



CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, NEWINGTON, CT

**Annual Reports
2024-2025**

Meeting to be held on
May 4, 2024 at 11:15 AM

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Special thanks to all the chairpersons, officers, and staff, who turned in timely, print-ready reports. As well as our volunteers, who contributed their time to assemble the reports.

Covenant of
Church of Christ, Congregational
Newington, Connecticut

We covenant with one another
to seek and respond
to the Word and the Will of God.

We promise to journey together
in the ways of the Lord,
made known and yet to be made known to us.

We bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world,
while worshipping God,
and striving for truth, justice, and peace.

As did our founders,
we depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us
toward the triumph of righteousness and eternal life.

We acknowledge our continuing need of God's grace,
Jesus' love, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the support of
our community in the fulfillment of this Covenant.

Adopted: May 7, 2023

AFFIRMATIONS

At a large leadership retreat of our church in January 2006 a need was expressed to proclaim more clearly who we are and what we stand for as a church. Below is a list of affirmations that was voted by the church on May 6, 2007 and amended on May 5, 2019.

The Church of Christ, Congregational affirms these beliefs and commitments:

Vision Statement: United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace, we grow in faith and service.¹

Mission Statement: This Church joyfully gathers to worship God. We proclaim and teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ while growing in faith and service. We pray for one another and for all humanity.²

We acknowledge that we are all on a spiritual journey, so we are moved to accept a diversity of belief and doubt.³

We accept as full members, with complete access to the rites of the church, and to service within the church, people of good will and faith, regardless of race, color, ethnic origin, physical ability, sexual orientation and status in society. In employment we also provide an equal opportunity.⁴

We affirm the Bible as our primary source of inspiration and understanding of God, but we do not necessarily adhere to a literal interpretation of Scripture.⁵

We affirm our belief in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, made known through the Holy Spirit.⁶

We affirm the right and obligation of the church to raise concerns about issues facing society, to critique the institutions of society which foster injustice, violence, racism, sexism and ageism and to act in response to these concerns. We affirm the pastor's freedom of the pulpit to proclaim the Word of God as it challenges the congregation to serve God.⁷

We care for God's Creation by adopting and advocating environmental stewardship that will preserve and restore Creation for our descendants and for all living things on Earth.⁸

We affirm the priesthood of all believers, and hold that each member has rights, privileges and obligations in the governance of the church and in the furtherance of its mission.⁹

Our interpretation of Scripture and the guidance of the Holy Spirit lead us to a faith that is full of hope, optimism and forgiveness.¹⁰

¹ This vision statement was written by the church leadership at a retreat on February 2019.

² This Mission Statement was written by the Board of Deacons in the early 1990's for our by laws.

³ We are a non-creedal church, affirming the statement of one of our Congregational founding preachers, John Robinson: "God has yet more light and truth to break forth out of his holy Word."

⁴ At the leadership retreat in 2006 the strongest affirmation of our church's character was its acceptance of all people.

⁵ This is the way in which the UCC typically interprets scripture.

⁶ We maintain our Trinitarian roots in faith.

⁷ Our church has historically been engaged with the needs of society. The by laws affirm the pastor's "freedom of the pulpit." Random House Dictionary: *Institution*: 1) *an organization, establishment, foundation, society, or the like, devoted to the promotion of a particular cause or program, esp. one of a public, educational, or charitable character.* 4) *a well established and structured pattern of behavior or of relationships that is accepted as a fundamental part of a culture, as marriage.* 5) *any established law, custom, etc.*

⁸ Adopted from the UCC Connecticut Conference Environmental Ministry Team's mission statement.

⁹ We affirm the Protestant principle of the "priesthood or ministry of all believers." See the front of our bulletin. "Ministers: The People of the Church."

¹⁰ Input from the congregation suggested ending on a note of optimism and uplift.

Church of Christ Congregational Newington, CT 06111

Minutes of the Annual Meeting, May 5, 2024

The Annual Meeting of the Church of Christ, Congregational, of Newington, CT was called to order at 11:29 AM by Skip Collins, Moderator and Rev. Melanie Enfield opened with a prayer. Approximately 55 people were in attendance.

1. Receive the reports of the Officers, Boards and Organizations and delegates were distributed. All members had the opportunity to review the Annual reports prior to the meeting and were encouraged to read through all reports.

Motion was made to accept the reports as presented, there was a 2nd, no discussion and reports were accepted by unanimous vote.

2. Present and approve the slate of officers that are to take effect on June 1, 2024.

Motion was made to accept the Church officers and Board members for the June 1, 2024, there was a 2nd, no discussion and they were accepted by a unanimous vote.

3. **Affirm our Focus Language for our Church.**

Why does Church of Christ in Newington, CT exist? To Love On Purpose.

We believe that God loves unconditionally and exclusively.

We dream of a connected, stable and fulfilled community.

We choose To Love on Purpose to realize that dream.

"We love because God first loved us." 1 John 4:19

Motion was made to accept To Love on Purpose, and there was a 2nd. A discussion followed and this was accepted by unanimous vote.

Tobey Aubert, Outreach Program Coordinator, "came up" with this wording because we want to look to the future and what is available to use. We are a faith-based community with values. We are connected, stable and fulfilled in our community. Why do we exist? Because God love us unconditionally and exclusively.

Skip Collins asked if there were any questions.

Ann Andrews asked, how would this **To Love On Purpose** be measured?

Tobey responded by our actions and how we serve our community.

4. Several other items were discussed:

- Legacy Church. This pertained to the Elmwood Community Church who is closing their doors and the last day of Church service is June 8, 2024.
- The Annual Report is also missing the following reports:
GHIA (Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance)
Women's Bible Study

Skip adjourned the meeting with a prayer at 12:02 PM.

Beverly A Adamick

Beverly A. Adamick
Church Clerk

Dated: May 5, 2024
Newington, CT

Church of Christ Congregational Newington, CT 06111

Financial Meeting, Sunday, February 2, 2025

The Annual Financial Meeting of the Church of Christ, Congregational, of Newington, CT was held on Sunday, February 2, 2025, at 11:15 AM following Church services. 68 people attended.

Prior to the start of the meeting, we said a thank you prayer for all first responders especially for those fighting the fires in California.

Chuck Hasbrouk opened the meeting at 11:20 AM and Paul Palaia said the prayer.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

1. Receive the reports of the Treasurer, the Board of Christian Stewardship, and other financial reports of the Church.

Ed Liedke, Stewardship Chair, reported that the 2025 campaign resulted in 175 pledges for a total of \$420,000. This included 75 increases and 12 new pledges.

Jim Mulrooney, Treasurer, reported that 2024 was a good year for the Church's finances. We did very well with the fundraising in 2024 and the fund raising totals increased by \$4,000 as compared to 2023 (\$18,501.89 to \$22,825.63). We spent more in maintenance as we had a surplus in 2023. In 2024, we continued to replace the windows and we added an upgrade to the furnace with temperature controls.

A motion was made to vote and approve the above. It was seconded and unanimously approved.

2. Consider and adopt the proposed budget for 2025.

Chuck Hasbrouk introduced Mark Russell to present the 2025 budget. The Growth & Development money was accidentally omitted from the budget. Paul Palaia and Jim Mulrooney assisted with the 2025 budget. Some of the budget expenses remained the same as in 2023.

Exhibit B – keeps track of all the Church programs.

The New Center Corp (NCC) was also reviewed.

Peg Schwanda, Assistant Treasurer, was introduced and thanked for her work.

A motion was made to vote and approve the budget It was seconded and unanimously approved. The 2025 budget was adopted.

