



**2017 ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT**

**June 1, 2016 - May 31, 2017**

**Special Congregational Meeting -**

**June 4, 2017**

*41 Central Street  
Andover, Massachusetts 01810  
[www.southchurch.com](http://www.southchurch.com)*

*South Church in Andover*  
*United Church of Christ*  
**2017 ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT**  
**June 1, 2016 - May 31, 2017**

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## *Report of the Moderator*

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South Church was recently honored for being one of the most “Vital Churches” by the MA Conference of the UCC. By what metrics was vitality defined? Strong attendance in worship, confirmation classes or new member sessions? A solid balance sheet supported by a highly developed, professional Giving program? Yes, we can check those boxes.

But what about a robust adult education program helping members deepen their faith by learning the craft of sermon writing? Or the 7th and 8th grade Sunday School class that dared to forgo a traditional curriculum and instead engage the students in an experiential-based learning program that had them tackling concepts like homelessness and engaging in community service? A leap into technology that gave us a weekly podcast by our pastors and multiple entry points to church via audio or video wherever you are, any time during the week? A Welcoming effort that is thinking about how to not just make people feel welcome when they visit, but striving to incorporate them into the life of the church after they join?

Perhaps it is the recently formed Social Justice Coalition who gathers each Sunday morning to explore faith-based engagement in the social justice issues of our time. Yes, it is the team of adult volunteers who spend 2 afternoons a week with the children of the Hancock Courts after school program in Lawrence, helping with homework, playing and serving as mentors and role models. The ways the Giving Garden Ministry is feeding the hungry but also creating connections between South Church and other faith and community groups.

The Deacons who beside their visible participation in worship, care for our congregation behind the scenes with love, visits and prayer. Singers and musicians who gift the beauty of their voices and instruments in ways traditional and contemporary. The volunteers who keep our phones and computers running, arrange and deliver flowers each week, train the acolytes, make the sound system work, and count the collection. The Fellowship committee who produced our own miracle of the loaves and fishes by serving hundreds at the Advent and Lenten brunches, not to mention all the pancakes flipped, coffee brewed and treats provided throughout the year.

The Trustees who faithfully work with church leaders to build a budget that lets us achieve our mission and ministry goals while being faithful stewards of our buildings and grounds. The Green Team teaching us to save money and the earth with LED bulbs and solar panels. The 60+ youth and adults that went on the mission trip, led by a Youth Board who actually makes church cool for teenagers. An office staff who keeps the train running, sure, but also engage in the faith life of our church, spending hours praying the hundreds of written prayers offered by the congregation this year.

THESE, I propose, are ways South Church is vital.

This good work is possible because hundreds of you step up and contribute, be it ad-hoc or as part of a board or committee. As Moderator, I have the joy of presiding over the monthly Council meeting where we oversee the activities of the church and share ideas, hammer out solutions to problems and reflect on how we are answering God’s call. I can report that you were well-served this year by a Council of smart, faithful, hard-working people who gave their all so that South Church could engage in so much vital work and on behalf of the entire congregation, we thank you. Looking forward to the ways the Holy Spirit leads us to vitality in the year ahead.

With gratitude for the honor of serving as your Moderator,

*Kate Jagger*

## *Report of the Senior Pastor*

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This past year at South Church we have focused on the theme of “home.” We began the year with a sermon series exploring the theological concept of “Finding a True Home.” And during Lent, our church devotional shared a wide-range of reflections on the idea of home as a sanctuary, as a landing dock, as a launching pad, as a safe place.

I think Steve Longo said it well in his Lenten reflection when he referred to the church as a harbor -- a community we return to when we need comfort, connection, and nourishment. But once we are refreshed and renewed, we go back to do God’s work in the world. Steve also shared one of his favorite quotes by William GT Shedd: “*A ship is safe in harbor, but that’s not what ships are for.*”

Undoubtedly, South Church is a steamship of a church. We do not make quick and nimble turns, but we are also not meant to stay put. We’re called for the wide open seas, where the water might get choppy and the seas might be rough. Jesus calls us to “put out into deep water” (Luke 5:4).

As your Senior Pastor, I’ve had the privilege of witnessing the ways we’ve courageously put our oars in the water this year:

- Throughout the year, we’ve had the privilege to learn from our student minister, Jennifer Murray. We formed a Teaching Parish Committee (TPC) to offer her support and feedback. And we’ve partnered with Hancock United Church of Christ to offer contextual learning classes for our students in partnership with Andover Newton Theological School.
- We navigated the tumultuous post-election world, by creating a Social Justice Coalition, which has met weekly since November. The group has more than 80 people on their email distribution list, which stretches beyond South Church to the surrounding interfaith communities and seeks to be a voice of social justice and advocacy in the local and national setting.
- In January, Church Council launched a Strategic Planning Taskforce to begin to create a process for visioning and planning for the next 3-5 years. The taskforce is hoping to begin listening sessions with the congregation this fall.
- Over 4 months, we engaged in intentional study and hard conversation around selling the Lupine Road parcel of land to Andover Community Trust (ACT) for affordable housing. On May 7th, our congregation voted by an overwhelming majority to sell the parcel of land and begin visioning for partnerships with ACT and Habitat.
- This spring, we received the recognition of one of the “most vital churches” in the Massachusetts Conference by the Church Development Council. In addition, at the Tri-State Annual meeting in June, South Church will be awarded as a “Bold and Courageous” congregation.

As I look towards next year, I pray that we live into the recognitions of “most vital” and “bold and courageous.” This is not a time to rest on our laurels and stay safe in the harbor. This is a time to trust that God has equipped us with what we need for the voyage ahead, even if we don’t know where we’re headed yet. I pray that we continue to put our oars in the water and set our eyes on the hope that is on the horizon.

Finally, thank you for the privilege that it is to be your Senior Pastor. As I prepare for maternity leave, I’m aware of how much joy and fulfillment ministry at South Church brings to my life. Thank you for being a home and a harbor for my growing family. I’m so grateful.

*Dana Allen Walsh*

## ***Report of the Associate Pastor***

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I'll admit: As I began to plan our second year in ministry together last summer, I was a bit worried. I wondered what our year would look like when everything I had to share with you didn't offer the novelty of "newness." What would it feel like to continue doing many of the things we began together last year, as opposed to creating new ministries? To my great delight, what I found was far more than I could have imagined.

The gift of more time together has allowed the faith formation opportunities that we began last year – such as Theology on Tap and the Caregivers group – to grow in depth. A second year has created space for true vulnerability and relationship building around common experiences. Of course, I've found the same to be true in my one-on-one relationships, too. Through every conversation in fellowship hour to a cup of coffee at Caffe Nero, God has allowed our relationship to grow in such a way that I might be a better pastor to each and every one of you. I give thanks to God for that every day.

While our year together felt more about settling-in than beginning something new, I'm excited by some of the new things we tried together this year, too – including the Men's Breakfast Group and our weekly podcast, Standing Under the Word. Early in the year, a diverse group of South Church men were intentionally invited to begin meeting on a regular basis for the purposes of fellowship and mutual personal growth. I'm grateful for the ways they've committed to this ministry and opened their hearts to how God might be working through them. I look forward to continuing to build similar ministries in the years ahead. (Let me know if you're interested in helping!) If you haven't subscribed to our podcast yet, I hope you'll ask me how. Each week, we make Sunday's sermon easily available for listening on the go or while you're driving. Additionally, each sermon comes with a "talkback" episode where I sit down with the preacher to talk about the text, their sermon, and anything else that comes to mind. If you haven't listened to it yet – give it a try! If you have, share it with your friends and family.

With our second year together almost finished, I give thanks that life isn't made up of first years. I'm grateful that there is more to relationship than the excitement of "newness." I'm comforted that every new year – every new movement, even - provides another opportunity for roots to grow deeper and stronger. Thank you for another year of life-giving ministry together.

*Love, Alex*

## ***Report of the Minister of Visitation***

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The past 6 years with you have confirmed the call I felt when accepting this part time position in March 2010.

