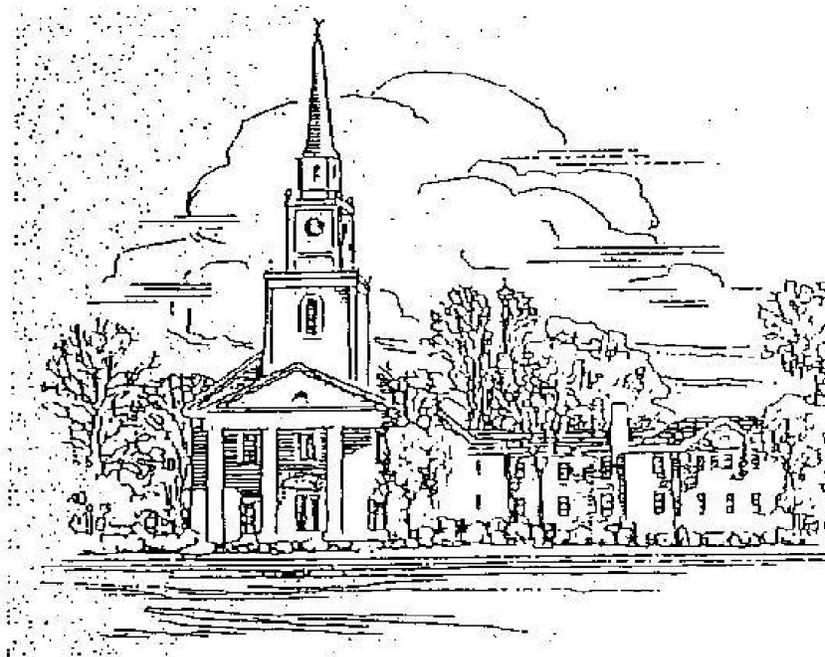


The First Church of Christ in Longmeadow, Massachusetts

United Church of Christ

**The Annual Reports for 2017
To the 302nd Annual Meeting
February 11, 2018**



*Embraced by the love of God in Christ, our mission is to love and serve our world.
We seek to grow in Christ's family through our journey –
inward toward faith and knowledge,
outward toward love and justice –
always rooted and nurtured in worship.*

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Officers Elected at the 301st Annual Meeting Feb 12, 2017 | 3 |
| Minutes of the 301th Annual Meeting Feb 12, 2017 | 4 |
| Minutes of the Special Meeting April 30, 2017 | 5 |
| Report of the Clerk for 2017 | 5 |
| Report of the Senior Pastor Search Team for 2017 | 6 |
| Report of the Senior Pastor for 2017 | 6 |
| Report of the Acting Associate Pastor for 2017 | 9 |
| Report of the Director of Music for 2017 | 10 |
| Report of the Moderator for 2017 | 11 |
| Spiritual Life Ministry | 13 |
| Adult Education, Youth Ministries, YUP, YES, Confirmation II, Family Ministries, Contemplative Worship, Forum, Bible study, Bible in a Year, Library, Sacred Circles | |
| Congregational Life Ministry | 17 |
| Called to Care, Meal Train, Women's Benevolent Society, Friday Evening Fellowship, Food Service Team, Prayer Shawl Ministry, Pastoral Relations Teams | |
| Mission in the World Ministry | 20 |
| Haiti Mission, Environmental Justice, Mission and Social Concerns | |
| Community Outreach Ministry | 23 |
| Neighbor to Neighbor, Ecumenical/Interfaith Presence in the Community, Loaves and Fishes, Open and Affirming Team, Visioning 2020, Delegates, Social Justice | |
| Stewardship of Resources Ministry | 26 |
| Consecration Sunday Team, Financial Secretaries, Budget Team, Personnel Team, Longmeadow Montessori Lease Team, Property Team, Investment and Finance Team, Buxton Room Decorators, Landscape and Gardening Team | |
| Worship Ministry | 30 |
| Deacons, Music Team, Liturgists, Worship Planning Team, Altar Flowers Team, Audio/Video Team | |

Election of Officers for one year terms

The Leadership Team:

| | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Moderator | Susan Kennedy | Liaison for Worship | Mora Geoffrion |
| Clerk | Eleanor Santos | Liaison for Spiritual Life | Kristin Thomas |
| Treasurer | Stewart Creelman | Liaison for Congregational Life | _____ |
| Past Moderator | Steve Gelling | Liaison for Mission in the World | Shirlee Fassell |
| Member-at-Large | Rosemarie Jarrett | Co-Liaison for Community Outreach | Marieke Burt |
| Member-at-Large | Gina Sears | Co-Liaison for Community Outreach | Candy Heaphy |
| Member-at-Large | Julie Pohlman | Liaison for Stewardship of Resources | _____ |

Assistant Treasurer Whiting Houston

| | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Stewards (at least 9) | Stewart Creelman | Susan Dugan | Katie Glasgow |
| | Alex Grant | Whiting Houston | Susan Kennedy |
| | Stephen Kennedy | Nola Kulig | Don Murphy |
| | John Ouellette | Ted Steger | Kristin Thomas |

(The Property Team, Personnel Team, and Investment and Finance Team shall each include at least 3 Stewards.)

Assistant Financial Secretaries Stephen Kennedy Katie Glasgow

Anne Landry was later appointed Liaison for Congregational Life

Lisa Gore was later appointed Co-Liaison for Community Outreach

Liaison for Stewardship of Resources remained open throughout 2017

Minutes of the 301st Annual Meeting
The First Church of Christ in Longmeadow United Church of Christ
Sunday, February 12, 2017

The 301st Annual Meeting of the First Church of Christ in Longmeadow was called to order by Moderator Susan Kennedy at 10:05 AM

The Clerk Eleanor Santos read the call of the meeting.

The service of worship then continued until after the doxology was sung when, a quorum being present, a motion was made and seconded to accept the Annual Report for 2016 after a correction was made. On Page 18, Mary Friedman should be credited as the author of the Haiti Ministry report rather than Mark Pohlman. As there were no comments or questions, the annual reports were unanimously accepted as printed and corrected.

Moderator Kennedy explained each amendment of the bylaws' Articles III Faith and Covenant, IV Membership, V Ministers, and IX Meetings. (See attached) This brought the bylaws into current practice and changed the quorum from 75 to 10% of the active membership as determined by the Clerk. A motion was made and seconded to amend the by-laws as proposed. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer Stewart Creelman presented the Treasurer Reports for 2015 and 2016. Total assets, not including property, were \$3,819,728 on December 31, 2015 and increased to \$4,002,802 by December 31, 2016. Mr. Creelman explained the rebalancing of the endowment to more appropriately help fund our annual budget, using the recommended 4.75% distribution rate. The Treasurer's Report was received as presented.

The 2017 Budget was presented. Moderator Kennedy explained some of the important changes such as the salaries of staff; Offices and Building expenses, which added lines for landscaping and snow removal; Music which was increased reflecting our new music program; and a 14% annuity is being offered to our new settled pastor and given beginning in 2017 to our current pastors. Also explained was the reorganization of endowment funds to make their intended use clearer. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the budget as presented. No questions followed and it was passed by a unanimous vote.

The floor was open for nominations to the open positions. Rosemarie Jarrett nominated Connie Shea for Liaison for Congregational Life. Ms. Shea declined the nomination. No other nominations being offered, a motion was made to elect the officers and stewards as presented on the ballot. The motion was passed unanimously.

Moderator Kennedy expressed appreciation of the time and efforts given by those who serve. A motion was made and seconded to recognize and authorize the work and ministry of the teams and their members. A standing ovation was made showing appreciation for all the work of Moderator Kennedy.

After a closing prayer, a hymn was sung.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15.

Respectfully submitted by Eleanor Santos, Clerk

**Special Meeting of the First Church of Christ in Longmeadow
April 30, 2017**

After having heard the call for a special meeting of the First Church of Christ in Longmeadow, the meeting was called to order after worship at 11:40 AM on Sunday, April 30, 2017 by moderator Susan Kennedy to act upon the report and recommendation of the Senior Pastor Search Committee.

Co-Chair Mary Friedman gave a summary of The Search Committee's process and activity over the past year. Each member of the committee reviewed an aspect of the candidate's strengths and background.

Steven Gelling made this motion: On behalf of the senior pastor search team, I move that First Church of Christ in Longmeadow call the Rev. Pamela McGrath to serve as our 17th settled senior pastor.

The motion was seconded. After opportunity for questions and discussion it was revealed that she has already met with staff, confirmed that she would live in town and that, and if confirmed as our new pastor she would start around the middle of August .

85 members being present, a voice vote was taken and Pamela McGrath was unanimously called as the 17th settled Senior Pastor of the First Church of Christ in Longmeadow.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 PM

Respectfully submitted by Eleanor Santos, Clerk

REPORT OF THE CLERK FOR 2017

Members reported in 2016: 331

New Members in 2017: 12

By letter, reaffirmation and confession: 5

Tara Howe
Ann Wolpert

Terri Jones
Rev. Pam McGrath

Stuart Jones

By Confirmation: 7

Shelby Alexandra Carman
Olivia Louise Manning
Connor William Plankey

Edmund Peter Desarro
Lucas Donald Olson

Ian Michael Kelly
Ryan Thomas Peluso

Members lost by death: 7

John Havens
Donald Hoyer
Charles Joseph Scharff McKee

Victor Bargar
Edward Snyder

Don Rogers
Philip Steiger, Jr

Active Membership as of December 31, 2017: 336

Members transferred to inactive status and/or removed: None in 2017

REPORT OF THE SENIOR PASTOR SEARCH TEAM FOR 2017: Steve Gelling

The Senior Pastor Search Committee was formed in May, 2016 and consisted of the following members: Wanona Dobbs, Alan Kulig, Susan Monks, John Ouellette, Shannon Plankey (youth member), Rev. Ute Schmitt, Laura Bird Smith, and co-chairs Mary Friedman and Steve Gelling.

In 2016, the team had focused on completing our Church Profile and advertising our Senior Pastor opening. By year end, we had received 33 profiles from which to begin the selection process.

This past year was devoted to the selection process. We received a total of 36 profiles, from which we selected 8 candidates for initial interviews, all of which were conducted in February and March via videoconference. From these candidates, we selected three finalists who were invited for onsite interviews in April held at team member homes.

After prayerful consideration, our team selected Reverend Pamela McGrath to recommend as First Church of Christ in Longmeadow's next settled Senior Pastor. Reverend McGrath was invited to Longmeadow for Candidate Weekend on April 29-30. After preaching to the congregation on April 30th, a special meeting of the congregation was convened, at which Pam McGrath was enthusiastically called as our Senior Pastor (and the first woman to hold the settled senior pastor role in our church's history). Pam accepted our call, and the Search Team assisted the Personnel and Finance teams in negotiating her contract.

Reverend Pam McGrath's first sermon as our settled senior pastor occurred on August 20, 2017, after which the Search Team sponsored a picnic celebration of her arrival.

