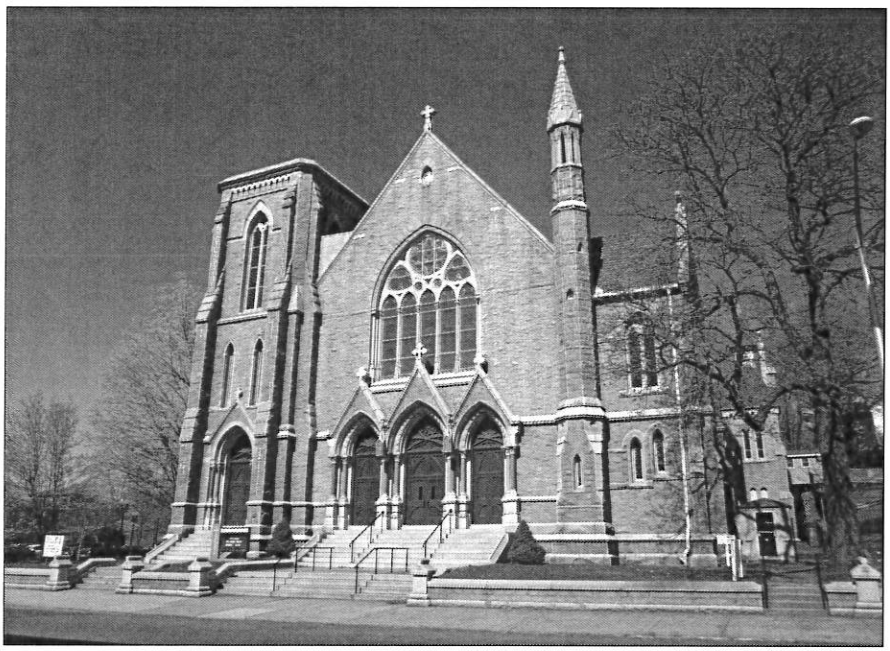
ANNUAL REPORT
JUNE 2017-MAY 2018



First Congregational Church

62 Colony Street
Meriden, Connecticut 06451

Telephone: (203) 235-5704
www.fccmeriden.org

First Congregational Church of Meriden
288th Annual Meeting – May 24th, 2018

Agenda:

1. "A Litany for Those Who Serve in the Church"
2. Invocation
3. Dinner
4. Approval of Nominating Committee Results
5. Approval of 2016 Annual Meeting Minutes
6. Presentation of the Annual Report
7. Ministry Updates
8. Recognition of 5+ years of Membership in the Church
9. Desserts and Ice Cream Social
10. Church Family Bingo

Adjournment

Litany for the Recognition of Volunteers:

Pastor: When there was a need you came forward.

People: And so we thank you.

Pastor: In the nighttime or daytime, on weekends and even in the coldest, darkest part of the year, you helped!

People: And so we thank you.

Pastor: Elected and duly appointed, or quietly, anonymously and unbidden, you did what needed doing.

People: And so we thank you.

Pastor: Sometimes with the help of many hands, other times alone-you worked.

People: And so we thank you.

Pastor: You give of your time, your talent, and even your treasure on behalf of this church.

People: And so we thank you.

Pastor: Your family and loved ones support your efforts and your commitment, sometimes at their own expense.

People: And so we thank your families and loved ones.

Pastor: For all of the things, great and small, that you have given this congregation we take time today to recognize you.

All: And thank you and honor your gifts.

Amen.

CHURCH STAFF
OFFICERS AND LEADERS
June 1, 2017 – May 31, 2018

PASTOR .....PASTOR BRUCE MILLER

MUSIC DIRECTOR ..... BARBARA MASE

NURSERY SCHOOL DIRECTOR.....SUE JENKIN

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR.....MEG HAMILTON

LAY MODERATOR..... ROBERT HILL, JR.

CHURCH CLERK .....KERRY MURAVNICK

TREASURER.....JEN COLACICCO

ASSISTANT TREASURER.....SUSAN MILLER

CHURCH REGISTRAR .....MEG HAMILTON

CHURCH HISTORIAN.....MARCUS HAMILTON

MEMORIAL FUND.....MEG HAMILTON

ALTAR FLOWERS..... BARBARA JASINSKI

AUDITOR.....

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP PRESIDENT.....CINDY EDDY

FAITH FORMATION COORDINATOR.....KRISTEN MILLER

DIACONATE: **(6)** PATRICIA MAGRATH (SECRETARY) (3), BILL BRYANT (1), TOM SQUIRE (2), MARCUS HAMILTON (3), CINDY EDDY (1), CHERYL HARNOIS (2) .

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: (6) CARA CLARK (3), CHRISTINA DAVIS (3), MEG HAMILTON (2), WENDY SANTIAGO (1), STEPHANIE SARGALSKI (1), JAMIE BREAU (2).

MUSIC COMMITTEE: **(6)** BRUCE BURCHSTED (3), SUE GORNALL (1), CONNIE MENSCH (2), _____(2), JANICE BRYANT (3), SUE BURCHSTED (1).

CHRISTIAN OUTREACH: **(6)** PETER BURCH (1),SHARON BURCH (3), BILL WHEATON (2), KERRY MURAVNICK (1),TIM ZAKRZEWSKI (1), ROBIE-LYN HARNOIS (3).

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE: (6) ,BOB HILL (2), PATRICIA MAGRATH (2), TOM SQUIRE (3), JEAN WHEATON (3), SUE BRUCHSTED (1), PETER BURCH (1)(Serving at a representative from Christian Outreach).

