

NORTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church of Christ
NEW HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT



Annual Meeting
November 13, 2022

North Congregational Church
Annual Report 2022

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Pastor's Annual
Report October 2022

*“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”
(Matt. 18:19–20.)*

I was called by this faith community on March 6, November 6th will mark the close of my eighth month at NCC as its Designated Term Minister. But my journey to this faith community began in May 2021, when I was called to do pulpit supply on June 13th—and then again on Christmas Eve. It was in those conversations and worship services that I first met the faithful people of this congregation and felt the pull on my heart that eventually drew me here.

NCC has been holding things together through a complicated time in not only its history, but in time when our culture and the workings of the world have gotten more complex, more demanding, more mobile, more hostile and suspicious. These are difficult times for all churches.

The good and faithful people of NCC have endured much over the past several years...a disheartening series of turn-over in settled and interim pastoral leadership, staff and membership departures, losses of loved ones, and then, with the rest of the world, the isolating closure and helplessness thrust upon us by the Covid pandemic. Home lives, family lives, work lives and our spiritual and worship lives have been tossed about by these rough seas.

These years have been a time of uncertainty, a time of making-do--and a time of incredible dedication by church leadership to keep the NCC faith community connected to the presence of God and each other. God has upheld you and sustained you in hope and has prepared the way for this faith community to do new things.

I am deeply grateful to Council, who also served as the Search Committee for their interest and thoughtful questions during my candidacy. Your warm and welcoming hearts have been a blessing to me, just as they have to the faith community, as you all have sustained NCC and continue to do so throughout very difficult circumstances. Suzanne Czerwinski, NCC's secretary, has been a beacon during the pandemic years, keeping the NCC home-fires burning during its closure. She has been of great help to me as I navigated these early months with you. It was a great joy to have so many of you attend my ordination and become an indelible part of a defining moment in my life. I am deeply grateful for all your prayers during my family crisis in April—knowing you have been with me in spirit through that troubled episode has meant the world to me.

Discernment Work

As we embark on our discernment—a process we go through in Sacred Conversations—let us keep in mind that it is not about getting back to where we were, but about moving forward, as

God leads us toward new life for this faith community. Discernment is a process, and, in a sense, is never complete as we learn we are always seeking to discover what God has in store for us.

The years of pandemic were particularly exhausting and had taken a toll on church leaders. In consultation with Council, we agreed to begin the formal discernment work in September. As a first phase, we focused on nurturing a re-gathering of the congregation throughout the Spring, which included holding a Blessing of the Motorcycles service, adding a new member in May, beginning a Peace and Justice Ministry with a Gun Violence Awareness Vigil, and celebrating our community of faith with our All Church Family Picnic on June 26th.

During the Spring, through many conversations with folks as we got to know each other, we also rediscovered our love of worship and longing for the days when the pews were filled. Summer was approaching, which meant folks would be traveling and our worship attendance would be even more spare. These conditions, which sad to say are common to all churches, gave birth to our Summer Worship Sojourn, a unique series of "mission trips" through which our congregation brought the gift of our love of worship to several nearby faith communities, the gift of filling their pews, as well as reconnecting us to our sister congregations and building stronger relationships with those faith communities. I reached out to churches within a 30-minute drive, telling pastors and deacons of our Sojourn, and scheduled visits. We visited nine congregations over the Summer and I was pleased and proud to see that our sojourning congregation reflected the numbers that we usually have in worship at NCC –revealing an indication of how strongly those who attend NCC identify as a faith community and wanted to share the sojourning experience as a church family.

Our discernment work was to begin in September but was delayed so we could include folks who were on vacation. In October, we embarked on another kind of journey -a series of Sacred Conversations - a visioning process - that we will make as we seek God's direction for our faith community. Some of these Sacred Conversations will cover work NCC has done with prior interim or settled pastors or consultants. As our rapidly changing society moves at breathtaking speed, we will have to cover some aspects of NCC's prior self-assessing and discernment work. In this, some may not grasp the point of doing so, yet it is essential to do it now, in our present reality, so that we may more clearly discern an attainable future.