My primary responsibilities continue to be in the area of pastoral care. The official job description is to assist the Senior Pastor and represent the Senior Pastor and South Church in visitation and in assisting with the coordination of pastoral care and visiting needs. This involves visits to hospitals, nursing homes and member's homes. I also work in collaboration with the Deacon's care and Calling Committee.

Some of the highlights of this past year have included –

- Assisting with Sunday Worship Services
- Serving as staff liaison to the Board of World Service and attending their monthly meetings
- Coordinating and leading the September Edgewood Worship Service
- Facilitating the Prayer Partners Ministry, our own South Church Intercessory Prayer Group
- Knitting with the Prayer Shawl Ministry
- Participating in the South Church Choir and other small musical groups on special occasions
- Leading a weekly Bible study/support group for South Church women

- Visiting and praying with you in the hospital, nursing homes, in your homes and by phone

It has been my privilege to serve you and with you in the ministry of South Church this past year. A special word of thanks goes to Dana Allen Walsh and Alex Shea Will for their support and encouragement. It has truly been a joy to be a part of the outstanding and caring staff and to have my life touched in such tender ways by the congregation of this beloved church.

Your sister in Christ, *Sherry Tupper*

## ***Report of the Minister of Spiritual Formation***

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*The infant's delicate forehead a beacon of promise,  
his perfect human face, all that we are depends on him,  
her stare from another world, her great, unblinking eyes so new to earth.  
The miraculous one keeps rising among us.  
Now do we turn and rush to prepare the way.*

*Anthony Piccione  
Crow Hill Farm, New York*

We are called to prepare the way of Christ, whose light becomes manifest in all children, each one so full of potential, curiosity and reverence, open to receiving God's love and giving it back. What a joy it is to experience a little God time together with the children, to dream and ponder deep questions, share personal faith experiences, to worship, serve and have fun together!

Through my ministry with you at South Church, I am also blessed to be working with so many adults who care deeply about the faith and welfare of our children and youth! Do you know how blessed you all are by their passionate service? The CE Board is continually hatching new ideas, all our Sunday School teachers are coming back to teach again next year, and we've just completed our second fantastic year of offering "Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education" for 8<sup>th</sup> graders. But our family ministry leaders can't do it all alone. My challenge to the whole congregation is this . . . How will you covenant and support the kids, their families and teachers next year? How will you prepare the way for the so that Christ's light can thrive and grow ever brighter?

This past year, I encouraged the Board of Christian Education to collaborate with other Board and Committees to make more of our church events/worship services/faith formation classes accessible and meaningful for a wide range of age groups, especially families with young children. These included, the Harvest Dinner, Giving Dinner, Advent Wreath Event, Ash Wednesday Dinner Worship, Lenten Spiritual Practice Workshops, Palm Sunday Brunch & Easter Egg Hunt and Celebration Sunday Worship/All Church Picnic. Faith formation is strengthened when all ages are able to worship, learn, serve and have fun together – a rare thing in our age segregated society – and over and over again, families tell us that they feel a real sense of home here.

I also launched a weekly newsletter, "Terry's Take" designed to keep families current on Sunday happenings, upcoming family events, faith reflections and spiritual practice tips.

Next year's goals include:

Increase family connections through

- Small group get-togethers in homes
- Family coffee hours
- Special "field trips"
- Family bible/book group
- Parenting for Faith Forum
- Work toward a Family Retreat

*In joy and gratitude, Terry Ebner*

## ***Report of the Youth Coordinator***

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I'm so frequently grateful to be in this role and to be a part of this church. This year has been a year of growth, learning and change in our youth program. This year we've discovered deeper community, made up new games and grown in faith together.

The high school youth group met on the first Sunday of every month from 6-8:30. We would have times of reflection, worship, play and fellowship. We broke bread together at the beginning of each meeting through pot luck suppers, pizza dinners and more. Throughout the rest of the year our high schoolers participated in service projects, a camping trip, overnight retreats and fundraisers, put on an amazing Cupid's Cabaret, spent ten days on a life changing mission trip and are gearing up for a summer of service and fellowship through South Church's Summer of Service program!

The middle school youth group meets every Wednesday. They dig into scripture together, play loud and exciting games and share their lives. They've been on a fall retreat, a winter retreat and a fall mission trip this year. Katie Holden, who led the mission trip for our middle schoolers, took them to Rangeley, Maine for a weekend of service and fellowship.

It has been an absolute joy to serve as the Youth Coordinator for this group of wild, loving, lovely teens and preteens. Each week I get to witness the ways that God's love can and does change lives. I can't wait to see what the 2017-2018 program year brings our way!

In Peace and Love,

*Jennifer Murray*

## ***Report of the Music Director***

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It has been an honor to serve South Church's music ministry over the past year. As a veteran of South Church but a newcomer to the post of Minister of Music, I have greatly appreciated all of the feedback and participation I have received from this community in my first year, and I hope that the music program at South Church will continue to grow and thrive into the 2017-2018 calendar year.

I would especially like to thank the members of this year's Music Committee, who have been my support team throughout the year. Nancy Miller, Donna Schroeder, Chris Boehmer, Candy Dann, Susan Big, and Rachel Longo have served faithfully and supportively, and I thank them for giving their time and effort to the betterment of such a vital music program. We also celebrate the life and mourn the passing of our seventh committee member, Glen Macon, who departed from this life earlier in 2017.

South Church maintains a large and vibrant music program that strives to speak to the spiritual needs of its congregation. We are a *singing congregation*, and I find joy every time I hear the enthusiastic sound of voices raised in a favorite hymn or anthem. I have made every effort this year to ascertain that this music program connects with the worship of this church and nourishes the needs of our Christian (or spiritual/questioning) souls. Our anthems follow a diverse repertory of old and new favorites from traditions as old as 11<sup>th</sup>-century plainchant and as new as world premiere original compositions written for this very church.

The quality and diversity of the musical groups at South Church is simply outstanding. The experience and ability of the 20-30 voice Sanctuary Choir is only the beginning. Their repertoire spans centuries of music from all different traditions around the world, and it is not unusual for a service at South Church to find the Sanctuary Choir singing both a traditional English anthem and a brand-new contemporary gospel piece. The Youth Choir, whose membership has been from 6-10 girls and boys over the course of the year, enjoys a similar diversity of repertoire as the Sanctuary Choir, and they have shown a remarkable amount of talent this year with their ability to sing in multiple-part harmonies, both a cappella and accompanied, both



with music and memorized. The Musical Cherubs, who have maintained an enthusiastic group similar in size to our Youth Choir, have learned dozens of new songs over the course of the year and love singing their hearts out.

South Church has also maintained a small but talented group of handbell players that make up our Jubilation Ringers. They have learned a number of new ringing techniques this year and have performed a diverse array of repertoire throughout the season. It serves as a good reminder that many of our fantastic ringers are relatively new to handbells, and we encourage others to come and try this wonderfully satisfying way of making music—and all you have to do is count and swing!

The Pentecostal Pickers have continued to have a wonderful presence in worship music at South Church this year. This collaborative group plays worship music from the popular and folk traditions, and we are blessed to have a number of seasoned—and extremely talented—musicians that make that group a very special presence in our worship experiences. In addition to playing the music that you hear one Sunday a month, the Pickers are songwriters, arrangers, and encyclopedic folk/popular musicologists in their own right. Most of the songs we play are original arrangements, and many are original compositions from members in the group.

In addition to our in-house ensembles, we continue to maintain a large instrument collection at South Church. The Sanctuary organ is a 3-manual tracker pipe organ that was built by George Bozeman, Jr. and Co. We continue to use our Steinway grand piano on most Sunday mornings. There are 6 pianos used regularly at South Church that are tuned by Robert Baughman, who (believe it or not) was your Minister of Music's jazz piano teacher at Phillips Academy. We are also blessed to have string, wind, and brass players among us, as well as pianists, organists, and vocal soloists, and I would especially like to thank Brian Diehl and Peter Cirelli for their longtime support as members of our Christmas and Easter brass ensembles.