On behalf of myself and my co-chair Mary Friedman, I would like to thank all of the Search Team members for their tireless dedication, meeting at least weekly for a year to reach such a satisfactory result. Thanks also to the Leadership Team and entire congregation for their full support of our efforts.

REPORT OF THE SENIOR PASTOR FOR 2017: REV. PAMELA MCGRATH

I have been with you for a little less than six months. In that time, I have gotten to know many of you. I feel blessed to be called to First Church of Christ. I appreciate your warmth, your gracious welcome, your playfulness, your willingness to try new things, your sense of living your faith in the world by doing what Jesus did, and your love of our church.

In this short time, I have noticed many well-developed strengths of First Church, some strengths we are already growing quite well, and some places I dream of our continued growth.

STAFF

We have a solid and dedicated clergy and staff. Everyone serves at FCC because they feel called here as a vocation. In the next few months, we'll all examine our duties, to discover how we can best use our gifts going forward.

LEADERSHIP

One of the things that drew me to FCC was our sense of shared leadership. Our circle model reflects the church's desire to have strong lay leadership. I have seen our system work to bring multiple voices and ideas to the congregation. We have a strong Leadership Team that loves FCC and gives their time freely. The new circle and team members who will be elected at the Annual Meeting will have good guides to help them use their gifts to serve.

One of my goals for FCC is to help the church continue strengthening our lay leadership. I have enjoyed attending all of our team's meetings and circles. We are a very active church and our interests are varied. The many choices of ways and places to serve gives everyone a way to use their voice and feel connected.

A new aspect of leadership is that we are widening the role of our deacons in worship. Showing through action our belief in the "priesthood of all believers," the deacons now offer a prayer at communion and have a part in baptisms.

WORSHIP

First Church of Christ has known Spirit-filled worship experiences for literally hundreds of years. Our worship planning team is vital and lively. We work together to plan worship as an integrated experience: the music, readings, visuals and sermon work to form a whole that is both intellectually challenging and spiritually fulfilling.

We have a wonderful choir, soloists, and director. I love their enthusiasm and willingness to try new ideas and music genres. Our deacons, liturgists and ushers are all dedicated and welcoming to newcomers and longtime members.

We have switched to the Narrative Lectionary. (A lectionary is a collection of Bible verses to be used in worship services throughout the year, in a multi-year cycle). The Narrative Lectionary moves through the bible by stories in a four-year cycle—beginning in September with Genesis, focusing on a single gospel from Lent to Pentecost and ending in June with Epistles. Our Sunday school curriculum follows the same story path.

YOUTH

Rev. Marisa, Marilyn Paul-Lewis and I have joined with volunteers to facilitate our YUP and YES youth groups. We began building relationships with the youth from St. Andrews by sharing a meeting once a month. We have gone skating, played laser tag, had game nights, packed food for mission, and shared pizza, conversations and Christmas parties.

I also want to thank the many parents and church members who have stepped forward and planned, cooked, driven, chaperoned and led our youth.

Our Confirmation II class is led by Wanona Dobbs, Rev. Marisa and myself.

Our youth are smart, articulate and have a heart for mission. I believe they also deserve a program run by a leader who can focus on their needs and on building relationships with them. Rev. Marisa, Marilyn Paul-Lewis and I sat down and dreamed of what we want for our youth and from a youth leader. I am hopeful that the presented budget will be passed, enabling us to hire a part time person (10-15 hours a week). When I asked some of you what is important to you about our church you have answered, "Our youth." I believe you and I believe that our youth deserve a solid program with a dedicated leader. If we are to grow our youth numbers I think it is imperative.

VISITS

Thanks to all of you who hosted or attended the "meet the pastor" gatherings. It was such a great way to get to know you and to answer questions you had for me. (I hope to continue these small group events throughout the rest of the year.)

Caring for members of this church is sacred work, and I feel profoundly honored to be able to serve. I have enjoyed visiting with many of you separately. I have also enjoyed leading worship services at Glenmeadow, visiting the residents at Reeds Landing and Ruth's House, and making hospital visits. Visiting you, praying with you and getting to know you is one of the most important things I have done since my arrival.

I have also called 162 families and/or individuals who attend or once attended our church. Calling and speaking with so many of our congregation has been a blessing. For the ones who attend now, I feel like I have gotten to know you. For the ones who no longer attend, I got to introduce myself and offer my cell phone number in case they are ever in need of pastoral care.

CLASSES

Every week I lead an open Bible study group on Thursday mornings. We study the scripture to be preached on the following Sunday. I always leave feeling energized and refreshed, having learned something new or having gained a new perspective on the text. The class members also appreciate this chance to help shape the coming Sunday's worship.

During Advent, I led a class after church where we discussed the journey of Mary and Joseph and our own ancestor's journeys as immigrants and refugees. Hearing stories of how members' families struggled to make new lives for themselves reminded us of ways we are connected to the Holy Family.

I am looking forward to leading a Monday night Lenten study focusing on the theme of *Listening*. (Rev. Marisa and I will alternate leadership.).

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In these first few months, I was able to complete a key goal of mine: to meet the town's school principals, town manager, senior center staff, VA officer, fire chief, police chief, librarian and area clergy.

After I met with the school principals, our bell choir was asked to play at the holiday assembly at Williams Middle School. I look forward to sharing more experiences with the community.

I have a dream of serving our town's citizens to ease their struggles with isolation. The Senior Center, the VA, the town manager, area clergy and the chaplaincy department of Baystate Medical (through the efforts of our own Rev. Ute Schmidt) are beginning to collaborate on ways to best serve. The dream is still forming but it seems to be a shared desire. I know we can all work together to make a difference for Longmeadow.

DREAMS--MINE AND YOURS

I have a dream that you're already helping me make real: finding ways to get to know our neighbors, outside of worship.

Once a quarter, we'll have a "Saturday Celebration." We'll invite the town and surrounding communities to join us for a Saturday night event that features live music, food, and crafts.

My hope is that by doing so, we'll begin to make others in our community feel comfortable among us—so that we can build new relationships and start doing things together.

I know you, too, have dreams: for this church, for your family, and for yourself. I'd like to hear those dreams so that, together, we can make them into new realities.

Rev. Pam McGrath

REPORT OF THE ACTING ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR 2017

REV. MARISA BROWN LUDWIG

It is with joy that I reflect on my fourth year here at First Church as Acting Associate Pastor. I have been with you through most of the Interim Time with Dr. Jay Terbush, to whom we said good-bye in June. I served as Transitional Pastor through the summer until the arrival of our new settled Senior Pastor, Pamela McGrath in mid-August - Welcome Pam! This fall has been an active time of walking together into this new chapter of our church. I am now near the end of the covenant First Church entered into with me when I first came in 2013, and so 2018 will be a year of discerning with you, Leadership and Pastor Pam about our next steps together from here forward. As your Associate Pastor, you've asked me to focus on Adult Formation, Pastoral Care, Youth & Families, Community Outreach-Interfaith/Ecumenical Relations, and being active as a Worship Leader/Preacher with the Senior Pastor. Here's how we've lived together in these areas in 2017!

WORSHIP/CHURCH LIFE

I have loved leading worship/preaching 1-2x/month throughout the year for Sunday services, collaborating with our Worship Team, Senior Pastors, Choir and Music Director on powerful worship regularly but also for special times of the year like Advent/Christmas, Lent/Holy Week. I led the weekly Contemplative Worship on Wednesdays with many members and friends. With Dr. Jay, I co-led a Deacon Retreat for our wonderful Deacon Team in January, and with Pastor Pam now we hope to bring more of this kind of spiritual development to many of you in 2018! I remained active in the wider church including Massachusetts Conference Super Saturdays, Annual Meeting and delegate to General Synod (our National Church setting) in Baltimore. I serve as chair of the MACUCC Task Force on Ecumenism & Interfaith Relations, and mentor a Member-in-Discernment working toward ordination in 2018.

PASTORAL CARE

I worked closely with our Called to Care Team to minister to our sick and homebound friends with pastoral visits, phone calls, emails, texts and cards. I companion our Prayer Shawl team in making prayer-filled shawls and baptismal blankets for our church and wider community as ministries of love and care. I have led worship services at Reeds Landing Assisted Living and shared leading monthly communion services with our Senior Pastors at Glenmeadow Assisted Living Community. I led a bible study for Jewish and Christian residents at Ruth's House at Rabbi Devorah Jacobson's invitation in December.

ADULT FORMATION

I partner with many of our church teams for growth and expression of Christian values into our world. This has meant much justice and witness work, and many of you have initiated and joined me in that! Together we did the White Privilege Series (with St. Andrews) Jan/Feb, the Praying the Psalms series in May, a New Member series in June, Movie Nights including "The Shack", a book study of "The Great Spiritual Migration" by Brian McLaren, The Reformation Study series with St. Andrews in early Fall, all with the Adult Ed Team. With the ONA Team, I supported the monthly LGBTQIA Support Group we host here at First, and the "Becoming Nicole" book group series with Trans Life Guest Panel in March. We went to the UNITY Trans Day of Remembrance in November, and their Christmas Party in December. With the Environmental Justice Team, I attended a Climate Rally on the Coolidge Bridge in January and did a Climate March in Springfield in April, performed in a Climate Justice Concert at the Unitarian Society in April, and participated in Prayers for the Planet Interfaith Worship in Northampton. I was in the Women's March in Greenfield with many members and friends last January. See more in my Community Outreach report!

YOUTH AND FAMILIES

I co-led the YUP middle school group first with Dr. Jay and then with Pastor Pam, Wanona Dobbs, Beth Elam and Deb DeBiasio. I have accompanied the YES Group Leadership also since summer 2017 through December. I co-taught Confirmation I for 6th /7th grade youth with Diane Peluso in winter/spring 2017, and have co-taught/organized Confirmation II for 7th/8th grade youth with Pastor Pam and Wanona Dobbs since September. I've been delighted to accompany so many Family Ministry intergenerational events this year, including sledding, splash park fun, movie nights, local park clean-up and more!

PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

This year I continued healing from the major surgery I had in March of 2016. So many of you have been a wonderful support to me in all my roles at church during this time, and I especially want to thank my Pastor Relations Team who accompanied me with such compassion: John Thomas, Anne Landry, Connie Shea, Mary Ellen Flaherty and Katie Glasgow. I attended continuing education programs, including trainings for new clergy leadership development, the Opioid Crisis and Church Security. The highlight of the year was definitely my pilgrimage trip to Iona, Scotland in July 2017, in which I studied church of the future with people from all over the world and brought back many prayer, liturgy and music resources used in our worship already! I can't thank First Church enough for supporting my learning and growth through these wonderful programs.

Finally, I am honored to work with the deeply faithful Leadership Team of this church, and the dedicated church staff: Maura, Gay, Stan, Deb, Dan, Carolyn, Marilyn and Pastor Pam. I thank them for all the ways they have collaborated with me across this year. I have been excited to companion all of you in this active and energized faith community, First Church of Christ in Longmeadow! Prayerfully, Pastor Marisa

REPORT OF THE MUSIC DIRECTOR FOR 2017

DAN INGLIS

Having concluded my first full calendar year as Director of Music, I am proud and grateful to see the music program thriving.