To this end, our twice-monthly visioning meetings for the current church year Oct'22-Jun '23, I envision our Sacred Conversations will run in Oct and Nov ,with a break during Advent and the holidays; resuming Jan through February 28. We may take a break in March and April during Lent and Easter; and resume on April 24 through June 11.

In keeping with the information provided in NCC's profile, NCC is a church in process of major restructure, assessment of viability, physical relocation, [or] uniting or yolking with another congregation. There are three stated goals DTM Ministry goals in my call agreement: (1)

choosing and implementing at least three strategies for increasing membership; (2) exploring the possibility of merging with another church by engaging in conversation with at least three neighboring churches; and (3) if neither (1) or (2) are possible, assisting the congregation in defining and implementing the steps needed to become a legacy church. None of these are done in isolation by me as pastor. The leadership and membership have covenanted to share these responsibilities, for it is they who will ultimately vote on the future of the life of the church. It is my honor and sacred responsibility to walk with you all through this process, to explore and discover what new life God has for this lovable and loving faith community. It is my prayer that God continue to sustain us in hope, inspiring us to explore and discover the new life God dreams for us, and enable us to do some new things to give that dream life!

With a grateful heart,
Rev. Kristie Rubendunst

Moderator's Annual Report November 2022

North Congregational Church has continued to work through many challenges this past year. During the first two months of 2022, we relied on pulpit supply for Sunday worship. Much hard work was put into the effort of searching for a pastor starting in June 2021 and continuing into 2022. We were successful in calling Rev. Kristie Rubendunst as Designated Term Minister beginning in March. A special congregational meeting was called on March 6, 2022 to affirm the recommendation of council in calling Kristie to be the Designated Term Minister. The vote was unanimous. As this is Kristie's first call, she subsequently was ordained and became a member of the Litchfield North Association. In December 2021, we completed the sale of the parsonage to Pleasant Valley Children's Center.

Council has been able to continue the work of the church using online or in-person meetings. Each committee has been quite busy and the work of the past year is detailed in the following reports.

A huge thank you is due to the many volunteers who work so hard to make our church what it is. These same folks have been involved for many years. But these volunteers have other life stresses that make it necessary to cut back in their service to the church.

Over the next several months with Pastor Kristie's guidance, the congregation will be in conversation about the future of NCC. We strongly encourage everyone to be involved in this discernment process.

NCC is facing difficult decisions for the future; many folks are very attached to this place having been members for many years. We were very lucky to have received an unrestricted endowment that has allowed us to thrive for so long. But the funds are finite. At the current rate of withdrawal and the small amount of annual pledging, we cannot last more than a few more years.

Please pray about these questions: Why do you come to NCC? What is your vision for our future?

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Lachowicz, moderator

Stewardship and Finance Annual Report November 2022

The Church's annual 2022 budget meeting was held on November 14, 2021. The congregation was presented with a balanced budget for 2022, emphasizing the need to depend on the endowment to meet operating costs. The budget was approved unanimously. For the 2022 budget year, we received 9 pledges totaling \$12,060. Our pledge goal was \$22,000. Thank you letters to those who pledged were mailed in early January.

We worked with Pleasant Valley Children's Center to negotiate the sale of the parsonage. This involved splitting the property along the driveway. The property survey was done by Martin Post. The closing was held on 12/9/21 with net proceeds of \$98,946 deposited to the account at Wells Fargo.

In February, council approved a revised budget due to the salary negotiation with Kristie Rubendunst. This resulted in an increase of \$3151 to the pastor's budgeted compensation.

Proceeds from 2022 fund raising activities: the tag sale held in August netted over \$2200. Thank you to the Missions committee for organizing and running this event.

Council has decided to suspend the annual stewardship campaign for 2023. Pledge forms will not be mailed but all congregants will be encouraged to give generously to support the work of NCC as we strive to understand our purpose within the UCC.