Our organ continues to be maintained by Mr. George Bozeman Jr, the same individual who built it in its current condition. After a few minor cipher issues that were occurring at the end of last summer, Mr. Bozeman returned the organ to fantastic working order, and the instrument has continued to thrive this year.

I thank everyone that has participated in the music program this year, and I also thank those of you who love the music enough to tell those of us making music how we are doing. Music is meant to feed our souls and bring us closer to God in our worship experiences, and this is something that we achieve together. That is why I will close this report the way I begin every Sanctuary Choir rehearsal, with the RSCM choristers' prayer:

*Bless, O Lord, us thy servants who minister in thy temple. Grant that what we sing with our lips, we may believe in our hearts; and what we believe in our hearts, we may show forth in our lives. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*

Faithfully submitted, *Jeffrey P. Cutts, Jr.*

## ***Report of the Board of Christian Education***

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2016/2017 was an exciting year for the Board of Christian Education. This report will capture some of the highlights including: shift in focus, Sunday School Classes, Core events & Programs, New events & Collaborations and well as Communications.

### **Youth and Family Focus**

The Board of Christian Education (CE) began the 2016/2017 year with a visit from Sr. Pastor, Rev. Dana Allen Walsh, to discuss the evolution in focus of the CE board. The discussion helped clarify CE's shifting role in education within South Church from education for all ages to a more targeted focus on young families with children infant to 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

South Church is blessed to have talented and loving staff members share the role of education and spiritual development to cover all demographics. Jenn Murray, Youth Program Coordinator/Student Minister, helps with education and spiritual development of our middle school & high school age

youth. Associate Pastor, Rev. Alex Shea Will along with Sr. Pastor, Rev. Dana Allen Walsh, focus on education and spiritual development for adults within South Church. Terry Ebner, Minister of Spiritual Formation, with the support of the CE board, focuses on nurturing the development of faith and involvement of children and young families within South Church.

### **Sunday School**

South Church Sunday school classes remain the core component of education and spiritual development for our youth. The board's first task of the year is to recruit teachers to volunteer to help with one of our identified classes (Pre K/K, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>). Each year CE aims for at least 4 teachers per class to ensure our teachers have some Sunday time in worship throughout the year and to provide our youth with a variety of teaching styles and perspectives.

In addition to Sunday school classes, in the past few years CE board has integrated variations to classroom learning into our youth programs. Included are: Family worship Sundays in which our youth remain in worship, Fun Day Sunday in which all classes combine for larger program/activities, and Sunday School Worship in the Chapel where our youth have their own special service. All programs provide our youth different learning environments to nurture their developing faith and understanding of our church family.

New in the 2016/2017 year was a shift in the format for our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade classroom, blending standard classroom activities with guest speakers and experiences/service learning. This was a nice mix of learning styles to get the class ready for High School & Youth Groups. Students and parents liked the new format and CE hopes to continue this blended learning opportunity in the coming years.

### **Core Events & Programs**

CE continued to support core events & programs for our youth and young families in the 2016/2017 year including Homecoming, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade bible breakfast, Advent Wreath Making, Family Christmas Eve Service/Pageant, Family Holy week, and participation in the All Church Picnic and outreach mission/fundraising. Each event provided a fun learning opportunity for our youth and young families to meet and connect with our South Church family. Outreach efforts in 2016/2017 enabled our kids to feel good about giving by providing Salem Animal Rescue League both supplies and money needed to continue their great work.

### **New Events & Collaborations**

CE took on a new challenge in 2016/2017 to collaborate with other boards on events to make them more family friendly and inclusive for youth and young families. Successes this year included Trunk or Treat, Harvest Dinner, Mardi Gras/Ash Wednesday & Palm Sunday Brunch. Trunk or treat enabled kids to get in costume, families to decorate their cars and kids of all ages to give/receive candy right in our very own South Church Parking lot. Harvest dinner incorporated pasta making and scarecrow building activities for kids and families, Mardi Gras/Ash Wednesday had youth choir, mask making and pancakes for dinner (yum), Palm Sunday Brunch marked the return of the Easer Egg Hunt for kids and a brief appearance by the Easter Bunny. CE hopes to continue these successes and seek new collaborations in the coming years.

### **Communications**

At the beginning of the 2016/2017 year Terry Ebner answered the call to strengthen the communication about all of the wonderful opportunities South Church has to offer with "Terry's Take", a family focused weekly newsletter providing content and programming updates targeting youth and young families.

Lastly, CE closed the year with a proposal to rename itself to align with shifting focus of the Board. The proposal is to change the name from the Board of Christian Education to the Board of Family Ministries.

*Respectfully submitted, Shad Flaig Chair*

*Debbie Arbo, Heather Abourjaily, Jen Beers, James Bossieux, Susan Connors, Jay Hudak, Serena Manning, Emily Strong*

## *Report of the Board of Deacons*

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In Acts chapter six, we read of the twelve disciples appointing seven of the brethren (“full of the Spirit and wisdom”) to take care of physical needs of the growing church family, so the twelve could devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word. The Board of Deacons at South Church lives into this tradition, sharing as yoke brothers and sisters with our pastors in the care of those in need, welcoming of new members of all ages, faith formation through our Lenten booklet and oversight of our worship.

It has been a privilege and an honour to serve as your Senior Deacons for a second and final year. We have been constantly amazed at the energy, enthusiasm and imagination of our pastors, Dana and Alex, and are grateful for the gifts and hard work that each member of the Board has brought to South Church this year.

At each of our meetings, in addition to hearing reports of the activities of the subcommittees and council, and considering other business to do with the spiritual life of the church, the board receives reports from the pastors. This latter function provides a critical sounding board through which the pastors can receive feedback from the past month’s ministry and seek advice and guidance on new ideas and proposals as they pertain to our spiritual life together. This is a vital part of the Board’s responsibility for which it serves as a representative body for the wider church.

### **Care and Calling**

The Care and Calling subcommittee coordinates outreach to those in need in our congregation and community, whether it is visiting members in hospital or who are unable to attend worship, or providing meals or rides as needed. Each of the Deacons has at least one Care and Calling partner with whom they visit regularly.

This year, the subcommittee organized leaf raking as part of the annual day of service and the delivery to poinsettias at Christmas and Spring flowers at Easter to the home-bound and Edgewood residents. The committee also scheduled weekly flower delivery and the “meal train”, an online planning and scheduling food delivery service to those recovering from operations or severe illness. This year, the care and calling ministry entered the digital age by adopting Trello as the principle means of tracking our caring activities. The care and calling subcommittee consists of Donna Kelley, Susan Sleight, Dot Tyler and is chaired by Glenn Rogers.

### **Confirmation**

This year, 15 confirmands have met regularly to explore their faith journeys, led by Jenn Murray, and deacons Donna Stewart and Chris Williams. With a high attendance at each class, the confirmands engaged in a faithful exploration of faith, worship, grace, God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The class emphasized learning to talk comfortably about subjects related to faith and church and also focused on learning to pray and opportunities for prayers. Each confirmand led the class in an oral closing prayer at the end of each session. These lessons about prayer were also used to compose the opening prayer for Sunday worship services, which confirmands wrote and delivered during the second half of the year. In the first half of the year, they practiced speaking from the pulpit by leading the congregation in the responsive Call to Worship portion of the service.

Service to the community, both local and in the wider world, is also a large focus of the Confirmation program. The confirmands served at CityReach overnight in Boston, where they worked with and learn from Boston’s homeless community. The class worked together to create and lead one of the monthly South Church services at Edgewood. Most of the class went on the Mission Trip to John’s Island, which many saw as the highlight of the year and a time when they experienced the love of God and the power of the Holy Spirit working through them. The culmination of the year was confirmation Sunday, on May 21<sup>st</sup>, in which the confirmands created and led the service.

## **Lenten Booklet**

The Lenten Booklet has been a feature of the devotional life of South Church for over 20 years. This year the theme selected was “Finding Home”, following the “home” theme that council adopted for this year. Over forty submissions were received, a third of which came from new contributors. The ages of the contributors ranged from youth to seniors, though youth contributions were significantly increased this year. The devotional readings were distributed daily by e-mail and as a hardcopy for those who preferred that format. Feedback from the congregation indicated that this year’s booklet was particularly well received.