PEOPLE & PROGRAMS

We continue to enjoy stellar performances every week by our choir and "dream team" of soloists. The choir is increasingly excited about new music and always willing to give every new selection a fair shake. They frequently display superb dedication and, to a person, will stay after rehearsal when needed for an important service. The soloists, besides being stellar musicians, are able to conduct the choir in Dan's absence (which they often do for our standard introit and benediction response when sung from the back of the sanctuary). Their musicianship and leadership expertise are most valuable.

After learning the ropes of handbells during my first church year (2016-17), I identified that the handbell choir was working very hard to learn music more suitable for a larger ensemble, performing about three times a year with high stress. Carey and I worked to re-target the repertoire selections, and this year we should perform about six times - including a very well-received Advent introit with the choir and our first gig out in the community - at the Winter Celebrations concert at Wolf Swamp Road School.

Musical collaborations with musicians in and around the First Church community have become a highlight and a growth area as I build my own network here. I have begun a column in the COG to feature and highlight these guest musicians. However, I struggle to find time to both collaborate with them and also write the articles. My hope is that featuring these musicians in worship, in print, and online will not only build interest in our worship services, but also facilitate more positive relationships within the community, important for all of us in the church but especially for youth.

My second church year is another year of building relationships with families and children through "Flash" Children's Choir episodes - short-duration commitments targeted for one particular special service. The longer-term plan is to identify a regular time and recruit a core group of families to become a standing children's choir. However, after almost a year and a half on the job, I consistently use up all my hours to do the job as it is. (John G-K was full-time and I am 18-25 hours.) I continue to become even more efficient at accomplishing all the job's responsibilities. But while adding a weekly Children's Choir rehearsal is a dream I share, at the moment my position would be unable to realistically accommodate it. We may need to both watch how much faster I become and also consider whether it is a value of the church to expand the position to include a standing children's choir.

WORSHIP COLLABORATIONS

I have had the chance to work with three very thoughtful and dynamic pastors and have thoroughly enjoyed each collaboration. I particularly enjoy our "new" worship team meetings and all the powerful things we are doing as a group.

MUSIC DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Upon hiring me in September 2016, the Music Director Search Team identified me an experienced pianist, choral director, and vocalist, with a relative weakness in organ. The Team charged me with demonstrating proficiency equivalent to a Service Playing Certificate from the American Guild of Organists by fall 2018. I enjoyed several organ lessons this year with Grant Moss (who would not take a dime), and I have now presented about 1100 unique pages of music at First Church, about 75% of it on the organ. With the exception of the instrumental music for weddings and funerals, I maintain the discipline of presenting each instrumental selection only once in order to continually hone my skill and achieve this goal. (I have made about 5 exceptions to this rule in 16 months, all for special uses in services when the repeated selection was particularly appropriate.) The Team earmarked some money for the eventuality that we might have a selection I could not play and might need to hire a more skilled organist to present it; we have never made use of that money and don't expect to. Every "church day," I prioritize improving my organ proficiency, which means, primarily, adding the pedals. I enjoy a higher and higher level of fluidity and am beginning to feel that the pedals are a natural part of playing music. I am playing pedals now on about 80% of organ choral anthems, 60% of instrumentals, and 30% of hymns. I am frustrated that the progress is not faster, but I'm always excited when a new plateau emerges and a new kind of musical fruit is ripe to pick. The standard "easy organ literature" now truly is easy for me, and I have never learned music faster than I do now. I appreciate First Church investing in me as a musician, and I fully intend to "reinvest the interest" by reaching an extremely high level of skill and, God willing, joyfully serving a thriving community here for a long time to come.

As a choral director, many know that I have also recently accepted the directorship of the Hampshire College Chorus. I look forward to the ways in which this new chorus will inform my work with the Chancel Choir. But how strange it feels now to have someone else play the piano!

PHYSICAL PLANT

In terms of our equipment, we are in the final stage of a piano inventory reshuffle: we have returned the blonde Steinway baby grand to the choir room and are prepared to liquidate two unwanted pianos (leaving the church with only four). Our handbells are still in good shape but will need maintenance in the coming years. Our library is increasingly tidy, operates with a Google Sheets-based catalog and a computer set up by Stan, and received a large gift of important major works this year from my Grant Moss, who is my organ teacher and the director of music at St. John's Episcopal Church in Northampton. Finally, a large pipe organ maintenance project is on the horizon, necessitating that we think of three echelons of investment in our organ. The first may be necessary in the next 10 years, according to our organ technician, and involve replacing the organ console for about \$60K.

REPORT OF THE MODERATOR FOR 2017

SUSAN KENNEDY

2017 was quite an unusual year, as the Leadership Team and congregation completed years of transition. We said goodbye to our Transitional Senior Pastor, Rev. Jay Terbush, after almost five years of creativity, struggle, honesty, and innovation. We supported Rev. Marisa Brown Ludwig during the summer as she served as Acting Senior Pastor, and we welcomed our 17th Senior Pastor, Rev. Pamela McGrath, in August. We continued to ask: Who are we? Who are our neighbors? What is God calling us uniquely to be and do in this time and place?

Transition work had four points of focus. First, reorganize our structure and bylaws to create space for creativity, flexibility, and experimentation: The final bylaw articles, those dealing with pastors, members, and quorums, were amended at the February 2017 Annual Meeting. We continue to evaluate the functioning of the new structure and make changes as needed.

Rethinking and improving use of our property was also a focus. Three large rooms were renovated this summer including the former bookkeeper's and Music Director's offices combined into one office for our new Senior Pastor. We rethought use of rooms with Montessori, made improvements, and prepared Room 1 for rental.

We continued to identify the staffing needs of the church and provide justice to employees. Job descriptions were approved. Legally correct employment practices were instituted. We continue to evaluate what is needed to best support our pastors and employees as they use their gifts for the mission of the church.

The fourth task was to improve management of our finances so that more church members can take part in decision-making. Several small accounts were appropriately combined, the Spending Rule was tried out for the full year, and collaboration with Professional Business Services, which does our bookkeeping, became efficient. We are confident that funds will be used as the donors intended for the mission of the church.

The result is a congregation which has worked through most of its internal issues and is more ready to reach out to the community and welcome the community in. We have worked together with St. Andrews, the Islamic Center, the Jewish Community Center, and other Longmeadow faith communities for mutual support in times of crisis. Our ONA team is working with several churches. The Environmental Justice Team is part of the Springfield Interfaith Climate Action Network, our new Social Justice Team will be partnering with other faith communities as well, and our long-time partnership with CONASPEH in Haiti is as strong as ever.

We are so grateful to Rev. Jay Terbush for his leadership, example of honesty, willingness to try new approaches, and patience during the interim. He arrived in September 2012, feeling as if he had to jump on a train that did not stop at the station. For the first year, he worked alone with no Associate Pastor. Jay led a trip to the Holy Land which brought renewed spirituality to the whole congregation. His care for our young people touched many lives. The Liturgy of Release in June 2017 was filled with deep emotion, sorrow for the leave-taking, prayers for safe journey for all, and hopes for the future. We presented our traveling preacher with a traveling shawl marked with our thumbprints, a commemorative plate symbolizing his work during our 300th year, and metal artwork from Haiti symbolizing his own renewed spirituality as a result of his encounters with the Haitian people and our shared care for them.

Now we are ready to install Rev. Pamela McGrath as our 17th Senior Pastor. Thanks to the faithful work of the Senior Pastor Search Team, we have a Pastor and Teacher who will provide great leadership as we move into the future. We continue to ask: What is God uniquely calling us to be and do in this time and place? We will know it as we see it. Will we speak the truth of God's love to a hurting world? Will we support our friends and neighbors as they meet the challenges of hatred and injustice? Will we minister to our community in Jesus' name? Truly "God is Still Speaking." Are we listening?

SPIRITUAL LIFE MINISTRY for 2017

KRISTIN THOMAS, LIAISON

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Family Ministries Team Debbie DeBiasio Noelle Peluso Christine Callahan Al Callahan Michelle Steger Beverly Sager Stephen Kennedy Katy Lee Ruth O'Donnell <i>Carolyn McGarr</i> <i>Marisa Brown Ludwig</i> <i>Marilyn Paul-Lewis</i></p> | <p>Centering Prayer and Praying the Scriptures Phebe Wallace Julie Pohlman Mary Friedman Rhoda Zettl Mora Geoffrion Kyle Ondricek Ann Mundy Beverly Sager <i>Marisa Brown Ludwig</i></p> | <p>Thursday Morning Bible Study Mary Friedman* Kyle Ondricek Mora Geoffrion Phebe Wallace Ann Mundy Marilyn Sutton Eleanor Santos Gail Fei Pat Jorczak</p> |
| <p>Adult Education Team Mark Pohlman* Herb Zettl Bob Barkman Bill Harbison Wanona Dobbs <i>Marisa Brown Ludwig</i></p> | <p>Youth Ministry Team Christina Carroll Tassie Plankey Shannon Plankey Diane Peluso Sally Schirmer-Smith <i>Jay Terbush</i></p> | <p>YES! Alan Kulig Tim and Tassie Plankey <i>Marisa Brown Ludwig Jay Terbush</i></p> |
| <p>YUP! <i>Marisa Brown Ludwig Jay Terbush</i></p> | <p>Confirmation Class One Diane Peluso <i>Marisa Brown Ludwig</i></p> | <p>Confirmation Class Two <i>Jay Terbush</i> and mentors Wanona Dobbs</p> |
| <p>Sacred Circle #1 Susan Kennedy* Maria Duncan Anne Landry</p> | <p>Sacred Circle #2 Candy Heaphy and others</p> | <p>Prayer Chain Katie Glasgow* <i>Maura Stevens*</i> Ruth Sandow and others</p> |
| <p>Sacred Circle # 3 Mary Friedman* and others</p> | <p>Sacred Circle # 4 Caitlin Cronin* and others</p> | <p>Women's Ministries Team Kristin Thomas*</p> |
| <p>First Church Library Julie Pohlman* Gladys Reynolds Carol Mazzarino</p> | <p>First Church Forum Kristin Thomas Alex Grant <i>Marisa Brown Ludwig</i></p> | <p>First Church Forum Facebook Kristin Thomas Susan Kennedy</p> |

ADULT EDUCATION: Herb Zettl

Current members are Bob Barkman, Bill Harbison, Marisa Brown Ludwig, Mark Pohlman, and Herb Zettl. The committee sponsored a one night intergenerational program centered on the theme that Jesus was an immigrant who had to flee from Bethlehem to Egypt after his birth. It was discussed how it feels to be as an outsider in a new land. Round tables were set up in Bailey Hall and soup and sandwiches were provided. People shared stories of being and/or feeling like an outsider. Children up to the 6th grade had a separate program with Marilyn Lewis from Children's ministry.

Rev. Marisa and Rabbi Katz from Temple Beth El presented a two part lecture series about the program "Roots" which promotes dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis.

