.00
Organ & Piano Tuning	2,963.31	1,200.00	1,763.31	1,200.00
Organist Salary	10,211.96	10,211.67	0.29	10,501.86
Youth Choir	-	-	-	-
Substitute Organist	-	-	-	-
Total Music	\$ 23,376.12	\$ 22,521.62	\$ 854.50	\$ 23,094.24
Office				
Designated Funds	\$ (900.00)	\$ (900.00)	\$ -	\$ (585.68)
Office Manager	11,427.42	10,624.70	802.72	9,946.31
Postage	571.12	650.00	(78.88)	627.54
Outside Financial Review	900.00	900.00	-	-
Subscriptions	1,873.57	2,100.00	(226.43)	2,000.00
Office Expense	1,056.32	1,200.00	(143.68)	1,100.00
Office Equip. Maint.	1,138.17	1,000.00	138.17	1,000.00
Total Office	\$ 16,066.60	\$ 15,374.70	\$ 691.90	\$ 14,088.17

	ACTUAL 2024 Jan - Dec	2024 Approved Budget	Actual vs Approved	Proposed 2025 Budget
Other				
Designated Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (2,300.00)
Altar Guild Supplies	190.22	375.00	(184.78)	375.00
Basic Missions/NE Conferen	4,900.00	4,900.00	-	4,000.00
Diaconate	520.54	900.00	(379.46)	600.00
Miscellaneous	70.63	500.00	(429.37)	500.00
Outreach	12,300.00	12,300.00	-	12,300.00
Conference Outreach	-	-	-	-
Religious Supply	392.12	475.00	(82.88)	475.00
Stewardship	468.88	600.00	(131.12)	600.00
Supply Minister	300.00	300.00	-	-
Windham Dues	574.00	395.00	179.00	395.00
Total Other	\$ 19,716.39	\$ 20,745.00	\$ (1,028.61)	\$ 16,945.00
Parsonage				
Designated Funds	-	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Rental Income	(15,640.00)	(15,600.00)	(40.00)	(15,600.00)
Real Estate	4,684.04	4,750.00	(65.96)	4,845.00
Maintenance	674.19	2,000.00	(1,325.81)	1,000.00
Total Parsonage	\$ (10,281.77)	\$ (8,850.00)	\$ (1,431.77)	\$ (9,755.00)
Pastor				
Designated Funds	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -
Annuity Contribution	4,136.34	4,736.29	(599.95)	-
Health Insurance	8,340.50	8,470.50	(130.00)	-
Housing Allowance	10,200.00	10,200.00	-	26,400.00
Interim Minister	6,600.00	27,000.00	(20,400.00)	64,822.59
Interim Minister Costs	3,500.80	3,500.00	0.80	1,138.08
Milage Reimbursement	1,499.94	1,500.00	(0.06)	-
Sabbatical	-	-	-	-
Salary	53,985.13	29,601.79	24,383.34	-
Seminars	340.00	600.00	(260.00)	1,000.00
Total Pastor	\$ 88,602.71	\$ 85,608.58	\$ 2,994.13	\$ 93,360.67
Total Expense	\$ 185,672.39	\$ 182,671.63	\$ 3,200.76	\$ 172,674.00
Operating Net	\$ 28,154.06	\$ 15,368.37	\$ 12,785.69	\$ 24,050.00
Extraordinary Expense or Capital Projects				
Capital Setaside	-	-	-	-
Capital Savings	-	(15,368.38)	15,368.38	15,368.38
Parsonage Kitchen	-	-	-	(26,250.00)
AV Equipment	-	-	-	(168.38)
Fire Alarm System	-	-	-	(13,000.00)
Sanctuary Expense	-	-	-	-
Total	-	(15,368.38)	15,368.38	(24,050.00)
NET Surplus/(Shortage)	\$ 28,154.06	\$ (0.01)	\$ 28,154.07	\$ 0.00

NOTES



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We gather as a people of God to worship and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We strive to carry on His teachings of love through our support and compassion for all people in our community and throughout the world.

East Woodstock Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Reverend Dr. Gary Shahinian, *Interim Pastor*
Jessica Weaver Boose, *Christian Education Director*
Nancy Ducharme, *Music Director/Organist*
Andrew Tomkins, *Bell Choir Director*
Mary Oliver, *Office Administrator*

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