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: (6) SHARON BURCH (3), BRUCE BURCHSTED (3), CHERYL HARNOIS (1), BILL WHEATON (1), 2 VACANT POSITIONS (2).

FINANCE COMMITTEE: JEN COLACICCO, ROBERT HILL, KERRY MURAVNICK

FACILITIES COMMITTEE: BOB WEST, JEN COLACICCO, NADINE KOWALEK, TOM SQUIRE, BILL BRYANT, MARCUS HAMILTON, PASTOR CLARENCE HAYES

DELEGATE TO UCC CONFERENCE MEETINGS: (8) PASTOR BRUCE MILLER, SUE BIRT, MEG HAMILTON, BILL BRYANT

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP: President - CINDY EDDY
Treasurer - JOYCE R. CHASE

Annual Budget Minutes

Sunday
January 28, 2018

Bob Hill called the meeting to order immediately after the church service ended.
Pastor Bruce Miller:

Highlighted the expenses from 2017,that were close to what was budgeted
Working from financial stability to financial health
Trust funds about the same as the beginning of 2017
Doing well controlling expenses, with the help of Tom, Marcus and Pastor Clarence doing much of the maintenance work for the church
Staffing wages have remained static and need to be adjusted as soon as funds can support an increase

Bob answered questions concerning the 2018 proposed budget

Timing issues with receiving rent payments form the Preschool and Overcomers Tabernacle is the reason they look to be behind
New refrigerator has been purchased and installed in the kitchen
Furnace/heat being watched closely by Marcus
Kitchen has no heat, if furnace replaced could the kitchen be included
Boiler life is about 5 years and quote to replace $30,000.00
Trust fund at approx. $845,000.00 which has remained about the same for the past 5 years

Motion to accept the 2018 budget voted and passed

The meeting adjourned at 10:50AM

Respectfully submitted,
Kerry Muravnick, Clerk

Administrative Council Minutes

May 2017- April 2018

Morgan Stanley approved grant for mission trip, need to provide them with proof of non-profit status

Scholarship committee to meet, more requests than in last few years, may need to ask Diaconate for increase donation

Clergy Association Committee was told our church would like to continue to participate in joint events with Center Congregational Church; however, their interim minister does not wish that to happen

Parking garage is open and it has been requested our members use it. It is unclear the time of day at which each 48-hour free parking on weekends begins and ends.

Hospital training for Pastor Bruce still has not been secured, talking with mentor on options

Pastor Bruce was informed he can wear a clerical collar if he wishes, considering one for use when at the hospital and outside events

Bob Hill will follow up with the Taiwanese church if further problems with cooking outside the chapel continues

Need to replace the security monitor in the office for the side door

All but one cord for coffee pots were noted to be missing from the kitchen two Sundays ago, security camera not working correctly during that two week period, two replacement cords will be purchased and kept in the locked cabinet
New refrigerator has been purchased and installed, 3 yrs general warranty and 5 yrs on the compressor, thanks to Sharon
AA person visited the church to see if the space available will work for them, interested but don't need to move yet

105 Colony St., has reopened but as a restaurant, building being sold, unsure of closing date, new prospective owner does not want current renter in there

Second stewardship letters have gone out to those that have not responded to date

Question about sanctuary churches, we are not one, if someone asks for it, we will give them information on ones that are but will not let anyone stay, if they refuse to leave, will contact the police

New computers are needed for office staff, Matt Studinski has cleared with his employer to look at costs and when purchased, to install and maintain them at no cost, he will be contacted to get estimates on two computers and monitors, Office 365 and Servant Keeper programs and licenses for them, Matt Studinski provided the council with a quote for new computers for the office staff :Move to purchase computers with one time Servant Keeper fee approved, Computers have been purchased and received, Matt Studinski hopes to install them on Sunday. He was able to purchase the Servant Keeper program at a lower price than previously quoted approx. $355.00

Amazon Smile setup is still progressing, maybe an issue that we are part of the larger UCC conference, may need to get our own EIN number

IBM stock holdings, still doing researching on the progress to sell them off

Marcus will contact two companies about fixing the walkway paver

John Clarke Jr., will be asked to mow the area around the marker on Dryden Drive better including the hill

Bottom of the handicap ramp needs to be "feathered" into the driveway

Once the Confirmands complete their classes, will be asked to be a Jr. Deacon for at least one month and/or join a committee to get a better understanding about the workings of the church, Pastor Bruce will meet with last year's confirmands to discuss where each one feels they are in relation to the church at this point

Respectfully submitted,
Kerry Muravnick, Clerk

NOMINATING COMMITTEE JUNE 1, 2018– MAY 31, 2019

MODERATOR……..…….ROBERT HILL (1+)

TREASURER……..JENNIFER COLACICCO (1+)

ASSISTANT TREASURER……....SUSAN MILLER (1+)

CHURCH CLERK……KERRY MURAVNICK (1+)

REGISTRAR……...MEG HAMILTON (1+)

HISTORIAN……...MARCUS HAMILTON (1+)

AUDITOR…….. (1+)

MEMORIAL FUND……..MEG HAMILTON (1+)

ALTAR FLOWERS……BARBARA JASINSKI (1+)

DIACONATE: **(6)** PATRICIA MAGRATH (SECRETARY) (2), BILL BRYANT (CHAIR) (3), TOM SQUIRE (1), MARCUS HAMILTON (2), CINDY EDDY (3), CHERYL HARNOIS (1) .

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: (6) CARA CLARK (2), CHRISTINA DAVIS (2), MEG HAMILTON (1), WENDY SANTIAGO (3), STEPHANIE SARGALSKI (3), JAMIE BREAU (1).