Bob reviewed the survey of the congregation that had been done by the AE team. The highlights of the survey were a strong interest in social justice issues, interfaith issues, and contemporary issues. The discussion/video/hands-on format was the most popular.

Marisa reported that she was working with Rev. Harvey Hill from St. Andrews on leading a group participating in reading the Daily Message version of the entire Bible during the 2018 calendar year. Readings would be done individually which would take about fifteen minutes a day. Those participating would meet monthly for group discussion. Newcomers can join any time.

The possibility of having an Adult Education sponsored book club meeting on a regular basis was discussed. Pastors Marisa and Pam have put together a “Listening Mondays in Lent “ program featuring guest speakers on different topics. Videos will be shown followed by a discussion. First session will be Monday, Feb. 19th at 7:00 pm.

This Lent there will not be the traditional Wednesday Lenten dinners. Instead, the ministers will have two social events – one will have a Mardi Gras theme and the other a St. Patrick’s Day theme.

The book “Good Goats” may be discussed by Pam this spring or, another possible book, “The Great Spiritual Migration” by Brian McLaren.

The Adult Education team decided to work closely with the newly created Social Justice team. Anyone interested in joining the Adult Education Team is more than welcome.

YOUTH MINISTRIES: The work of the Youth Ministries Team has been given to other teams, and the team no longer meets.

YUP (Middle School youth group, grades 6 - 8)

Youth Understanding the Promise is for Middle School youth. This group is co-led by both Pastors and Deb DeBiasio, Beth Elam with help from Marilyn Paul-Lewis and Wanona Dobbs. We meet twice a month, usually once for a meeting with pizza and a discussion of a topic and ending with a brief devotional. The second gathering of the month is either for a fun activity (for example, roller skating/laser tag) or a service activity (for example, preparing meals for Loaves and Fishes). In May, YUP went to Boston for a weekend mission trip. This annual event gives us the opportunity to help homeless and hungry people in the city and to demonstrate our faith in action. We were able to make and distribute 200 meals in two locations in Boston, and our youth seemed to enjoy the entire experience. In June YUP had a Lock In at our Church, which included the always-popular bell tower tour! That overnight Lock In also provided the YUP group an opportunity to say goodbye to Dr. Jay in a smaller setting than the larger luncheon hosted at the church. In October, the group participated in the annual Crop Walk, helping First Church win the Platinum Prize in fundraising for the first time ever! We have had an average of about 10-15 youth participate in our activities. Starting in the fall YUP met with the youth group from St. Andrews Church several times, for shared activities. YUP joined YES in helping at the Christmas Fair (waiting tables at lunch and cleanup) continuing an annual tradition loved by many! YUP made Christmas ornaments and crafts for the Christmas Fair, and ended the year having a rousing Christmas party!

YES (High School youth group, grades 9 - 12)

Dr. Jay, Alan Kulig, Tim and Tassie Plankey, and Gary and Carol Mazzarino shared leadership of YES Group last year, Jan – June, with weekly Sunday evening meetings, contemporary discussion topics, prayer together. Poignant conversations about suicide, depression, coping strategies and resiliency training were discussed at a First Church YES group meeting last year. The Group was unable to hold their summer mission trip to NYC due to low enrollment – so their fundraising is being saved for the next big mission trip.

The YES team started Fall 2017 with Tim and Tassie Plankey, Al Kulig, Pastors Pam & Marisa and Marilyn Paul-Lewis soliciting opinion about youth interests with respect to: discussion topics, fund raising activities, mission projects and fun events. Senior leadership developed a schedule to have a combined dinner, then separate YES and YUP meetings with youth from St. Andrews and First Church on the first Sunday of each month, in an effort to foster youth camaraderie between churches and grow the energy of our groups. YES youth had the opportunity

to participate in an Interfaith Youth Rally (social event with music and food held on the lawn of St. Andrew's with youth from St. Mary's, St. Andrew's and First Church) and CROP walk in September and October, respectively. Reverend Derrick Fetz from St. Andrews showed a short film called "Breathe" and led a conversation about prayer in October. Combined youth groups gathered and organized food products for a spaghetti dinner to help feed local people in need and participated in a fun Interskate 91 skating/laser tag outing in late Fall. Interested YES youth participate in Loaves and Fishes once per month and expressed interest in a bigger mission project later in the year. First Church youth turnout at YES events has been variable and somewhat lackluster the last six months, for a variety of reasons (i.e. departure of Dr. Jay, new group leadership, new YES group members with varied interests). Senior leadership expressed interest in hiring a Youth Group Director, who will be the primary coordinator for all YES and YUP events, in an effort to have a central vision and personality who can attract youth through caring, mission, and fun.

CONFIRMATION II CLASSES Wanona Dobbs

Confirmation II, starting in September 2017, is meeting (on average) twice a month with either Pastor Pam, Pastor Marisa, or Wanona Dobbs leading the classes. For this year's journey we are using the book Words for the Journey by Martin B. Copenhaver and Anthony B. Robinson. We are covering topics such as My Favorite Bible Stories, Social Justice, Advocacy, Sin, Grace, Doubt, and Faith (to name a few). The Confirmands each have a mentor who meets with them occasionally and attends other group activities (such as Hanging of The Greens, visiting other churches' services, as well as sitting together in a First Church of Christ in Longmeadow's services).

FAMILY MINISTRIES Marilyn Paul-Lewis

The Family Ministries Team organized a number of events over the past year. The goal is to have at least one event per month, and all events are intergenerational and open to all members of the congregation. Events are organized so that some are at the church, some off site, some primarily social, and some with a mission and service component.

This past year activities included movie nights, a sledding afternoon, Easter egg decorating (with the extra eggs donated to Loaves and Fishes), an afternoon at a water park, trash pickup at a Springfield park (followed by ice cream at Cold Stone Creamery), kickball on the Green, croquet on the lawn, a visit to Randall's Corn Maze (followed by ice cream), participating in the CROP Walk, pumpkin decorating, Halloween movie night, and a potluck dinner with Muslim families.

In Church School and the Pre-School Nursery children's activities are based on the Spill the Beans curriculum, so children are learning about the same readings that their parents and caregivers are experiencing in worship. Children in both groups are also learning The Lord's Prayer.

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP Rev. Marisa Brown Ludwig

A groups gathers weekly for Centering Prayer (a meditation practice with silence as taught by Fr. Thomas Keating,) and Lectio Divina (the ancient monastic practice of silent reflection focused on the reading of a scripture passage followed by discussion) every Wednesday Afternoon in the Buxton Room from 1-2pm. An email goes out each week to a larger group with the prayer outline so many can follow along at home who can't make it in person. Weekly group is about 6 -10 people, while the weekly email goes to a wider group of about 40. All are welcome anytime!

FIRST CHURCH FORUM

The First Church Forum is a website located at firstchurchforum.com. The website was originally designed to host a congregational ‘talk-back’ about sermons, or articles of interest by members of the congregation. The forum remains available to the congregation for use but is currently inactive.

BIBLE STUDY Rev. Pam McGrath

Bible Study meets 10:00-11:00 am, Thursday mornings in the Buxton Room. We study the scripture which will be preached the following Sunday. We read the text; reflect on what speaks to us or we have questions about; discuss the context, translations, geography, and commentary written about the text. Finally, we sit with the question, “What do you want to hear more about on Sunday?” The Bible Study is led by Pastor Pam and Mary Friedman. All are invited to attend. No previous reading is necessary. Come with doubts, questions, opinions or hopes. We typically have between 5-8 join us. There is room for you!

BIBLE IN A YEAR 2018 Rev. Marisa Brown Ludwig

Pastors Marisa & Harvey Hill of St. Andrews are co-leading this group which is reading the bible in a year, using the devotional “The Daily Message” by Eugene Peterson. Members from both churches and from the local community read on their own daily, and gather monthly over food to share and discuss their readings. Resources include an online chat group that the Pastors monitor and participate in, and videos for each book of the bible produced by The Bible Project that are made available to all participants to support them in this powerful practice. Anyone can join at any part of the year, so if you are interested, see Pastor Marisa and dive in with us!

LIBRARY Julie Pohlman

Carol Creelman, and Ellie Santos kept our library in order much of the year, especially during the summer months. We all were active for the first 4 months of the church year keeping the books in order and working on sorting out and getting rid of some books. We added about 10 or 12 books to our collection during the year.

Our big news is that after one final “housecleaning” we will be having a new head librarian, Carol Mazzarino. Carol has worked in the children’s section of Storrs Library for 18 years. She has loved her job but will now be soon retiring. Her retirement job will include First Church Library! We are so fortunate to have her. She has lots of ideas and plans and looks forward to taking over our library. Our library is a wonderful resource and we hope more of you will now begin to try it out.

I have enjoyed working in the library for the past 10 years and was happy to serve the church in this way.

SACRED CIRCLES

One of the Sacred Circles consists of Mary Friedman, Wanona Dobbs, Shirlee Fassell, Mora Geoffrion, Kelly Batchelor and Marieke Burt. They meet regularly at someone’s home almost once a month. They are starting to become a cohesive group.

Another circle which includes Maria Duncan, Anne Landry, and Susan Kennedy, said goodbye to Gina Sears this year. The circle has added new members--Diane Doherty, Janice Patel, Carey Larsen, Liz Woolsey, Sue Feuerbach, Ann Wolpert, and Pat Jorczak. This circle meets monthly in the Study.

A third circle includes Laura Bird Smith, Caitlin Cronin, Diane Peluso, Ruth O’Donnell, and Deb Manning. The meeting location varies, but the circle tries to meet once a month. The day/night often varies, dependent on some members’ work schedules.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE MINISTRY for 2017 ANNE LANDRY, LIAISON

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Called to Care John Ouellette Jean Clark Marieke Burt* Bunny Bewick Julie Pohlman Jack Russell Mark Garrity Candy Heaphy <i>Marisa Brown Ludwig</i></p> | <p>Rev. Brown Ludwig Pastor-Parish Relations Team John Thomas* Connie Shea Anne Landry Katie Glasgow Mary Ellen Flaherty <i>Marisa Brown Ludwig</i></p> | <p>Prayer Shawl Ministry Melissa Mitchell* Ruth Sandow Carol Mazzarino Gladys Reynolds Katie Glasgow Julie Pohlman Mora Geoffrion Sonia Arakelian Candace Rutz Mary Murphy Elizabeth Vartanian Vicki Kiss Rosemarie Jarrett Eleanor Santos Jeanne Wheeler Phoebe Wallace Carolyn Snyder Audrey Rich <i>Marisa Brown Ludwig</i> Bev Gray Marilynn Sutton Sonia Merigian</p> |
| <p>Food Service Team <i>Maura Stevens</i> * Katie Glasgow Gladys Reynolds Charlie McKee Ellie Plaus Mary Murphy Don Murphy</p> | <p>Rev. Jay Terbush Pastor-Parish Relations Team Susan Kennedy Marieke Burt Don Murphy Diane Peluso Wanona Dobbs <i>Jay Terbush</i></p> | <p>Women's Benevolent Society Connie Shea* Shirlee Fassell* Mary Murphy Eleanor Santos Christmas Fair Team: Sandra Turner Mora Geoffrion Candy Heaphy</p> |
| <p>Cooking for Comfort Meal Train Lucy Shepard</p> | <p>Friday Evening Fellowship Stew Creelman* Carol Creelman Stephen Kennedy</p> | |

CALLED TO CARE: Marieke Burt

This team generally meets on the second Tuesday of the month. At these meetings we review the needs of members of the congregation who are in need of regular social visits or assistance of any kind, such as a ride to church or appointments or meals during recuperation times. This team delivers flowers from the altar at Christmas and Easter time or for special occasions. Holiday cards are sent out for Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Valentine's Day and sometimes for special birthdays. From time to time one of the pastors will review a typical visit procedure with the group. Reminding them that this is not only a social visit but a visit that should reflect the ties to the church and the presence of God.