3. The Trustees and Council are asking the Congregation to approve the reallocation of the original \$100,000 donated to the future generations fund. The money is currently listed as a **Part B** Restricted Asset whereby the interest earned gets used for a specific mission. We cannot find any historical reference as to what that specific use is. Therefore, we are asking to approve the reallocation into category of **Part A asset whereby the interest earned can be used for any use the Church deems necessary and approves.**

The current earnings from Part B, you can use the interest only. Earnings from Part C must remain in place for 10 years. It makes sense to move to Part A.

The Future Generations Fund was established by the Women's Professional Group (Thrift Shop Organization) and it started with \$100,000. The interest from this can be used as needed. According to Tom Dunn, Chair of Investments, these investments are very strong.

The current and former Thrift Shop members were asked about the use of these monies in the Future Generations Fund and there was not specific statement for the use.

The money will remain in the account and bear interest. The interest does not have to be used for anything specific.

A motion was made to vote and approve all the items associated with the Future Generations Fund. It was seconded and unanimously approved.

Rev Melanie Enfield announced that we received a beautiful and generous "legacy" gift totaling \$100,000. Ideas for using these monies are for mission projects, education, faith formation and outreach programs. The gift is given without any restrictions. When thinking about how to use this money think of the following: How is God working here;

and how can we use these monies? The first is prayer and have God help us to use this gift in our Church community.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 12:15PM. The meeting ended with a prayer.

Beverly A Adamick

Beverly A. Adamick
Church Clerk

Dated: February 2, 2025
Newington, CT

MODERATOR – ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

To be clear up front this isn't a political message I'm a staunch independent. However, I find it enlightening to compare our church to our country and government. You hear constantly about all the supposed chaos and divisiveness in today's world. Yet for me, when you look within this church, I don't see any of that. Rather, I see the Church of Christ Congregational in Newington as a safe harbor in the tempest and I hope we can all find great comfort in the sanctuary that it provides.

I find refuge in the fact that there's no tariff on God's love. We choose or "vote" to be members of this church, yet we feel no desire to denigrate the beliefs of others. There are no borders to entering our church, nor can you be deported because of your country of origin, your ethnic background, or your beliefs. Unlike our constitution the bible is never amended, though it is similarly subjected to ever evolving interpretations. We don't have to pay any taxes on our riches from heaven and your position with God is never subject to a reduction in force. Lastly, there are no judges within the church although I guess like the Supreme Court Jesus has been appointed for life!

It's because of these bedrock virtues and beliefs, which are so much more powerful than the comparatively mundane pursuits of politics, that our church has continued to evolve and prosper for over 300 years. It's a testament to the strength of the foundation, the steadfast leadership, and most of all to the people who generation upon generation have remained faithful to the belief in God's word. I so love and believe in our resilient optimism that we can help make our community and our world a better place.

On a quick personal note as my six years as Moderator comes to an end in June, I want to say thank you for the privilege of having served in this role. I'm most appreciative of getting to better know so many admirable people throughout the congregation. I'll always be grateful for the opportunity and the time spent and look forward to remaining involved as we continue to walk a well-intentioned, albeit imperfect trail of goodness and godliness. Continued blessings and well-being to all.

Skip Collins

Church of Christ, Congregational – Newington, CT

Report of the Church Clerk 2024-2025

Membership as of April 16, 2025 _____ 681

Received:

By letter of transfer, confession, _____ 0
 Reaffirmation of faith or Membership _____ 18
 Reinstated _____
 Confirmation _____ 5

Dismissed:

By Own Request /Transfer _____ 3
 By Deacons _____ 0
 By Death _____ 4

Gain/(Loss): _____ +16

Active Membership as of April 25, 2024 _____ **697**

Total Baptisms _____ 7

New Members (18)		
Katherine Boismenu	Matthew Gaffney	Kathie Ledoux
Donald Burnham	Tricia Burnham	Shannon Evans
Jennifer Freese	Robert Batson	Ginger Croxall
Edythe Gary	Jereld Gray	Sarino Haggett
Carol McGregor	Bridgett Olszewski	Charles Peterson
Colleen Peterson	John Tedesco	Patricia Tedesco
Confirmation (5)		
Drew Morgan	Kenzie Morgan	Brooke Morgan
Olivia Miller	Victoria Kiriyan	

Baptism (7)		
Scarlett Rae Megofna	Cameron Piombino	Eliza Jean Piombino
Grace Skylar O'Connor	Reid Harvey Stebbins	Savannah Amelia Mehigen
Emma Olivia Ross		

	Deaths (4)	
Cynthia Tinkham	Florence Guite	Ann Marino
Eleanor Duey		

Removed at own request/transfer (3)		
Lisa Delude	Ronald Hemman	Ben Nichols

Removed by Deacons (0)		

Inactive (0)		

Annual Report 2025
Rev. Melanie Enfield
Senior Pastor

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the ways our congregation has embraced faith, courage, and connection. In a world often marked by uncertainty, our church has remained a steadfast beacon of hope and love.

Vibrant Worship and Creative Expression:

I spend the bulk of my time preparing and planning for our worship services as they are a source of inspiration and spiritual renewal for many. I have sought to create meaningful experiences that speak to the heart of our community. In the fall, we explored a sermon series on courage, delving into the strength that faith offers in uncertain and challenging times. I have tried to expand the voices we hear in worship. Members of the congregation shared personal reflections on gratitude, creating powerful moments of connection. We highlighted star Sunday with the presence of our young adults (ages 18–25) and a personal testimony on a star word. I incorporated drama to bring the stories of our faith to life in new and compelling ways. These expressions of worship have strengthened our sense of community, reminding us that we are all participants in God’s ongoing story.

Deepening Faith Through Study

We offered two Bible study series this year: one in the fall focusing on courage, and another during Lent that invited participants into reflection and spiritual growth. These gatherings provided meaningful opportunities for members to delve deeper into Scripture and engage in thoughtful discussions about living out our faith in daily life.

I also had the joy of co-teaching Confirmation with Tobey Aubert. Each Monday afternoon, we gathered with our confirmands to build meaningful relationships and explore questions of faith. Together, we reflected on who God is, how we experience God’s presence, and what it means to live as followers of Christ in today’s world

Pastoral Care and Connection

Pastoral care has remained a cornerstone of my ministry. I have had the honor of officiating at weddings, baptisms, and funerals, walking alongside individuals and families during some of life’s most significant moments. Through hospital and home visits, as well as numerous phone calls, text messages, and emails, I have offered prayers, provided support, and shared in the joys and sorrows of our community.

Recognizing the importance of collective care, we revitalized our Caring Ministry Team, a dedicated group of volunteers who actively reach out to members of our faith community through phone calls, visits, and heartfelt cards. I am deeply moved by the number of individuals who stepped forward to participate. Thank you!

To further nurture our connection with one another, we introduced a weekly text messaging platform this year. Each message contains a prayer or a word of inspiration, offering encouragement and spiritual nourishment to recipients throughout the week.

Administration and Leadership

A significant portion of my ministry involves the behind-the-scenes work that supports our church's vitality. As Head of Staff, I meet weekly with our dedicated team to provide guidance, mentorship, and collaboration, ensuring that our shared ministry remains cohesive and responsive to the needs of our congregation. Communication is vital and I oversee the creation and distribution of our weekly bulletins, email newsletters, and video messages. I work with many of our boards, so their work continues and flourishes. I have been very excited about our new Community Dinner initiative.

In addition to administrative duties, I have led our new member classes, welcoming individuals into our faith community. I love working with our youth and I host a monthly dinner and conversation for our high school students at my home, providing a space for meaningful conversation and relationship-building. I am also connected to the wider church as the Chairperson for the Committee on Ministry of the Association. I am a facilitator for a clergy excellence group that meets monthly. And I am on the board for Family Promise of Central CT.