MUSIC COMMITTEE: **(6)** BRUCE BURCHSTED (2), CONNIE MENSCH (1), JANICE BRYANT (2), SUE BURCHSTED (1), KERRY MURAVNICK (3).

CHRISTIAN OUTREACH: **(6)** PETER BURCH (3),SHARON BURCH (2), BILL WHEATON (1), KERRY MURAVNICK (3), ROBIE-LYN HARNOIS (2), JEAN WHEATON (1).

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE: (6) ,BOB HILL (1), PATRICIA MAGRATH (1), CARA CLARK (2), JEAN WHEATON (2), SUE BRUCHSTED (3), PETER BURCH (3)(Serving at a representative from Christian Outreach).

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: (6) SHARON BURCH (2), BRUCE BURCHSTED (2), CHERYL HARNOIS (3), BILL WHEATON (3), 2 VACANT POSITIONS (1).

FINANCE COMMITTEE: JEN COLACICCO, ROBERT HILL, KERRY MURAVNICK

FACILITIES COMMITTEE: BOB WEST, JEN COLACICCO, NADINE KOWALEK, TOM SQUIRE, BILL BRYANT, MARCUS HAMILTON, PASTOR CLARENCE HAYES

DELEGATE TO UCC CONFERENCE MEETINGS: (8) PASTOR BRUCE MILLER, SUE MILLER, MEG HAMILTON, BILL BRYANT

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP: President - CINDY EDDY
Treasurer - JOYCE R. CHASE

SUMMARY OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP
JUNE 1, 2017 THROUGH MAY 31, 2018

2017	Total Membership		173
2017-2018	Losses		
		Transfer/removals	1
		Deaths	2
Total Membership			170

Baptisms 7

The following members were **removed** from the church rolls by **death**
Franklin Scharmer
Gretchen Bozenhard

Respectfully submitted,
Meg Hamilton
Church Registrar

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS
FOR
5-25 YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP
(in 5 year intervals)

5 YEARS
SUZAN BIRT MILLER
WILLIAM BRYANT
JANICE BRYANT
REV. CAROLYN YOUNG
MEG HAMILTON

15 YEARS
KEN MURAVNICK
TOM SQUIRE

25 YEARS
SUSAN BROOKS
MARIA CLARK
REV. JOHN CLARK

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS
FOR
25+ YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP (2018)

28 YEARS
MATT STUDINSKI

29 YEARS
BERNARD HENTZ

31 YEARS
SARAH DAVITT

32 YEARS
PATRICIA RIVERA

33 YEARS
BRYAN BARBER
LAURA BARBER
MARCUS HAMILTON
LAURA RADER
KIMBERLY WARD

35 YEARS
STEWART ANDERSON
SUE BURCHSTED
SETH EDDY
RUSSELL RADER

36 YEARS
SUSAN POULSEN
GERALD SIBLEY

37 YEARS
JEFFREY MCBRIDE

38 YEARS
CINDY HAWLEY
PAUL HAWLEY

40 YEARS
HELEN KING
BAR6BARA RYBECK
ESTHER SEPULVEDA
ALAN TUCKER
JUDITH TUCKER

41 YEARS
JOHN ACABCHUK
JANET BARTON
PATRICIA BOSSI
CRAIG BOSSI
BRUCE BURCHSTED
STACIA MOREHOUSE
LAWRENCE MOREHOUSE

42 YEARS
PETER BURCH

44 YEARS
SUSAN MOREHOUSE

45 YEARS
MARGARET ANDERSON
KERRY MURAVNICK

46 YEARS
LINDA MOORE

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS
FOR
25+ YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP (2018)

47 YEARS
CHERYL HARNOIS
ROBERT HILL
STUART MCELROY

48 YEARS
ALICE YOUNG

49 YEARS
ROBERT WEST
PAM WEST

50 YEARS
NADINE KOWALEC
BEVERLY MCELROY

53 YEARS
GAI RADER

56 YEARS
JEAN GRETEN
JOHN MOREHOUSE

57 YEARS
JOHN MACNEIL
JOYCE CHASE

58 YEARS
SHARON BURCH
JEAN WHEATON

59 YEARS
KENNETH BARTON, SR.

60 YEARS
CINDY EDDY
ART SKINNER

61 YEARS
PHYLLIS MILLER

62 YEARS
GRACE PETERSON
WILLIAM WHEATON
JON HACKBARTH

64 YEARS
RONALD POULSEN
ROBERT COOK
CHARLOTTE COOK

65 YEARS
GERALD CHASE

67 YEARS
DORIS MCBRIDE
LOIS MCMAHON

68 YEARS
GLADYS SANDUSKY

70 YEARS
WAYNE SMITH
NANCY SQUIRE

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS
FOR
25+ YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP (2018)

74 YEARS
DOROTHY SKINNER
NANCY WILSON
EDITH DAVIS

78 YEARS
CURT DISBROW

First Congregational Church of Meriden

Annual Report of the Pastor 2017-2018

"…So Christ himself gave the apostles the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors, the teachers to equip his people for works of service so that the Body of Christ may be built up."
Ephesians 4:11-13

This scripture reading will be our focus for this year and next, "that the body of Christ may be built up." Three different ministries emerged from our Future Directions Task Force to begin implementing objectives and action steps. They each have a different focus, yet each is aligned with building up the body of Christ, this church! Each will speak to their efforts and their progress at our 288th annual meeting where we look back, and look ahead with confidence.