MEAL TRAIN: Lucy Shepard

A huge thank you to those who consistently cook for those in need. You compassionate cooks make my job so easy.

WOMEN'S BENEVOLENT SOCIETY: Shirlee Fassell

The Women's Benevolent Society mission is to promote benevolent giving, outreach support for our surrounding community, provide entertaining and educational programs and spirituality and fellowship among the First Church community. Weather permitting we have a program the first Friday of the month, October through May, except in December and January. We are experimenting within some evening programs, rather than

luncheons only, in an attempt to accommodate women's working schedules.

2017 programs included Discovering the Wisdom of Woman Helena Houston author, Guessing at Normal Gail Olmsted author, "A Fun Musical Evening with Gail Fei", Stephen Hayes of the Drama Studio, Susan Chnyk of Hampden Hearing, and World Day of Prayer including women from St. Mary's and St. Andrew's. We hosted a Silver tea in October after church on Heritage Sunday.

We held a very successful tag sale in September, and in December our annual Christmas on the Green fair was again beautiful, welcoming and successful, earning approximately \$20,200. We are most grateful to Sandy Turner and Mora Geoffrion for chairing this event. The success of the Fair is possible because of the support and enthusiasm shown by so many. On the day of the Fair alone, over 100 people staff the booths, the kitchen and make everything run smoothly by greeting, playing music etc. The Set up and take down of the tables, furniture and hundreds of boxes of goods to sell are accomplished with the help of YES, YUP and members of the LHS Key Club.

There would be nothing to sell without generous donations from church members and their friends. Baking cookies, knitting hats, ironing aprons, preparing soups – these are a few examples of work that is done ahead of time. Donations are accepted and sorted starting in June.

We thank the Pastors, all the staff and all the people who use First Church for meetings for their support, understanding and flexibility in the weeks leading up to the first Saturday in December. Special thanks to Stan and Maura for their extra work and creative problem solving.

January (2017) we disbursed the proceeds as benevolences to Longmeadow Open Pantry, the Center for Human Development, Friends of the Homeless, the New England Farm Workers Fuel Fund, the New England Learning Center for Women in Transition, Open Pantry, Our Church's Wider Mission, Square One, Baystate VNA Hospice, Western Mass Food Bank, YWCA Women's Shelter, Gray House, Project Coach, ROCA, and the Tree House Foundation Heroes Project.

Our attendance has been very good with several new faces participating in the fun and fellowship and we hope to see this continue on in 2018.

FRIDAY EVENING FELLOWSHIP: Stew Creelman

The year 2017 was another year of exploration of ideas, entertainment, and fun. The February Fling drew a great crowd to John and Dennis' home for a gourmet treat and a challenging quiz. March was timely, to learn about the very rare total Eclipse with Ed Faits. In April we explored the mysteries of the Paranormal with Rob Groff. Bob Marshall and daughter again hosted our May picnic. Then we headed off to Tanglewood for concerts in July and August. In October Pete and Ellie Santos hosted while Pete shared the amazing story of the Famous Longmeadow Polish Joke Book, then in November Bay Path University President, Carol Leary gave us a look at the amazing growth of her institution and shared how Bay Path and our Town relate to each other. We were pleased to be invited back to Phoebe Wallace's home for our traditional Carole Sing.

FOOD SERVICE TEAM: Maura Stevens

Members of the Food Service Team provided meals for Lenten Dinners in March and April. As part of the Stewardship Campaign, they assisted Carey Larsen (head chef) with the Leadership Dinner on October 24, and the Consecration Sunday Breakfast on November 5. The team – Katie Glasgow, Charlie McKee, Don and Mary Murphy, and Gladys Reynolds - is always willing to assist. They make themselves available to ensure delicious food

is part of church programming. Our Sexton, Stan Zdonick, is always a huge help – cheerfully available whenever we need him.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY: Melissa Mitchell

The Prayer Shawl Ministry is proud to report.....

Prayer Shawls:

In the year 2017, a total of 19 people received Prayer Shawls from our group.

An impressive 713 shawls have been knitted or crocheted and distributed since the group's inception in 2004.

Baptism Blankets:

There were 8 Baptismal blankets gifted to families that had their babies baptized at First Church in the year 2017. A total of 17 blankets have been given since this tradition began in 2015. We currently have 2 completed blankets in the “reserves” and we are working on making more for future baptisms.

Meetings:

Our group continues to meet twice a month. We meet at 7 pm on the 2nd Monday of the month and at 10 am on the 4th Monday of the month.

Membership:

Our current membership still stands at 23 members.

Key People:

Our coordinated leadership effort includes:

- Ruth Sandow mails our reminder postcards.
- Katie Glasgow leads our night meetings
- Gladys Reynolds leads our morning meetings.
- Carole Mazzarino and Melissa Mitchell keep track of the prayer shawls, baptism blankets and records.

REV. MCGRATH'S PASTORAL RELATIONS TEAM: Laura Bird Smith

Rev. Pam's Pastor-Parish Relations Team began meeting in October, and we have been meeting once a month. The team consists of the following members: Rev. Pam, Wanona Dobbs, Mora Geoffrion, Mary Friedman, Alan Kulig, Steve Gelling and Laura Bird Smith. We provide a confidential source of support for Rev. Pam and hope to help solve any challenges that might arise with creativity and compassion. Our hope for the upcoming year is to foster more open dialogue between the team and the congregation.

REV. BROWN LUDWIG'S PASTORAL RELATIONS TEAM: Mary Ellen Flaherty

Our main purpose is to provide ongoing support for our Associate Pastor who plays a critical role in ministering both to our congregation and to the greater community. We do this by serving as a confidential, supportive sounding board. Throughout this past year, the PRT focus included continued review and prioritization of job functions within her call, with particular attunement to support a smooth transition due to departure of Interim Pastor, Dr. Jay Terbush, and arrival of settled pastor, Rev. Pam McGrath. Additionally, the PRT offered general support for Marisa's role as Head of Staff during this critical transition for our congregation.

REV. TERBUSH'S PASTORAL RELATIONS TEAM: Susan Kennedy

Our mission this year was to prepare the congregation for Jay's departure, ensure that the congregation knew what boundaries must be observed after he left, and plan the going-away service and party. We set up a transition team to support Marisa during the summer and ensure coverage while she was away.

MISSION IN THE WORLD MINISTRY for 2017 SHIRLEE FASSELL LIAISON

| Environmental Justice Team | Mission Team | Haiti Ministry Team |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Mark Pohlman* Julie Pohlman | Steve Gelling* Kelly Jacobek | Mark Pohlman* Mary Friedman |
| Eleanor Santos Judy Ebeling | Tara Howe Connie Shea | Wanona Dobbs Marilynn Sutton |
| Herb Zettl Steve Gelling | <i>Marisa Brown Ludwig</i> | Len Bertelli Dan Bausch |
| Stew Creelman Shirlee Fassell | | Lucy Cassells Anne Landry |
| <i>Maura Stevens</i> | | Mela Obas |
| <i>Marisa Brown Ludwig</i> | | |

HAITI MINISTRY: Mark Pohlman and Mary Friedman

Last spring our congregation donated \$13,069.35 during our yearly Haiti Scholarship Fund Drive. The money raised each year is sent to Haiti through Global Ministries and makes it possible for more students to attend schools supported by the National Council of Spiritual Churches of Haiti – CONASPEH.

In 2017 Mary Friedman met with youth leaders from the Edwards Church and First Churches in Northampton to discuss the possibility of a combined youth trip to Haiti in 2018. Subsequently both of those churches decided to wait until they had a larger group of youth who might be able to go.

Dr. Mark Pohlman and Mary Friedman along with Darrell Cantrell from Country Club Disciples of Christ Church in Kansas City visited the CONASPEH headquarters in Tabarre, PAP for two days on December 15 and 16. The main purpose of their visit was to attend the celebration of the life of Pastor Patrick Villier who died the previous year. Pastor Francoise Villier, who is now Executive Director of CONASPEH, had invited us and requested a memorial plaque with Patrick’s picture, the CONASPEH logo and a written tribute in French which Francoise composed. Mark worked hard to procure this plaque which was paid for by many who had visited Haiti and met Patrick. In addition to the plaque, they brought a large suitcase filled with over-the-counter medications for the clinic, ink cartridges for the id cards that are now used as students and staff check in to school in the morning, and the equipment for the student nurses – all of which was donated by our church. Five new bishops were ordained for CONASPEH during the two-day ceremony.

We had a chance to observe some of the new things at CONASPEH. There are now several trampolines for the children. The upstairs in the headquarters building is now enclosed in glass in the front. The wall behind the main welcome desk is covered in a colorful mural representing Psalm 23. The plaque in memory of those who died in the 2010 earthquake is on the wall next to the desk. We visited the new school clinic which has shelves for supplies and medications, a bed, etc. We also visited the nursing lab which looked much more set-up and organized than on our previous visit. Both the clinic and the nursing lab are now on the first floor. We noted the need for roof repairs to both the classroom and headquarters building. \$2,000 has been sent from our Mission Team to begin the process of getting an estimate for repair.

We had a conference with Pastor Francoise and Bishop Guy Romelus about plans for the future. Francois would like to begin a midwife assistant program. There may be a number of new initiatives in the coming year. There is currently no Global Ministries missionary in Haiti. The hope is to find someone who knows (or can learn) Haitian Creole and who has an understanding of Haitian culture.

Mary and Mark attended Bishop Fontus’s church on Sunday with Pastor Francoise and our translator.. The Bishop hopes to be able to have more students attend his small school if our church can help by our scholarship donations this spring. Mark presented Francoise with a photo album of pictures of Patrick and CONASPEH.

Several more people at First Church have expressed the desire to visit Haiti on the next trip. Please let Mark or Mary know if you would like to join them! A specific date has not yet been set.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TEAM: Mark Pohlman

The EJ team, which started in 2014, continued its mission to educate the congregation about and encourage active participation in environmental stewardship. It helped support the newly formed Springfield Area Interfaith Climate Action Network, SAICAN, as well. Their mission statement reads "As an alliance of people from various religious and spiritual traditions working together to address the crisis of global warming and climate change, we envision a climate justice movement in which religious and spiritual communities take a leading role and ultimately succeed in making all communities equitable, just, and resilient.