The cover of the booklet, which was a painting by Frank Brescia, told a particularly poignant story. After meeting Frank at Common Art (a program of Ecclesia Ministries, Inc.) a couple of years ago, one of our deacons bought the painting that she had watched him create. Frank, his paintings, his talent, his fortitude and his strong spirit were joyfully discussed at our February Deacons meeting. In March, we received the news of his tragic and untimely death and were filled with a deep sadness. We are grateful that he touched our lives and offered our story along with a donation in his honor to Ecclesia Ministries, Inc.

This year the booklets were printed “in house” with just the covers being printed at Minuteman Press - a big thank you to Linda Hacker for all her help with the printing of the booklet. The Lenten booklet subcommittee consists of Laurie Brosnan, Evonne Yang and is chaired by Dave Floreen.

## **Worship**

The most visible part of the Deacon’s role is in our worship, whether it is in serving communion, greeting at the front and back doors or reading scripture from the pulpit. We are grateful to the deacons who have faithfully served in these roles over the past year and particularly grateful to Donna Stewart who has managed the ever-changing schedule. The worship subcommittee serves as a resource and partner to the pastors, staff and congregation which goes far beyond our weekly Sunday worship. It is through this subcommittee that our liaison with the Music Committee occurs and it is this group that also ensures that we have readers, liturgy leaders and greeters at the various special services during the year. The worship subcommittee consists of Barbara Stubenhaus, Mark Bohrer and is chaired by Linda Zimmerman.

## **Welcome and Membership**

The welcome and membership subcommittee assists our Pastors in welcoming new members into the life of South Church and explores new way to further extend our welcome. This subcommittee also serves as the primary liaison with the *ad hoc* welcome group. The primary role is to organize new member classes, of which there were two this year. Each class now consists of three sessions after church on Sunday, which explore faith journeys, South Church and UCC polity and an additional class, led by Alex, which explores the theology of the UCC. The classes conclude with a potluck dinner prior to the new members joining the church.

This year there were two new member classes – one in the Fall from which 24 new members joined the church and the second in the Spring, when 9 new members joined. We are particularly grateful to Donna Kelley who hosted both potluck dinners for our new members. The Welcome and Membership subcommittee consists of Becky Cutts and Mike Bronder, assisted by William Wood.

Apart from our regular business, the Board has also considered other matters, including the conclusion of our plans from the church banner and notice board (both in progress), training in visitation, which was ably provided by Jenn Murray, consideration of theologically appropriate adornment of the wall behind the pulpit in the sanctuary (see the recent Buzz) and preparation of Dana’s review.

Respectfully submitted,

*William Wood and Fran Healey, Sr. Deacons.*

*Mark Bohrer, Mike Bronder, Laurie Brosnan, Marge Chiafery, Becky Cutts, Dave Floreen, Donna Kelley, Susan Sleight, Donna Stewart, Barbara Stubenhaus, Dot Tyler, Chris Williams, Evonne Yang and Linda Zimmerman*

## *Report of the Board of Women's Ministries*

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The Board of Women's Ministries focuses on the needs of women in our congregation and in the greater Andover community. Resources are derived from an endowment to the BOWM from the Trustees of the Trust Fund, from fundraising efforts, and from specific requests made to the congregation for assistance. The board considers both traditional events, and new relationships to address emerging needs.

This year, the Board of Women's Ministries projects and activities included:

- Organizing a successful blood drive at South Church.
- Baking hundreds of cookies for our annual holiday cookie sale, which raised over \$1000.
- Supporting the trip to the Boston Women's March through both attendance and funds toward the bus charter (although participation was so strong, our subsidy was returned).
- Serving as a resource and support to women in the church; connecting people with a welcoming network. BOWM also assisted with the transition of events formerly under the "Women's Connection" umbrella into independent small group gatherings or BOWM events.
- Participating in the planning and organization of the annual Women's Retreat at the Miramar Retreat Center in Duxbury. In addition, we covered 100% of scholarship needs, coordinated registration, and contributed toward supplies to defray the cost.
- Sponsoring, collaborating on, or assisting with various church-wide events, including the Giving Dinner, Time and Talent Fair, Harvest Dinner, and the Church Picnic.
- Establishing a new relationship with the women's programs at Lowell House in Tewksbury. The BOWM made a substantial donation to a fund that assists women with the cost of transitioning into the sober house. In addition, we held a shopping outing to purchase a number of "wish list" items for women in the recovery home.
- Donating flowers in celebration of women – an annual tradition.

The responsibility for making decisions about trust money is never taken lightly. The work of the BOWM ranges from highly visible activities to quiet moments of sharing God's light with others; we are grateful for the opportunity to serve the congregation and the community in both ways.

*Suzie Henderson, Chair;*

*Diane Morris, Treasurer; Rashida Mack, Secretary; Deanna Atchison, Rachel Cloutier Mary Beth Fahey, Linda Mesler, Nancy Schmehl*

## *Report of the Youth Board*

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The Board of Youth Ministry consisting of 12 adult members and 4 youth members with our youth coordinator and spiritual guide, Jenn Murray, completed a successful year filled with youth activities, fundraisers, fellowship, and service to the wider community. It is a great joy to work with and support the youth of the church as we all grow in faith. Here are some highlights from our year:

Summer of Service program – Three weeks of service and learning at non-profit groups in the local community and Boston with fun and games as well for middle school through high school youth. Older high school youth also lead as counselors.

High School Retreat – Camping in Harold Parker. Games, cooking supper, fellowship, and worship in the woods.

Apple Pie Bake - A fun evening for youth prepping apples and making crisps and pies. Sale of baked goods supports the youth mission trip.

Middle School Mission Trip to Rangeley, Maine - New this year! Katie Holden created this event as part of her Girl Scout Gold Award project. The middle school youth and adult chaperones traveled to Rangeley, Maine over Veteran's Day weekend. Also new, a cake-walk fundraiser with cakes created by the middle school youth supported this event.

Los Amigos Tree - Christmas gifts for children in need provided by the congregation, and a fun youth shopping and gift wrapping event.

Cupid's Cabaret - Youth planned the skits and musical offerings and also served dessert, tea and coffee for an uplifting night and fundraiser for the youth mission trip.

Hand to Hand Craft Fair - This event coordinated by Emily O'Hara has become an annual event in support of the youth. The fair brings others in the community into our church and into conversation, as well as raising funds for youth activities. Youth and adults display and sell their creations.

South Church Players musical, Wizard of Oz - The youth helped build the set and sold concessions at intermission.

High School Mission Trip to Johns Island, South Carolina - Annual pilgrimage over April Break. Over 60 people, high school youth and adults went on the trip this year. Transformational and energizing.

Care Packages for South Church College Freshman - an encouraging note and shoebox filled with snacks and fun items is packed and mailed to youth during finals.

Weekly Middle School Youth Group

Monthly High School Youth Group

Faithfully,

*Christina Curtin & Susan Henke, Co-chairs*

*Mark Aude, Debbie Bohrer, Brenda Bryan, Rachel Combs, Greg Galat, Seth Holden, Lynne McDonald, Lysanne LaPierre, Julie Prentiss, Charlie Ziegenbein*

*Youth Members: Faolan Curtin-Orsmond, Katie Holden, Caroline Jagger, Matt Joyall,*

## ***Report of the Fellowship Committee***

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The new Fellowship year started off with a beautifully sunny fall day for punch at the Parsonage on 9/18/16. Along with the usual cheese and crackers, desserts, cookies, fruit and sweet drinks, we welcomed in our new Minister of Music, Jeffrey Cutts Jr. with a decorated cake.

Our next big event was the traditional Ham and Bean supper at the end of day of service 11/5/16. That went well. People liked the home made beans and the sharing of the day's stories and photos. If there was one curiosity, it was that one pan of macaroni and cheese went missing, disappointing Laurie Sorota, who was certain she had cooked another pan of mac and cheese. More on this later.