More than a motto, "Bring Church to Life," has been our foundation as we have successfully broadened the church experience. There are now many more opportunities than ever to worship, to pray, to serve, to learn, and to enjoy one another's fellowship. Each are represented now…

-We have cultivated and developed our Faith Formation Program for our Youth and Teens under the direction of an active Christian Education Committee. Activities included quarterly family events such as apple picking, bowling, games night etc. Special events include Halloween and Christmas Party, Teen Lock-in and Advent and Lenten programs. Inter-generational events include Family Communions, Family retreat weekend and new this year a progressive Christian music concert!

-Our "Soup and Sanctuary" contemplative prayer services were held four times this year as part of our Advent and Lenten programs.

-Expanded Christian Outreach efforts which now include Food Pantry Sunday, Soup Kitchen Support, Back to School Expo, Christmas Mitten Tree, and the Pay it Forward Program. We have formalized the use of the Parson Viets funds within the concept of "Within Reach Ministries" to support parish and community needs. "Prayer Ribbons" have helped "percolate" new needs. International Outreach has increased with an expanded Mercy Touch initiative in Zambia, Africa to support three individual girls and also support micro-businesses. We have returned to Sonrisa de Dios, Nicaragua for the fourth year in assisting with the development of a community center, We have been active partners with the Meriden Clergy Association with "Stone Soup Kitchen," to support our Soup Kitchen. We have provided space for Assurance

Christian Ministry's outreach efforts on Saturday nights, and provide support for the UCC Church's Wider Mission.

-We have commissioned an active Facilities Committee. Accomplishments in recent years include; a new sound system for the sanctuary, new painting for kitchen, Smith Hall, the narthex and the foyer. We have also painted outside doors and first floor windows. Our upstairs classrooms have been revitalized and put to use. Our basement area has been renovated and put to use by a new church occupant. There is an on-going and regular response to all repairs and maintenance issues. Our efforts are now preventative as well has reactionary.

-Our church finances have been stabilized with a budget creation process, review procedures and complete transparency. Pledged income has seen small growth and budgets have been balanced without diminishing trust principle. Individual committees have successfully initiated their own fundraisers and efforts are underway to implement a Planned Giving Program!

-Membership has been stable with new members equaling the loss due to moves and passing. We have created a promotional brochure, established quarterly newspaper ads, maintained an active website, and develop post cards and news releases to interpret what we do. Ministry teams will be actively working to build our membership base.

None of the new initiatives have come at the expense of those things we have been doing for long including Covenant to Care, Boy Scout Troop 10 and Scout Sunday, Chancel and Bell Choirs, Music Concerts, Nursery School and Support of three other churches here, as well as weddings, funerals, baptisms new member inductions and our signature fundraising event "May Breakfast!" We continue to support the efforts of our affiliated summer camp, Camp Claire.

But we are not done yet; we can't be done yet! Our ministry teams will be reviewing and assessing a number of church models, benchmarking success, and bringing forward significant decision options that will positively affect our congregation; all of this while discerning God's will.

Special thanks to Barbara, Meg and Kristen for all of their hard work on our behalf. We are blessed to have them. Special thanks to all of you who choose to be members of First Church. Let us find blessings in our work together in building this body of Christ which has historic tenure and service within this Meriden community.

We have lived a long history and heritage of ministry and mission. I believe that our best days await us. Let us continue to know the blessings of God in our time together.

Blessings Indeed,

Pastor Bruce

Moderator's Report:

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. There is no law against such things." Galatians 5:22-23

Stability and progress; these are two most welcomed qualities for churches these days. This past year First Congregational Church of Meriden remains blessed with both of these. It has been a privilege to again serve as the church moderator this year, presiding over meetings, working closely with the pastor and church council and generally making sure that we are operating within optimal governance aligned with our mission. I confess that there is little that a moderator accomplishes without dedicated volunteers and caring capable staff. Our congregation consistently demonstrates its response to Jesus' command to love one another with generous gifts of time, talent and money.

Our stability reflects in a budget that again is realistically conceived and responsibly managed. There has been consistency in our pledged income, endowment support, donations, fundraising, and community use. There has also been consistency in our controlled expenses. Stability is also demonstrated by very capable staff that remains with us and build on their successful tenure.

Progress is identifiable in the ever increasing and expanding opportunities within our church experience for youth, teens, families and adults. This diversity can be seen in worship, prayer services, concerts, family events, community service, international outreach, special events, fundraisers, faith formation, ministries, and collaboration with other faith communities. There is both depth and breadth to our church experience and we have been adding to this each year. Progress can also be seen in our ministries which are an outgrowth of our Future Directions Task Force. These ministries are active or soon to be activated in such areas as financial health, church identity and membership growth and participation.

We have had a long and important history and we remain committed to a secure and confident future! It remains both a privilege and an adventure to be your moderator in the service of God.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Hill

Moderator

TREASURER'S REPORT
JANUARY 1, 2017 TO DECEMBER 31, 2017

BUDGET SUMMARY - 2017:	
Approved budget anticipated income:	$227,750
Total estimated expenses:	$227,750
Total anticipated deficit:	$0
Year End Results:	
Total Actual Income:	$157,160
Total Actual Expense:	$224,602
Total Deficit for the year:	$67,442
The deficit was covered by the sale of stock from the Major Trust Fund totaling:	$70,000
Cash carried over from the 2017 year:	$2,558
Pledge Income:	
Total amount projected:	$74,000
Total payments to church as of 12/31/2017:	$68,963
Shortfall as of 12/31/2017:	$5,037
Major Trust Fund Summary:	
Fund balance as of January 1, 2017:	$833,182
Fund balance as of December 31, 2017:	$873,407**