Some of our EJ activities during the year included the following;

On January 10th we worked with SAICAN in hosting a symposium with newly elected State Representative Solomon Goldstein-Rose from Amherst giving a talk on carbon pricing as well as his broad approach to climate change with emphasis on jobs, research, education, financing and regulation reform. Newspaper and community TV coverage helped spread his message.

On February 28th, again working with SAICAN, we hosted at First Church a Symposium called "Moving Solarization Forward" with dinner and four speakers. Over 75 people listened to talks on solar legislation, how to lobby effectively, MassMutual's experience with Solar Panels, and Home Solar Opportunities.

On June 25th, committee members helped at a Solar Symposium at Sinai Temple sponsored by SAICAN and Resident Energy from Boston.

On October 15th we hosted at First Church Mass Power and Light's Sustainable House of Worship Workshop, sponsored and financed by Mass Conference of UCC.

On Thursday, October 19th the EJ team joined with Storrs Library and the Longmeadow Environmental Transition Group to present a free showing of Al Gore's documentary "An Inconvenient Sequel; Speaking Truth to Power" which was followed by a live call-in discussion with Al Gore. The DVD is now available at the library.

During the year we met with the building committee and continued to study the possibility of placing solar panels the south roof of the main building where there is a problem with the existing slate which will likely need replacement. A definitive proposal continues to be worked on. We are more optimistic that a plan acceptable to the town Historic Commission can be found.

We studied the UCC's articles on "Becoming a Creation Justice Church" which requires a real commitment from the congregation. This will be an ongoing goal for the next year. We also studied the UCC's "Green Creation Challenge" which has lists of different green changes to do at the church. We have done 10 of the 18 items to qualify for a level one goal, and almost have completed the level two criteria and are working on some of the highest, level three tasks. Maintaining a bulletin board on environmental issues has been one of our tasks and we have started a monthly "Stewardship of Eden" tip in the Sunday bulletin.

New members are always welcomed.

MISSION AND SOCIAL CONCERNS TEAM: Stephen Gelling

The Mission team was again able extend our congregation's unwavering support of local and global mission work. Our team disbursed over \$20,000 to the following organizations:

- Action Center Tutoring
- Christina's House
- CONESPEH (new classroom building roof in Haiti)

- Crop Walk
- Food Bank of Western MA
- Freedom Dogs
- Friends of the Homeless
- Gray House
- Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity
- Longmeadow Food Pantry
- Open Pantry
- Puerto Rico hurricane relief
- Roca
- Salvation Army Fuel Fund
- Springfield Rescue Mission
- VNA/Hospice of Springfield

In addition, our team provided an online donation link for congregation members to directly purchase Puerto Rico earthquake relief goods.

Finally, our team has begun a dialogue to discuss how we can effectively direct our accumulated Mission Endowment Income towards impactful projects in the future.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY for 2017

MARIEKE BURT, CANDY HEAPHY, LISA GORE CO-LIAISONS

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Visioning 2020 Susan Kennedy Susan Dugan Marieke Burt <i>Jay Terbush</i> John Thomas Candy Heaphy | Open and Affirming Team Mary Friedman* Marieke Burt Thomas Kubick Sandy Turner <i>Marisa Brown-Ludwig</i> | Loaves and Fishes Team Tim Plankey Tassie Plankey Wanona Dobbs Julie Pohlman Candace Rutz Mora Geoffrion Dawn Barkman |
| Church Delegates Susan Kennedy*, MACUCC Ute Schmidt, MACUCC Marisa Brown Ludwig, General Synod, Marieke Burt MACUCC | Coffee with Clergy <i>Marisa Brown Ludwig</i> Website <i>Deb Garrity</i> | Ecumenical and Interfaith Partnership Julie Pohlman Marieke Burt Kristin Thomas <i>Marisa Brown-Ludwig*</i> |

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR INITIATIVE: Stewart Creelman

A group of us launched a new initiative to reach out to new residents of Longmeadow. We contacted Bob Magovern (a past First Church member) who has a welcoming service contacting new residents, Neighbor to Neighbor. Their service is to provide the new resident with information about local merchants and professionals, and they mail a package to each new resident, which now includes a flyer about First Church and a letter from us with contact information about all local "Houses of Worship". We get a list of those new neighbors.

Our committee has begun contacting these people in various ways. We don't have phone numbers. Some of our members have made in person drop in calls. In some cases team members have provided the new resident with street listings of that person's neighbors. At this point we are open to new ways of making this outreach effort

more productive. At this point we don't know if anyone has "shown up" at First Church on account of this program.

We hope to coordinate with others as we continue this experiment.

ECUMENICAL /INTERFAITH PRESENCE IN THE COMMUNITY 2016: Pastor Marisa & First Church Members

First Church members and friends joined Pastor Marisa in being visible and participative in many events and programs across faith lines this year, building interfaith relationships and collaboration, witnessing in our local community our deep affection and respect for our neighbors of other Christian understanding and other noble faiths! Some of what happened this year included: participating in the joint White Privilege program with St. Andrews and a faithful monthly gathering of people who continued to read, see films and discern together on racial justice issues all year. Pastor Marisa gave the closing prayer at City Hall Springfield for the Black Heritage Day celebration early Feb and served as part of an interfaith delegation from the Interfaith Council that met with Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno around Muslim community vulnerability and refugee/immigration/diversity needs in our area in Feb. First Church friends joined Pastor Marisa at a silent vigil protesting anti-Islamic vandalism and offering remarks at the Islamic Society of Western Mass in Feb; attending monthly Springfield Area Interfaith Climate Action Network (SAICAN) and events (see EJ Team report). Pastor Marisa was part of community planning and First Church friends attended a response vigil at the Jewish Community Center when the JCC was vandalized with anti-semitic threats in March; Pastor Marisa attended an interfaith gathering in Longmeadow in the Muslim Community.

Pastor Marisa spoke on an interfaith clergy panel at Western New England College Law School on increased Hate Crimes in March; was an ecumenical witness at the Episcopal Diocese of Western Mass Holy Week blessing of oils in Springfield; planned & concelebrated worship on Good Friday and Easter Vigil with Dr. Jay and St. Andrew's Episcopal and other local churches; brought Israeli Ambassador teens through the Jewish Federation to YES group in May; was ecumenical witness and participant at Rev. Tom Callard's installation as Dean at Christ Church Cathedral in the Episcopal Church; and participated in UCC-Episcopal clergy dialogue day in May exploring deepening partnerships between us in towns throughout Massachusetts.

Many First Church members joined Pastor Marisa attending the interfaith Iftar at Islamic Society of WM during Ramadan in June and in participating in interfaith worship vigil at South Congregational church when they announced becoming a Sanctuary Level I Church July. Pastor Marisa co-led worship with Rabbi James Greene at First Church in July; co-led a Reformation Study series and worship with St. Andrew's in Fall, piloted monthly youth group partnering with St. Andrew's Fall; was interfaith witness at Baha'i Community 200th Anniversary of birth of Baha'u'llah at Mt. Holyoke College October; First Church Adult Ed co-sponsored Israeli & Palestinian speakers from the Occupied lands with Temple Beth-El and Rabbi Amy Katz at First Church in November; Pastor Marisa and First Church friends attended/led prayer in the Interfaith Thanksgiving Program at the Islamic Society in November; co-led Deep Listening Program with Rabbi Amy Katz at Beth-El and First Church on UCC-Jewish Community relations in light of UCC Palestinian Resolutions in December. All year Pastor Marisa has served as an officer for the Interfaith Council of Western Mass, and hosts a weekly interfaith coffee at Starbucks in the Longmeadow Shops where local clergy, congregation members and community folk participate in public conversation with a faith presence.

LOAVES AND FISHES TEAM: Tassie Plankey

I must say, we continue to get better and better at this. We shop once a month at Restaurant Depot. We buy enough pasta and meatballs to make 13 casseroles. We also buy enough hot dogs, buns, fruit and beans to deliver with our casseroles for an additional meal. We spend about \$275 per month on food. This outreach program needs a budget of at least \$3,300 dollars per year to serve about 4,200 meals.

Ten casseroles are delivered on the 4th Monday of the month to South Congregational church. It is our understanding that this feeds over 150 people. The hot dogs also serve an additional 160 people. We make a delivery to Shiloh on the 2nd Sunday of the month. Three casseroles are delivered hot with a vegetable and feeds about 50 people.

We are very grateful to Marieke Burt, Wanona Dobbs, and Mora Geoffrion for helping with our deliveries. Alan and Olivia Kulig are always faithful helpers in the kitchen. Sometimes we have a couple other high school students join us from the YES group. Our children Shannon and Connor are always there when we need them. We find it best to work in the kitchen with 4-6 people. The staff at First Church are always supportive. Gay, Maura, Pam, Marisa, etc. will always check in with us to see if we need anything. The Plankey family is happy to continue to lead this important outreach program that serves so many and supports our local community.

THE OPEN AND AFFIRMING TEAM Mary Friedman

This past year the ONA Team at First Church sponsored three movies for our congregation: “Pride” – a film about London-based gays and lesbians who lend their support to striking coal miners in 1984 Wales; “Kinky Boots” – an American-British comedy drama about a drag queen who comes to the rescue of a struggling British shoe factory; and “The Imitation Game” – starring Benedict Cumberbatch as English mathematical genius Alan Turing who cracked the German code during WWII.

Last May members of the ONA Team once again marched in the annual Pride Parade in Northampton.

ONA sponsored a book discussion last fall on *Becoming Nicole* by Amy Ellis Nutt. This book (a true story) is “a powerful and illuminating book about one couple’s journey in coming to accept and nurture their transgender daughter. It is a page turner and a heart opener.” Google Books

Team members once again attended the Transgender Day of Remembrance in November. This event is held yearly to honor the memory of transgender people who have been murdered during the previous year.

Our ONA Team has also been consulting with several other churches as they begin or continue their journey of extravagant welcome to the LGBTQ community: First Church East Longmeadow (“The church in the Rotary”, which just became Open and Affirming in January), Feeding Hills Congregational Church, and Lucy and Dwight Shepard’s U.C.C. church in Duxbury which is also on the journey toward becoming officially “Open and Affirming.” We look forward to sharing ideas, support, prayer, and best practices with these other congregations.

ONA continues to facilitate the LGBTQ Support Group which meets monthly on the first Wednesday of the month in the Heritage Room at 6:30pm.

ONA Team members: Pastor Marisa, Marieke Burt, Sandy Turner, Thomas Kubik, and Mary Friedman

VISIONING 2020 TEAM: Susan Kennedy:

Although Visioning 2020 has not been active this year, the work done in 2015 and 2016 has been a frequently-used resource. Job descriptions inspired by Visioning 2020 were approved. The goals and other characteristics of the congregation described in the Church Assessment Tool (CAT Survey) were lifted up as the

Search Team interviewed and the congregation began its work with Rev. Pam McGrath. The habit of frequently asking the congregation how they think things are going is now part of our church culture.