From a food service technical perspective, one major highlight had to be fixing the dishwasher. It had been noted that the dishwasher rinse temperature was not reaching the minimum requirement of 180F for proper sanitation. It was this way from the start. Yet the original purchasers did their homework and bought a sturdy reliable Insinger dishwasher with a built in hot water booster for the rinse water. Why was it not working? Out came the tools. After a thorough inspection and some head scratching, members of Trustees and Fellowship figured out that the control wiring to the booster heater was never connected. So, like a bomb expert in reverse, we connected the blue wire, and miraculously the booster heater came to life, and rinse water temp shot right up to 180F. But a few weekends later, the dishwasher blew a fuse.

Fortunately Tim Osirsky and Wayne Shaw looked more deeply into why the water booster was not connected. They found that it was done so intentionally, because the electrical wiring to that circuit did not have the capacity for the heater tank. Yes all kinds of incredulity and frowny faces followed. But the important outcome was that Trustees came through with the money and contract to have a new higher capacity electrical service professionally installed. And the dishwasher and its users washed happily ever after.

There were some lighter moments in Fellowship. The next major event was the all church Advent Pot luck brunch on 12/11/16. There was a near capacity gathering of church members young through old in Fellowship hall. The Advent/Christmas spirit was in full gear and many people brought egg dishes, salads, baked treats, fruit etc. Fellowship cooked 3 hams. Earlier, while trying to place one of the hams into the lower oven, the Fellowship chef of the day noticed that something large was obstructing the oven space. Of course the first reaction was to shove the ham in with more force, but this obstruction was too massive and hard. This required getting down on knees and seeing what was in the way. Someone had left a pan! Not just any pan. It was the missing macaroni and cheese from the Ham and Bean supper one month ago! Bluck! Just ask Laurie, Jan or Gavin what one month old overbaked mac and cheese smells like. You will probably get one of those frowny faces.

Chili cook-off on 2/4/17 was very well attended. All available seats were taken in Fellowship hall. Fellowship by this point had decided that one piece of their observation of the 2017 South Church theme of ‘home’ would be to break from the tradition of putting out a basket for donations. The overall winner, Alicia Bursey, Susan Big’s daughter, was also a break away from the inner circle of past decorated Chili champions. Her heart-felt appreciation touched everyone present.

The next Fellowship event was a newer tradition in it’s third year: the Palm Sunday brunch. While I was not present due to a death in the family, I heard that there was tons of ham, eggs, casseroles and fruit and cookies. And it all went!

Now we are planning for upcoming traditions such as All-Church outdoor picnic on 6/11/17, lemonade and cookies at summer Fellowship hours, and Summer Social Suppers. We thank God for the abundance of food and drink available to us; for the plentiful help our fellow parishioners, who so readily contribute their time, cooking crafts, and love to each event; and the recharge of happiness we receive from seeing all the smiling faces, which leaves us wanting to gather in unity again and again.

*Jan Holden, Gavin Kelley, Co-chairs*

*Janet & Gary Clarke, Erick Cotton, Jim Knowles, Donna MacLean, Kristie Nardini, Liss Sellers, Laurie Sorota, Adam & Taylor Ware*

## ***Report of the Green Team***

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The Green Team is an ad-hoc committee within the Church. Its purpose is to promote good environmental stewardship in the church's facilities, and also in our homes and the wider community. The committee also works to foster action on Climate Change. We meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month during the regular church year. We welcome new members and new ideas. Everyone is welcome to participate!

Looking back through the 2016-17 church year:

Last June, we helped make the all-church picnic a “green” event again by setting up and demonstrating how to compost food waste, paper products and recyclables, and how throw away trash can be greatly reduced, almost to zero. Our goal was to show that it’s easy to do this at your home once you know how.

On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 we hosted the 4th annual Harvest Dinner to celebrate the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the Giving Garden. This year’s family evening included homemade pasta making in fellowship hall, activities for kids, a vegetarian/low impact pot-luck dinner, and several videos to share and discussion time after dinner. An

enjoyable night for all ages.

We hosted another “Sustainable House of Worship” workshop at the church on February 12<sup>th</sup>, presented by Interfaith Power & Light, for people of all faiths to learn the best ways to reduce energy consumption at their houses of worship. This was attended by 10 members from 4 different congregations in the area. (We might have had twice this number if a snowstorm that day hadn’t kept numbers down!)

At the Earth Day service on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, we welcomed our MACUCC conference president, Rev. Jim Antal. After the service, we hosted a get-together luncheon for church members who wished to take part in a Q&A session with Rev. Antal.

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, dozens of church members joined with other members of faith communities from around the US – and with many other groups – at the climate rallies and marches in Washington, DC, and in Boston. In DC, more than 200,000 people turned out to let their voices be heard.

Throughout the year: we coordinated and worked on energy efficiency improvements at the church related to air-sealing, and plans to insulate and air-seal the “chimney” that goes from the boiler room to the attic (on the other side of the front wall of the sanctuary). More improvements can be done! We can use your help!

Throughout the year: We had discussions on divesting from fossil fuels with the Trustees of the Trust Funds, the church committee responsible for investing the church’s endowment. We hope to bring the divestment discussion to the church membership in the near future.

coming year: We hope to work with ACT and Habitat to help make the affordable housing units as green as possible.

**BIG PLANS:** We are planning an all-church retreat on nature, the environment and creation care in the fall of 2018, at the AMC Highland Center at Crawford Notch, NH.

*Mark Bohrer, chair*

*Janet Clarke, Candy Dann, Terry Ebner, Fran Fink, Steve Fink, Iric Rex, Terry Ebner, Bill Schroeder*

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## ***Report of the Graduates***

The Graduates met three times this year hearing about the April 2016 Mission Trip from the Youth and Adults who traveled to Johns Island. Jeffrey and Lannie Cutts joined us in February for a get-to-know you luncheon and meeting. The Cutts entertained us with their music and life stories. April brought the history of the Underground Railroad here in Andover, and Lucy Foster with Elaine Clements, Executive Director of the Andover Historical Society. We will resume our meetings in the Fall. See you then.

Julie Pike, Chair

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## ***Report of the Library Committee***

In 2016, many wonderful new books were added to our collection. These books will help us to better understand our faith, support the educational ministry, provide us with material to help deal with issues and crises we may be facing in our everyday lives, and help us better understand our church family. The library bulletin board in the hall opposite Fellowship Hall highlights new and interesting books in our collection. Come explore our collection and sign out a book. Book suggestions may be left in the Library Committee mailbox.

*Carol Georgine West, Chair*

*Deanna Atchison, Shirley Stratton*



# Nominating Committee Report

## Officers, Boards and Committees

### Serving from June 1, 2017 - May 31, 2018

<b>Moderator</b> (one year term)	Kate Jagger
<b>Clerk</b> (one year term)	Alyson Shaw
<b>Treasurer</b> (one year term)	Anne Hemmer
<b>Superintendent of Church School</b>	Stephanie Aude
<b>Assistant Superintendent of Church School</b>	Beth Piekarski