**Net after funding part of the 2017 deficit, paired with market changes and a generous donation.

Major Trust Fund Total Dividend & Interest Income:	
As of December 31, 2016:	$40,161
As of December 31, 2017:	$37,439
Other Trust Fund Income from Accounts Held by Local Banks (Riecke, Hubbard & Mueller Trusts):	
As of December 31, 2016:	$6,104
As of December 31, 2017:	$7,580

The Major Trust Account was reviewed several times during the year by our Financial Advisor at A. W. Wood Co, Inc. in an effort to secure needed income, growth, and maintain principal value.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Colacicco, treasurer

Diaconate Report: 2017/2018

First, all, I would like to thank my fellow Deacons (Cindy Eddy, Marcus Hamilton, Cheryl Harnois, Pat Magrath[Secretary], Tom Squire and Junior Deacon Griffin Tiezzi-Clark for all their help and support over the past year. We are also happy to have Pat back after her serious illness. The only term that was up this year is mine, and I have agreed to serve another 3-year term. Everyone pulled together and made this a great year. High points include our donation as usual to the Backpack event, Scholarships, Children's Christmas Party, visitation and cards for shut-ins and donations to various causes, events and people from the Assistance and the Ministers Discretionary Fund. Due to the unfortunate cancellation of the Nicaraguan Mission Trip, this year's donation will be returned for use next year and for other ongoing needs. We also as usual participate in each Sunday service as well and during Communion and many Baptisms during the year. The current budget is noted below.

INCOME:		$20,500
		(From Parson Viets Trust Fund)
EXPENSES:	Assistance:	$2,500
	Worship Supplies and Services	$1,000
	Evangelism	$2,000
	School Book Bag Support	$1,000
	Ministers Discretionary Fund	$4,000
	Youth Christmas Party	$1,000
	Mission Work	$4,000
	Central Association Dues and Fees	$2,000
	Scholarship Fund	$3,000
		$20,500

Respectfully submitted

William J. Bryant

Head Deacon

Diaconate Annual Financial Report For The Year of 2017

BALANCE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2017:			**$ 9,737.25**
INCOME			
Trust Funds	$ -		
Interest	$ 0.97		
Communion Offering	$ 82.00		
Parson-Viets Trust Fund	$ 20,628.82		
TOTAL INCOME	**$ 20,711.79**		**$ 20,711.79**
		TOTAL	**$ 30,449.04**
EXPENSES			
Minister & Prof. Expenses (2016 adj)	$ 650.00		
Worship Supplies/Flowers	$ 442.49		
Bank fees & checks	$ 3.00		
Diaconate Events (Food)	$ 438.89		
Scholarship/Campership	$ 4,800.00		
Confirm. Class Expenses	$ 278.86		
Diaconate Christmas Party	$ 414.24		
Bibles	$ -		
Advertising	$ 1,256.43		
Discretionary	$ 7,000.00		
Central Assoc/Miss. Society-dues	$ 2,214.00		
Refurbishing of Silver	$ -		
UCC conferences	$ 170.00		
Backpacks	$ 1,000.00		
Annual dinner	$ -		
Nicaragua trip	$ 4,000.00		
UCC Mission Support	$ -		
Youth/Teen Program	$		
Unallocated-Gen'l(Phone system)	$ -		
Evangelism Outreach	$ 1,208.00		
Pageant Costumes/Maint.	$ 43.96		
Sanctuary cleaning/Maint	$ -		
Outstanding Funds from 2015(adjmt)	$ 101.44		
Covenant to Care	$ -		
TOTAL EXPENSES	$24,021.31		**$ 24,021.31**
BALANCE AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2017:			**$ 6,427.73**

Christian Outreach Committee
Annual Report 2017-2018

Food Pantry Drive ("Our Neighbors in Need")
The First Congregational Church of Meriden 13th Annual Food Drive was held on March 25, 2018 to benefit the Meriden Soup Kitchen. In addition to our parishioners, donors included the Assurance Christian Ministries, the Taiwanese Christian Church and the First Congregational Preschool, all of whom share space in our building. A total of 2398 lbs. of non-perishable food was collected, exceeding the previous record, set in 2017, of 2053 lbs. A very special thanks to Pastor Clarence Hayes of Assurance Christian Ministries who personally collected well over 1000 lbs. of the total. Our thanks to all who donated to help feed the hungry in Meriden.

International Benevolence
The 12th Annual Mercy Touch Luncheon was held on Sunday, Nov. 19, 2017 with 55 attending. Remarks about the orphanage in Ndola, Zambia were made by Pastor Bruce Miller and Peter Burch, followed by a video presentation about the Mission. Then a delicious luncheon was served, consisting of Kate's chicken, stuffing, marinated green beans, rolls and butter, beverages and a variety of desserts, prepared by the Christian Outreach Committee.

Pastor Bruce and four other members of our congregation were part of a team leaving this past June on a one-week mission to Nicaragua. They worked in the barrio of Sonrisa de Dios (Smile of God) on projects to build an irrigation system, floor tile a bodega (grocery store) and dig numerous organic garden beds.

Meriden Back to School EXPO
The 14th annual Back-to-School Bookbag EXPO was held on Aug. 22, 2017 at the Meriden Green. More than 1000 bookbags filled with necessary school supplies were distributed to needy Meriden schoolchildren. Center Congregational Church and First Congregational Church were major contributors to this mission, both being listed as Salutatorian Sponsors with a combined donation of $3890. First Church donated $2220, with $1000 coming from the Diaconate, $500 from the Christian Outreach Committee (as matching funds), and $720 coming from 20 individual donors in the congregation. Great job by our two churches.