Looking ahead with hope

As we look toward the coming year, I am filled with anticipation and readiness to follow where God leads us. I am deeply grateful for our dedicated staff—Peter Niedmann, Tobey Aubert, Michelle Dixon, Bria Shaw, Mary Jane DiPaola, Glenn Casey, and Bob Pinard. Their unwavering commitment to their work and to our church community is truly inspiring. Each brings unique gifts that enrich our collective ministry, and I am thankful for their faithful service.

I sense that new and transformative things are on the horizon. As we remain open to God's guidance, we must be willing to embrace necessary changes that will allow us to grow and serve more effectively. In a world that deeply needs messages of love and acceptance, it is our calling to share the truth of God's love with all. Let us move forward with courage and openness, ready to be vessels of hope and compassion in our community and beyond.

Tobey Aubert
Program and Outreach Coordinator
Annual Report 2024-2025

It has been a little over a year since I began working here at Church of Christ, Congregational. I am grateful for the connections of warmth, friendship and common desire for more of the love of God in our lives. Melanie's care for this community (including me) has been wonderful to observe and experience, and the everyday interactions with staff and members have been a constant source of joy.

Being blessed with the opportunity to be involved across programs and ministry has created multiple avenues to facilitate ministry to our church community and the Newington area. Interviewing and working alongside members we looked at the Strategic Plan and created language to articulate the perceived needs by the congregation within the community and how we can meet them. Out of that work came the Love on Purpose focus language with three key focus words, Connected, Stable and Fulfilled. That language was to enable us to direct our attention and action in church-wide efforts to meet needs and love people intentionally and well.

Emphasizing the key word, "Fulfilled," we launched a church-wide student school supply collection in coordination with Human Services beginning with the Extravaganza ice cream event, and collected three bins full of supplies, blowing away the expectations of the Human Services staff.

Emphasizing the key word, Stable, we created in-house curriculum that would be easy for volunteer teachers to use and be relevant to our families. It also tied in directly with the Children's sermon which tied into Melanie's sermon series. We followed the service with a post-discussion group discussion time for adults. All those aspects enabled the entire family to grow together on one relevant theme. We tied in the sermon series to our Youth Group events, both at Melanie's house for discussions with High School students and Middle School youth nights at the church. We also continued working with Center Church to prepare and serve a meal to the unhoused folks in the Hartford area. I also participated in my first Sleep Out for the Homeless. Game times and the conversations at Melanie's house provided the "Connected" focus for our youth.

The Connected and Stable focused words were emphasized through a new alternative service, named U. happening every fourth Tuesday of the month. This alternative gathering provided a sacred safe space for those folks who are often the “doers” in church and in the personal lives as well as hungry hearts who are aware of their need for a place of rest and refreshing. This alternative space was in addition to the Sunday morning service and focused more upon reflection, prayer and small group discussion.

In the fall, the decision was made to realign our Love on Purpose initiatives under the “Fulfilled” key word by serving the Community Meal. This once-a-month meal gathered together church members and volunteers across boards and age groups and served as an easy entry point into serving others for folks new to the church. The Community reached around 100 guests a month with 60 percent being folks outside of our church attendees.

As part of the “Fulfilled” focus language, we have begun to reboot our involvement in the Greater Hartford Action Alliance (GHIAA). About 20 key leaders and church members attended the annual GHIAA Power Summit. We hosted an after-service discussion group with a GHIAA organizer to clarify the opportunities our church has to partner with other places of faith to bring about systemic justice in the greater Hartford area.

Being able to help facilitate Sunday morning services, preach on occasion, help with holiday related evens like the Night of Lights, Christmas and Easter services has been a joy. I look forward to continuing to love our friends and neighbors within our community together.

ANNUAL REPORT 2024 -2025

From the Organist & Director of Music

Our music ministry is vibrant and strong. The Youth, Adult, and Handbell choirs offered a wide array of music for worship. They also performed in 2 concerts—Christmas by Candlelight and Spring Pops—to enthusiastic audiences.

We welcomed Sacred Steel—a wonderful steel pan band from New Haven—to lead our worship music in October. We also welcomed the Hot Cat Jazz Band to lead our worship music in March.

All of our choirs grew this year with several new members. The Youth Choir sings every other week in the service. They also rehearse weekly, and enjoy 4 Fun Nights each year (food, games, social time). On June 1st, the Youth Choir will combine with 6 other youth choirs from around the state to sing Choral Evensong at Trinity College Chapel.

Janet Schneider led the Cherub Choir in Advent in a joyful song during worship.

Our Concert Series increases in popularity each year, bringing in folks from around the region to enjoy great music, free of charge. There were 7 excellent concerts this season, from concert organist Janet Yieh to singer-songwriter Kala Farnham to *a cappella* groups from UConn, and more.

Our choirs will sing the national anthem at a Hartford Yard Goats game on June 25th.

Thank you to everyone involved in our music ministry: the choirs; Kris Dunn, choir librarian; Board of Music; staff. We are blessed with many talented and positive people who work hard together to make our worship a beautiful experience.

Gratefully,

Peter Niedmann

Board of Trustees

Annual Report

2024-2025

The Board of Trustees has the responsibility as stewards of the church to oversee the maintenance of our property and the financial health of the church. Our church family continues to show amazing commitment with their time and finances. We are truly blessed.

Financials

First and foremost, I want to say thank you to all our members and nonmembers who have pledged or contributed to the fiscal health of our church. Without these gifts we would not exist. So, thank you!!

Our 2024 Annual Stewardship Campaign resulted in a total actual pledge amount of approximately \$426,000. This is an increase of \$8000 over our 2023 budget. We maintained our basket/Non pledges income at \$19,000. However, we exceeded that amount by \$2300 in the 2024 yearend report. Our Shared expenses income remained strong and steady. As part of our 2024 budget, we transferred the full amount of \$65,000 from our endowments. We ended the 2024 fiscal year with an income of \$17,770 more than our 2024 budget. Our Expenses were less than budgeted for the year by \$5,148.

The 2024 fiscal year ended with a Surplus of \$4,484. The trustees continue to navigate the financial needs of the church. We strive to maintain our talented staff, support the Christian education, Music, Mission and building maintenance. We pray that God will continue to bless and guide us so that we remain a strong and vital church, performing his work every day.

We carefully observed our endowment funds, which grew substantially due to a strong 2024 market performance. As always, we seek to balance return vs. risk in accordance with our guidelines. We continue to look at the most efficient way to invest our funds and we navigate the current markets and stay consistent with our financial policies and procedures. A special thanks to the Investment Subcommittee. This group of experienced church members always have the best interest of the church in mind.

The Trustees are consistently monitoring the costs of operations including utility rates, insurance, maintenance cost, investments, along with use of building and safe egress for everyone.

Maintenance

For building maintenance and repair, we continue to focus on ongoing preventative maintenance of our aging building. We successfully completed significant projects such as, but not limited to:

- We continued with the long-term plan of replacing windows in the building.
- We continue the long-term project of removing the building away from the aging pneumatic temperature controls. We converted the Sanctuary and fellowship hall over to a programmable electronic system.
- Volunteers performed various painting projects throughout the building.
- We continue to repair aging floor tile and carpet as we planned for the renovation of the Narthex in the winter of 2025.
- We replaced the toilet/general exhaust fan for the elevator addition.
- We continue to maintain our heating and air conditioning systems
- We performed significant tree pruning

New Center Corp.

We continue to work closely with the dedicated church members who manage the New Center Corporation, on our behalf. The Board consists of Chairman Steve woods, Andy Grocki, Kent Stoddard, Jay Krusell, Paul Palaia and Neil Pade In 2024 Dunkin Donuts moved to a new location. They continue to pay their lease which ends 2/26/2026. We have begun to advertise the vacant space. We performed a sewer pipe root clearing and water jet service to clear the flow for the building. This sewer lateral may need replacement at some point. M&T Bank continues to operate and remains a very busy local branch. M&T has a 20-year lease ending in 2033 with two ten-year options.

