



East Woodstock Congregational Church

An Open and Affirming Congregation
of the UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

2025 Annual Report

25 January 2026
East Woodstock, Connecticut

AGENDA

Annual Meeting

25 January 2026

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 25, 2026 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 2026 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

MEETING MINUTES FROM THE EWCC ANNUAL MEETING, 1/26/2025

40 people attended, 2 Non-members (Sign-in sheet available)

Meeting Opened at 11:15am. by the Moderator Dawn Adiletta. Dawn welcomed Pastor Gary Shahinian to his 1st Annual meeting.

Christine Armstrong read the Call to the Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting Prayer was read together. The Covenant of Worshipping and Working Together was read together.

Annual Meeting Minutes from January 28, 2024 were reviewed. No discussion.

Motion: Kerstin Forrester made a motion and seconded by Tom Stokes to accept the minutes in the annual report. The motion passed.

The Nominating Committee presented their report and nominations were opened. Discussion included the following:

- A change in Jamboree members to reflect Co-Chairs DeEtta Spalding and Lynn Looby.
- The Pastoral Relations Committee should reflect members: Jen Griffin, Amy Hiller White, Dorrie Scranton, Chuck Warinsky, Bob Rath, and Taryn Tomkins.
- Added Emily Hayden to the Search & Call Committee

Other Committee reports had discussion as follows:

The members of the Security Subcommittee of Society were acknowledged for their efforts developing an EWCC Medical Emergency Response protocol: Andy Hescheles, Peter Engh, Susan Converse, Kerstin Forrester, Marilyn Rath, Stacy Vogt, Seth Spalding, and Valerie Law. (A copy was handed out at the meeting).

Kerstin Forrester gave an update on the Parsonage project.

Jeff Wong spoke about transitioning to Google office and maintaining office and committee documents digitally. Glen Lessig, Jeff Wong and Jessica Reed would be administrators of the Google Works platform.

Judith Wong encouraged everyone to watch Myron Stachiw's presentation about our church's architectural history on Facebook. The link is in the annual report. There is no funding or grants at the moment to carry out some of the refurbishment projects, but Judith is looking for artifacts.

Motion: Seth Spalding made a motion and seconded by Bob Rath to accept the slate of Nominees presented by the Nominations Committee as amended. Motion passed.

Motion: Lynn Hescheles made a motion and seconded by DeEtta Spalding to accept all of the committee reports as reported. Motion passed.

DeEtta Spalding, EWCC Treasurer, reported on the Cash Balance Report for 2024 and the proposed 2025 Budget 2024 Surplus of \$28,154.06

Society recommends moving the surplus to the operating budget for 2025 as follows:

- \$5000 for the Christian Education Committee
- \$7000 for the General Fund
- \$2300 to restore the Outreach budget to fully funded
- \$585.68 for Office funds
- \$13,268.38 for the Parsonage kitchen project

Additional Comments:

- The fire alarm system is old and needs updating
- The church has a healthy cash balance as indicated in the report
- Appreciation to Lynn Looby as Assistant Treasurer
- Staff getting a 3% raise in pay
- Reminder to keep pledges and donations caught up
- EWCC is cost cutting as much as possible.

1 Discussion regarding the budget presentation: Peter Green asked about a current appraisal on the parsonage and the answer from DeEtta S. was yes. Sherry Magnan asked about the loss of members during this transition time and

what happens if pledges decrease. DeEtta S. replied that the church has Heritage Funds to keep the church operating if needed. It was noted that insurance costs will increase and the church may have to do more fundraising, i.e. the Auction, or a 53rd Sunday collection. Jeff Wong commented about the Search and Call committee working with Stewardship in the fall season, and having a healthy church budget will attract a good candidate. Phil Parizeau asked about any church endowments. DeEtta S. answered that we have checking, CD's and savings. The church is fiscally conservative.

Motion: Lynn Looby read the motion to allocate \$26,400 to the Pastor Shahinian's Housing Allowance. Bob Rath seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Motion: Lynn Looby read the motion to move the \$28,154.06 surplus from 2024 to be dispersed as described above into the 2025 budget. Amy Hiller White seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Motion: John Davis made a motion to approve the budget report for Fiscal year 2024. Bob Rath seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Motion: John Davis made a motion to approve the 2025 Budget as presented. Kerstin Forrester seconded the motion. Motion passed.

No other business discussed.

Motion: Phil Parizeau made a motion to adjourn the EWCC Annual meeting. Amy Hiller White seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 12:13pm.

CLERK'S REPORT 2025

Number of Members who joined in 2025: 11

Number of Members lost during 2025: 8

By Transfer: 0 By Death: 8

Baptisms: 0 Weddings: 0

Funerals and Graveside Services

John Carlson 1/11/2025

William Cruttenden 4/16/2025

RoJeanne Doege 4/26/2025

Jasmin Floyd 4/26/2025

Viola Gifford 5/4/2025

Alice Compagnone 6/14/2025

Bruce Benkhart 7/19/2025

Kenneth Marvin 11/29/2025

New Members

Affirmation of Faith

Jessica Weaver Boose

Lucy Bousquet

Linda Kaplan

Stacy Vogt

Windsor White

New Members

By Confirmation

Haven Magnan

Henry Griffin

Gabby Santos

Adian Newall-Vuillemot

Gigi Young

Letter of Transfer

Mary Oliver

Christine Armstrong, Clerk

CHURCH COUNCIL

In 2025, the Council met nearly every month (except summer) to maintain consistent communication among all church committees and the interim pastor during this important period of transition. The Council is composed of one representative from each church committee, providing a forum where a wide range of topics affecting the life of the church can be shared, and if need be, discussed collaboratively.

This year, Council fully embraced and implemented a hybrid meeting model using Google Meet, enabling members to attend regardless of their location. Additionally, we fully integrated Google Drive to archive agendas and approved meeting minutes, ensuring clear recordkeeping and long-term accessibility.

2025 brought more discussions regarding committee ownership over tasks that were previously filled by our prior pastor, streamlining church records, and overall church preparedness as we start to make room for a settled pastor. Each member of Council has met every challenging discussion with open ears, an open mind, and full of grace. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone for their dedication throughout the year. Your collective knowledge, commitment, and love for our church continue to guide us forward.

With gratitude,
Dorrie S. Scranton
Council Chair

NOMINATING REPORT

Officers for 02/01/2026 – 01/31/2027

Council Chair: Dorrie Scranton
 *Clerk: Bob Rath
 Moderator: Dawn Adiletta
 Treasurer: DeEtta Spalding
 Assistant: Treasurer: Lynn Looby

*Vice Chair: Sherry Magnan
 Assistant Clerk: *Amy Hiller White
 Collector: John Davis
 Assistant Collector: Kerstin Forrester
 Historian: Mary Ellen Blake

Committees for 02/01/2026 – 01/31/2027

Standing 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.

Standing Committees (Term and Year, up to 2 terms, each 3 years, before rolling off)

DIACONATE (9)	Term	Year	OUTREACH (6)	Term	Year	NOMINATING (3)	
						(Council nominates max. 3-year terms)	
SOCIETY (9)	Term	Year	MUSIC (5)	Term	Year	PASTORAL RELATIONS	
Valerie Law	1	3	Lynn Hescheles	2	3	Bob Rath, <i>Chair</i>	1 3
Mark Billings.	1	3	Tom Stokes	2	3	Valerie Law	2 1
Susan Converse	2	2	Christine Lessig	2	3	Dorrie Scranton	1 3
Anne Sorensen	2	1	Kerstin Forrester	2	2	Jess Reed	1 3
Taryn Tomkins	2	1	Cris Waldron	2	2		
Stacy Vogt	1	2	Donna Baldyga	2	1		
*Marilyn Rath	1	1	Barbara Hackett	2	1		
*Jess Reed	1	1	Peter Green	1	3		
*Windsor White	1	1	Karen Ryker (Friend)	1	3		
			Melanie LaMountain	1	3		
			Dee Harless (Friend)	1	2		
						Serving during Interim Pastor period.	
						To be determined for new Pastor.	
STEWARSHIP (6)	Term	Year	CHRISTIAN ED. (6)	Term	Year		
Dawn Morin	1	3	Karen McFarlin	2	1		
Dee Harless (Friend)	2	2	Diane Billings	1	3		
Valerie Law	2	1	Kerstin Forrester	1	3		
Anne Sorensen	1	2	Dorrie Scranton	1	3		
Beth Baron	1	2				*Mary Oliver	
*Jen Griffin	1	1				1 1	
						*Miranda McCabe	
						1 1	
						*Christine Armstrong	
						1 1	
						Jessica Weaver Boose, <i>CE Director</i> , (employee)	
AUDITORS (2) (Max. 1 3-year term)	Year						
Jeff Wong	2						
*Phil Parizeau	1						

Special Committees—no terms and no limit to number of people

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

Judy Schumacher
Deb Hervieux

UCC ASSOC. DELEGATES (2)

Christine Lessig
Mary Oliver

ALTAR GUILD

Karin Tourtellotte
Judy Schumacher
Laurie Edwards
Mary Ellen Blake
Susan Converse
Lucy Bousquet

HOSPITALITY

Laurie Edwards, Co-Chair
Diane Morin, Co-Chair
Nancy Young
Marion Hallowell
Barbara Morse
Gail Lorentzen
Beth Baron
Charlotte Davis

Jill Sherman
Marilyn Rath
Barbara Hackett
Windsor White
Christine Lessig
Deb Sherman
Karin Tourtellotte
Sue Swan

JAMBOREE

Lynn Looby (Co-chair)
DeEtta Spalding (Co-chair)
Judith Wong
Angela Young

REPORT ON SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Nominating Committee Report on Pastoral Search Process - January 9, 2026

The Transition #2 Committee completed its work culminating in the unanimous approval of the EWCC Profile by the Congregation in June 2025. Thank you to all the members of this committee who completed the work on time. The Transition #2 Committee orchestrated advertisements at 5 seminaries and the on-line job board Indeed in an effort to stimulate interest beyond the UCC posting system.