- Account balances as of 12/31/2021
 - UCC trust funds: \$81,322; dividends \$1,441
 - Wells Fargo endowment: \$241,626
 - 2021 earnings: \$9,534
 - 2021 withdrawals: \$17,492
 - Wells Fargo restricted music fund: \$31,689;
 - earnings: \$1,946; withdrawals \$0

Account balances as of 09/30/2022 ○ UCC trust funds: \$74,620; dividends \$1,052
○ Wells Fargo Endowment: \$164,575

- ✦ 2022 YTD earnings: \$5,707
- ✦ 2022 YTD withdrawals: \$41,500
- Wells Fargo restricted music fund: \$27,970; earnings \$1,109; withdrawals \$0

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Lachowicz, endowment manager

Committee members: *Donna Howard*; *David McCunn*, Treasurer; *Susan Lachowicz*

**We wish to recognize and extend our thanks to families and individuals who
had submitted pledges for 2022:**

Anonymous

Fran Herman

Dave & Cecelia Hoffman

Donna Howard

Susan Lachowicz

David & Shirley McCunn

Rev. Kristie Rubendunst

Louise & Roy Van Alstyne

NCC 2023 Budget
October 1 to September 30

<u>North Congregational Church</u>	<u>2022 budget</u>	<u>2022 actual</u>	<u>2023 budget</u>
<u>Income</u>	\$ 53,265	\$ 75,963	\$ 92,985
Employee Withholding	\$ 360	\$ 1,494	\$ 1,510
CT Paid Leave	\$ 20	\$ 49	\$ 50
Life & Disability Insurance	\$ -	\$ 549	\$ 550
Medicare	\$ 60	\$ 77	\$ 80
Pension	\$ -	\$ 492	\$ 500
Social Security	\$ 280	\$ 328	\$ 330
Endowment Income	\$ 25,500	\$ 44,444	\$ 73,500
Endowment Transfer	\$ 24,000	\$ 42,800	\$ 72,000
UCC Dividends	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,644	\$ 1,500
Fund Raising	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,325	\$ 2,300
Tag Sale	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,325	\$ 2,300
Offering	\$ 22,200	\$ 25,039	\$ 15,000
General Fund	\$ 22,200	\$ 25,039	\$ 15,000
Missions	\$ 550	\$ -	\$ -
Food Banks	\$ 200	\$ -	\$ -
Missions (Other)	\$ 200	\$ -	\$ -
Neighbors In Need	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ -
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$ 100	\$ -	\$ -
Strengthen the Church	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ -
Property	\$ 2,555	\$ 1,835	\$ 575
Basement Rental	\$ 250	\$ 575	\$ 575
Hall Rental	\$ 300	\$ -	\$ -
Parsonage	\$ 1,725	\$ 1,260	\$ -
Sewer Share	\$ 280	\$ -	\$ -
Transfer from Savings	\$ -	\$ 800	\$ -
Worship	\$ 100	\$ 26	\$ 100
Fellowship	\$ -	\$ 26	\$ -
Flowers	\$ 100	\$ -	\$ 100
<u>Expense</u>	\$ (53,265)	\$ (80,129)	\$ (92,985)
Administration	\$ (600)	\$ (944)	\$ (946)
Office Expenses	\$ (500)	\$ (848)	\$ (850)
Website	\$ (100)	\$ (96)	\$ (96)
Compensation	\$ (7,815)	\$ (32,665)	\$ (56,305)
Federal Tax (Form 941)	\$ (2,200)	\$ (1,507)	\$ (1,600)
Minister Benefits	\$ -	\$ (19,378)	\$ (37,295)
Housing Allowance	\$ -	\$ (16,731)	\$ (30,000)
Life & Disability Insurance	\$ -	\$ (393)	\$ (1,788)
Pension (Annuity)	\$ -	\$ (633)	\$ (2,600)
Social Security & Medicare Offset	\$ -	\$ (1,621)	\$ (2,907)
Wages	\$ (5,600)	\$ (9,754)	\$ (17,360)
Minister	\$ -	\$ (4,462)	\$ (8,000)
Secretary	\$ (2,800)	\$ (2,912)	\$ (4,680)