Personnel

The church staff have been working very well. Michelle has been with us for 1 ½ years and has hit her stride. There isn't much she can't do, and she manages the staff and functions of the church extremely well. Mary-Jane DiPaola, our financial administrator, moved to Florida in August of 2024. We agreed to a trial remote work model and at this point we haven't had any major issues. There are a few new logistical tasks that require the help of Michelle and Bria, but the transition has been very manageable. Mary Jane continues to perform her financial responsibilities very well. MJ works closely with the Trustees and the Treasurer to maintain a good standing with all our accounting and bookkeeping. Bria continues to perform her work responsibilities with ease and efficiency. The Sexton duties were performed by Bob Pinard and Glenn Casey. Both men perform their duties very well, keeping our building clean and safe for us all. We appreciate all their efforts. Tobey Aubert, our Program and Outreach coordinator, works well with the staff and volunteers. He compliments Rev. Enfield very well. Peter, our Music Director, continues to impress. He is a talent of the highest level, and we are truly blessed to have him in our church family. We have a very good staff, with impressive talents and skills. They all work very well together, with Rev. Enfield and the entire church volunteers.

Shared Expenses

We also want to extend a Thank you to all the other groups who share in the expense of church building. Baby Bees Preschool, Wellspring Ministries, Weight Watchers, New England Coffee and various groups such as Al-Anon, NA, MADD, and other one-time events. We continue to look for opportunities to share our building with members and outside groups.

Strategic Plan

As highlighted in our current Strategic plan, we are focusing on the third year of our plan and goals. That includes continuing the process of accessing our underutilized building spaces. We are open to new and exciting opportunities to offer spiritual and faith-based growth within our community. We continue to evaluate our ability to maintain our staff and offer competitive salaries and benefits.

Board Members

The current members of the 2024-2025 Board of Trustees are Paul Palaia, Dave Austin, Jen Andrade, Bob Batson, Mark Russell, and Jim Mulrooney (Treasurer). We saw Melissa Harris and Heather Dewitt exit from the board. I want to thank them for their years of faithful service. It was a pleasure serving with them. I also need to thank Tom Dunn for his efforts with our investment committee. I am extremely grateful to each Trustee for their efforts and dedication to this church. Our numbers may be few but the talent level exhibited is immense.

Sincerely,
Paul Palaia, Chair of Trustees.

Board of Deacons Annual Report 2024–2025

What makes a board effective? Having a great group of people whose talent and dedication is the most noteworthy. Much appreciation is given to Linda Crawford, Nancy Crawford, Peg Garrison, Jamie Harris, Dale Hasbrouck, Chuck Hasbrouck, Sue Kalman, Peg Kelly, Dave Kilpatrick, Jenn Laurito, Renee Lavoie, Karyl Sadowski, Janet Schneider, Theresa Swenor, and Mary Woods. We miss the wisdom of Ann Marino, who passed this year. The board is appreciative of the Nominating Committee's work in providing a full board which helped greatly in our work.

The Board of Deacons has sought to enhance the spiritual life of our church. As a sounding board for Melanie, the Board has provided feedback and ideas. On the first Sunday of each month, deacons serve communion in the worship service. For several of the communion services, parishioners provided home-baked bread which added a variety of flavors for the sacraments.

For each worship service, deacons work in the background doing the preparations that help make the service a meaningful experience for all in attendance.

In addition to communion, deacons are part of many church services, including weddings, funerals and memorial services, baptisms, and new membership.

Providing spiritually meaningful holiday seasons, the Deacons had a beautiful Advent alter scape. The board is most appreciative of the design creativity of Chris Boghosian and Mary Woods. For Christmas and Easter, the communion table and surround had seasonal flowers. After these worship services, the flowers were distributed to designated church members under the leadership of the board.

Being an open and affirming church that is welcoming for everyone, the public was kept aware of this with the display of Pride Doors near the church sign at the corner of Cedar and Main in June of 2023 and 2024. In the current state of political turmoil, it is especially important to proclaim the message of inclusivity. The Pride Doors will be on display again in June 2025.

New this year, the Deacons began placing 'God Loves You!' yard signs at homes of church members who are experiencing difficulties. For a week, the recipients receive our love via the signs seen on their lawn. The signs then are moved to another site. It has been a welcomed outreach project.

Deacons provided leadership for our church's role in the town Parks & Recreation Department's *Night of Lights*, a highly successful community activity. This event requires many members volunteering, with the Deacons providing organization and coordination.

In a church that does so much in service to God, the Board of Deacons feels blessed to serve.

Blessings,
Chuck Hasbrouck
Chairperson

Board of Christian Education

Annual Report

2024-2025

The Board of Christian Education had a very busy year this year. In June we were thrilled to once again be able to host a Children's Day event with a magician who kept us laughing and entertained with balloon animals. It rained this year so we had to hold the event in fellowship hall. We also had single serve ice cream available from a local truck vendor at the back door. Additionally, we handed out \$500 Church scholarship awards to 5 seniors and an additional \$500 Burgess Scholarship award.

Our summer was busy planning for church school, with a theme of "Love is Our Superpower". The Board continued to meet on Zoom for a majority of our meetings including special meeting during the summer to plan the school year. Tobey Aubert provided a custom curriculum aligned with the Sunday sermons for the fall. He continued with the custom curriculum after advent. Teachers were trained in the new curriculum during sessions before Rally Day. Julie Wacht, Concetta Conlogue and Amanda Pippen rotated weeks in our PreK-K room along with a volunteer assistant. Grades 1-3 solicited volunteers from our CE Board and the Church to teach on a monthly rotation. Don and Vaille LaChance continued teaching 4th and 5th grades. Our 6th and 7th grade room switched to a weekly rotation with Nicole Haeseler, Tonya Affricano, Skip Collins, Jen Andrade and Lara Bohlke.

The CE Board decided to pause our attendance award program that was our strategic goal for 2023-2024. We heard feedback that some children are unable to attend all weeks due to parent arrangement and so some children would not enjoy the full benefit.

In October we held an open house to welcome parents to meet the teachers and learn more about Church school. We also conducted our annual fire drill for the church school. In December we hosted our annual Christmas Family Party, with a special visit from Santa who read a story to the children. We held the annual Christmas Eve family service - a great time was had by all.

In February we switched our Souper Bowl drive to benefit the Newington Food Bank from a drive through event to a partnering with the Caring Cart. We would like to continue this arrangement in the future.

We look forward to confirmation this year in April and another successful Children's Day in June.

As always, we are grateful to the volunteers that help our youth with their faith formation, and to the amazing leadership of Rev. Melanie Enfield. Her patience, energy and guidance are invaluable. We are also grateful to Tobey Aubert for helping us improve our faith formation programs for the children and we are looking forward to his assistance to better link our church school families with the church's missions and outreach.

Respectfully submitted,

Dagny Bronson, Chair

Members: Nicole Haeseler, Amy Damato, Angela Duran, Michelle Jackson, Julie Wacht, Angela Tedesco, Kathryn Roman, Lena Kiriyan

Mission and Social Action Annual Report 2024-2025

This year our committee was reorganized with each member becoming the contact person and expert on our various benevolence partners. This streamlined the contact with the agency and empowered our committee member's involvement with each agency. We also focused on mission items that invite church members to participate in service opportunities that require a short term commitment.

We started off the new year with a huge collection of hygiene items for Church World Service. The items were collected in February and the kits were assembled by church families after a Family First Friday Worship in March. 72 kits were mailed to Church World Services with funding for the kits to be shipped to needed areas.

The Caring Cart- a grocery cart in the narthex to collect weekly nonperishable food and items requested by Newington Social Service for the Newington Food Pantry, had monthly themed donations. It was always full and was brought to the pantry weekly by mission committee members. Having the one mission committee member responsible for communication with the agency and the congregation meant that the immediate needs of the food pantry were met by our specific donations. Our generous church family always filled the cart weekly.