Transition #2 Committee (T2)
Bob Rath Co-chair; Jess Reed Co-chair;
Anthony Reed; Kaylyn Converse;
Phil Parizeau; Tom Stokes; Pam Brown;
Lynn Hescheles; Peter Green; Jessica Weaver-Boose

Search & Call

The Search and Call Committee commenced work in the fall of 2025. They are underway reviewing, evaluating and interviewing candidates. They provide frequent updates verbally at church and in writing in the Weekly Reminder, Trumpet and Sunday Bulletin.

Search and Call Committee (SCC)
John Davis Co-chair; Marilyn Rath Co-chair; Jaime Boisvert;
Pam Brown; Emily Hayden; Denise Eslinger; Sherry Magnan; Jeff Wong

Process Recap

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.

Pastoral Relations

Pastoral Relations has met periodically with Pastor Gary over the 2025 calendar year. In keeping with the charge of the committee there are no minutes.

Amy Hiller-White – Chair; Jennifer Griffin, Bob Rath,
Dorrie Scranton, Taryn Tomkins and Chuck Warinsky

WORSHIP, PRAISE & CARE

2025 PASTOR'S REPORT

We are still in the interim period of the church between settled pastors, but the church continues to be faithful in carrying out its regular ministries, missions, and programs.

On the first Sunday of the year, January 5, Windsor White, our five Confirmation students, and I visited Worcester Fellowship, an outdoor church in the heart of Worcester that ministers to the homeless. Homelessness continues to be a prominent issue, especially in large cities. All Saints Episcopal Church graciously allows the homeless to meet outside their building every Sunday afternoon for a worship service (as well as providing a meal for them once a week in their Fellowship Hall). Our confirmands provided 50 bagged lunches for the homeless which was distributed to them after the worship service by the students. The students had the opportunity to meet these destitute persons and to interact with them. It was quite instructive for our young people to experience what it is like to be without shelter in the bitter cold of winter. After lunch, we were all given a tour of the beautiful sanctuary of All Saints Church, the "mother" church of Worcester Episcopalian, established in 1835. The impressive Gothic Revival structure made a lasting impression on our young folks as they embraced the opportunity to behold a church building somewhat different from our own.

In addition to the regular Sunday morning classes, the Confirmation Class attended the six-week Lenten Series on Sunday afternoons, participating in the discussions. The adults were very impressed by several of the comments of these bright young persons. These students led the worship service of May 18 and displayed impressive spiritual insights when they commented on a favorite hymn. I was very proud to oversee the Confirmation Sunday celebration on June 15 when Haven Magnan, Henry Griffin, Gabby Santos, Adrian Vuillemot, and Gigi Young made their vows before God and the congregation and became official members of the church. These youth have a very auspicious future ahead of them. I want to thank Windsor White, who sat in on all of the classes as the second adult and led the discussions in my absence.

It was a year of several funerals, eight in all (not to mention a few funerals I presided over for nonmembers of the church). John Carlson, Bill Cruttenden, RoJeanne Doege, Jasmin Floyd, Viola Gifford, Alice Compagnone, Bruce Benhart, and Kenneth Marvin all entered God's presence and were laid to rest.

I led Membership classes in January, which stretched into February because of the interest and enthusiasm of the participants and their many questions and comments. During the March 2 worship service, Jessica Weaver Boose, Lucy Bousquet, Linda Kaplan, Mary Oliver, Stacy Vogt, and Windsor White became members of the East Woodstock Congregational Church. These persons were already active in our church, but now felt the obligation to attach themselves to our congregation in an official way as a testimony honoring the biblical example of joining a local congregation of believers.

Our weekly Bible Study continued with our very committed group of Bible "scholars" always eager to learn more about their faith. We finished the topic of "How to Read the Bible" and then delved into the Gospel of Mark, the earliest of the gospels about Jesus Christ. Reading and studying the Gospel of Mark took most of the year. It is not that our group dawdles, but rather, they are very serious about absorbing all that God's Word has to offer. They even met by themselves sometimes on Wednesdays when I was in New Jersey. That's what I call devotion! After finishing Mark, we decided to study the First Letter of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians. This significant book of the New Testament shows an example of an early Christian congregation's aspirations and struggles. We are still only in the third chapter of a 16-chapter letter, but again, that is because we take the time to investigate as much as we can from the sacred scriptures to help us to grow in our spiritual life. It's not too late for newcomers to join our group, especially guys!

In March of 2025 we introduced a Lenten Series to the congregation. For each of the six Sundays of Lent, a solid group of between 15 to 20 persons met in Fellowship Hall to discuss Rev. Adam Hamilton's booklet and accompanying film series *24 Hours that Changed the World*. This study covered the last 24 hours in the life of Jesus, from the Last Supper, to the Garden of Gethsemane, to Jesus's arrest and interrogation by the Sanhedrin, to his meetings before King Herod and Pontius Pilate, to his torture and humiliation, to the crucifixion, to the resurrection. This format proved to be a very popular innovation and we will continue with another Lenten Series in the new year.

Our congregation continued its association with our nearby sister churches, the First Congregational Church of Woodstock and Church of the Good Shepherd, for our joint Ash Wednesday Service. I gave the message during that service on March 5 and our congregations shared Holy Communion as brothers and sisters in Christ. Our Maundy Thursday Service on April 17 was preceded by a light supper representing a Seder meal graciously organized and prepared by our Office Manager, Mary Oliver. On Good Friday, I led a workshop on how the crucifixion of Christ has been variously depicted in major Hollywood films, including the Academy Award-winning *Ben-Hur* (1959) and its masterfully photographed and edited scenes of the decimated Christ hanging on the cross, his blood dripping down onto a pool of water gathered from a thunderstorm, flowing down Calvary hill, going out to cleanse the world, one of the most poignant aesthetic sequences ever filmed. Our ecumenical spirit was shown by our congregation's participation in the annual Easter Sunrise Service in the parking lot of Woodstock Academy overseeing a beautiful vista where parts of the three states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island can be observed. The service's participants included clergy from South Woodstock Baptist Church, Faith Bible Church, Woodstock Evangelical Cove-

PASTOR'S REPORT, CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

nant Church, First Congregational Church, Woodstock, Church of the Good Shepherd, and East Woodstock Congregational Church. Our Easter Sunday Service was glorious on April 20 with many faces not usually seen in the sanctuary present that day to celebrate Christ's resurrection from the dead, the event that gave birth to the Christian religion.

I have introduced a monthly Movie Matinee on Sunday afternoons as an entertaining way to learn about our faith. I choose mainstream Hollywood films that have a redemptive message or a moral lesson from which Christians can learn. The films that were shown were *Groundhog Day*, *Sister Act*, *Field of Dreams*, *Places in the Heart*, *What's Cooking?*, and *The Nativity Story*. Congregants have commented that though they have seen these films before, they did not realize the spiritual significance that they contain. If you have not been to a Movie Matinee, try it out! You will never look at these films the same way again. I must thank Windsor White who downloads the films from his personal account so that we are able to watch them on the television monitor in Fellowship Hall. That is a big advantage over watching them on a DVD player.

Our church has made significant progress this past year during this interim period, a highlight being forming the Transition Team II (the Transition Team I was the group that received and read Ministerial Profiles for the position of Intentional Interim Minister, interviewed candidates, and made a final recommendation to the congregation). The task of the Transition Team II was to write the Church Profile. The Church Profile is necessary to advertise the congregation on the United Church of Christ website and other prominent venues in the search for a Settled Minister. The highly talented Transition Team II which represented the congregation in terms of gender, age, theological perspective, values, and membership length, composed a Profile that was eye-catching, informative, and highly readable. The Profile must capture the attention of ministerial candidates, and this one surely will! Kudos to all the members of the committee for composing a truly outstanding document.

As the Transition Team II completed its mandate, it passed the baton to the Search and Call Committee to begin the process of collecting and evaluating Ministerial Profiles, interviewing relevant candidates, and finally recommending to the congregation a single applicant to become the church's next Settled Pastor. The membership of the church will then vote on the committee's choice. The Search and Call Committee is fully immersed in its work, having received seven applications for the position of Settled Minister, and already having interviewed some of them. This dedicated group of church members is highly qualified for this task and will diligently work to endorse the pastor who is the best fit for this congregation.