Pastor's Discretionary Fund
This fund is used to help people with emergency needs such as heat, rent, medical bills and child care. It is administered by our pastor and confidentiality is essential. It is an outreach of our church.

Meriden Soup Kitchen
Six members of our congregation (up from three previously) have worked during the past year on a regular basis every 1-2 weeks at the Meriden Soup Kitchen.

Covenant for Care
Once again, our church provided Christmas gifts to 50 needy Meriden children. This was coordinated again this year by Kristen Miller and children of our Faith Formation program.

Other Outreach
1. The third annual "Stone Soup" food drive by the Meriden Clergy Association to benefit the Meriden Soup Kitchen was held in Feb. 2018. Six churches participated this year.
2. The Pastor's Discretionary Fund - $4000 annually, funded by Parson Viets Fund.
3. Mission Trips. Will again be in Nicaragua this year June 18-25, 2018. Possibility of a mission trip to Zambia (Mercy Touch) next year.
4. Home to AA and NA meetings 3 days per week. Attendance seems to be increasing.
5. The Mitten Tree ministry was again successful this year.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Burch (chair), Sharon Burch (secretary), Pastor Bruce Miller, Robie-Lyn Harnois, Kerry Muravnick, Bill Wheaton, Tim Zakrzewski

2017 Christian Outreach Finance Report

BALANCE AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2016			**$10,348.45**
INCOME			
Mission Pledges	$	20.00	
Women's Fellowship	$	300.00	
Mercy Touch Donations	$	2,330.00	
Memorials	$	91.00	
Total	$	2,741.00	
Total Income			**$13,089.00**
EXPENSES			
Miscellaneous			
Mercy Touch Enterprizes Project	$	2,000.00	
Mercy Touch Orphanage	$	1,440.00	
Special Appeals (Backpacks)	$	500.00	
Postage			
Bank fees	$	-	
Total Expenses	**$**	**3,940.00**	
Balance as of December 31, 2017			**$ 9,149.45**

2017 Scholarship Committee

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2017

BALANCE AS OF December 31, 2016.....	**$**	**2,690.84**
INCOME;		
Trust Fund Income.....	$	-
Donations:		
Women's Fellowship.....	$	300.00
Diaconate.....	$	4,800.00
Other Income- Memorial	$	50.00
Total Income Deposits.....	$	5,150.00
TOTAL	**$**	**7,840.84**
EXPENSES;		
Scholarship (2)	$	3,000.00
Campership total (12 total)	$	4,219.00
Misc. expenses-bank charges.....	$	3.00
Total Expense.....	**$**	**7,222.00**
BALANCE AS OF 12/31/17	***$***	***618.84***

First Congregational has a long reputation of giving financial support to the youth of our congregation for college scholarships and camperships. In these especially hard economic times and with the increase in our youth in the congregation, we have seen a steady increase in this need over the last few years. In 2017, we awarded twelve camperships and two college scholarships. This financial assistance enable both our youth and adults to attend a number of camps and colleges including Camp Claire, Cuno Camp, Mountain Mist (YMCA), Girls Inc. Summer Camp, CCSU and Charter Oak State College. And the families that receive this support are truly grateful.

We would like to thank the Diaconate and Women's Fellowship for their continued support of these programs and any and all memorial contributors. With this increase comes more need of your assistance. We ask everyone to keep this in mind when making your memorial donations in the future.

Respectfully submitted,
Scholarship Committee Members

WOMENS FELLOWSHIP

2017-2018

The Womens Fellowship has an annual budget of $1,575.00, which is distributed amongst many areas within our church, and also to civic-related projects. These areas are:

Camp Claire (camperships)	$ 300.00
Christian Outreach Committee	300.00
Scholarship Committee	300.00
Church Women United	50.00
City Mission	25.00
Special Day for Special People (Seniors)	25.00
Christmas Gifts to Staff	25.00
Maintenance for Church Projects: (Kitchen, etc.)	550.00
	$1,575.00

During the past year (2017-2018), monies were disbursed as follows:

Donations and Gifts:	
Camp Claire (camperships)	$ 300.00
World Service Committee	300.00
Scholarship Committee	300.00
Church Women United	50.00
City Mission	25.00
Special Day for Special People (Seniors)	25.00
Christmas Gifts to Staff	25.00
Maintenance: (Kitchen, etc.)	0.00
Miscellaneous Expenditures:	
S & P shakers, funnels, syrup jars	34.03
3 Black banquet tables	159.49
	$1,218.52

Womens Fellowship has one (1) scheduled function per calendar year from which income is received – the annual May Breakfast.

MAY BREAKFAST MAY 6, 2017 – "OUR 113th YEAR"

Income:	
Breakfast tickets, plants, candy & bread sales: (Includes $850.00 Advance)	$2,844.48
Expenses: (Includes $850.00 Advance)	-1,845.83
NET PROFIT:	**$ 998.65**

The MAY BREAKFAST 2018 is in process as of this report. Many thanks to Cindy Eddy & Company and to all of you who may spend many long and untiring hours in preparation for this event and still had some of that undying energy left over to work the day of the Breakfast.

Again, we extend our appreciation to each and every one of you who give so willingly of your time and talents, support and dedication to Womens Fellowship and to our church.

Respectfully Submitted:
Joyce R. Chase, Treasurer

Music Committee Report

May 2018

Finally, the parking garage at 24 Colony Street opened it to the public this past September. Even though they still haven't gotten the ticket reader to function correctly, it still has made parking for our church services and events more plentiful and safer. It has not, however, improved our attendance at our concerts as we had hoped.