In February '24 we had a zoom meeting with Bryan Parrish, the UCC minister serving the Central Democratic Republic of Congo. He reported many hardships and that our donation did not go to him directly. We did make a change so that our donation did go to him for his mission work with the Congo and received a detailed account of how the money was used for micro loans for small businesses run by women. Due to deteriorating stability in the country, Bryan safely returned home in Dec. '24.

Camp Hispaniola run by Marc Regis, in Haiti and Dominican Republic for two weeks in the summer for the children, became a mission focus. A service opportunity was presented, church members created multiple fun events for the church family to support this mission: a bake sale, Chili Contest and dinner, a sound healing circle and table donations raising \$2400 for camp in 2024. This April table donations were taken.

In September we welcomed new members and started dreaming about hosting a Community Dinner- A time for all to gather for a meal, fellowship, feel connected to our community. A time for our church family to reach out intentionally with love and serve our neighbors. Our first community dinner was planned for Saturday Nov. 2, 2024. We invited the Got Lunch families, Flyers were sent to Newington Social Service, the Thrift Shop, Library, Senior Center, added lawn signs and on the Community Sign at Main St. We filled fellowship hall with church and community members and many helping hands serving close to 90 people.

Community Dinners continued monthly from Jan-May, the first Saturday 4:30-6pm. Serving 75-85 people, giving opportunities to be the hands and feet of God to over 20 volunteers, youth and adult, each dinner. The atmosphere is a warm hug for all those involved. A blessing goes home with attendees. These meals have been fully funded by donations received at the door.

Pluck a Turkey provided 6 baskets with all the fixings for a fantastic Thanksgiving meal. This was double what was asked for.

The Giving Tree –supported the general needs of the Friendship Service Center in New Britain with two car loads of items. Fifteen individual from Social Service had their wish list filled. Family Promise received 16 gift cards. Our Congregation gives generously.

Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA) held a Power Summit in Nov. which many members attended. Beatrice Santiago gave a second hour presentation in March to a full parlor. Tobey Aubert and Karen Serio will continue to represent our church.

This mission year we have loved intentionally, served with gifts and plates of food, and generously given our time, talents and support to the mission of this church and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Niedzielski, Chair

Members of the Mission and Social Action Board: Tammy Samarotto- secretary, Bill Ford, Michelle Lawson, Liz Palaia, Melissa Miller, Ursula Hunt, Brian Alemany

BOARD OF SACRED MUSIC ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

“Music is a fair and glorious gift from God” ...and with hearts full of gratitude, our entire music program under the very talented direction of our organist Peter Neidmann, has in turn, glorified our loving God in a variety of musical dimensions for another year.

We have been extremely fortunate to have both a very dedicated Senior and Youth Choir whose faithful members share their beautiful voices each Sunday with a variety of musical selections. Both familiar and new interpretations of hymn and anthems always provide an integral part of every worship service. During the months of July and August when choir members and our organist enjoy well-deserved vacations, we have been most fortunate to have very talented guest substitute organists, in addition to talented soloists who shared their musical gifts with us. For these special individuals, we are genuinely grateful.

Our faithful Handbell Choir also continued to ring bells in church on a monthly basis, adding significant musical gifts to those worship services. Fortunately, the handbell Choir has a nice compliment of very accomplished and longtime ringers with new ringers as well.

‘Special music’ was provided during a few of our services once again this year. Several of our young people shared their personal musical gifts with us (voices or instruments) during services, and needless to say, they were a blessing to us all. Returning favorite groups included the ‘Sacred Steel Band’ from New Haven whose rhythmic island folk music, reggae, and sacred jazz played on their steel drums brought renewed inspiration to us. Also, ‘The Hot Cat Jazz Band’ played in February, filling our sanctuary with most enjoyable music and accompaniments of some spirituals as they were sung by the congregation. Undoubtedly, both of these musical genres were deeply ‘felt’ as well as ‘heard’.

Throughout the year, and with the tremendous efforts on behalf of our director of Music, our church offered a variety of concerts to the public. Annual donations collected at each concert helped to make these concerts ‘free’ to all who attended.

The following concerts were enjoyed most thoroughly by congregants and visitors alike:

June 2024 - A 'Four Choir Choral Evensong' was presented at Trinity Chapel with several of our church's young people participating. Their voices were 'naturally angelic'.

July 2024 - An evening Carillon Concert was held on the church lawn, thanks to the cooperation of Mother Nature last year. As music rang out from our bell tower, attendees were also encouraged to share their favorite requests of hymns or other musical selections so those could be programmed into the concert also.

Sept. 2024 - Acclaimed singer and songwriter Kayla Farnham (CT's 'State Troubadour') played the guitar and harp while performing folk music selections.

Nov. 2024 - 'Our own' Peter Niedmann performed the music of Beethoven, Brahms, and selections from Copeland's 'Appalachian Spring' on the piano as a wonderful piano concert.

Dec. 2024 - Once again, the 'Christmas by Candlelight Concert' filled the sanctuary with people and both liturgical and secular holiday music. Selections were performed by our various choirs, soloists, harpist, and a small orchestral group, along with congregational singing of carols. The Music Committee hosted a reception following the concert which included punch and generous food donations from church members. The enjoyment of our concert receptions is always dependent upon many giving hands and hearts and for that (along with Hospitality Team members), we continue to extend our sincerest appreciation.

Feb. 2025 - Prize winning Concert Organist Janet Yeih presented and performed a delightful concert which showcased her extraordinary talents on our pipe organ.

March 2025 - Talented singing groups from UCONN - 'Notes Over Storrs', 'A Completely Different Note', and 'ConnMen' - performed several a cappella selections before a large crowd in the sanctuary.

On May 18, 2025, our 'Spring Pops' Concert will be held with a reception to follow. Music will include selections from 'Wicked' and 'Mama Mia', along with a Billy Joel Medley and more Broadview hits. No one will want to miss it!

Throughout the year, the Music Board also hosted Fellowship Coffee and provided ushers for each Concert. We sincerely extend our thanks to those special people who volunteered their time to help us out in an ushering capacity when it was needed.

In closing, heartfelt thanks and sincere appreciation is extended to our church organist and Music Director, Peter Neidmann, for his always inspiring organ and piano music during each worship service. His talents in directing, playing and arranging musical selections, integrating appropriate music within each service, introducing new hymns, and even displaying lots of understanding and patience with handbell ringers are all very special gifts from God. Our family of faith is very fortunate to call Peter 'one of our own'

May our music always continue to welcome visitors through our doors and continue to touch the hearts of faithful members in new and inspiring ways.

Respectfully submitted:

Christine Boghosian - Chairperson

Joyce Brown

Mick Duffek

Cindy Kaiser

Janet Machol

Peter Niedmann - Director of Music

JoAnn Scott

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024- 2025

Our year started with our annual Sundaes on Wednesday give away event held during Extravaganza week. Many volunteers from the church, the backbone of many of our events, manned a toppings bar that transformed the 200 cups of ice cream into delicious sundaes. A second community event, the Night of Lights, provided us with an additional opportunity to advertise our church to non-members. We purchased candy canes, attached a church message to them, and distributed them to people in the crowd.

In the Fall we re-introduced a past favorite event, the Progressive Dinner. Those attending went to one location for appetizers, another for dinner, and all returned to the church for some yummy apple crisp. It was a great way to meet people in a relaxed setting. We also hosted the ever-popular Donut Sunday in January. Our church has no problem consuming over 120 donuts during this sugar high coffee hour. During Advent we hosted a coffee hour to decorate gingerbread houses, a great time was had by all! Thank you to Terri Molway for baking the 40 gingerbread houses!