Our worship services continue to fulfill the spiritual needs of the congregation. We are very blessed to have an accomplished organist/pianist, Nancy Ducharme, who selects a wide array of hymns and songs to inspire us. Our faithful choir members do an outstanding job in setting a reflective mood for worship. We are also blessed to have a gifted Bell Choir leader in Andy Tomkins and talented ringers to whom everyone looks forward to hearing. Our broadcasting and sound team of Val Law, John Davis, Karen Ryker, and Tom Stokes do an outstanding job of producing and recording quality videos of the services that can be watched at any time.

The Children's messages during the worship services are very competently given by Jessica Weaver Boose who directs our Sunday School. As many as 15 children have attended the Sunday School classes and everyone enjoys watching the children hustle to the front of the sanctuary during Children's Time and quietly traipse into the balcony on "Juicy Sunday" to join the rest of the congregation for Holy Communion.

I want to thank Glen Lessig and Jeff Wong who are always available when I have technological questions dealing with the computer or office equipment. And I thank Jeff for purchasing a new printer for my office. It makes my job much easier.

I try to attend as many committee meetings as I can and I am impressed with the capable leadership of all the chairs of the committees and those who prepare the minutes of the meetings. Though I miss some meetings, the minutes are comprehensive so that I can read them and feel that I am fully informed about what was discussed and decided. In our Congregational tradition where a layperson, not the minister, chairs committee meetings, it is imperative that proficient members of the church lead the meetings. That is certainly the case in our church. Such leadership will be a great help to any incoming Settled Pastor.

Finally I must thank our very skilled Office Manager, Mary Oliver, whose competence makes sure that the day to day operations of the church go efficiently and effectively from answering the telephone to assembling an excellent monthly newsletter. Mary is a great asset to this congregation and we should all be thankful for her work.

As you anticipate the arrival of a new Settled Pastor, you should be gratified that the East Woodstock Congregational Church has ministered very faithfully without one now for a year and a half. You have shown that you are indeed a local expression of the universal Body of Christ that has been able to function in remarkable ways employing the gifts, talents, and abilities with which you have been endowed by God's Spirit. However long it might take to procure a Settled Pastor, you have done the work that God has called you to do. I am confident that you will continue to do so.

WORSHIP, PRAISE & CARE

UCC DELEGATES REPORT

The Windham Association Annual Meeting took place on May 21, 2025. Representing the church were Mary Oliver, Christine Lessig, Rev. Dr. Susan Foster, and me. We should feel pleased that our church had more delegates present than any other church in the Association. Moderator Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer of the First Congregational Church of Woodstock led the meeting. He announced a workshop, "Ways to Think About Using Our Facilities," to be held on August 19, 2025, which addressed the possible ways our church buildings can be utilized other than on Sundays by groups in the community. This workshop was co-sponsored by both the Tolland Association and Windham Association.

There is now available online a Manual on Church, which is a companion to the Manual on Ministry. Just as the Manual on Ministry serves as a guidebook for clergy in the United Church of Christ (UCC), the Manual on Church will serve as a guidebook for congregations in regard to duties and expectations. This will be a valuable resource for our congregations. Kevin mentioned that the Super Saturday that took place at the First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, on March 8 was very well attended, with 450 participants. The featured speaker was Bishop William J. Barber II, a Disciples of Christ minister, whose keynote address raised the importance of conscience shaped by the Holy Spirit and action in behalf of the marginalized and oppressed. North Central Area Conference Minister Carol Steinbrecher attended the meeting and apprised us of events taking place within the Central Massachusetts and Windham Associations. She sadly reported that Jill Ford, Minister of Search and Call, is retiring. Jill oversaw the important task of sending Ministerial Profiles to prospective churches searching for pastors. She will be dearly missed.

The 6th Annual Meeting of the Southern New England Conference of the UCC (SNEUCC) was held online on Saturday, June 7, 2025, bringing together authorized ministers, lay delegates, board members, and other attendees on Zoom to deliberate on significant matters impacting the Conference and its local churches, consisting of about 103,000 members and 570 churches across 25 associations. The theme, "Into the Deep: Living and Leading at the Intersections," was reflected upon throughout the meeting as attendees were encouraged to engage deeper into their communities. Present at the meeting were 502 pre-registered attendees, including 230 authorized ministers, 200 lay delegates, and 8 members of the Board of Directors for a total of 438 voting members. Keynote speaker Jamar Doyle, President and CEO of the UCC's Council for Health and Human Service Ministries, gave a call to action for the church to reframe its mission around compassionate service and how to move from institutional maintenance to spiritual movement. He commented, "The central theme of my conversation is really to think about the revival of the church, and how it can be achieved through faithful, outward-looking service. To really begin to think that service is not just an add-on to what we do at church. But that service IS the church. That leadership means stepping into a number of intersections, which is why I so love the theme of this conference, Into the Deep: Living and Leading at the Intersections." He continued, "So leadership, then, is being at the intersection of both faith and action. At the intersections of tradition and innovation. The intersections of grief, and of hope. To find our sacred purposes . . . can be a tool for churches, clergy, and yes, even individuals, to discern what is next at this moment. Not just for survival. But for spiritual transformation."

Executive Conference Minister of the SNEUCC, the Rev. Darrell Goodwin, addressed the fatigue and challenges many church members are facing, but encouraged a renewed trust in God's abundance and a willingness to cast nets in new directions. He remarked, "Jesus was calling us in the Scripture to leave the shoreline of certainty and comfort to push our boats into the deep, maybe into uncharted territory, maybe into places where we don't feel as secure, or that we know everything about it. Maybe we're pushing into a place that only the Spirit can lead. . . . This is not talking about shallow waters, or safe harbors, or controlled conditions. But the deep. This is where the Church of Jesus Christ must now live, not in the nostalgia of what used to work. Not in the illusion that we are somehow separate from the suffering of the world, but in deep intersection." He went on, "The theme of this Annual Meeting is not just a group of poetic words, but I hope it is this prophetic invitation to who we might be. . . . We have to interrogate what are the intersections in the Southern New England Conference. I believe that our congregations are uniquely poised in this moment in history to sit at literal and spiritual intersections of people's lives." Rev. Goodwin and Board President Ms. Persephone Hall reflected on the accomplishments and future vision of the Conference. The conversation highlighted the collective achievements

and aspirations of the Conference, emphasizing the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding the Conference's efforts. The two spoke about the new Legacy Corporation and staff, the successful acquisition of a \$1,250,000 grant from the Lilly Foundation to support Project Proclaim, the work of the Associate Conference Minister (ACM) team, and ended with a call to action for all members to actively participate in the Conference's initiatives and votes.

Chief Financial Officer Diane Mercier and Treasurer Calvin Price reported that in 2024, the Conference was blessed to receive nearly \$8,200,000 in operating revenue, exceeding the budgeted income by 1% and almost 5% above the 2023 revenue.

In addition, revised bylaws were debated and adopted, folks spoke on their favorite subjects through Speakouts, the finances and budget were explained, Authorized Ministers were celebrated, philanthropy was applauded, and other needed business was addressed, all interspersed with moments of music and prayer. The meeting, marked by high participation and active engagement, included live presentations, pre-recorded sessions, and online voting by delegates and authorized persons.

If you have never attended an Annual Conference Meeting, I highly recommend that you do to experience the excitement and inspiration of a large crowd of God's people together in worship, discussion, and community.

Blessings in Christ,
The Reverend Dr. Gary R. Shahinian

DIACONATE

The role of the deacons continued to be essential in 2025 as the East Woodstock Congregational Church navigated a significant period of transition. Following the retirement of Pastor Sue Foster in 2024, the deacons focused on supporting the congregation through the arrival and integration of Interim Pastor Gary Shahinian. Their efforts ensured that worship and community life remained steady and spiritually enriching during this time of change.

A primary responsibility this year was assisting Pastor Shahinian in becoming familiar with the church's traditions, practices, and community needs. The deacons worked closely with him to provide context and continuity, helping to maintain the welcoming and inclusive spirit that defines East Woodstock Congregational Church while also embracing change.

Listening to the congregation emerged as a central priority in 2025. The deacons actively sought feedback and engaged in conversations to understand the evolving needs of the church family. In response, they implemented thoughtful adjustments to the worship service—such as refining liturgical elements, enhancing opportunities for lay participation, and ensuring accessibility for all members. These changes reflect the deacons' commitment to fostering meaningful worship experiences that resonate with the congregation. In addition to these efforts, the deacons continued their traditional roles of offering prayers, reading scripture, and providing spiritual care during services. They also supported pastoral care initiatives and assisted with memorial services, demonstrating compassion and dedication to the church community. The work of the deacons in 2025 exemplifies their devotion to both the spiritual health and organizational strength of East Woodstock Congregational Church. Through collaboration, adaptability, and attentive leadership, they have helped guide the congregation through transition while nurturing its vitality and faith.

