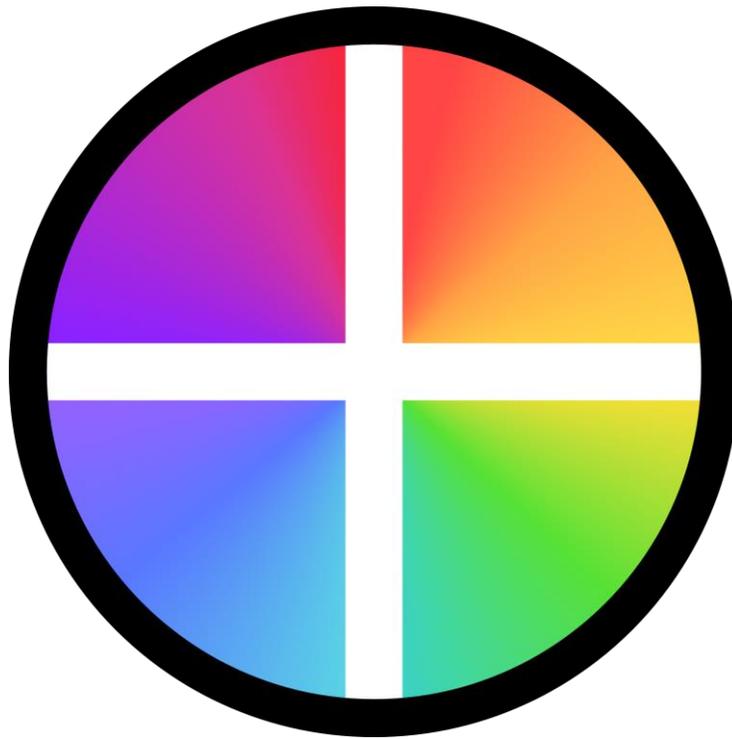


**South Church in Andover, UCC**  
**ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT**  
**June 1, 2020 - May 31, 2021**



**boldly embodying God's love and compassion**

**Special Congregational Meeting**  
**June 13, 2021**

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

*South Church in Andover*  
*United Church of Christ*  
**2021 ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT**  
**June 1, 2020 - May 31, 2021**

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# *Report of the Moderator*

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Challenging times bring out the core truths of an individual or organization. The past year surely qualifies, and it is humbling to look back and realize the extent to which South Church rose to the Covid challenge and exceeded all expectations of what a virtual faith community could offer. Without skipping a beat the church pivoted to online worship (and virtual everything else), invented new ways of connecting to our members and the greater community, and embraced the pandemic as an opportunity to practice Jesus's teachings. We were blessed to have an incredible, energetic staff that was positioned to take on exactly this sort of challenge - and that stretched more than we will ever know to deliver the worship opportunities we have all been part of over the past year.

Although much of it has been behind the scenes, the new governance model is off to a good start. Arguably, had we known, we would not have launched this the same year as an historic pandemic event. Nonetheless, having an organization with clear responsibilities and a solid, hard working core team has been a blessing as we wrestled with a stream of Covid related issues and decisions. I remain convinced that as we come back together the new approach will allow us all far more opportunities to serve both the church and the community in enriching ways. We will ask the congregation to extend the trial period for the new model for another year so we can work with it in a fully opened church.

It has truly been a gift to be a part of this wonderful church community. The list of the many good works listed below make it clear God is at work in our lives.

## **Highlights of 2020-2021 Church Year**

- Sunday worship didn't just become virtual – our Pastors created an entirely new approach that became a model for others. Our worship attendance increased 100-200%!
- Our church responded to Covid's personal impact on our members with an expanded meal train and extensive one on one outreach. We delivered Advent boxes, women's retreat boxes, VBS in a bag, 1000 epiphany stars, plants and pumpkins - all helping to keep us connected.
- Many of our small groups continued virtually – Faith Forum, Theology on tap, Men's group, Young women's groups, Single moms, Bible study, the Green team, Social Justice, South Church Pride.
- Jen kept our youth programs humming and provided an important link to normalcy for our youth. The great outdoors became the place to meet-for walks or just discussions. We even managed a mission trip!
- Much as with worship, the music program didn't just go virtual but reinvented itself – with a choir of both local and far-flung members, magical cloned performers, Band in a box, a wonderful virtual youth music program and a new vision for a Wednesday Family music time supported by an expanded children's music staff.
- Our outreach to the larger community has blossomed. Mission giving has continued, but our monthly mission partner giving has grown beyond all expectation (\$56k in the first 4 months of 2021). 680 \$25 MB cards were donated for Thanksgiving. Habitat has continued despite Covid restrictions, with the first Lupine Road units near completion. With social distancing, Day of Service was reinvented as Season of Service. We created an Andover rolling Pride Parade. The Giving Garden continues to produce tons of produce and explore better gardening techniques. The pop the trunk food program has become a community program, attracting givers from outside our church. And Fran Healey's dedication to the Farmer's Market has created an entirely new way for the church to connect with our Andover community.
- Our new governance model has shown some great early results in terms of clear focus on specific activities of the church, especially Youth faith formation, financial management and church maintenance. Volunteer management software and an associated coordinator promises to help realize the core tenant of ONCET: Service.