In February, all of us, as well as many other Americans, were shocked and saddened by the wildfires that were devastating the Los Angeles area. At the last minute we arranged an apple crisp fundraiser to raise money for the first responders dealing with the tragedy. We partnered with the Newington Volunteer Fire Department and gave apple crisp to anyone who donated to the fire relief fund. This event raised over \$3,000 to send to L.A. We also hosted our annual Bingo Night, where over 70 people attended this family event and competed for fun prizes. We ended February by sponsoring a night out to eat at Puerto Vallarta, another fundraiser to support church activities.

On April 26th we are excited to be hosting our first adult prom, Dancing through the Decades. We anticipate that this will be a fun event for reminiscing, laughing about, and sharing stories that remind us of what our teenage years were like. A free will offering will be collected and donated to the Newington Senior Center's Meals on Wheels program. We close out our year by hosting the "Rookie Challenge". This event is geared towards new and potential members. They face off in a number of challenges, all in the name of team building and cooperation.

Thanks to Tonya Africano, Concetta Cologne, Pete Donahue, Elizabeth Kostreva, Kara Russell, Jerome Manning, and Pam Bogdanovich for all they do and all the creativity they generate. A special shout out to our Emcee, Jim Mulrooney.

Faithfully submitted by Jon Tinkham, Chair of the Growth and Development Committee.

LOVE
ON PURPOSE



GIVE WITH INTENTION

 **CHURCH OF CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL**
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWINGTON, CT

The theme for the 2025 Stewardship Campaign was Love on Purpose; Give with Intention. During this year's campaign we used a skit and a game show to demonstrate the impact of stewardship on our church.

For me, the most impactful presentation was the short video we did in which various members of the church told us why they give and what it means to them. The answers to the question were as varied as the programs that we offer.

One area of the strategic plan for the church suggested that stewardship should be done year-round culminating in stewardship Sunday. To that end, we will be submitting short descriptions of how stewardship impacts the church. These will be included in the weekly newsletters and the bulletin.

Members of this year's stewardship committee were Judy Warren, Ann Marino, Bev Adamick, Jim Mulrooney, Davie Austin and Ed Liedke

Blessings,

Ed Liedke, Chairperson Stewardship

Annual Report for the Market Square Thrift Shop 2024-2025

Many of our church members may not be aware of our treasure in Newington Center (second to our church, of course). It is our church-sponsored, "Market Square Thrift Shop" located at 230 Market Square (rear), between "Ming Moon" and "Hair Spray Studio". We are open Wednesdays through Saturdays from 11:00 AM until 3:00 PM. You can find men's, women's, and children's clothing, shoes & purses, knick-knacks, dishes, glassware, costume jewelry, paperback books, toys, a variety of household items, and more for sale in the shop. We offer various categories of these items on sale at 50% off over 2-week durations during the year. For the first time, we held a special open house immediately after a Sunday church service in October, to give our parishioners the opportunity to visit the shop and view the merchandise. Not knowing that we even existed, many saw what they had been missing for the very first time! Two highlights of the shop are our two "Bag Sales", one held at the end of the summer and one at the end of the winter season. We just completed our "swap-over" from winter to spring/summer. Yearly, we close the last 2 weeks of August and reopen the Wednesday after Labor Day.

Through our fundraising (money from our sales of all-donated merchandise) we were able to "help" our church in many ways. We will be covering the cost of the carpeting & installation in the Narthex. We also help fund "Hands on Hartford", Friendship Center, and "Got Lunch" for the Board of Missions, to the board of Music for Peter's concert series, and to ASP for their ministry trips to name a few. We also offer free work clothes & shoes, etc... to the ASP volunteers to wear on their work-trips.

In addition to helping the church, we extend some funding to the community in our yearly donations to NVFD Co. 1 and our Newington EMS. As always, we donate various household & clothing items that we can't sell to other charities, such as the Salvation Army, and we always have things to donate to the ASP tag sale.

We are grateful to our amazing volunteers who sign up for 2-hour shifts (11:00 AM to 1:00 PM or 1:00 to 3:00 PM) and our "fill-in" substitutes who cover as needed. Sadly, this year we lost a very beloved, faithful, dedicated volunteer, Ann Marino. Despite her many challenges, she covered her Saturday shifts, usually working a double shift of not two, but four hours! We sorely and deeply miss her. With the resignation of Dot Jacobs, we welcome Cindy Kaiser to our board.

If you've never visited the shop, stop in to see what you've been missing! You might find that treasure you have been searching for, or you might even decide to become a volunteer! Either way, we promise you a very rewarding pleasant and fun experience.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vaille LaChance

Board members: Sherry Affleck, Deb Jeanfaivre, Cindy Kaiser, Vaille LaChance, Peg Schwanda, and Linda Stewart

ASP Annual Report 2024-2025

ASP provides one of the most rewarding structured service opportunities in the nation — bringing thousands of volunteers from around the country to rural Central Appalachia to repair homes for low-income families.

Since 1969, they've made homes warmer, safer, and drier for families and provide transformational service experiences for volunteers. Each year, more than 15,000 volunteers serve with ASP, providing critical repairs for more than 350 families. In 2024, our Church sent a group of 38 Strong and served 6 Families. **And, our Church has been a proud and active supporter of this mission sending more than 350 different individuals over more than 3 DECADES**

Each year, ASP selects an overarching theme and a bible verse. The ASP 2024 theme was **Building Kindness** with Ephesians 4:32 as the bible verse: *“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you”*.

Kindness is of course an element of any mission efforts and altruistic endeavors. But Kindness goes so far beyond the most obvious of our team organizing, mobilizing, and heading south to help our brothers and sisters in need. **First**, without the Kindness and support of our Church, we could not extend that kindness to actions; we are extremely grateful for that. **Next**, is the kindness that we find on our journey to Appalachia. This year, we were the recipients of **overwhelming Kindness**. St. Stephen United Church of Christ in Harrisburg, VA quickly and enthusiastically responded to outreach for a place to simply set up our cots and stay for the night (we do this to break up the drive on the way down). Not only did they provide a great place to stop, stay and recharge, but their Church community came out in full force to provide an incredible homecooked dinner and even came back the next day with an amazing breakfast! Now THAT is KINDNESS! **Additionally**, we experienced kindness on the trip. From our amazing youth showing kindness by treating each other and our adult leaders with respect, to our adult leaders showing kindness through patience, understanding, and teaching to our families extending kindness back to us; they are incredible people with a deep love for family, and community.

We had our typical lead-up to our trip. An informational meeting in September, monthly meetings from January through June, team-building events, skills-building opportunities, and fundraisers. These were all great opportunities to learn about ASP and the mission and create connections with our work teams and the entire group.

Our trip took us to Man, WV and we split up into teams to tackle our project aimed at making houses warmer, safer and drier. One of the mottos of ASP is it's a “relationship ministry with a little construction on the side”. This was certainly the feel again this year. We, of course, got our projects done. Yes, there were challenges to overcome, but as always - we did it! But the construction and the project are and will always be secondary. Seeing our youth grow in confidence and spirituality is what truly makes ASP an amazing and worthwhile adventure.

ASP 2024 was another tremendous success!

Honor and Memorial Gifts Committee

Annual Report for 2024-2025

The Church of Christ, Congregational welcomes gifts given in memory of a loved one or in honor of a living person who has been a part of our lives, our church, and our community.

The Committee handles bequests to the program, oversees the purchase of items on the approved Gifts List, works with the families and/or donor, and recognizes all gifts in the Annual Report.

Purchases made during May 1, 2024 and April 30, 2025 include –

1. Hearing Assist System Upgrade - The Memorial Gifts Committee purchased some new equipment to upgrade our hearing assist system. We installed a new transmitter that provides a higher quality sound and better clarity. We also purchased 20 new receivers, 11 of which were paid for by the Thrift Shop committee. We greatly appreciate the continued support of the Thrift Shop for their help in this upgrade. We have also purchased 20 new headsets with disposable covers to be used with the receivers. These headsets fit over the ears and do not require the removal of hearing aids to use them. The disposable covers will be replaced after each use. This equipment is available to anyone needing a 'boost' to improve hearing in the Sanctuary, not just those with hearing aids.
2. PA Mixer – This equipment was purchased to replace a sound mixer that was failing. It is used for the choir and general sound reinforcement.