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

- Hosted third annual Breakfast Church in conjunction with the annual meeting
- Supported Pastor Gary's movie afternoons following worship
- Worked with Society to come up with an appropriate schedule for when offering plates would be passed during service
- Created a policy for when the church would need to be closed due to inclement weather
- Assisted with Ash Wednesday in conjunction with the First Church of Woodstock and Church of the Good Shepard
- Assisted with the newly created Lenten Series following worship
- Assisted with the induction of new members
- Continued to work through increased "Safe Church" measures on how to keep the church community safe during worship

April – June

- Hosted Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Services
- Assisted with multiple memorial services
- Made new adjustments to the confirmation services including providing red stoles for confirmants
- Continued to work with those assisting with service technology to offer better sound and microphone options for those viewing online
- Added weekly attendance to deacon responsibilities as it is needed to create the church profile

July - September

- Partnered with The First Congregational Church of Woodstock ("The Hill Church") for summer services.
- Assisted with Rally Day to kick off the start of the new Sunday School Year.
- With no confirmation class this year, the role of acolyte defaults to the deacon's responsibility
- Celebrated World Communion Sunday by providing samples of various forms of bread from across the world and having confirmants provide a description

October - December

- Created a laity service and found volunteers
- Assisted with Christmas Services including Quiet Christmas and two Christmas Eve services

2025 Deacons include: Mark Billings, Susan Converse, Jennifer Griffin, Sherry Magnan, Valerie Law, Anne Sorensen, Stacy Vogt, and Taryn Tomkins

MUSIC COMMITTEE

We have such a musically talented church and what a delight that they like to share their talents.

With deep appreciation and gratitude I would like to thank Nancy Ducharme and Andy Tomkins, the directors of our Choir and Bell choir who perform beautiful, expressive music throughout the year. The Bell choir welcomes new member Sue Swan and they also said goodbye to Anthony Reed. Dorrie Scranton became an alternate with Jamie Boisvert, Andy Tomkins, and Denise Esslinger. The Choir welcomes new members Linda Kaplan, Pam Brown and Leslie Sweetnam. Also welcome back to Rebecca Hyde and Lynn Looby. Anyone interested in learning more about the Choirs should reach out to Nancy Ducharme or Andy Tomkins.

Thank you to the Men's Choir for singing the Palms. Every year it is such a treat to hear them belt it out. Thank you to Sarah Jo Burke, Leslie Sweetnam, and his friend John Arimond for sharing their soulful music that enhanced our Sunday church services and embraced a moving way of lifting our hearts and prayers to God.

A special thank you to Rick LaMarre, Leslie Sweetnam, Sarah Jo Burke, Jeff Wong, and Lucy Bousquet for providing music for the August union services with First Congregational Church of Woodstock. Heather Santos and Nancy Green for singing some solos throughout the year. Such heavenly voices.

A huge thank you to our younger musical members for sharing their talents on Christmas Eve. There was Eva Nester-Wheeler playing Joy to the World, Gabriella Santos playing Carol of the Bells, and Kaylyn Converse playing O Come, O Come Emmanuel. It's a great joy watching your talents grow. Also on Christmas Eve how could I forget

all the children that took part in A Christmas Alphabet. Thank you Jessica Weaver-Boose for your talent.

Now, I would like to thank EVERYONE for sitting and listening to Nancy play the Postlude. Keep up the good work.

Laurie Edwards, Chair

LEARNING & GROWING IN FAITH

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

2025 was a year of holding steady, which is a very good thing while a church is in between settled pastors.

The second half of the programming year saw consistent Sunday School classes of about 10 to 14 children. We occasionally split up into younger and older groups.

The Confirmation Students regularly helped out and often enjoyed being leaders in the space they had grown up in. The confirmation class had a good trip into Boston to participate in common cathedral's CityReach program. They had some good moments with the unhoused community over the course of their visit.

Children's Sunday was another wonderful worship service with our youngest church members presenting a wide variety of talents. They provided music, did readings, and even wrote some of the prayers and the Assurance of Pardon.

By June we knew we had a wonderful problem – a family that needed our nursery! By September the church leaders had revived the paid position of a nursery caregiver and Noelia Reed was hired for the position. Noelia has become a favorite of the littlest kids. We also have a couple younger kids who occasionally go into the nursery, when there is no one else their age at Sunday school. They appreciate the play time and the older students appreciate having a class that is tailored more to their intellectual needs.

This year the Sunday School was focused on parables and hands on learning. In October the Parable of the Sower was taught and then presented in worship. November and December had a variety of hands – on activities – preparing for the Christmas Pageant, making gratitude plates for the church members who sometimes struggle to leave their homes, a prayer spa day with stations of different activities and challenges.

There will be more to come!

The students appear to really enjoy each other. The opportunities presented in church to be creative and to safely try new ideas are also appreciated by children of all ages. They are learning that God loves them and loves for them to appreciate the world they have been gifted. They are learning that Jesus taught everyone that people of all ages are important and beloved. They invite their friends to our church and that is a blessing for everyone.

Peace, Jessica Weaver Boose, DCE

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 eight children presently in our Cradle Roll:

Graber, Connor Steven 10-12-23

Hannon, Wyatt James 07-08-23

Lurvey, Axel Hanson 08-14-21

Workman, Margaret 05-23-23

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

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 **10**

LEARNING & GROWING IN FAITH

BOOK DISCUSSION

The Book Discussion Group Annual Report

In 2025, we read the following books: February: "James" by Percival Everett, March: "The Berry Pickers" by Amanda Peters, April: "The Golden Doves" by Martha Hall Kelly, May: "By Any Other Name" by Jodi Picoult, June: "There Is a River in the Sky" by Elif Shafak, September: "The Borrowed Life of Frederick Fife" by Anna Johnson, October: "One Thousand White Women" by Jim Fergus, and November: "My Friends by Fredrik Backman

We meet monthly for conversation and fellowship in our church's chapel. New readers are always welcome, whether you want to join us for just one book that piques your interest or participate in several selections.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Sorensen

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

HOSPITALITY

The Hospitality Committee continues to serve our church family and community when the need arises. This past year we were able to serve over 725 people at different funerals held for John Carlson, Bill Cruttenden, RoJeanne Doege & Jasmin Floyd, Viola Gifford and Ken Marvin. 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 was a record year for Jamboree attendance. The weather was beautiful for the event. The church is truly blessed to have so many people offering their time and talents to make this event a success and provide our community with a wonderful Independence Day celebration. The Jamboree raised \$17,622.50 surpassing its budgeted goal of \$15,000 with sales increasing across all booths.

The Jamboree offers endless fun for all! The delicious food and friendly atmosphere brought people together and added to the festive spirit of the day. Live entertainment from talented community musicians kept spirits high, with many guests singing along. Attendees enjoyed browsing the Book Tent for great reads at affordable prices and exploring Attic Treasures, discovering hidden gems among a wide variety of unique and gently used items. And the Silent Auction featured handcrafted pieces and unique collectibles, drawing enthusiastic bids for many generously donated items.

The Children's Area was full of fun, featuring face painting, games, an inflatable slide, and other activities enjoyed by kids of all ages. Noodles the Clown was a big hit, delighting children with balloon animals as she roamed the Common. The hayride provided families and friends with a memorable way to enjoy the farmland scenery and visit with one another. The parade brought the community together, creating a fun and memorable experience that left smiles on the faces of both participants and spectators. And don't forget the Firemen's Water Polo – always keeping viewers cool while the action heats up.

What a spectacular Fourth of July! The energy of all the volunteers made the day fun and memorable. Families and friends came together, creating lasting memories, starting new traditions, and enjoying a day filled with community spirit. We're so grateful to everyone who helped make this celebration truly unforgettable!

In 2026, America celebrates its 250 th anniversary. The Committee will be collaborating with the Town of Woodstock to add a few extra special things to the Jamboree. Stay tuned for more information!

Lynn Looby and DeEtta Spalding
Co-Chairs, Jamboree Committee

LADIES BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

On average we had 19 women attending our eight meetings during 2025. Our year began on March 19 with a presentation by personal trainer, Bri Fuda, on Physical Fitness and You. On April 9 we were enthralled by a discussion with Rodney Rivers who journeyed with us to The Dark Side – coping with life as a blind or visually impaired person. Rodney lives by himself, cooks, shops and talked about how he reads nutrition labels! He is amazingly self-sufficient. He travels with friends and is often accompanied by Marilyn and Bob Rath.

Dorrie Scranton entertained us on May 21 with a presentation and discussion of how to “Say it with Flowers”. She provided us with beautiful flowers and helped us make our own bouquets.

Our annual luncheon was held at Renee’s Bistro in Putnam on June 18. We enjoyed a formal afternoon tea complete with sandwiches, scones, sweets, and of course tea.

We returned in September after our July/August hiatus when many of us helped with the Jamboree on July 4th! We kicked the fall off with a potluck luncheon in Fellowship Hall and voted in the following officers: Kerstin Forrester, President; Laurie Edwards Vice President; Susan Converse Treasurer; Barbara Fitzgibbons Secretary. Of course we also began planning for our Holly Fair to be held on November 8 rather than the 1st. This allows people to recover from Halloween!

At the October 15 meeting we enjoyed a virtual trip to Greece and Portugal that focused on Taste, Sound, and Touch. The travelers were Marilyn and Bob Rath and Rodney Rivers whom the trip was geared for. A truly amazing and informative trip shared with us in pictures and narrative. At the end we were treated to some of the cuisine that they had enjoyed in both countries!