<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
<b>Board of Deacons</b>		
Dot Tyler	Barbara Stubenhaus	Kathleen Ranney
Linda Zimmerman	Donna Kelley	Janis Hill
<b>Donna Stewart, Sr. Deacon</b>	Chris Williams	Emily O'Hara
<b>Dave Floreen, Sr. Deacon</b>	Becky Cutts	Dave Bryan
Mike Bronder	Glenn Rogers	Wayne Gendron
Dave Keene	Dave VanArsdale	Shad Flaig
<b>Board of Trustees</b>		
Neal Long	Dave Meldrum	Rob Thomas
Wayne Shaw	Dave Jagger	Iric Rex
<b>Kathleen Curry, Co-chair</b>	<b>Betsy Davis, Co-chair</b>	Brenda Bryan
<b>Board of Christian Education</b>		
Jay Hudak	<b>Jen Beers, Co-chair</b>	Fabiana Murphy
James Bossieux	Susan Connors	Julia Rutherford
Debbie Arbo	<b>Heather Abourjaily Co-chair</b>	Allison Osgood
<b>Board of Youth Ministries</b>		
Lynne McDonald	<b>Rachel Combs, Co- chair</b>	Martin McGrath
Mark Aude	Greg Galat	Christa DiNapoli
<b>Susan Henke, Co-chair</b>	Debbie Bohrer	Dennis Forgue
Charlie Ziegenbein	Karen Bacchi	Kevin Brosnan
<b>Board of World Service</b>		
<b>Amie Hellauer, Co-chair</b>	Betsy Hopkins	Lynn Welbourn
Amy Joyall	Karen Sperling	Jay Arbo
Carrie Fittz	Willa Rapp	Marge Chiafery
Fran Fink	<b>Marc Henderson, Co-chair</b>	Gavin Kelley
<b>Board of Women's Ministries</b>		
Deanna Atchison	Rachel Cloutier	Colleen Kiezulas
Mary Beth Fahey	Linda Mesler	Christina Craig
<b>Diane Morris, Chair</b>	Rashida Mack	Alexis LaTour
<b>Giving Committee</b>		
<b>Brandon Blech, Co-chair</b>	Tom Jordan	Vicki Hoyt
Ron Hill	Steve Longo	Laura Rex
<b>Carol Floreen, Co-chair</b>	Steve Cortner	Robin Gendron

<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
<b>Nominating Committee</b>		
<b>Polly Pyle, Co-chair</b>	Ellen Arvidson	Terry Guenard
<b>Eric Stubenhaus, Co-chair</b>	Al Joyall	Mark Bohrer
<b>Music Committee</b>		
Susan Big	<b>Nancy Miller, Chair</b>	Graham Long
Chris Boehmer	Candy Dann	Derek Holbrook
<b>Fellowship Committee</b>		
<b>Jan Holden, Co-chair</b>	<b>Laurie Sorota, Co-chair</b>	Sarah Hull
Taylor/Adam Ware	Jim Knowles	Martha Beesley
Janet/Gary Clarke	Eric Cotton	Kelly Ferguson
<b>Kristie Nardini, Co-chair</b>	Char Lyons (1 yr)	
<b>Flower Committee</b>		
– <b>Business Manager – Clara Wade (2018)</b>		
<b>Mary Bambury, Chair</b>	Garnett Jacavano	Kim Maggio
Carolyn Gray	Carol Hopkinson	Gail Elliot*
<b>Memorial Gifts</b>		
<b>Marianne Knowles, Chair</b>	Tom Larsen	Charlotte Taylor
Cindy Thomas	Jennifer Rogers	Peter White
<b>Library Committee</b>		
<b>Carol-Georgine West, Chair</b>	Deanna Atchison	Shirley Stratton

**Trustees of the Trust Funds (six year term)**

<u>2019</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2023</u>
Dave Welbourn	Jane Ingram	Duncan Pyle

**Assistant Treasurers (one year term)**

**Chuck Crockett, Coordinator,** Karen Perkins, David Currie, Mike Curry, Elaine Geffken, Priscilla Bartle, Morgan Kiker, Char Lyons, Don Price, Donna Schroeder, Dot Tyler, Caroline Washburn (youth), Georgia Rex (youth)

**Members at Large to the Church Council (one year term)** Dave Sleight, Jennifer Bouchard

**Coordinator of Ushers (one year term)** **Margaret Crockett**

**Assistant Coordinators of Ushers (one year term)**

Tim/Cindy Ozirsky, Marianne Knowles, Kerianne Harris, Dave Schmehl, Emily Appleton, Carol/Brian Carmichael

**Auditors (one year term)**

**Delegates to Northeast Association of the UCC (one year term - up to 7 members)**

Janet Clarke, Bill Schroeder, Kath Mason, Jenn Murray, Wayne Gendron, Kristi Nardini,

**Delegates to Communities Together**

Priscilla Bartle, Sandy Meldrum

**Delegates to the Massachusetts Conference, UCC (one year term - up to 4 members)**

Janet Clarke, Kath Mason, Jenn Murray, Sue Christopherson

**\*non-voting**

*Linda Annino, Wayne Gendron, co-chairs*

*Ellen Arvidson, Al Joyall, Polly Pyle, Eric Stubenhaus*

## *Report of the Welcome Initiative Team*

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The Welcome Initiative Team was formed two years ago in response to a perceived need to be more intentional in our practices of welcoming one another. We realized that while our South Church vision was extravagant welcome, in practice this wasn't always the case. How often were we approaching people we didn't know? What was getting in the way? How inviting was our physical environment? How clear were our practices and printed materials to those who had never set foot in our doors? So a group of about 12, led by Laura Jordan, began to look various aspects of our church through the lens of a newcomer and to determine the practices and tools we could implement so that guests felt "seen" and welcomed right from their first visit to our church.

We held a general training session open to all and have continued ongoing discussions, communications and training with committees to discuss what a theology of welcome looks like and how we might interact with one another in "holy curiosity." Alex helped us define a welcome theology: that our welcome is rooted in, and an extension of, God's love for us; it's not a marketing strategy. We welcome because we feel compelled to share with others the ways our hearts have been changed by God's love. To do this, we must see our role as "host" rather than "guest" and thus, welcoming is everyone's job, not just the responsibility of certain people. The bottom line is that we want the practices of our church as well as involvement in the life of our church to be accessible to all regardless of tenure. We also want to practice and communicate openness to the diversity of gifts/feedback/changes we might receive from one another.

We now make a small jar of honey available to anyone visiting our church for the first time. This honors the legacy of beekeeping in our church and is a gesture of hospitality. We revised the gold cards to make it easier for guests to request further information, and asked our pastors to reinforce from the pulpit: welcome to guests, the purpose of the gold cards and what to do with them, the offer of honey, and invitation and location of fellowship.

We looked at our printed materials, particularly the bulletin and corrected "insider" language, and created a Q&A pew card that answers questions regarding our worship practices geared towards those who might not have set foot in a church before. We set up welcome tables in the narthex and fellowship hall and initiated some improvements to the building to make it warmer, i.e. repainted women's bathroom, updated the furniture in the reception area, added brass signs to the side entrances, and drafted temporary interior directional signs (which we are currently working on to make more permanent.) We've also renewed efforts to encourage everyone to wear nametags; and Linda now makes nametags for anyone that's filled out a gold card. We looked at exterior signage and got approval to purchase "Be the Church" and "God is Still Speaking" banners to help better tell our story. The team also managed the Andover Day booth for the past few years.

Our goals going forward are to continue to seek ways we might empower one another to reach beyond our comfort zones in getting to know one another and to facilitate ways for folks to get engaged in the life of our community. We will continue to conduct training sessions and bi-monthly newcomers gatherings, and support the newcomer classes series. Our meetings are open to everyone and all are welcome to participate as they are able.

*Participating: Janet Clarke, Wayne Gendron, Jan Holden, Betsy Hopkins, Kate Jagger, Laura Jordan, Tom Jordan, Donna Kelley, Char Lyons, Dave Meldrum, Lauri Sorota*

***Minutes of the Special Congregational Meeting  
South Church in Andover, United Church of Christ  
Sunday, June 5, 2016***

Moderator Dave Welbourn called the meeting to order and confirmed that a quorum of the church membership was present. Copies of the Annual Program Report were handed out to the congregation.

Other than the items on the agenda no other issues were brought forward to be discussed.

The congregation read the responsive reading to open the meeting.

**UCM Proposal**

Bill Schroeder and Wayne Shaw presented the United Church Mission proposal. The MA conference of the UCC is recommending a new model for Giving, named United Church Mission (UCM). UCM replaces fellowship dues and Our Churches Wider Mission (UCWM). The contribution will be reported as \$ and % of the budget. The MA conference has asked us to adopt the new model. The reason for the change is that it simplifies giving to one line. It eliminates fellowship dues. It strengthens our relationship to the conference. They are our churches church.

Our delegates have asked us to adopt this method. There will be no change in the budget year. Next year money will be moved to the missions and Board of world service budget. Board of world service will report what is given to UCM.