We again held the Morgans' *A Celtic Christmas* in December, which was not as well attended as prior years. Likewise, we had fewer in attendance at the Riverboat Ramblers *Mardi Gras Jazz Fest*. Either these two events have run their respective courses or our audience is dying off, or both. If we are going to continue with our outreach music series, we will likely need to reformat it to attract a younger audience.

Our Austin organ has had some significant repair work these past few months. Fortunately, all is working well, and everything is in place for our June 10th concert in the Sanctuary, featuring Barbara Mase at the keyboard of that very same organ. Also featured will be our Chancel and Bell Choirs. It will be a free concert, with a free will offering to help support the music program.

As always, we welcome additional Sanctuary Choir members for our Sunday Services. For those who like to wave their hands about, and can count up to four, consider looking into joining the Hand Bell Choir.

Our youth choir, under the direction of Barbara Mase, is now up and running, and has performed on special occasions this past year, including Youth Sunday on the 20th of this month. We are looking forward to seeing, and hearing, them sing in the years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Burchsted, Chairperson

Music Series Financial Report 2017

BALANCE FORWARD: DECEMBER 31, 2016			***$14,050.38***
INCOME FOR MUSIC SERIES:	**YEARLY TOTALS**		
MUSIC CD INCOME	$ 612.00		
THE JAZZ CATS	$ 890.00		
THE MORGANS	$ 1,253.00		
MEMORIAL	$ 80.00		
TOTAL INCOME FOR 2017	**$ 2,835.00**	**$**	**2,835.00**
	INCOME AS OF 12/31/17	***$***	***16,885.38***
MUSIC SERIES EXPENSES:	**YEARLY TOTALS**		
THE JAZZ CATS FEE	$ 875.00		
BANK FEES/CHECK	$ 42.00		
MORGANS FEE	$ 1,500.00		
ORGAN REPAIR	$ 7,594.00		
TOTAL EXPENSES FOR 2017	**$ 10,011.00**	***$***	***10,011.00***
CHECKBOOK BALANCE AS OF 12/31/17		**$**	**6,874.38**

Christian Education Annual Report 2017-2018

It has been another busy year for Christian Education and Faith Formation at First Congregational Church. The year has been filled with well-established traditions and new activities alike.

Our traditions include

- Apple picking
- Laser tag
- Christmas party with Santa
- Covenant to Care
- Christmas Pageant
- Family Movie Night
- Youth Group Easter Egg assembly
- Easter Egg hunt
- Youth Sunday
- Family retreat weekend at Camp Claire
- Yankee Candle fundraiser

New Activities

- Halloween party
- Youth Group shopping for Christmas party
- Youth group lock-in at our church
- Set back tournament and game night
- Side walk sale at May breakfast
- Confirmation class field trips
- Jr deacons and other committee members

We will continue to implement new programs and keep our well-established traditions alive. Our committee works hard to continue to provide programs for today's modern families.

Yours in Faith,

Kristen and the fabulous CE committee

2018 Facilities Update

This past year we saw an update to the plumbing. For those of you who may not be aware, the pressure which was coming into the building was very very high, and our plumber stated it was a miracle that none of our pipes had burst. I happened to witness the effect of the high pressure first hand, when replacing a ceiling tile in Smith Hall one Sunday. As the water ran in the kitchen sink, a water pipe was bouncing back and forth vigorously in the ceiling, which was very startling to see.

So, a pressure reducing valve has been installed where the water enters the building in the basement. This has helped tremendously in the reduction of service calls to fix toilets. The previous pressure was blowing parts within the toilets every six months, and the cost for service calls is expensive. The down-side to the installation of the valve, unfortunately, is that Tabernacle (downstairs) now has to put up with noise from this valve every time someone flushes a toilet, which is heard via the air duct that enters their worshiping space. We will be undertaking the task of wrapping the air duct so as to reduce the noise that they hear.

A big Thank You to the Kay Company who services the building, and caught this potentially catastrophic issue. On a historical note, the Kay Company were the ones who originally installed the plumbing for the building (though, of course, none of the current employees remember this :)

A new pressure reducing valve was installed beneath the dishwasher (the old one was completely rotted out). Additional service to the dishwasher is needed, and an effort to contact Hobart (the manufacturer) is in the works.

Last month, we had a representative from PTE Energy walk through the building to see what could be done to reduce the electrical cost. Bruce Burchsted & I will be sitting down with the rep to go over his findings.

A new circulator pump is needed in the furnace room, and we will have that taken care of in the fall before winter arrives.

An effort is underway to raise the sunken slate piece, and level other pieces that are a tripping hazard on the walkway.

A HUGE thank you to Clarence & Tom for all they do!

Side Note: Some doors have been accidentally left unlocked by various groups. If you are using the building, please make an extra effort to check to see that everything is locked up before leaving. Also, please be aware of any unfamiliar people who may come in, and let those in charge know. Additionally, if any groups need to change their schedules, please check with Meg before doing so. Things like the heat, service calls, and other rental groups can potentially be an issue if the office isn't notified. Thanks!

Financial Health Ministry

April 26, 2018

Last year the Futures Direction Task Force determined that while we are stabile financially, there is significant work to be done to reach Financial Health which is identified as the capability of a faith community to be confident in its ability to facilitate and enhance its financial position to manage risks, absorb any shocks and look ahead toward the next decade with security.

For this congregation to move in this direction would require an additional $100,000 per year improvement in our budget position which will minimize drawing interest payments and capital gains from endowments, promote portfolio growth and ensure competitive salaries and benefits for needed staff positions, and facility maintenance.