We celebrated the success of our Holly Fair at our November 19 meeting. We had a fantastic Holly Fair that grossed \$10,425.96. Like every year, this is a Congregational effort and I thank everyone who helped in any way! It is because of our successful Holly Fair that we were able to do the following during 2025: new faucets in the kitchen; pay for breakfast church; provide a \$500 scholarship to Phoebe Griffen; provide flowers for Children’s Day; new coffee urn; help with funding for the new fire detection system and the parsonage renovation. Also at our November meeting, Linda Kaplan gave a demonstration about making Thanksgiving floral arrangements using both purchased flowers and dried flowers from her garden. She completed two lovely arrangements.

We enjoyed a wonderful Christmas party in Fellowship Hall on December 17. No meeting, just songs and fun and refreshments. The 21 women who attended donated gift cards totaling \$715! These will be given to Pastor Gary and Outreach to help people in need throughout the year.

As you can see, we had a very successful and fun year of fellowship and helping our church and community.

Respectfully submitted,
Kerstin Forrester, President

OUTREACH

Outreach Annual Report 2025

Our Outreach committee was busy this year meeting the requests and emerging needs of our community partners. With the unwavering support of our congregation, we fulfilled requests from the local, national, and international organizations we support. When we see the Easter baskets, Thanksgiving baskets, and all the Christmas gifts, it's amazing how many requests are fulfilled, especially considering that the numbers have doubled! We hear stories about the impact this outreach has and the joy it delivers to families. A million thank yous to our generous and loving congregation. 2025 brought a greater need for our food programs: Community Kitchen, Caring Continues, and First Friday Food Fair. Thank you for your donations to these programs.

First Friday Food Fair: Our food distribution continues to serve the community. We offer this service on the first Friday of the month from 9:00 to 10:00. We have a consistent number of patrons who come to receive non-

OUTREACH, CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

OUTREACH, CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

perishables, and meat and vegetables when available. We appreciate food donations from the congregation, which keep this program in operation.

Community Kitchen: EWCC provides one meal a month for the community kitchen at First Congregational Church. We are now serving 100-120 each week, including those who sit down, take-outs, and volunteers.

Caring Continues: provides food for families of children in the Woodstock school system who need food assistance. The Evangelical Covenant Church coordinates 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 specific food items, from grape jelly to spaghetti sauce, which helps to keep the Caring Continues Pantry well stocked. Volunteers from our congregation go to the Woodstock Academy South campus every six weeks to pack bags of food, which are then delivered to the Middle and Elementary schools for the children to bring home.

TEEG (Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group): Our Church generously partners with TEEG in two major missions, in addition to our annual donation to support the Woodstock Fuel Assistance Fund. Our springtime “Bring Your Cooler to Church” was held on April 27th, providing over 350 pounds of food, from ground beef and pork to fresh vegetables, cheese, and eggs, as well as \$250 in cash and gift cards. It was an inspiring sight to see the TEEG truck being filled by a continuous line of our parishioners laden with their generous donations.

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, ranging from notebooks, binders, and loose-leaf paper to pens, pencils, and backpacks, were delivered to TEEG for distribution to children preparing for back-to-school. This year, TEEG experienced an unfortunate power outage, resulting in a loss of food and refrigeration capabilities...EWCC immediately responded by sending a \$1,000 check to ameliorate a distressing situation! The ability to respond to the needs of our neighbors on so many levels is only made possible by the generosity and caring nature of our congregation. We are an amazing family of faith!

Freezer Meals: Outreach maintains a supply of meals in our freezer that can be delivered to those experiencing illness or challenging circumstances. We stock the freezer by preparing meals as needed. Meals are available to Pastor Gary for visiting community members at home who are sick or would appreciate a meal and a visit.

Covenant to Care for Children: Outreach partnered with the Social Workers at DCF (Department of Children and Family Services) to help meet the needs of their families. Outreach provided a car seat and cribs to new foster parents, as well as gift cards to help meet the needs of displaced families. The social workers were extremely grateful for EWCC's generosity after they picked up 30 Easter baskets, 28 Thanksgiving baskets, and 31 Christmas gifts!

WAIM (Windham Area Interfaith Ministries): Andy Krofina continues to serve as the EWCC representative and volunteers regularly. This year, her truck was often loaded with clothing and household items donated by friends and church members.

Emergency Shelter and Domestic Violence Shelter: Our Church continued to support both shelters by delivering toiletries and feminine hygiene products throughout the year. We also provided Easter Baskets to children at each shelter. In Christmas 2025, we provided gifts to a record 21 children across both shelters. In addition, Barbara Hackett donated beautiful handmade pillowcases to the children. All donations from the Congregation have made a significant difference in the lives of many vulnerable people, and we are very grateful.

IHSP/Daily Bread: Our continued support of Daily Bread in Putnam is essential, as demand among those experi-

OUTREACH, CONTINUED PREVIOUS PAGE

encing food insecurity is increasing due to rising food prices and uncertainty about SNAP & WIC benefits. Many church members volunteer regularly.

World Vision: Our congregation remains committed to sponsoring Inne, a five-year-old child from Mauritania in Northwest Africa. Through our contributions, we support both Inne and his community, and we communicate with Inne by sending letters and pictures, recognizing that at his age, visuals are a meaningful way to connect.

Take Them a Meal: Through the “Take Them a Meal” website, our congregation provided meals over three weeks this past year to one family facing challenging circumstances, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to supporting families in need.

Support Teams: Outreach continues to coordinate church member volunteers who assist church members with rides, visits, and other unusual or emergency needs, reinforcing our shared dedication to caring for one another. Many of our dedicated church members also provide informal support to older members, which is greatly appreciated.

Kiva: We continue to support seven agricultural micro-businesses with \$25 loans through Kiva for low-income/underserved female entrepreneurs in Kenya, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Bolivia. These loans are repaid and reinvested to help alleviate poverty.

Card Ministry: An average of 30-35 cards were sent each month to members and friends who are homebound, ill, mourning a loss, or simply needing some cheer. This year, following the sad passing of longtime members Jasmin and RoJeanne, a large number of RoJeanne's cards were added to Outreach's cache. Many of these cards were sent in their name, and a substantial number were used to create a card-themed basket for the annual Holly Fair.

LGBTQ: This year, our church participated again in the Putnam Pride Day at Rotary Park in Putnam. Our attractive, colorful EWCC tent and displays, along with the beading project orchestrated by many in our church community, attracted steady visitors, both children and adults. They appreciated that our handouts were free to take, and the EWCC literature was noted by many. Some expressed interest in our church and its services, so the outreach was effective. A joyous, celebratory event that gives us hope for a better world.

Prayer Shawls: 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 to our talented knitters, who work throughout the year to create beautiful shawls.

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 our Church members, 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.

Respectfully submitted, Andy Krofina, Chair,
Donna Baldyga, Kerstin Forrester, Peter Green,
Barbara Hackett, Dee Harless, Lynn Hescheles,
Melanie LaMountain, Christine Lessig, Karen Ryker,
Tom Stokes, and Cris Waldron,

A FIRM FOUNDATION

SOCIETY

The Society committee met monthly throughout 2025 to discuss and review our church's financial and property management issues. Thanks to the efforts of our committee members and many, many volunteers, we were able to address these issues. The Society Committee is fortunate to have a strong financial team of qualified and dedicated volunteers led by Treasurer DeEtta Spalding, Assistant Treasurer Lynn Looby, and Collector John Davis.

Fire Alarm upgrade: Received and reviewed three proposals to update our Fire Alarm system. With Seth Spalding's support, the installation was completed in accordance with all applicable codes. The original budget was \$13,000, and the final price was \$15,827.43. A generous donation from LBS of \$2,827.43 covered the balance.

Parsonage kitchen remodel: The total renovation of our parsonage kitchen is complete, and the parsonage is now ready to offer to a new minister or to maintain as a rental property. Seth and DeEtta Spalding contributed throughout the project, donating time and equipment. Steve Integlia donated his labor for the new ceiling. Cory Dancosse, of C&J Electrical, contributed generously with his extra work and labor to upgrade the parsonage's electrical service. Phil Parizeau's assistance was significant, guiding us in drafting our RFQ and providing support throughout the project. Kerstin Forrester, Allan Walker, and Judith Wong took the lead on choosing and purchasing appliances and colors. And, of course, Peter Green lent his painting skills to the project. Thanks to all of these volunteers and their generosity with time and financial support, we were able to complete a significant upgrade to our parsonage property at a very affordable cost. The original budget was \$26,250, and the final price was \$28,311. A generous donation from LBS covered the \$2,061 balance.