NCC 2023 Budget
October 1 to September 30

<u>North Congregational Church</u>	<u>2022 budget</u>	<u>2022 actual</u>	<u>2023 budget</u>
Sexton	\$ (2,800)	\$ (2,380)	\$ (4,680)
Withholding	\$ (15)	\$ (2,026)	\$ (50)
CT Paid Leave	\$ (15)	\$ (49)	\$ (50)
Pension	\$ -	\$ (1,976)	\$ (500)
Dues	\$ (950)	\$ (850)	\$ (950)
Litchfield North Association	\$ (100)	\$ -	\$ (100)
Proportional Giving	\$ (850)	\$ (850)	\$ (850)
Insurance	\$ (800)	\$ (510)	\$ (800)
Workers Compensation	\$ (800)	\$ (510)	\$ (800)
Missions	\$ (1,150)	\$ (800)	\$ (800)
Charity	\$ (800)	\$ (800)	\$ (800)
Food Banks	\$ (200)	\$ -	\$ -
Neighbors In Need	\$ (25)	\$ -	\$ -
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$ (100)	\$ -	\$ -
Strengthen the Church	\$ (25)	\$ -	\$ -
Music	\$ (7,800)	\$ (6,175)	\$ (6,300)
Instrument Maintenance	\$ (300)	\$ -	\$ -
Substitute Musician	\$ (7,500)	\$ (6,175)	\$ (6,300)
Property	\$ (11,300)	\$ (15,581)	\$ (12,900)
Inspection	\$ (300)	\$ (531)	\$ (400)
Maintenance	\$ (1,000)	\$ (6,176)	\$ (2,000)
Property Insurance	\$ (8,000)	\$ (5,609)	\$ (8,000)
Snow Plowing	\$ (2,000)	\$ (3,265)	\$ (2,500)
Transfer to Savings	\$ -	\$ (2,750)	\$ -
Utilities	\$ (10,200)	\$ (14,172)	\$ (13,534)
Electricity	\$ (1,600)	\$ (1,927)	\$ (1,800)
Oil	\$ (7,000)	\$ (10,543)	\$ (10,414)
Propane	\$ (20)	\$ (20)	\$ (20)
Sewer	\$ (500)	\$ (131)	\$ -
Telephone/Internet	\$ (880)	\$ (1,055)	\$ (1,100)
Water	\$ (200)	\$ (496)	\$ (200)
Worship	\$ (12,650)	\$ (5,682)	\$ (450)
Confirmation & Baptism	\$ (50)	\$ -	\$ -
Fellowship	\$ -	\$ (172)	\$ (350)
Flowers	\$ (100)	\$ (111)	\$ (100)
Substitute Minister	\$ (12,500)	\$ (5,398)	\$ -
Honorarium	\$ (12,500)	\$ (4,556)	\$ -
Travel Allowance	\$ -	\$ (842)	\$ -
Bank Balance as of 9/30/21		\$ 4,547	
Bank Balance as of 9/30/22		\$ (381)	
<u>Difference</u>	\$ -	\$ 0	\$ -

Deacons' Annual Report 2022

At the beginning of this year, we continued services with a variety of excellent “pulpit supply” ministers. The deacons worked to provide these ministers with a template for worship services, to coordinate the service/bulletin preparation among minister, secretary and musician, and to act as lay readers during the services.

With other Council members, we participated in the work of creating a church profile, and were delighted when Kristie Rubendunst expressed interest in serving as our Designated Term Pastor. We witnessed her joyful ordination, then began the work of the transition period, as now Reverend Kristie Rubendunst entered her first “call” with NCC.

The deacons have assisted Rev. Kristie by orienting her to previous procedures, acquainting her with members and friends of NCC, and assisting with the planning of worship services, including our first “Blessing of the Bikes”. The deacons led a “Lectio Divina” service in August, which was well received.

Deacons have accompanied Rev. Kristie to meet a few of our members who are no longer able to attend worship due to health concerns.