Honor and Memorial Gift List – Current Approved List

1. Rebind hymnals as needed
2. Handbells for Handbell Choir
3. Outside Banner for North Side of Church
4. Chalice/Communion ware for Intinction during services
5. Fellowship Hall chair caddies (2) to store unused chairs in North closet
6. Banners for Sanctuary (similar to Awe and Joy that we have now)
7. Two TV/Monitors for the Narthex or other church space
8. Signage for the Narthex
9. Table for the Narthex

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Warren

Memorial Garden Committee Annual Report for 2024-2025

**Fear not.....I died and behold I am alive forevermore.
Revelations 1:18**

The Memorial Garden was established in 2001 as a final resting place for church members and their immediate families. Surrounded by beautiful shrubs, trees, and flowers, it provides a tranquil setting for family and visitors to rest, meditate, pray, and remember loved ones.

The maintenance of the Memorial Garden is supported by donations that help pay the ongoing expenses, approximately \$3,000 a year, to keep it looking beautiful. Over many years, Judy Gordon and Deb Caserta have provided their time and talents to plant and maintain the flowers and weed the gardens during the year. Judy is no longer able to work in the garden, and we want to recognize her contributions over the years that has kept the garden in beautiful condition. We also appreciate the work done by Stonehenge Landscaping over the years to maintain all the gardens around the church, we are very grateful.

Over the past 24 years, we have interred the ashes of over 50 church members and their immediate family members. The name of each person is listed on granite markers within the garden. There is also a Book of Remembrance in the south hallway by the doors leading to the garden that contains the names of loved ones interred and those who have been memorialized through a donation to the Memorial Garden Fund.

We received a donation from Steve and Mary Woods toward the cost of purchasing a new granite marker in 2024 to provide more name plates in the future. The marker was installed in March 2025. We are grateful for their donation.

Donations are greatly appreciated and if you are interested in helping to support the ongoing maintenance of the Memorial Garden, you can donate online or directly to the church office. Please include 'Memorial Garden' in the memo line.

If you haven't visited the Memorial Garden lately, please take a few minutes to stop by and enjoy the beauty and tranquility.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Carubia
Pat Lavery
Judy Warren

RaiseRight Committee

2024 Annual Report

In 2024 we had record earnings of just over \$10,000. We are having increasing success in convincing people to order from the website and app after the holidays. The website continues to add features that enable us to increase earnings in new ways, and more people are paying online so that no manual effort is needed on my part.

We continue to benefit from Melanie's support and I'm very grateful that our committee is still intact with Kris Dunn, Diana Krusell, Karen Serio, and Deb Sanborn. This team has been in place for several years and works very well together to ensure that the table is open every Sunday.

Respectfully Submitted,
Donna Cagen
4/10/2025



Church of Christ Congregational UCC STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 – 2025 Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION



Church of Christ Congregational in Newington is celebrating 300 years of serving as the hands and heart of God in our community. This tremendous milestone is an opportunity not only to honor and celebrate our past, but also to share our vision and strategic priorities for the future. As such, the Church has developed a strategic plan that is anchored in our aim to “grow in faith and service,” and that will help guide our efforts over the next few years.

This plan has been shaped by the many congregants, committee members, and community leaders that shared their perspectives with us. We thank all those who thoughtfully contributed to our learning, discussions, and direction. Through you, we see that God truly is still speaking, and we look forward to answering God’s call together.

OUR VISION AND VALUES

VISION

United in Spirit and inspired by God’s grace, we grow in faith and service.

We do this by:

- Gathering together as the body of Christ to worship God
- Deepening our faith through God’s word and prayer
- Welcoming all as an open and affirming congregation
- Fostering connections to strengthen a diverse community
- Being the hands and heart of God to serve the world near and far.

VALUES

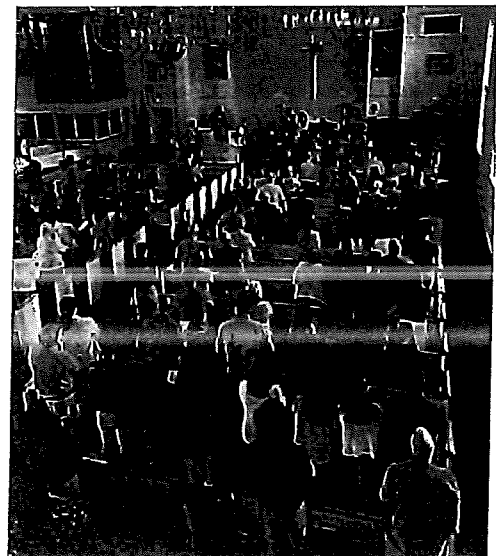
Our Church's culture and efforts are guided by the following values:

- **Openness** – Our doors are open to all, as we are all children of God. No matter who you are or where you are in your faith journey, you are welcome here. We fully and unconditionally embrace people of all orientations, backgrounds, and abilities. We encourage inquiry, wrestle with doubt, acknowledge the hurt of the disaffected, and offer acceptance, affirmation, and belonging.
- **Active Faith** – Faith is a spiritual muscle that grows stronger with exploration and practice. God is calling us to deepen and live our faith through reflection, our attitudes, and actions. In addition to worship, we strive to follow and share the loving and just example of Christ in the way we meet one another, live, serve, and grow. But we are human, so we also meet ourselves with grace and keep trying.
- **Service** – God is still speaking and there is much work to be done. Our Church offers abundant opportunities for youth and adults alike to love, serve, and give generously. When we serve others, we connect with what matters, become more aware, grow in gratitude and character, act as the hands and heart of God, and contribute to a more just society. Everyone has something to offer in service to their neighbor and to God.
- **Community** – Here, you will be met with genuine kindness, care, and acceptance. Here, you can build meaningful relationships and find community. We get to know each other, support each other, and celebrate each other. We are neighbors. We are friends. We are a diverse family, formed by faith and service.

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN TO GROW IN FAITH AND SERVICE

Affirmations: We are a dynamic Church community that offers congregants of all ages numerous and meaningful ways to grow in faith and service. Our members are generous with their time, talent, and treasure. We are financially healthy and benefit from strong ministerial and lay leadership. Accordingly, this strategic plan has been developed from a place of gratitude and abundance.

The goals and strategies in this plan seek to build upon the great work we are already doing—They focus on areas of opportunity and growth, as opposed to areas to sustain. Therefore, under each goal, there is also an affirmation or acknowledgement of the many strengths that serve as our foundation.



GOAL 1: GROW IN OUR FAITH AND SPREAD THE WORD OF GOD THROUGH OUR DIGITAL MINISTRY, SPIRITUAL FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES, AND INTENTIONAL WELCOME OF ALL.

Affirmations: Our Church currently helps us grow in faith through compelling Sunday services, enhanced by beautiful music and online access; spiritual formation classes and Bible studies that also promote a sense of belonging; and a culture that values love, acceptance, and the active practice of faith. The following strategies build upon these strengths.

Strategies:

- Increase access to the word of God and connection to our Church by growing our digital ministry.
- Inspire more people to explore their faith through thought-provoking, creative, and tailored programs.
- Be more explicit in our intentional welcome of people of all abilities, orientations, races, and cultural backgrounds.
- Ensure all visitors and new members receive deliberate welcome and cultivation.



GOAL 2: EXPAND THE MEANS, METHODS, AND RELATIONSHIPS THAT WILL ENABLE US TO CONTINUE GROWING IN SERVICE AND ADVANCING JUSTICE.