- **Cleaning service:** Reviewed and updated our list of services provided weekly by The Center of Hope Foundation, the ARC agency that provides services to people with disabilities located in Southbridge, MA.
- **Google Workspace:** Implemented the online productivity suite Google Workspace for our church. Workspace will enable us to collaborate and share files easily, access required cloud storage, manage church calendars, and run online meetings. All committees can use the Google Meet app (comparable to Zoom Pro) at no charge.
- **Online storage of church files:** Initiated an effort to move church policies, procedures, and documents to a safe and convenient online platform with Google Workspace.
- **Transition Teams support:** Society continued to support the Search and Call committee as it conducted EWCC's search for a settled pastor.
- **Audio System:** With the support of Jeff Wong, worship service microphones were reviewed, and new protocols were implemented.
- **Employment contracts:** All staff contracts were reviewed and completed.
- **Exterior projects:** With the invaluable skills of Leslie Sweetnam our front sign was repaired with an epoxy base, should be beautiful for years. Peter Green lent his valuable painting skills to repaint the Chapel entryway.
- **Snow Removal:** Thank you, Seth Spalding, for volunteering to plow our parking lot pavement. Calvin Neely and Eddie Hryzan assisted with hand-shoveling our entrance sidewalks.
- **Gardens and lawn:** Thank you, Christine Lessig, for maintaining the church gardens and lawn. Many volunteers also supported the fall workday clean-up.
- **Jean Sunday:** Judith Wong again organized very productive Jean Sundays both this spring and autumn. Thanks to the support of many volunteers, these workdays enable our church to clean and maintain our facilities affordably.

Refurbishment Committee: Thank you to Judith Wong, who continued to coordinate the Refurbishment Committee, a subcommittee of the Society. Please see the Refurbishment Committee report for more details. The Refurbishment Committee remains committed to refurbishing the sanctuary and narthex, aligning our efforts with the mission of creating worship spaces that address both current and future needs, while maintaining the historic integrity and blended architecture of EWCC. As we anticipate future refurbishments, please consider sharing your Church historical photos, records, and memorabilia to enhance EWCC's ongoing story. While the Committee is "on hold" until we have a settled pastor, this year we focused on several tasks that align with our mission:

- With thanks to Peter Green for his time and talents, select areas in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall, and the entire Hospitality Room and Office were repaired and repainted.
- New wall signs were created for our Church buildings that can be changed out as needed.
- With Seth Spalding's and the Fire Marshal's input, plans to upgrade exit signs are being reviewed.

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

Society Committee: Glen Lessig - Chair, Dawn Adilietta - Secretary,
DeEtta Spalding Treasurer Ex-Officio, Lynn Looby Assistant Treasurer Ex-Officio,
David Brown, Kerstin Forrester, Andy Hescheles, Calvin Neely,
Rick Place, Judith Wong

STEWARDSHIP

Dreaming God's Dream: No Gift Too Small, No Dream Too Big

The Stewardship Committee held its kick-off meeting in October to launch the Stewardship Campaign. We chose to utilize the stewardship materials available through the UCC Conference. Our theme was: We dream big in church. The Gospel moves us to imagine addressing poverty, stopping conflicts, reconciling enemies, and building the kin-dom of God. Our gifts may seem small next to the big dreams of our congregation. But like the Feeding of the 5000, God's amazing work begins with our small gifts.

In November, we shared stewardship moments with the congregation using materials from the UCC leading up to Pledge Sunday, November 16 th . We sincerely appreciate the congregation's generous pledges. These pledges enable the Society Committee to construct a budget that supports both our church's needs and those of the wider community.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the members of the Stewardship Committee for their quick and efficient work on our Stewardship Campaign: Jaime Paris Boisvert, Dee Harless, Valerie Law, and Dawn Morin. I also want to express my gratitude to DeEtta Spalding, Treasurer, and Lynn Looby, Assistant Treasurer, for their invaluable time and resources dedicated to the Stewardship Committee. Your efforts have been greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Sorensen, Chairperson

AUDITOR'S REPORT

On May 29, 2025, Kerstin Forrester and Jeff Wong completed an audit of the EWCC financials. Our focus was on the checkbook and on funds such as Memorial, Music and Ted Cox memorial. DeEtta Spalding explained fully what funds are restricted and which, like Music, are in a sinking fund. The check book reconciliations are done in detail on a monthly basis and are in great shape!

We also reviewed the purchasing process and found that it is not always adhered to. DeEtta will send out a memo to all Committee chairs explaining the process to complete purchase orders prior to a purchase other than for utilities. This process will ensure improved control and planning of resources.

Since Outreach is primarily funded from the EWCC general budget, there needs to be at a minimum an entry that shows the income and expenses for Outreach on EWCC General Ledger. Kerstin Forrester, Treasurer for Outreach and DeEtta Spalding will facilitate this for 2025. Outreach will still maintain its own checking account as done historically. Overall the EWCC accounting is well documented and we found no errors or omissions.

Thank you to DeEtta Spalding and Lynn Looby for their dedication to ensuring that EWCC financials are in excellent condition.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kerstin Forrester & Jeff Wong

COLLECTOR'S REPORT

Pledge Offerings 2025	\$146,150.06
General Offerings	25,539.06
Prepaid Pledge for 2026	19,965.00
Memorials	10,475.00
Outreach	5,161.00
Loose	4,530.90
Christmas and Easter	2,520.00
Music	142.66

	\$214,483.68

Respectfully submitted,
John M. Davis

LBS TREASURER'S REPORT

Beginning Balance: \$16,965.07

Receipts:

Holly Fair \$10,681.60
Holly Fair (2024) 50.00
Monthly Donations: 85.00
Deposit from CD 2,823.91
Total Receipts: \$13,640.51

Expenditures:

Holly Fair Expenses: \$984.33
Annual Church Breakfast: 566.86
Kitchen Faucets 686.70
EWCC General Fund 347.50
High School Senior Scholarship 500.00
Children's Day Flowers 148.89
Confirmation Class Flowers 35.52
55 Cup Coffee Pot 143.56
EWCC Capital Funds: Fire Alarm System
Parsonage Kitchen 4,820.07
Outreach 100.00
Checks and Mailing Supplies 66.85
LBS Luncheon costs 155.00
Total Expenditures: \$ 8,555.28

Ending Balance: \$22,050.30

In addition there is a CD valued at \$ 5,116.77 due to mature 04-30-2026

Commitments: Painting of the sanctuary \$ 5,000.00

Footnote: We have committed:

- to the church budget \$ 8,300.00
- Breakfast church expenses
- Children's Day flowers

Susan Converse, Treasurer

OUTREACH TREASURER'S REPORT

		ACTUAL	Budget	Actual	Actual	
		2025	2025	2024	2023	
INCOME:						
Church Budget	Monthly	\$ 12,300.00	\$ 12,300.00	\$ 12,300.00	\$ 12,300.00	
OGHS Collection	In-Out	\$ 448.00		\$ 858.00		
CWS Blanket Program	In-Out	\$ 200.00		\$ 70.00		
Individual Donations		\$ 5,225.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,275.00	\$ 3,700.00	
TOTAL INCOME:		\$ 18,173.00	\$ 13,800.00	\$ 15,304.00	\$ 16,859.00	
EXPENSES:						
TEEG - Woodstock Fuel Assistance Fund \$750/Cooler \$100	Q1	\$ 1,850.06	\$ 850.00	\$ 750.00	\$ 1,000.00	Add \$100 for Cooler Collection
ACCESS No Freeze Shelter & Homeless Shelter	Q1	\$ 600.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
Cathedral of the Beloved	Q4	\$ 200.00	\$ -		\$ 200.00	
Quiet Corner Cares	Q1	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	Phil Parizeau is working with them
Back Bay Mission	Q1	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	We committed to a 5-yr Capital Campaign
IHSP Daily Bread	Q1	\$ 1,750.00	\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00	
Abba's Army (2/11/24 collection + donations)	Q1	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 801.00	\$ -	Veteran support
OGHS	In-Out	\$ 448.00		\$ 858.00		
KIVA (as needed)	Q2		\$ 25.00	\$ -	\$ -	
SWBC - Guatemala Mission	Q2	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 859.00	
Day Kimball Healthcare (Palliative Care, Hospice, & Homecare)	Q2	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	
World Vision (Sponsored Child)	Q2	\$ 312.00	\$ 312.00	\$ 312.00	\$ 312.00	
Camp Quinebaug	Q2	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	
East Woodstock Cemetery Fund	Q2	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	
East Woodstock Library	Q2	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	
Treehouse Foundation (Tom Stokes)	Q3	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	
Why Me & Sherry's House	Q3	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	
The Underground CT	Q3	\$ 800.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	
Community Café at Putnam Methodist Church	Q3	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	
NE CT Salvation Army	Q3	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	
WAIM	Q3	\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00	
Gay-Straight Alliance Club at WA	Q4	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	
Heifer International	Q4	\$ 120.00	\$ 120.00	\$ 120.00	\$ 120.00	
Danielson Veteran's Coffeehouse	Q4	\$ 750.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	
Flying Free Therapeutic Riding Center	Q4	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
LGBT (Hadwen Church)	Q4	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	
Northeast Placement Services (NEPS)	Q4	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	
Silver Lake Campground	Q4	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	
DKH Foundation (Tree of Life)	Q4	\$ 200.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	In memory of RoJeanne & Jasmin
Muddy Brook Fire Department	Q4	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	
Windham County 4-H Foundation	Q4	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	
St. Luke's Guesthouse (Southbridge)	Q4	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	
Thanksgiving Baskets	Q4	\$ 1,018.07	\$ 650.00	\$ 529.21	\$ 477.48	
						1/16/2026
World Central Kitchen	Q4	\$ 500.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ -	
Center of Hope Food Pantry		\$ 700.00				
First Friday Food Fair	Monthly	\$ 249.70	\$ 400.00	\$ -	\$ -	
Community Kitchens, Inc. (EWCC)	Monthly	\$ 1,302.89	\$ 1,700.00	\$ 1,458.54	\$ 1,429.32	137.46
Caring Continues	As needed	\$ 120.00	\$ 100.00			
Covenant to Care / Shelters	As needed	\$ 333.76	\$ 150.00	\$ -	\$ -	
Meal Ministry	As needed		\$ 250.00	\$ -	\$ -	
Miscellaneous, Postage & Cards	As needed	\$ 336.00	\$ 550.00	\$ 416.70	\$ 521.30	
Prayer Shawls (& Cards)	As needed		\$ 250.00	\$ 185.75	\$ 941.75	
UCC Disaster Relief Fund	As needed	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,000.00	
CWS Blanket Program	In-Out	\$ 200.00		\$ 70.00		
EWCC LGBTQ Books & Display & Pride Putnam		\$ 51.88	\$ 200.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 244.73	
Domestic Violence Shelter	As needed		\$ 125.00	\$ -	\$ -	
Community Gifts/Needs (2025 Connie Community Kitchens)	As needed	\$ 1,420.12	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 315.19	\$ 1,964.07	FCCW; Gmagnan; Fridge; Gift Cards
Jasmin Floyd Disability Trust (Check was returned upon her death)	TBD	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 500.00		Donation to Hole in The Wall Camp
Scholarships (Abigail Converse)		\$ 500.00			\$ 500.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ 19,912.48	\$ 15,932.00	\$ 14,641.39	\$ 18,760.72	
Difference (Income less Expenses)		\$ (1,739.48)	\$ (2,132.00)	\$ 662.61	\$ (1,901.72)	
Starting Balance		\$ 3,652.81	\$ 3,652.81	\$ 3,214.73	\$ 3,214.73	
Ending Balance		\$ 1,913.33	\$ 1,520.81	\$ 3,877.34	\$ 1,313.01	
Certificate of Deposit						
Special Donation for Community Emergencies		\$ 10,509.16	\$ 10,500.00		\$ 10,001.61	
		As of 11/28/25				