The Financial Health Ministry Committee has the following objectives:

- Explore potential yoking (NOT merging) with another UCC parish to reduce administrative salaries
- Establish an Annual Giving Plan for Church Facility Maintenance and Restoration
- Increase and improve fundraising projects
- Develop a plan for endowment fund development via a legacy gift program
- Increase annual stewardship efforts via increases in membership participation
- Increase community usage of the building

Significant effort has been made to expand the May Breakfast to increase profit from our major fundraiser by adding a door prize, raffle baskets and a sidewalk tag sale run by the CE Committee. Tickets were presold at a reduced cost and publicity was greatly increased via use of internet sites, newspaper ad, email, posters and flyers. Availability of free parking in adjacent garage was stressed. This fundraiser had a $3000 goal. Additional fundraisers will be developed.

The Century Club will be the basis for a Restoration and Facility Maintenance plan which will include current and past church members and others who value this building. Major areas of concern include essential replacement of the boiler system in next 3-5 years, detailed evaluation and cost analysis of which is planned for this summer. A lighting evaluation by Eversource representatives has been completed to reduce electrical costs; report is pending. Grant money may be available in some instances.

Development of a legacy gift program will include a brief presentation by representatives from Arthur Wood Financial on Charitable Gift Annuities at the May Annual Meeting. Arthur Wood Financial manages FCC funds.

Changes to the Stewardship program are necessary to increase the number of pledging members. We presently have 93 possible pledging units (a unit may be one or more people in a family or group). Those who do not pledge are considered "plate donors" and that income is often not trackable to the actual donor. Financial stability increases significantly with the commitment of actual pledges and the goal is to convert "plate donors" to pledgers. This year eight "plate donors" have become pledgers.

Building use by rental of space takes various forms. Weekly rentals include NA and AA groups three days per week, Pastor Clarence has a Bible Study on Wednesday nights and Casa de Gozo meets on

Thursdays. Boy Scout Troop 10 meets Tuesdays but is not charged rent. These groups provide lesser income to us. Major rental income is received from the Taiwanese Christian Church, Overcomers Tabernacle, Casa de Gozo and the First Congregational Preschool. Rental of Smith Hall, the kitchen and the Sanctuary are sporadic. Marketing of these spaces will be necessary to produce far greater income. FCC's mid-state location and "big" non-Catholic church presence within a thirty-minute drive of highly desired reception sites should make it quite marketable as a wedding venue. This will be further investigated.

"If you change nothing, nothing will change. If you resist change, you resist growth." Here's to growth!

Sharon F. Burch, Leader
Bruce Burchsted
Joyce Chase
Bob Hill
Marcus Hamilton
Nadine Kowalec
Kerry Muravnick

First Congregational Preschool, Inc.
62 Colony Street
Meriden, CT 06451
203-634-8886
www.firstcongregationalpreschool.net

Annual report
2017-2018

As we come to the end of our 51st year, we are thankful for another wonderful, successful year. We continue to grow, develop and enjoy respect for our programming in the community, and among early childhood professionals. Children attend from Meriden as well as area towns, including Southington, Middletown, East Hampton and Cheshire.

This year has brought more changes to our programming. We continue our programming with school day classrooms that run from 8:30-2:30 pm and one-part day classroom, that is 3 year olds and runs from 9-11:30 or until 1:00 pm. We have added full days on Fridays as well as all week, hoping to evolve as family needs change ☺.

This year was our first fully integrated, (3 and 4 year old's together), in all classrooms! Research shows that all children benefit from this type of grouping, with younger children learning from their older peers and the older children becoming more nurturing and understanding of differences. After trying it in one classroom for several years, and now in all classrooms, we can attest to the success. What fun we have had watching the children support one another.

We still have some part day schedules, some children from each classroom will leave at 1:00 pm – after lunch, which just might be our favorite part of the day. The stories and conversations are priceless!

This year we had a total of 55 families. Our staff now numbers 11. Ginger Alwang, although retired, continues to provide guidance and programming for our students, she comes in twice monthly to sing songs and dance with the children, we are lucky to continue our connection with her. We experienced a bit of transition this year, having two teachers leave mid-year, which was unusual, and necessary. A teacher from the past has returned, Kristen Nedinsky, we are so glad to welcome her back ☺. We also hired several new teachers, one starting this spring, the other two beginning in late August.

This month, we held our Meriden Public Library Art Reception. We collect art work from the artists who attend our program all year. In May we highlight several pieces from each child and it is displayed at the library. On May 2nd, all families were invited to the library for a reception; complete with water and goldfish crackers. Each artist is photographed with their art and is celebrated for their growth. It is one of our favorite activities and this year proved to be no exception. The art work will remain displayed in the library hallway through the month of May, stop in if you can ☺.Our state license continues to

ensure the safety of the children, while the National Association for the Education of Young Children, NAEYC, monitors the quality of care for the families enrolled in our program. We had our renewal visit this past winter, while we were nervous with so much riding on the visit, we were also confident. We are good at what we do, and our efforts were rewarded, we are renewed with "flying colors." Our accreditation is on the national level and allows us to provide the school readiness program for young children. School Readiness is funding that provides opportunities for all children, regardless of economic situation. It is designed to give all children the same background and range of experiences to draw from as they continue on a successful school career. We are proud to be a part of this funding. The funds have enabled us to make contributes to the upkeep and maintenance of the Church.

We are truly fortunate to enjoy our space and relationship with the First Congregational Church of Meriden and look forward to many years in the future. We provide high quality care and education for children of the area. You can be proud of the preschool, we know we are too!

Sue Jenkin
Silvia DiMella
Jamie Dudley
Stacy Martell
Meagan Levesque

Patti Curry
Michelle Zvonkovic
Michelle Tommell
Kristen Nedinsky