CHURCH DELEGATES: Susan Kennedy:

First Church members participate strongly in Association and wider UCC events. Susan Kennedy and Rev. Ute Schmidt are both members of the Hampden Association Church and Ministry Committee, which holds the standing of pastors and churches in the association. Marieke Burt, Susan, Jay and Marisa took part in the Tri-Conference Annual Meeting in Hartford in June. First Church hosted the Hampden Association Annual Meeting in May. Marisa was a Massachusetts Conference Delegate to the General Synod of the national United Church of Christ this summer. Ten First Church members took part in Super Saturday in March in Wilbraham, and several attended the October event in Framingham. First Church is well known and respected within the wider church for our faithful support of the Association and the Conference. In return, our church has been infused with many new ideas and deeper understandings of how to do church.

SOCIAL JUSTICE TEAM: Susan Kennedy

The Social Justice Team was recognized and authorized by the Leadership Team in December 2017. It was formed by Mary Friedman, Anne Landry, and Susan Kennedy as follow-up to events earlier in the year. In January, Pastors Marisa and Jay partnered with Rev. Derrick Fetz from St. Andrew's for a joint study of "White Privilege: Let's Talk," a curriculum of writings from UCC Minister and President John Dorhauer, UCC Justice and Witness Minister Traci Blackmon, and others. These gatherings were well attended, and several members of the group continued to meet through the summer for book discussions (Michael Dyson's *Tears We Cannot Stop*) and conversation. Rev. Terbush led a trip to Amherst Cinema to view *I Am Not Your Negro* based on the words of James Baldwin.

Meanwhile, immigrants living in our larger community were suddenly at greater risk for deportation. First Church members attended workshops on immigration at First Churches in Northampton, and became interested in how we could support South Congregational Church, a Level 1 sanctuary church. Rev. John Allen of Milton came to speak to First Church and St. Andrews about the sanctuary movement. This led to interest in membership in the Pioneer Valley Project as a way to partner with other faith communities to ensure justice for threatened people in our community. Emily Rodriguez and Tara Parrish presented information on PVP to an after-church gathering.

By this time two things were clear: One, there was great interest in combining forces, working with Adult Ed and other teams, to become more aware and partner with other social justice organizations and, two, that within our congregation were divergent views about how immigrants should be treated. The formation of a Social Justice Team will encourage dialogue within the congregation, bring opportunities for further education, and allow those who are ready to participate in social justice work.

At the first meeting on Jan 16, 2018 the following intentions were agreed upon by the 15 people present:

- Speak with the voice of scripture; learn more about what the Bible says about social justice
- Collaborate with Mission, Adult Ed, Environmental Justice, ONA, Family Ministries, YES, and YUP and other teams within the church which seek to do justice work
- Work alongside other social justice organizations in the wider community to learn from them more about what is needed and what works
- Raise our awareness of how deeply racism is woven into the systems and institutions with which we live;

- Catch up on what is happening in the UCC (i.e. Sanctuary work in Amherst and Springfield, Kelly Gallagher and Liza's story from Charlottesville, etc.)*
- Accompany victims of social injustice and listen to their testimony

The group also agreed to read and discuss *Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine. Adult Ed agreed to co-sponsor this project. Liz Woolsey brought this Emerson college project to our attention. We are ready to engage with the wider community to raise awareness of injustice and work towards justice for all people.

STEWARDSHIP OF RESOURCES MINISTRY for 2017

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Treasurer <i>Stewart Creelman</i> Assistant Treasurer Whiting Houston | Budget Team Stewart Creelman Susan Dugan Susan Kennedy* Whiting Houston <i>Jay Terbush Maura Stevens</i> | Financial Secretary: Richard Volk Assistant Financial Secretaries Stephen Kennedy Katie Glasgow |
| Investment and Finance Team Stew Creelman* Nola Kulig Susan Dugan Whiting Houston <i>Jay Terbush</i> | Buxton Room Decorators Susan Dugan* Joey Rosenthal Nancy Russell Rhoda Zettl | Consecration Sunday Team Carey Larsen* Susan Kennedy <i>Jay Terbush Marisa Brown Ludwig</i> <i>Maura Stevens Venessa O'Brien</i> |
| Property Team Stephen Kennedy* Alex Grant John Ouellette Don Murphy <i>Maura Stevens Stan Zdonick</i> | Landscape and Gardening Team Marieke Burt* Stew Creelman Mary Murphy Sandra Turner Don Murphy and Property Team | Leadership Development and Nominations Team Members-at-Large Gina Sears Julie Pohlman Rosemarie Jarrett |
| Technology Team Kristin Thomas* <i>Marisa Brown Ludwig</i> | Personnel Team Ted Steger Susan Kennedy Kristin Thomas | Montessori Lease Team Susan Kennedy <i>Maura Stevens</i> <i>Jay Terbush</i> |
| Memorial Fund Team Stewardship of Resources Rep Congregational Life Rep Jay Terbush | | |

CONSECRATION SUNDAY TEAM Carey Larsen

For the past three years we have focused our annual pledge campaign on Consecration Sunday, a special worship service where we come together to make pledges for the coming year. Our goal is to encourage parishioners to consider what percentage of their income they are giving to First Church, and encourage everyone to grow in generosity, step by step, year after year. The November 5 Consecration Sunday worship included communion, a powerful personal testimony from Rev. Todd Weir (Senior Pastor at First Churches, Northampton), lovely music, and a delicious brunch. Drawing from Isaiah 5: 1-7, Todd described the world as God's vineyard. Christ is the vine, and we are the gardeners. Pledges turned in during worship totaled more than \$262,000. Leading up to Consecration Sunday we had moving testimonials from a number of parishioners during Sunday worship, and hosted the October 24 Leadership Dinner (open to everyone) featuring a "Giving Thanks" menu and guest speaker Todd Weir. After Consecration Sunday, the team sent out follow-up letters, and made calls to parishioners who had not yet pledged. Many thanks to everyone for their generosity.

FINANCIAL SECRETARIES Richard Volk

The Financial Secretary is responsible for counting and securing Sunday offerings and reporting same to Maura Stevens. The secretary is assisted by Stephen Kennedy and Katie Glasgow alternate Sundays as assistants for the counting process.

BUDGET TEAM Susan Kennedy

During 2017 the Budget Team worked closely with Joellen LeGrand and Sue Morse of Professional Business Services, as First Church finances and pledges were all converted to QuickBooks. Teams are now able to request updated information about their expenses and available resources. We are smoothly implementing the Spending Rule: 4.75% of endowment funds are transferred to income funds and then may be used to reimburse the checking account for expenses if, and only if, funds are used for the intended purposes.

Fund organization was simplified, as several small endowment funds for music and for children's ministries were combined into single funds, and their respective savings accounts were combined into income funds for music and family ministries. Other savings accounts were moved into the endowment as income funds for the Buxton Building Fund and the Buxton Room Fund. This enables all of this money to participate in the endowment growth, and facilitates the use of these funds by the congregation for the intended purposes.

The Budget Team meets with Joellen every month, and works weekly with Sue to ensure that all expenses and income are properly accounted. We report on the budget every month to the Leadership Team, and hold a Budget Forum each January to explain the budget and receive comments and questions from the congregation.

PERSONNEL Susan Kennedy

During 2016 the Personnel Team did a great deal of research on legal employment practices and worked to implement these practices within First Church. As 2017 began, several employees moved from salaries to hourly wages. The Personnel Team worked with the bookkeepers to ensure that our staff, youth employees, and substitute musicians were properly paid. We worked closely with Rev. Terbush to ensure that all job descriptions were approved by the Leadership Team and all staff had a final evaluation before the transition time ended. The Administrator was asked to assume more responsibility for personnel records.

We met with Investment and Finance and the Senior Pastor Search Team to agree on compensation and benefits to be offered in the church profile, and to negotiate the covenant agreement with Rev. McGrath.

We prepared the church for the departure of Rev. Terbush in June by setting up additional salary for Rev. Brown Ludwig during the weeks before Rev. McGrath arrived. After her arrival, we have worked to assist our pastors to develop a healthy and collaborative working relationship which will allow both pastors to thrive and the mission of the church to move forward. In order to meet the church's goals for a strong youth program, we encouraged our pastors to make plans to employ a Youth Director.

The Personnel Policies of First Church have yet to be reviewed and updated. We are looking for two more people who will work to ensure just and legal compensation and benefits for all First Church employees and pastors.

LONGMEADOW MONTESSORI LEASE TEAM: Susan Kennedy

The lease agreement with Longmeadow Montessori International is in effect until 2020. However, LMI has requested that we renegotiate in 2018 due to upcoming changes in the LMI board. We are requesting First Church members with expertise in this area to assist with the renegotiation. During 2017 several projects were undertaken

by First Church to accommodate the programs and ensure the safety of LMI students. The church and LMI currently have a very healthy working relationship.

PROPERTY TEAM: Stephen Kennedy

The Property Team was elected in May of 2016. Members are Stephen Kennedy, John Ouellette and Donald Murphy. Our mission is to oversee the needs of church buildings, to include the parking lot garage and the Montessori building. We meet with church employees Maura Stevens and Stan Zdonick to identify items of concern, to identify what can be done by volunteers and what requires outside contractors.

In the past year, Property supervised:

Interior items:

- Restoration of the Senior Pastor's office prior to Pastor Pam's arrival.
- Restoration of second floor Room 1.
- Restoration of second floor meeting room (formerly Senior Pastor's Office). Walls painted with a new color scheme. Carpet and drapes professionally cleaned.
- Repair of second floor church school room to allow for Montessori use as a secured student lunch room.
- Heating System. We continue to have problems with the again heating system. Replacing the 45 year old system is a long term effort.

Exterior items:

- Replaced second floor windows in area used by Montessori school.
- Numerous paint jobs – Completed by volunteers
- South side sanctuary roof & gutters given temporary repairs, pending decision on replacing the failing southside slate roof.
- Sanctuary siding up to window sills cleaned and painted by volunteers.
- Front portal Columns restoration completed by Historic Preservation Associates.
- Montessori building front porch re-built by John Ouellette's company. Driveway side and porch area was "refreshed" as well
- Parking lot garage was painted & the roof moss was removed.

INVESTMENT AND FINANCE TEAM: Stewart Creelman

Your Finance Team is pleased to report positive financial information for the year of 2017. We finished the year in balance, having total income of \$631,385 and total expenses as of 12/31/18 of \$635,229.60. That reflects a net negative cash flow of \$3844.60 but doesn't include some 2017 pledge payments that have arrived after January 1. We will be showing a slight surplus. Actual pledge payments were about \$10,000 less than anticipated. A new source of income was the rental of Room 1. Rental for that room will be \$8,000 for 2018. Expenses for pastors was a bit less than budgeted a/c the weeks at end of summer when we only had Marissa. Pam started in August and Jay had left end of June.

Our Endowment participated in the positive returns of the stock markets. Our account continues to be well managed by US Trust (Bank of America).