East Woodstock Congregational Church Projected

Giving and Expense Summary
Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2025
Proposed Budget Calendar Year 2026

	2025 Jan - Dec	2025 Approved Budget	Actual vs Approved	Proposed 2026 Budget
Giving				
Pledges	\$ 162,424.20	\$ 153,274.00	\$ 9,150.20	\$ 148,067.00
Non Pledged	32,589.96	23,400.00	9,189.96	20,000.00
May Fund	745.50	750.00	(4.50)	750.00
Rent Other	600.00	800.00	(200.00)	600.00
Fundraisers	19,187.50	18,000.00	1,187.50	17,300.00
Interest	1,074.28	500.00	574.28	500.00
Total Giving	\$ 216,621.44	\$ 196,724.00	\$ 19,897.44	\$ 187,217.00
Expenses			105%	
Christian Education				
Designated Funds	\$ (5,000.00)	\$ (5,325.00)	\$ 325.00	\$ (1,680.00)
Childcare Sunday Srv	403.72	-	403.72	592.08
Christian Ed Director	12,209.36	11,750.15	459.21	12,116.29
Religious Education	20.25	725.00	(704.75)	325.00
Sr. High Youth Group	1,155.16	1,076.30	78.86	-
Sr. High Supplies	(20.00)	345.00	(365.00)	345.00
Sunday School Supplies	24.00	510.00	(486.00)	1,010.00
Total Christian Education	\$ 8,792.49	\$ 9,081.45	\$ (288.96)	\$ 12,708.37
Church				
Designated Funds	\$ (7,000.00)	\$ (7,000.00)	\$ -	\$ (6,600.00)
Capital Funding	-	-	-	-
Cleaning & Supplies	3,173.42	3,130.00	43.42	3,800.00
Communication	2,139.94	1,995.48	144.46	2,160.00
Electricity	3,535.96	3,600.00	(64.04)	3,840.00
Heat (C)	6,256.52	6,800.00	(543.48)	7,057.05
Insurance	13,286.75	11,084.00	2,202.75	13,917.00
Kitchen Supplies	683.41	300.00	383.41	525.00
Lawn care	632.50	475.00	157.50	575.00
Repairs & Maintenance	3,869.02	3,000.00	869.02	6,000.00
Rubbish	1,882.09	1,800.00	82.09	1,920.00
Workman's Comp	789.00	675.00	114.00	675.00
Total Church	\$ 29,248.61	\$ 25,859.48	\$ 3,389.13	\$ 33,869.05
Music				
Designated Funds	-	-	-	(500.00)
Gift of Music	(239.79)	\$ (810.00)	570.21	\$ (810.00)
Bell Choir	94.10	600.00	(505.90)	580.00
Music & Dues	376.00	1,510.00	(1,134.00)	1,210.00
Music Directors Salary	10,134.85	9,692.38	442.47	9,994.08
Long Range - Bells	400.00	400.00	-	900.00
Organ & Piano Tuning	1,340.50	1,200.00	140.50	1,200.00
Organist Salary	11,731.13	10,501.86	1,229.27	10,812.49
Youth Choir	-	-	-	-
Substitute Organist	-	-	-	-
Total Music	\$ 23,836.79	\$ 23,094.24	\$ 742.55	\$ 23,386.57
Office				
Designated Funds	\$ (585.68)	\$ (585.68)	\$ -	\$ (684.05)
Office Manager	11,753.42	9,946.31	1,807.11	11,947.58
Postage	106.00	627.54	(521.54)	650.00
Outside Financial Review	-	-	-	-
Subscriptions	2,203.20	2,000.00	203.20	2,200.00
Office Supplies	1,132.56	1,100.00	32.56	1,200.00
Office Equip. Maint.	1,098.80	1,000.00	98.80	1,000.00
Total Office	\$ 15,708.30	\$ 14,088.17	\$ 1,620.13	\$ 16,313.53

East Woodstock Congregational Church Projected

Giving and Expense Summary

Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2025

Proposed Budget Calendar Year 2026

	2025 Jan - Dec	2025 Approved Budget	Actual vs Approved	Proposed 2026 Budget
Other				
Designated Funds	\$ (2,300.00)	\$ (2,300.00)	\$ -	\$ (2,400.00)
Altar Guild Supplies	272.14	375.00	(102.86)	375.00
SNEC Conf - Basic Mission	4,000.00	4,000.00	-	4,000.00
Diaconate	229.68	600.00	(370.32)	600.00
Miscellaneous	50.00	500.00	(450.00)	500.00
Outreach	12,300.00	12,300.00	-	14,400.00
Religious Supply	538.97	475.00	63.97	475.00
Stewardship	584.30	600.00	(15.70)	600.00
Supply Minister	-	-	-	300.00
Windham Dues	395.00	395.00	-	395.00
Total Other	\$ 16,070.09	\$ 16,945.00	\$ (874.91)	\$ 19,245.00
Parsonage				
Designated Funds	-	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Rental Income	(15,725.00)	(15,600.00)	(125.00)	(15,600.00)
Real Estate	4,962.56	4,845.00	117.56	5,329.50
Maintenance	3,287.95	1,000.00	2,287.95	2,000.00
Total Parsonage	\$ (7,474.49)	\$ (9,755.00)	<b">\$ 2,280.51</b">	\$ (8,270.50)
Pastor				
Designated Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Housing Allowance	26,400.00	26,400.00	-	17,600.00
Interim Minister	65,327.11	64,822.59	504.52	43,672.68
Interim Minister Costs	500.00	1,138.08	(638.08)	-
Sabbatical	-	-	-	-
Salary - Settled	-	-	-	27,692.31
Seminars	425.00	1,000.00	(575.00)	1,000.00
Total Pastor	\$ 92,652.11	\$ 93,360.67	\$ (708.56)	\$ 89,964.99
Total Expense	\$ 178,833.90	\$ 172,674.01	\$ 6,159.89	\$ 187,217.00
Operating Net	\$ 37,787.54	\$ 24,049.99	\$ 13,737.55	\$ (0.00)
Extrordinary Expense or Capital Projects				
Capital Setaside	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,000.00
	13,268.38	13,368.38	(100.00)	-
Grant	2,000.00	2,000.00	-	-
Tech	-	(168.38)	168.38	(1,500.00)
LBS Donation	4,820.07	-	4,820.07	1,500.00
Parsonage Kitchen	(28,311.02)	(26,250.00)	(2,061.02)	-
Fire Alarm	(15,827.43)	(13,000.00)	(2,827.43)	-
Search & Call	-	-	-	(3,000.00)
Total	(24,050.00)	(24,050.00)	\$ -	\$ -
NET Surplus/(Shortage)	\$ 13,737.54	\$ (0.01)	\$ 13,737.55	\$ (0.00)