During Lent, we hosted a small group gathering to discuss excerpts from the Kate Bowler book, *Good Enough*.

We welcomed new member Rebecca Glinsman.

Our prayer chain has continued to provide the important ministry of regularly praying for requests received from the congregation. The group is currently comprised of Sue Lachowicz, Cele Hoffman, Carol Beaudoin, Fran Herman, Angie Moore, Phyllis Rigby, Rev. Kristie, Rev. Yost and Shirley McCunn. New members are always welcome; if you would like to join, please contact Fran Herman.

We have begun a collaboration with Our Lady of Hope Parish to revive our Free Community Meal in October. The Parish has obtained a grant to cover meal costs, and will assist with the advertising, cooking, and other tasks.

We continue to give thanks for our small but caring church family, and for joys great and small. We trust that God will provide us with guidance for the path ahead so that we can continue to do God’s work in our corner of the world.

Respectfully submitted,
Fran Herman, chair of deacons

Personnel Committee Annual Report
November 2022

2022 brought a major change to NCC: the hiring of our Designated Term Minister, Kristie Rubendunst! Once Rev. Kristie was on board, the Personnel Committee worked to ease the transition by introducing her to existing church and office procedures and assisting with the integration of some new approaches that Rev. Kristie has initiated. Personnel assisted Rev. Kristie with her first employee evaluation and has worked to improve communications among staff members.

Our sexton, Kelly Holcomb, who currently works four hours a week, recently announced that she will be resigning. Rev. Kristie will initiate the search for a new sexton.

Our secretary, Suzanne Czerwinski, continues to be a valuable member of our staff. Her courteous and friendly demeanor, and flexibility during a period of transition from a succession of supply ministers to our Designated Term Minister is much appreciated!

Shirley McCunn has continued to grace our services with her beautiful and inspiring organ, keyboard and choir music. Shirley continues to work on a per service basis which allows her greater flexibility; substitute musicians have covered the services when Shirley was not present.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Herman, Chair and Deacon Representative

Music Committee Annual Report October 2022

Music committee: Sue Lachowicz, Clarence Moore, Theresa Moore, Fran Phelps

We have had services with music all year except for the summer services when members visited other churches. However, the choir was not able to participate until Easter because of Covid restrictions, and members are still singing with masks. In September two new members, Annmarie and Gene Janczak joined. Many thanks to the following singers:

Annmarie and Gene Janczak, Sue Lachowicz, Clarence, Kerissa and Theresa Moore, Fran Phelps and Phyllis Rigby

The choir has resumed Wednesday evening rehearsals at 7:00pm in addition to the before the service rehearsal at 9:00am. There is so much music to work on for future weeks that it is necessary to have the extra rehearsal. In addition there is no time restraint so it's possible to prepare more thoroughly. The choir looks forward to singing for the rest of the year. It is a joy to work with such an enthusiastic group of people who love to sing!

Many thanks also to our keyboard substitute, Holly McCann and our organ substitute Mary Pat Frederickson.

I am continuing to play the organ and rehearse the choir in my capacity as a substitute.

I also help Rev. Kristie select hymns that the congregation knows or could easily learn.

I am looking forward to a music filled year.

Respectfully submitted

Shirley McCunn
Organist/Choir Director

Trustees Annual Report
November 2022

This has been a difficult year again as the pandemic refuses to disappear. Inperson services have resumed but attendance has been low. The Fellowship Hall heating system has needed significant maintenance and repair.

List of Trustees for 2022/2023:

The list of Trustees has not changed since last year:

David Hoffman

Mark Perillo

David McCunn (chair)

Frank Owens

Accomplishments:

- Two Fellowship Hall oil tanks have been replaced for \$5200.
- Both oil burners have had their yearly service for \$930.
- Two leaking toilets have been repaired for \$46.
- The parsonage and church water and sewage bills have been separated since the parsonage was sold. The church no longer has a sewage charge.
- The annual plowing contract was reviewed. Prices haven't changed in years. The total cost was \$3265 for last season.
- See Treasurer Report for details of the \$13,894 yearly utility costs. Most of this was for oil.
- The church basement Bilco door has been repaired.
- Cleanup weekend has *not* been scheduled this year.
- The basement has been used for storing tag sale items as well as rented space for the Farmington Valley Band music (\$575 income).
- Two dehumidifiers have been installed in the basement.
- Many thanks to Frank who volunteered to mow the lawn all summer.
- Plans to paint all four bathrooms in Fellowship Hall have been put in place. Work not expected to start until November. Cost estimate to not exceed \$1000. Thanks to Rebecca for her support.