The Trustees, Board of World Service and Council have approved these changes. Bill made the following resolution:

Be it resolved that South Church adopts United Church Mission (UCM) as a new mechanism for giving to the Massachusetts Conference and the National setting of the United Church of Christ effective January 1, 2017.

The motion was moved by Wayne and seconded by Linda.

A lot of effort has gone into this effort. The value will remain the same for 2017. MA UCC is asking for a set percentage, they are asking for level funding. We currently give about 5% between our dues and OCWM.

This will strengthen our relationship to the conference and all the other churches within the conference. It enforces that we are all in this together. We have received a lot of support from the UCC during our last two pastor searches. South Church is well represented in the conference.

Vote was taken and passed unanimously.

**Behavioral Covenant**

Thomas Arnold and Kate Jagger presented the proposed Behavioral Covenant. This covenant was developed by a group of approximately 50 South Church members. It is reflective of who we are and how we want to behave. It is written in a 'we will' language and embraces apology and forgiveness.

It is for all in our congregation to embrace. Printed covenants will be displayed and included in new member meetings. It will be reviewed annually at each beginning of committees.

Thomas read the Covenant aloud. Steve Longo moved and Wayne Shaw seconded.

Jan raised questions about the line 'understand and trust that our leaders must uphold certain issues as truly private or confidential'. In light of our congregational background is this a conflict? It was acknowledged that certain issues need to be private and some circumstances require confidentiality. The concern that this line could be used years down the road to allow secrets and private meetings was discussed.

The subject of salaries being confidential here at South Church versus other churches was discussed and the fact that this decision belongs to the elected committees each year.

Thomas addressed the private and confidential aspect and pointed out that the other parts of the covenant work against this happening.

Garnett Jacavano asked about a process for revision in the future. This would go to council.

Discussion around certain words began with Michael Bronder suggesting removing the word certain. Others voiced that they were fine with the words.

Jan Holden proposed the following amendment:

Understand and trust that our leaders will strive for transparency, while they must also uphold certain issues as truly private or confidential.

There was one no vote and the amendment passed.

Motion was made to accept the Behavioral Covenant as amended. Motion passed.

### **New Board/Committee Slate**

Wayne Gendron and Linda Annino from Nominating thanked all past committee members for their service and all the new volunteers. Nominating took a 3 step process this year and filling committee spots. They first checked with committees on what was working for them and what wasn't. They asked for committee needs. They worked to discern the interest of the congregants. People took an active role this year by coming forward and asking to help.

Wayne made one change to the published Nominating Committee report published on page 11 and 12 of the annual report. Candy Dann and Marty Mason were added to Music.

The congregation voted unanimously in favor of accepting the list of committee candidates.

### **Gavel Transfer**

Dave reflected on three years of being moderator and working with this congregation. He thanked everyone for their trust and advice. Dave then passed the gavel to Kate Jagger as the next moderator.

### **Closing Prayer**

Dana thanked Dave for his leadership through a wilderness of transition and change then closed with a prayer.

Kate adjourned the meeting.

*Respectfully submitted, Alyson M. Shaw, Clerk*

## ***Minutes of the 306th Annual Meeting South Church in Andover, United Church of Christ Wednesday, January 25, 2017***

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With a quorum of more than 65 members present Kate Jagger, Moderator, called the meeting to order. Attendees received copies of the 2016 Annual Financial Reports and the meeting agenda.

Dana opened with a prayer.

### **Welcome**

Kate welcomed everyone.

Dana recognized several unsung heroes among us. They included Tom Appleton for his weekly effort as sound technician, Betsy Hopkins for teaching and guiding our Acolytes, Chuck Crockett for recording our weekly pledges for the past 10 years and our amazing choir who practice every Thursday evening to have music for us on Sunday.

Dana recognized the remarkable team of employees who put in many hours and work hard in their call to South Church. Every day is a joy to work together. The staff consistently goes above and beyond their job descriptions. Reading the congregations prayers together has been an amazing experience this past year. Dana described the many roles that each plays in the life of the church. Staff consists of Linda Hacker,

Sherry Tupper, Joanne Smith, Terry Ebner, Jeffrey Cutts, Nora Kay Pelt, Wally Brousseau, Jenn Murray and Alex Shea Will.

### **Board of World Service (BWS) Report**

Robin Gendron reported on the Board of World Services accomplishments in 2016. South Church gave \$87,000 to local and international organizations. South Church gives of its time as well as money. We worked with Habitat for Humanity to finish up the Parker Street project and coordinated with the Board of Women's ministries to offer household support to the family we worked with at Habitat. We have a monthly work commitment at Habitat as an ongoing service project. Our Easter offering went to Sustainable Harvest, the Giving Garden and Neighbor's in Need purchase of a much need van. Day of service had 15 service projects with over 150 people participating. Thanksgiving share a meal provided 268 meals. The Christmas offering was divided between Wells Bring Hope, Communities Together and aid to the Syrian Crisis.

### **Giving committee report**

The Giving committee is working to increase planned giving. They would like to increase gifts outside of the normal pledging including bequests in wills and RMD gifting. The hope is to create a true endowment. There will be more discussion in the future.

### **Trustee of the Trust Funds**

Dave Floreen reported that the 2016 performance of the trust funds slightly beat the market. The funds earned 9.5%. This is a direct result of having a great advisor with low fees and the funds being invested in low cost Vanguard ETF's.

There was no additional money added to the Cemetery Trust. An additional \$225,000 has been added to the Trust funds over the past 3 years. Our only method of increasing our trust funds is through performance of our current investments and increasing gifts to the Trust. Trustees would like to encourage members to include South Church in their wills.

### **Deacons**

*A summary of the update from the Board of Deacons presented by William Wood at the January Church Meeting:*

"This time last year, I outlined the board of deacons plan to place banners, including a rainbow banner, on the front of the church building. Since that time, South Church led the way in Andover, putting up a rainbow banner outside the church, followed by West Parish, Ballardvale, and our Episcopal neighbors all putting up rainbow flags or banners. For ourselves, we heard the voice of some in the congregation who were opposed, not to the content of the proposed banners, but to idea of attaching them to the church. We also saw that the "God is Still Speaking" banner, placed directly in front of the church, has attracted nothing but positive responses.

Following the expected denial of our permit application for permanent banners on the church, the deacons took the opportunity to review the plan before appealing to the zoning board. After discussion, the board came to conclusion that we did not need to attach banners to the building to achieve our original goals. We could redesign our church sign to include a full rainbow with the words "One in God's love" and place a banner in the same place where we temporarily placed the rainbow banner with a permanent installation.

Many of the Deacons would have preferred to go ahead with our original plan – my own theology of the church would have taken me down that path. But I think it is important that we move forward together in unity of purpose. If we can alleviate the concerns of some in the congregation, while still achieving our goals, then that would reflect the ideal of Christian leadership.

We have appointed a small committee to place a permanent installation to hold varied banners in front of the church and to redesign the main church sign to include the rainbow banner. As soon as we have a concrete plan, we will show that to the congregation and hold an after church meeting to hear comments from the congregation."

### **Board of Trustees Report and Proposed Budget for 2017**

Wayne Shaw presented the proposed budget for 2017.

2016 Missions giving totaled \$111,577 this is made up of all cash distributed from various programs.

Highlights of accomplishments for 2016 include hiring a Music Minister and a Communications Assistant and reworking the Personnel guidelines. Facility improvements included repairing the church bell, installing LED lights in fellowship hall, office painting, renovation to the women's bathroom, and repair to the chapel window, creation of the Minister of Music office and replacement of the church tractor.

There is an \$18,000 carry over from 2016. This is made up primarily of savings in personnel costs and utility savings.

2017 budget highlights include an increase in support for missions, ministry programs, child care, church equipment and software and some facility repairs.

2017 Annual giving used to create the 2017 budget totals \$719,836. This is broken down to the giving campaign \$695,397 plus Under, Non and over pledges \$17,786 and loose offerings of \$6,652.