East Woodstock Congregational Church

Cash Balance Report

	Beginning Balance as of Jan 1, 2025	Deposits/Interest Income Jan 1, 2025 - Dec 31, 2025	Checks/Withdrawals Jan 1, 2025 - Dec 31, 2025	Ending Balance Dec 31, 2025	December 31, 2025		Account Total
					Undesignated	Designated	
Cash Balances							
Main Checking Account	\$ 16,763.29 *	\$ 257,261.92	\$ (263,762.76)	\$ 10,262.45	\$ 10,262.45	\$ -	\$ 10,262.45
Short Term Designated							
Gift of Music	1,753.44	142.66	(239.79)	1,636.31	1,636.31		1,636.31
Flowers	1,080.03			1,080.03	1,080.03		1,080.03
Operating Reserve	23,883.71			23,883.71	23,883.71		23,883.71
Parsonage Reserve	6,600.00			6,600.00	6,600.00		6,600.00
Emergency Maintenance	19,078.22			19,078.22	19,078.22		19,078.22
Hospitality	1,217.03			1,217.03	1,217.03		1,217.03
Total Main Checking Account	\$ 70,355.72	\$ 257,404.58	\$ (264,002.55)	\$ 63,757.75	\$ 10,262.45	\$ 53,495.30	\$ 63,757.75
Certificate of Deposits							
Ted Cox Fund	\$ 3,236.97	144.59	*	3,381.56	3,381.56	3,000.00	3,381.56
3 Rolling CD'S	\$ 34,707.09 *	748.11	*	35,455.20	35,455.20	*	35,455.20
Rental Deposit	\$ 1,306.68	0.67	*	1,307.35	1,307.35	1,307.35	1,307.35
Money Market Fund							
Legacy Reserves							
Christian Ed	7,113.90	2.87	*	7,116.77	7,116.77		7,116.77
Planned Giving (was Fidelity)	6,013.18	12.14	*	6,025.32	6,025.32		6,025.32
Religious Camp Scholarship	4,935.41	10.02	*	4,945.43	4,945.43		4,945.43
Sanctuary	23,547.20	10,450.00	*	33,997.20	33,997.20		33,997.20
Hospitality	1,160.00	*	*	1,160.00	1,160.00		1,160.00
Ted Cox Fund	2,833.55	5.72	*	2,839.27	2,839.27		2,839.27
Heritage Foundation	5,559.44	11.25	*	5,570.69	5,570.69		5,570.69
Friends of The Common	8,670.05	17.57	*	8,687.62	8,687.62		8,687.62
Annual Meeting Reserves							
Music - Bell Maintenance	500.58	400.25	*	900.83	900.83		900.83
Sabbatical	3,562.76	7.22	*	3,569.98	3,569.98		3,569.98
Long Range Maintenance	23,426.56	114.54	*	23,541.10	23,541.10		23,541.10
Sub-total	\$ 87,322.63	\$ 11,031.58	\$ -	\$ 98,354.21	\$ -	\$ 98,354.21	\$ 98,354.21
Total Cash	\$ 196,929.09	\$ 269,329.53	\$ (264,002.55)	\$ 202,256.07	\$ 46,099.21	\$ 156,156.86	\$ 202,256.07

ALTAR GUILD

Do you not have much time to help your church? A great way to serve is by giving a couple of months during the year and possibly when the pastor may need help for a special event. One works in pairs with someone else and is responsible for the setup and cleanup of communion, the candles used for various services and Sunday, changing the paraments (altar, table, and lectern cloths) for the different seasons, special services, ordering and setup of the flowers for Easter and Christmas seasons, use of the candelabras, and flowers for the altar table on Sunday which may be in honor of or in memory of a loved one or a group of individuals.

Thank you to all who served their church and dedicated their time and energy to make this a good year.

Respectfully,

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

CHURCH HISTORIAN

We started the new year on the wet side and not much snow. The 5th we celebrated Communion with our interim pastor, Pastor Gary Shahinian and still some lovely poinsettias. This is a busy time for Outreach with Covenant to Care, Homeless Shelter and other community needs. As we celebrated Epiphany we got our new Star Gifts. Again we had a meal before the Annual Meeting. It is was with sadness that we lost John Carlson on the 3rd and Alice Compagnone 28th. The 28th was Annual Meeting with great discussion on our pastoral transition and the future. It was noted that the budget was tight but older members noted that we had been there before and would be okay.

February is our short month and usually quiet. On the 2nd we joined together for Communion. Quietly Peter Green has been making various areas of the church fresh with new paint. Annual Jazz Sunday was loved by all. After Sunday service a potluck lunch with the discussion by Pastor Gary of two movies shown, Ground Hog Day and Sister Act were well attended. Our Transition 2 Committee started to work in groups toward completion of our Church Profile. We mourned the loss of RoJeanne on the 28th.

We joined together for Communion on March 2nd on a still frigid day. The 5th we joined with the Hill Church and Good Shepherd for Ash Wednesday. A Lenten Series with programs of the last 24 hours of Jesus's life with a DVD segment offered each week after Sunday service. The 23rd Men's Breakfast was well attended and talk of the choir for Palm Sunday. We welcomed the following as new members, Stacy Vogt, Windsor White, Linda Kaplan, Lucy Bousquet, Mary Oliver, and Jessica Weaver Boose.

April had come, though cool it certainly didn't indicate spring was upon us. We celebrated Communion on the 6th with Palm Sunday the following Sunday. Our men's choir was great and was getting some younger members to join in. This is the start of Holy Week with Good Friday services. Easter morning was bright but cold and the sanctuary was colorful with the flowers.

In May we celebrated Communion on the 4th and the Men's Breakfast ongoing. Music Appreciation Sunday was done and the Jamboree Committee in full swing looking for chairmen and workers. On the 18th the confirmands led the worship service reflecting on personal faith, favorite hymns and led the congregation in prayer.

June is a busy month with Communion on the 1st, the 8th was Pentecost Sunday in Greek meaning *pentekoste*-- translated is fiftieth. This is the fiftieth day after Easter called White Sunday. This was also Children's Sunday with bibles to the 3rd and 5th graders. On the 15th the confirmands chose to be confirmed. They are as follows Henry Griffin, Haven Magnum, Gabby Santos, Adrian Vuillemot-Newell, Gigi Young and we wish them welcome to our church family. We had 4 graduates this year one from Tourtellotte, one from Havard H. Ellis, and 3 from Woodstock Academy.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

July/August is a time for union services with our pastor in July and the pastor of the Hill doing August. In August we do blessing of the school bags. Vacation Bible School was held in the July on Thursdays. The start of the remodeling of the parsonage kitchen started in July. The 4th of July Jamboree was a success with the largest attendance ever.

September was a busy month, the kitchen remodel at the parsonage was complete and what a change. Amazing what a group of church members can do, reminds one of days gone by when the Fellowship Hall was built. Communion the last of the union services, was on the 7th. Rally Day was the following Sunday. Outreach was busy with the Community Kitchen. Men continue their Breakfasts with good fellowship.

As we enter the month of October the air is changing. Sunday October 5th was a lovely day. And as the sun shone through the windows we joined together in World Communion. The Search & Call Committee is underway with hopes of having a settled pastor by September 2026. Pastor Gary has again done the film series, one in October and one in November. The 4th was the blessing of the pets with 12 canines, one Bengal cat. The children have been doing the Parable of the Sower.

November 2 we shared Communion on a cold Sunday and also celebrated All Saints Sunday, thinking about those that we may never have met and those that are inspirational people with whom we worship. There are those that encourage us. We give thanks for those brothers and sisters in Christ who faithfully follow Jesus into places where being a Christian puts them in jeopardy. Outreach again provided Thanksgiving Baskets through our Covenant to Care ministry. The 16th was Jeans Sunday, our annual day of cleaning, raking, changing light bulbs, and polishing. Things smell so good and there a true sense of pride when finished. We then have a light lunch. Our Holly Fair was a huge success what with the baskets, jewelry, goodies, and much more. The 9th was Stewardship Sunday where one pledges to support the church through his or her own funds. Men's Breakfast continues with conversation and laughter. Bell Choir continued to be part of our service. The 30th we celebrated the first Sunday of Advent with the lighting of a candle in the wreath.

In December we celebrated Communion on the 7th as we lit another candle for advent. A Blue Christmas Service was held on the 18th for those that are experiencing loss or grief. We again shared the loss of Ken Marvin. As our youth have learned about Communion and the parables they prepared for Advent with a pageant on the 14th. A potluck lunch followed the service. Bell choir was part of our service and the men had their Breakfast with also some bell ringing. The Nativity was the topic for Movie Matinee after service on the 21st. Christmas saw services at 5 PM and 11 PM which was Communion and candles. Our church was decorated with greens and the poinsettias which are always beautiful.

As we close out the year we give thanks for dear ones that have left this earth and are on another journey. Their memories will linger and certainly missed. Those in our prayers and thoughts are John Carlson, Alice Compagnone, RoJeanne Doege, Jasmin Floyd, and Ken Marvin.

In whatever travels may await us, our church on the green wishes its Community a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Respectfully,
Mary Ellen Blake,
Historian



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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