In 2017 we implemented our new Spending Rule where we draw from the Endowment at the rate of 4.75% of the average of the prior 20 quarters account value. It is our goal to reduce the draw to 4.5% or lower, in order to

preserve the after-inflation purchasing power of the income. If the total return over time can be 7% and inflation is 2.5% then a draw of 4.5% will allow the growth of the Endowment to maintain ongoing purchasing power.

The Bank of America now offers a "Carbon Free" fund. Since it is our wish to be environmentally responsible, we feel that avoiding investment in oil, gas, and coal is consistent with our environmental mission. We have directed our manager to move \$100,000 of our equity accounts into the Carbon Free Fund. The fund has operated positively over its two year lifetime. We will monitor performance in hopes of justifying moving additional funds to that fund.

At the Annual Meeting Whiting Houston will report on the significant work he has done to clarify the operation of the many Endowment Funds. A new brochure now exists to be used as a resource by all First Church Teams when determining what funds are available to them for their operations. Also he will report on the elimination of confusion as to the operation of the many savings accounts that had been operating. Many of those funds have been folded into the permanent endowment where a corresponding fund already existed.

Your Finance Team - Stew Creelman, Treasurer. Assistant Treasurer Whiting Houston. Susan Dugan, and Sandra Turner for part of the year.

BUXTON ROOM DECORATORS: Susan Dugan

This year our group of ladies was asked to improve the appearance of the entry hall to the Buxton Room and the bathroom there. We have finished the entry hall with 2 groups of new chairs and a bench. This spring we will work on improving the appearance of the handicapped bathroom.

LANDSCAPE AND GARDENING TEAM: Marieke Burt

The Landscape team consists of a small group people who maintain the exterior property/landscape of the church. This team is assisted by volunteers in the spring to spread mulch and the fall to rake leaves. The lawn is mowed by Stan and lawn care is provided by a professional organization.

Much of the church landscape has been in place for at least 20 years. Many shrubs are looking well and blooming nicely due the regular application of plant food. On the other hand there are many shrubs which have outlived their beauty. The memorial garden is generally looking "tired" with overgrown shrubs and ailing flowering plants. Because this is a place where members of the congregation inter ashes of their love ones, it is important that this garden be pretty and conducive to contemplation. A start has been made to remove some plant material and trees that are no longer pretty or handsome.

We will spend the next few months to develop a new plant design to be implemented in the spring. We will solicit funds from the congregation who have special ties/ interest in supporting the memorial garden. Other funds will come from the Memorial Fund.

We are looking onto the most possible organic lawn food especially keeping in mind that this is an area that is heavily used by the kids from the Montessori school

WORSHIP MINISTRY for 2017

MORA GEOFFRION, LIAISON

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Worship Planning Team Carey Larsen* Dan Bausch Gail Fei Mary Friedman Wanona Dobbs Candy Heaphy <i>Dan Inglis</i> <i>Marisa Brown Ludwig Jay Terbusch</i> | Deacons Mary Friedman* John Ouellette Venessa O'Brien Ted Steger Anne Landry Jennifer Creelman Carolyn McGarr Patrick Hildreth Deborah Manning <i>Gay Wesson</i> <i>Marisa Brown Ludwig Pam McGrath</i> | Altar Flower Team Marieke Burt* <i>Gay Wesson *</i> Candace Rutz Pat Jorczak Kathleen Brindle Douglas Burt Mary Murphy Candy Heaphy |
| Liturgists Karen Rafferty* Carey Larsen Deb Garrity Wanona Dobbs Eleanor Santos John Ouellette Beverly Sager Peter Ludwig Michelle Steger Pat Jorczak Melinda Cropsey Abel Togba <i>Marisa Brown Ludwig</i> | Chancel Choir Mora Geoffrion Carey Larsen Maribeth White Gail Fei Sue Comstock Steve Kennedy Mark Todd Stew Creelman John Thomas Michael Wiseman Doug Burt Wanona Dobbs Eleanor Santos Peter Santos Katie Glasgow Gina Sears Candy Heaphy <i>Dan Inglis</i> | Audio-Visual Ministry Don Wesson* Marieke Burt Mary Ellen Flaherty Jim Flaherty Mark Garrity John Ouellette |
| Music Committee Eleanor Santos* Carey Larsen Katie Glasgow Debbie DeBiasio <i>Marisa and Jay alternate</i> <i>Dan Inglis</i> | Handbell Choir <i>Dan Inglis</i> Carey Larsen Mark Todd Eleanor Santos Mora Geoffrion Stew Creelman Diane Peluso Maribeth White Wanona Dobbs Mandy Kravetz Noelle Peluso | Musicians Marsha Harbison Bill Harbison John Turner Susan Kennedy <i>Dan Inglis</i> Zach Sears Hannah Sears Pastor Marisa |
| Ushers Don and Mary Murphy and others | | Bell Ringers Don Wesson |

DEACONS: Mary Friedman

The job description of deacon reflects a servant mindset, and that is the attitude of the deacon team. Serving communion is regarded as an honor and is deeply moving to those who offer the elements to the gathered community. Greeting both familiar faces and newcomers at the door is a joy. Three new deacons have joined the team this year but we still need more! Is God “putting it on your heart” to join us???

Deacons have had a busy year as usual. A new, better- equipped first aid kit was purchased and is located in the narthex. Last fall Deacon Anne Landry procured a Phillips AED defibrillator for our church, thanks to a generous donation from Audrey Rich. Stan installed it in the Williams St. Lobby. Two trainings were held for staff, congregation, and nursery school staff.

A new glass baptismal font has been ordered, donated by the Women’s Benevolent Society. Steve Gelling will make the wooden stand for the bowl. This new font will be more portable than the marble one that will remain in the sanctuary.

Deacons assisted our pastors in the special Lenten/Holy Week services, Advent/Blue Christmas/Christmas

services, and memorial services as well as the regular Sunday and Communion Sunday services. Deacons participated in the annual confirmation banquet. The team planned a special communion with youth on Dr. Jay's last Sunday. Deacons planned and facilitated a laity-led outdoor service in July after Dr. Jay had left and Pastor Marisa was on retreat.

Deacons also planned "Gathering Sunday" on September 10 and had an ice cream truck for the first time. Picnic Costs: Grill - \$101.50, Bounce House - \$205.00 (donated by an "angel"), Music - \$150, Ice Cream Truck - \$351.00 (donated by an "angel") Food from Costco - \$220.08, Big Y - \$22.62 Total: \$494.20

Deacons continually explore new and better ways to be welcoming. This year we tried "Welcome Bags" for newcomers. We also discussed the need to be "Welcoming but Watchful" at the doors, given some of the violence that has occurred in churches recently.

We now offer individually wrapped gluten-free wafers on the communion bread trays.

Deacons assisted clergy with the monthly communion at Glenmeadow.

Pastor Pam has asked deacons to take a more active role during the sacraments of baptism and communion by offering prayers.

MUSIC TEAM: Carey Larsen

The Music Team meets every six to eight weeks. Our primary purpose is to support the Director of Music, and this past year we focused our efforts on orientation for Dan Inglis. We coordinated the purchase of new folders for the choir, and new notation software for the Music Director. We looked for ways to help Dan with some of the Music Department's administrative tasks. The music library catalog is now online, and, thanks to Stan Zdonick, a web-enabled computer is in the rehearsal room. Dan catalogues new music and the team files existing music. This year we will be working with Whiting Houston to update and clarify the criteria for the Ruth Perry award. Current members include Marisa Brown Ludwig, Debbie DeBiasio, Dan Inglis, Katie Glasgow, Carey Larsen, and Eleanor Santos. If you would like to join this team, please talk to any member of the team!

LITURGISTS: Karen Rafferty

The Liturgist group has had a good year. We are not doing anything new, just following our Pastors' leads on what they want for each particular service. We are always looking for new voices to add to our group, and would welcome newcomers to join us.

WORSHIP PLANNING TEAM: Carey Larsen

The Worship Team meets every four to six weeks. The pastors share their choices for liturgy and/or messages for the worship calendar, and the Team brainstorms ways in which services can be most meaningful. This year we transitioned to the "Narrative Lectionary" which runs on a four-year cycle and is focused on the stories of the Bible. From September to mid-December the preaching texts are from the Old Testament. From Christmas to Easter there are readings from one of the four gospels (this year it's John). Then, from Easter to Pentecost the texts are chosen from Acts and Paul's letters. Interestingly, this also follows the school year, and works well with the flow of church activity. Sunday School follows the same lectionary, so parents and children are experiencing the stories and concepts at the same time. The Worship Planning Team also helps plan for services and series that are outside the usual Sunday setting, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and gatherings during Lent and Advent.

Current members include Dan Bausch, Marisa Brown Ludwig, Wanona Dobbs, Gail Fei, Mary Friedman, Dan Inglis, Carey Larsen, Marilyn Paul-Lewis, and Liz Woolsey. Please consider joining this team!

ALTAR FLOWER TEAM: Marieke Burt

The altar flower ladies met before Christmas. We put up the poinsettias for the Christmas season and signed up for future Sundays. We enjoyed a lunch served in the Buxton Room.

AUDIO/VIDEO TEAM: Don Wesson for the Balcony Believers AV Gang

I am pleased to report that the video gang, composed of Marieke Burt, John Ouellette, Mark (in a pinch) Garrity, Doug McGrath, Deb Garrity, Steve Creelman and Gay Wesson plus an emergency fill in by Stan (always ready to help) Zdonick, has completed the year with the following highlights:

- Another Fifty Two Sunday services taped and delivered to LCTV for publication the next Sunday at 8:00 AM and Noon. That's 3,120 minutes of taping by the team!
- Each Sunday sermon has been posted on the church web site by Deb Garrity.
- The team is not sure how many people watch the service on LCTV but my guess is at least 10. Phoebe Wallace tells me every Sunday that she watches last week's service at 8AM before she comes to church! WOW!
- Two (2) Christmas services....sorry Santa was hanging stockings at 11 PM!
- Two (2) weddings ceremonies with DVD's
- Plus several baptisms, funerals and special events. When possible these were transferred to DVD's and delivered to special people
- We continue to look for volunteers who would like to join the Balcony Believers and assist with the videotaping of services and special events. Sometimes a person scheduled to tape can't make it so we need a backup.
- Steve Creelman is working on a collection of video clips that can be turned into a web-based video of Church Services and or happenings.
- We are going to review our audio system capabilities and some periodic issues with sound and feedback. Will be reviewing all systems with Tony Caliento, a Longmeadow resident that has an audio company (ATC Audio), He will be training the team on use of the audio system.
- We will be adding another handheld mic as well as experimenting with a lavalier system for Pam that is easier to use and eliminates some sound issues.
- Please pass the word to neighbors that might be interested in viewing a First Church Service every Sunday at 8 AM or noon or.....come on up to the Balcony and join the BB group!! We still have room...all visitors welcome!!

All of the group are looking forward to a packed house and helping to spread the word about the exciting happenings at First Church Longmeadow.