### **Jenn Bouchard reported on the results of the giving campaign.**

The giving campaign numbers break down to \$672,000 from 236 families. There were 25 new pledges and 51% of families increased their pledge over last year. The average increase was 12%. The biggest challenge that we currently face is that 1/3 of our families' submitted flat pledges.

Other income sources include a trust fund distribution of \$33,552, organizational gifts of \$28,000 and miscellaneous income of \$475 for a total \$62,027.

Expenses for our church break down into 4 primary categories: Worship 30%, Belong 24%, Serve 24% and Learn 22%.

2017 budgeted expense breakdown is as follows:

Debt payments \$39,804 - Missions \$64,783 - Reserves \$23,500 - General Fund \$599,821 - Ministry Staff \$349,883 - Ministry programs \$32,850 - Administration \$125,555 - Facilities \$174,871

Mission's budget will receive a 13% increase this year. Increases will be given to Community and welcoming, small groups, Christian Education, fellowship and giving. The administration budget will increase to be able to lease a new copier and purchase new church management software. Facility work needs to be done in the Rompers space. Money has been allocated to work on the plaster in the sanctuary additional parsonage renovations. There was some money left over for this work to be done.

Ron Hill made a motion to approve the 2017 budget as printed. Steve Longo seconded. All approved.

### **Minutes approval**

Motion was made for approval of the minutes from Annual meetings in January 2016 and June 2017 as printed in the handout. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

### **Lupine road working group**

Ted Harris presented the working group tasked with presenting to the congregation a proposal for the use of an acre of land South Church owns on Lupine Road. The group is tasked with working with the Trustees, the Trustees of the trust fund and the congregation to put together a proposal to sell the lot with the purpose of building 6 affordable housing units. There will be information sessions for congregational input and questions. The plan is to have a special congregational meeting in the spring. Members include: Ellen Arvidson, Candy Dann, Fran Fink, Steve Fink, Ted Harris, Matt Joyall, Haley Joyall, Neil Long, Char Lyons, Marty Mason, Mary Prichard, and Dave Welbourn.

### **Strategic Planning task force**

Dana introduced a newly formed Strategic Planning task force. This group is tasked with developing a plan to facilitate the process of strategic planning. This group consists of the following members: Ted Harris Lenore Price, Hooks Johnson, Nicki Donofrio Wiggins, Laura Jordan and Ted Jenkins. Alex Shea Will, Kate Jagger and Dana Allen Walsh will serve as advisory members.

Voted to adjourn. Dana offered a Benediction.

*Respectfully Submitted, Alyson M. Shaw, Clerk*

***Minutes of the Special Congregational Meeting  
South Church in Andover, United Church of Christ  
Sunday, May 7, 2017***

With a quorum of more than 105 members present Kate Jagger, Moderator, called the meeting to order. Attendees received copies of the Proposed Joint ACT/Habitat Project.

Dana opened the meeting with a prayer.

Fran Fink, member of the working group, gave an overview of the proposed project as outlined in the handout. Highlights were that many members have attended meetings over the past few months to learn about the proposed project. South church owns approximately one acre of land that was gifted by Mary Byers Smith with no restrictions on the gift. Andover Community Trust (ACT) and Habitat for Humanity approached the trustees about 5 years ago to sell them the land to develop affordable housing. Our congregation wasn't ready 5 years ago to tackle the proposal with the staffing changes that we were undergoing at this time.

This past winter the project was taken up again. A working group was formed comprised of members from trustees, Board of World Service, and youth. They were tasked with gathering information and putting together all the information pertaining to this project. They asked trustees to draw up a Memorandum of Understanding with ACT & Habitat for Humanity. Visits were made to the adjoining neighbors. A slide show of information was created and many listening sessions were held.

When new questions were brought up the information was updated. The working group was very appreciative of everyone's participation.

Ted Harris Presented the following motion:

I move that South Church in Andover, acting through its Board of Trustees, sell the parcel of land at 8 Lupine Road to Andover Community Trust for \$200,000 for the purpose of building six units of affordable housing in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, or that, in the event that Andover Community Trust and habitat for Humanity are not granted all necessary state and town approvals for six units but are granted approval for at least four units, that South Church in Andover will sell the parcel of land for \$150,000.

The Motion was seconded by Steve Longo.

Ted Harris, as a member of the working group, presented the opportunities this project offers South Church.

The project offers us the opportunity to do what Jesus calls us to do as Christians. It keeps South Church active in our community. It is a unique opportunity to partner with two amazing organizations. It will create affordable homes in Andover when most of our affordable housing stock is in apartments. These affordable units will stay affordable forever unlike many of the apartment choices. It is a chance to show the Andover community who South Church is. We are not solving homelessness but we are making a difference to 6 families in our community.

One member spoke to reasons why South Church should not enter into this deal.

The Member felt that this was not a top priority for our church. We should be working toward keeping green space. The land should be held in reserve for financial emergencies that could arise in the future and it should be preserved for future generations to fall back on. The member also felt that with the proposed mill district we should wait to see what will happen there as this could have an impact on the parcel on Lupine Road. The Mill district and the Dascomb Road project are also slated to add affordable housing units in Andover. This land offers a habitat for wildlife in our area and as we were discussing the project, foxes were seen living in the area. The concern for headstones along the property line was raised and maintaining the sacred natural space surrounding our meeting house. The preference to table this vote and proceed with a neutral committee was proposed.

A member stood to offer his experience as a Financial Consultant with years of experience to speak in favor of the motion. His point was that being a good steward is to manage your assets well and to manage



assets in conjunction with your principles and values. He also made the point that cash is far more liquid and will remain liquid. Real Estate is inherently non-liquid and may not be of the same value down the road should you need its value in an emergency situation. As a member of the giving committee the point was raised that this piece of land is not our only asset and that the Giving Committee is working to increase our assets with plans for the future.

Another member spoke in opposition to the motion. As treasurer of South Church there should be concerns for the potential risks of the sale. There are many trees that will be hanging over the houses and the property. The Church will be responsible for the trees health. With the running of the sewer line on School Street this could damage the trees and their roots which will cause more tree risk. We should get an arborist to discuss risk to the tree health.

The fact that there was no formal appraisal prepared was raised. It was pointed out that 2 real estate agents gave an assessments and the tax assessment was looked at. The need to know what value we are giving up was raised as a concern. With the Mill district overly pending, should it pass, the area could be revitalized as a whole and the area may have better use at that point with more value.

Another Member spoke in favor as he felt we had been discussing this for years. His perspective was that it would be an enriching experience for us and will broaden the reach of our church.

A member spoke to the opportunity to enrich our community and ourselves.

A member spoke to having a gut reaction that this is the right thing to do. The benefit of separate homes and not apartments was a positive to the affordable housing stock in Andover. It is an opportunity for South Church to lead the way.

Another member raised concerns. Having supported this proposal until 2 weeks prior, his standing had changed after going to information sessions and listening to other with concerns. He walked the property and saw the green area and the leaves budding. It was hard to see 3 structures in this space. The feeling that other affordable housing was coming and was available putting 3 structures in this space didn't seem feasible.

As a church we are strong together no matter what the results of this vote will be and feel that we could table the mater for another 6 months. It would be great to have more work done on this project.

Another member made a point that the projects on Dascomb Road are not for families. The apartment layouts are purposeful to discourage families as to not have an impact on the school district. The time is now to act on this proposal.

A 3<sup>rd</sup> generation member of South Church spoke in favor of this motion. We need to act now. We have plenty of open space in Andover. It is time to strike out in a bold and generous way and be a beacon. Be leaders and offer the widest open arm embrace. A prayer was offered that we will love into our decision.

A motion was made to move the vote. It was seconded. Move to vote.

Adoption to approve the motion, the vote was taken. There were 5 votes against and the votes in affirmative approved the motion.

Kate reminded us that as this was not a unanimous vote it is important to turn to our neighbors with gratitude and love for the courage to speak and share and participate.

Alex closed in prayer. Motion was made to adjourn and seconded. Meeting adjourned.

Our next congregational meeting will be in June.

Respectfully submitted, *Alyson M. Shaw, Clerk*