Affirmations: Service is considered a vital and empowering extension of our faith, and our congregants serve generously. Our broad range of service opportunities for youth and adults is noteworthy and appreciated, and our ministries align with critical community needs like housing, food, and economic insecurity. Community leaders value working with our Church, and we are seen as a reliable and responsive partner. The following strategies build upon these strengths.

Strategies:

- Increase the visibility of and participation in one-time and ongoing service opportunities.
- Provide education and forums to address racial, social, and environmental injustices.
- Develop an intentional community outreach strategy aimed at fostering relationships and expanding our collaborations to address community needs.
- Strengthen our presence in the community by increasing our participation in Newington groups and events.
- Invite the community into our Church more regularly and create a safe space for building relationships.

GOAL 3: ORGANIZE MORE EFFECTIVELY, ACCESSIBLY, AND INCLUSIVELY TO ADVANCE OUR WORK.

Affirmations: The dedicated volunteers engaged in our Church's many boards and committees drive our mission and ministries. They are responsible for the spiritual life of the Church; grace us with music, nurture our youth, reach out to the community, invite people in, steward our resources, and so much more. We honor their immense contributions to every aspect of our Church and invite more members to answer this vital call to become a lay leader. The following strategies build upon our strengths and encourage changes that will promote more participation.

Strategies:

- Create onramps for committee service and more intentionally develop our lay leaders.
- Examine streamlined and enabling committee structures.
- Engage and empower our youth as the next generation of Church leaders.

GOAL 4: MAXIMIZE OUR AVAILABLE RESOURCES AND INVEST WISELY IN OUR INFRASTRUCTURE.

Affirmations: Our lay leaders have dependably safeguarded and nurtured our Church's resources for 300 years. In a time where so many churches are struggling, our finances, building, and membership are in admirable shape because of their diligence and the faithful generosity of our congregants. From New Center Corporation to the use of our preschool space and Fellowship Hall, we also have a history of thoughtfully and creatively using our property to help sustain our Church and contribute good to the community. Now, as we consider the Church's value, relevance, and role in a rapidly changing society, we stand ready to ask new questions, explore new ideas, and continue boldly answering God's call. The following strategies build upon our legacy and call upon us to embrace an abundance mindset.

Strategies:

- Use our building needs and use audit to plan for capital improvements and explore our untapped potential.
- Promote abundance through the prayerful solicitation and use of financial resources.
- Invest wisely in our staffing and infrastructure.

IMPLEMENTATION AND PROGRESS MONITORING

The strategic planning task force and Senior Minister will identify year-one priorities and share them with the Church Council. An implementation spreadsheet also will be created to track assignments and support progress monitoring. At that point, the Church Council will assume oversight of the plan and serve as a resource for committees.

Each committee will prayerfully review the plan, identify opportunities to contribute to the work, and submit a year-one workplan to the Council that outlines their ambitions. Progress by each Committee will be included in their regular updates to the Council. Sharing what worked, what didn't, and what was learned will be important as we all seek to continue experimenting, learning, and growing together.

The Report of the Board of Nominations
April 17, 2025

The Board of Nominations is pleased to present for consideration to the membership of Church of Christ, Congregational, Newington, Connecticut the following list of nominees (underlined) for the year June 1, 2025, to May 31, 2026. This Board has endeavored to include as nominees some new church members as well as other members of all age groups to help bring new ideas to the various offices and boards.

Officers to June 2026

Moderator: Heather DeWitt
Treasurer: Jim Mulrooney
Assistant Treasurer:
Church Clerk: Beverly Adamick
Auditor: Peter Brzezicki
Assistant Auditor: Ray Girard
Historian: Jon Tinkham &
Susan Hutcheon

Board of Deacons (15)

Serving to June 2028

Chuck Hasbrouck
Dale Hasbrouck

Serving to June 2027

Theresa Swenor
Jamie Harris
Jennifer Laurito
Nancy Crawford
Janet Schneider

Serving to June 2026

Mary Woods
Margaret Kilpatrick
David Kilpatrick
Renee Lavoie
Margaret Peg Garrison

Board of Trustees (12)

Serving to June 2028

Serving to June 2027

Paul Palaia
Dave Austin

Serving to June 2026

Jennifer Andrade
Robert Batson
Mark Russell
Joe Jones
John Tedesco, Sr.
Neal Pade
Deb Carabillo

Board of Christian Education (12 plus 2 youth)

Serving to June 2028

Serving to June 2027

Amy Damato

Serving to June 2026

Angela Tedesco
Katie Roman
Nichole Haeseler
Angela Duran
Dagny Bronson
Julie Wacht
Yelena Kiriyan
Amanda Pippen
Angela Crapser

Board of Sacred Music (6 plus 1 youth)

Serving to June 2028

Serving to June 2027

JoAnne Scott

Serving to June 2026

Janet Machol
Chris Boghosian
Cindy Kaiser
Kris Dunn
Pat Lavery
Sage Campbell
Grace Miller
Ritamarie Haeseler

Board of Missions and Social Action (15)

Serving to June 2028

Serving to June 2027

Serving to June 2026

Bill Ford
Judy Niedzielski
Michelle Lawson
Ursula Hunt
Melissa Miller
Brian Alemany
Liz Palaia
Carol McGregor
Michelle Roy
Ginger Croxall

Growth & Development

Serving to June 2028

Serving to June 2027

Kara Russell
Pete Donahue

Serving to June 2026

Tonya Affricano
Concetta Conlogue
Jerome Manning
Elizabeth Kostreva
Jon Tinkham

Board of Christian Stewardship

Serving to June 2028

Jamie Harris

Serving to June 2027

Jim Mulrooney

Serving to June 2026

Dave Austin
Ed Liedke
Bev Adamick

Board of Collectors (6)

Serving to June 2028

Deb Jeanfaivre
Sherry Affleck

Serving to June 2027

Serving to June 2026

Barbara Mead
Maggie Essex
Katrina Mattern

Board of Ushers (6)

Serving to June 2028

Serving to June 2027

Joyce Thorner
George & Gail Verheyen

Serving to June 2026

Paul & Susan Hutcheon
Peter Tinkham
Matt Sigall and Family
Joseph "Skip" Collins
Kathie Ledoux

Board of Hospitality (8)

Serving to June 2028

Serving to June 2027

Steve Woods

Serving to June 2026

Nancy Crawford

Deb Sanborn

Susan Hutcheon

Memorial Gifts Committee (3)

Serving to June 2028

Serving to June 2027

Serving to June 2026

Judy Warren

Kit Bon

Lee Gray

Memorial Garden Committee (6)

Serving to June 2028

Serving to June 2027

Patricia Lavery

Serving to June 2026

Judy Warren

Board of Planned Giving

Serving to June 2028

Serving to June 2027

Serving to June 2026

Judy Warren

Tom Dunn

Board of Nominations

Serving to June 2028

Serving to June 2027

Steve Woods

Pete Donahue

Melissa Harris

Joseph "Skip" Collins

Serving to June 2026

Liaison to Avery Heights

Paul Stewart

Board of Market Square Thrift Shop (6)

Linda Stewart
Peg Schwanda

Dot Jacobs
Vaille LaChance

Deb Jeanfaivre
Sherry Affleck

Delegates (1-year terms)

Central Connecticut Association, United Church of Christ

Deb Jeanfaivre
Jim Mulrooney
Jon Tinkham

Melissa Harris
Tobey Aubert
Janet Schneider

Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ (3 + 1 alternate)

Tobey Aubert
Jim Mulrooney

Newington Interfaith Housing Corp. & Southfield Children's Center (2)

William Hall

Stephen Woods

Respectfully Submitted,

Jon Tinkham
Steve Woods
Ed Liedke
Pete Donahue

Board of Nominations