Respectfully submitted,
David McCunn
Trustee Chair/Treasurer

**MISSIONS AND OUTREACH
ANNUAL REPORT NOVEMBER 2022**

2022 Membership: Gail Embrey, Donna Howard (chair), Jane King, Shirley McCunn, Karen Murray, Mary Wilson.

Financial Contributions. Our congregation's contributions this year include:

UCC Special Offerings:

Christmas Fund (Veterans of the Cross)	\$ 0.00
Neighbors in Need	\$48.00
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$ 0.00

Local and International Donations:

Back Bay Mission (UCC Ministry in Biloxi)	\$150.00
Susan B. Anthony Project	\$150.00
Heifer International (international mission)	\$150.00
Ecad.org (Winsted-training for service dogs)	\$150.00

Budget: Our budget is \$800 this year for Missions projects.

Activities (alphabetically arranged!):

Covenant to Care: Our commitment and offers to help continue but we have not been contacted by Torrington DCF personnel with their list of children needing our support. We hope their 2022 Christmas gift list will be coming soon, since the whole church enjoyed giving teens gift cards in 2021.

Food Collection: The church continues to support the Open Door but Pleasant Valley Food Bank has closed indefinitely. Cele and Dave Hoffman continue food collection.

Knitting Ministry: No requests for prayer shawls or baptismal blankets but we have a supply of both on hand. If you know of someone suffering a life-threatening illness or of a child who will be baptized soon in our church, please contact Donna.

Missions Retreat: Due to fears of COVID-19, in place of a full-day retreat, on June 15 we shared a delicious dinner at Old Riverton Inn. We each invited a guest or two to join us. We plan to do this again.

Peach Fest: Cancelled again this year.

Tag Sale/Rummage Sale: The sale was on July 15 and 16. Once again Missions ladies rose to the challenge and had a lot of fun. We earned around \$2300 for the General Fund and Missions

savings account. Unsold items went to San Juan Center in Hartford for their thrift shop and to non-profit thrift shops in Winsted. Special kudos to Dave Hoffman and Marty Post for days of schlepping carloads of stuff. Heartfelt thanks to those who donated items (especially to the “downsizing” couple who went to our church years ago, then saw our press release in the Waterbury Republican and gave us all their estate sale extras). Your love for our church and community really shines!

Blessings,

Donna Howard, Missions Chair

Fellowship
Annual Report November 2022

Purchases: \$314.50

Donations: \$ 43.50 Cash

Food collected for food bank: 867 lbs.

Committee members: Cele Hoffman, Chairperson
Dave Hoffman, Rebecca Glinsman, Theresa Moore

This is my annual report for November 2022.
Cele Hoffman, Chairperson

Christian Education
Annual Report 2022

It has been an interesting two years for Christian Education. We as a committee stepped up to help when our last chairperson left. In May 2021 we welcomed a new student [REDACTED]. I enjoyed working with [REDACTED] until I had a much unexpected stroke in September 2021. To let you know what a devoted group we have, the classes were taken up immediately by Donna Howard and Mark Perillo.

When I returned after seven months I joined [REDACTED] and Mark. On the last day of the teaching year [REDACTED] was presented with a plant which is the tradition in our church. For the Fall Curriculum we will be using "Weekly Bible Readings" given to us by the Congregational Church in Torrington where my son and his family attend.

We are dedicated to teaching our young people about our Lord and His love and care. When I cannot be here on a Sunday be assured someone will be here for all the children.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Embrey
Donna Howard
Mark Perillo