- The building shutdown, as well as the generosity of many of our members, allowed us to address a variety of needs: the Sanctuary ceiling and front wall repair, a rebuilt 1<sup>st</sup> floor bathroom, lots of interior painting, a new Sanctuary piano, a new phone system, a new security system and a wonderful new Sanctuary A/V system that will allow us to create a blended live/virtual Service as we come together in person again.
- Finally, the faithfulness of all the Congregation, whether through continued generous giving, participation in virtual events, or just tuning in on Sunday morning, has kept South Church both healthy and an island of hope and peace in these times.

*Marty Mason*

## *Report of the Senior Pastor*

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Prior to March 2020, if you had told me that we would close the church building for 15 months, worship virtually with our slippers and coffee, and host all our meetings on zoom, I would have told you that was impossible in a 310-year-old church. And then if you told me that as a result, we'd attract newcomers and re-engage church folk who had moved away, witness deep sharing and consistently high attendance in adult faith formation programs like Faith Forums, Bible study, men & women's groups, we'd give away more money than ever before to our mission partners, and see worship attendance increase by double (sometimes even triple), I simply would have told you that you are crazy.

Yet, this is no accident. This is not a coincidence. God has been ever faithful.

When the pandemic caused us to close the building, you as the church trusted the staff and lay leaders to innovate and to rethink how we do church. As they say, necessity is the mother of invention. It wasn't possible to have a two-year committee study of how to best endure a global pandemic. Instead, overnight, we had to reinvent ourselves. The trust you placed in the staff and lay leaders allowed us to experiment, fail, reevaluate, and try again. Your support and flexibility made facing the enormous challenges of this past year possible and even at times, joyful.

In a way that we never have before, we embraced creativity. We don't often associate "creativity" with the church. Instead, we think more about tradition and "the way things have always been." Yet, we worship the ultimate Creator. Out of chaos, God brought life into being and God never stopped creating, each and every day. God is always working to bring more joy, hope, and possibility into our lives.

We creatively learned how to bring the church to people, rather than always inviting them into our building. We brought worship to people's television screens and laptops, communion to ordinary kitchen tables, and fellowship to Brady-Bunch style zoom calls. We visited people's homes with pumpkins, mums, Advent boxes, Lenten retreat boxes, music kits and VBS in a bag. Through videos, emails, and webinars, we delved deep into God's call for justice and compassion through important awareness-building around racism, bias, affordable housing, and food insecurity.

The "why" of church never changed, but the "how" of church life shifted drastically. And we found that we can still be the church even when our form and function look radically different than they ever have.

Adam Grant, an organizational psychologist, writes about the value of a leader's ability to rethink and reimagine new solutions to old problems. Instead of getting curious and leaning into possibility, people often double down, putting more money, resources, and energy into what was already not working (escalation of commitment). However, Grant makes the point that if people are willing to endure the discomfort of uncertainty and to ask themselves and each other good questions, then there's an opportunity to embrace a learner's mindset and discover new possibilities.

As we look ahead to re-emerging from this pandemic, I see the opportunity to look at what we learned, to ask ourselves what we have missed, and what we have gained.

We are different people and a different church.

While there is much to celebrate, these past fifteen months were a time of loss and isolation, economic hardship, and emotional strain on families. For those that study trauma, it is known that the aftermath can be as hard as the initial events. As we emerge and exhale, we recognize that the relief may be mixed with grief, loss, and new fears. Our work as South Church is to meet the moment by sharing the compassion, community, and creativity that God has so generously bestowed upon us.

There is no returning “back” to old ways and old norms. It is a time to ask ourselves: How do we boldly embody God’s love and compassion? How do we nurture connections through service, spiritual growth, and fellowship?

There is a journey beyond the pandemic that we will find one step at a time. In our 310-year history, we haven’t been to this particular future before and we will need one another to get there. With trust, creativity, and flexibility at our core, I’m grateful that we have the opportunity to walk this un-trod road together.

*Dana Allen Walsh*

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

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Good People:

As I sit here to write my last annual report for you as your associate pastor, I’m reflecting on my first annual report. That one was easy to write. I arrived with lots of new ideas about what we could do together and quickly detailed them for my report. When I finished, I instantly began worrying about the next year. What would I do - what would *we* do together - now that all my new ideas had been implemented? I worried that I’d look back on the next year and have nothing new to share, no new ideas to “wow” you with. As it turns out, I was completely wrong. Not one of the six annual reports I’ve written has been hard to write - except for maybe this one, but for a completely different reason.

Over the years, I quickly realized that I didn’t need to go into the year with lots of innovative ideas, because God would provide plenty of opportunities for us to do something new, if we listened hard enough. I also realized that it wasn’t just about me and *my* creativity, but about what *we* wanted, needed, and discerned together. Year after year, God presented new and interesting opportunities to “boldly embody God’s love and compassion” and I’m so grateful for all the ways we leaned in together. It hasn’t always been easy, but it’s always been worth it. This past year has been no exception.

While we began the pandemic with completely pre-recorded services, we transitioned to part-live/part-prerecorded worship in August of 2020. Our editing wasn’t always perfect, and sometimes our transitions were not timed exactly correctly - I may have also messed up a few lyrics here or there; sorry, Cathy! - but you never complained. Instead, you were more grace-filled than I ever could have imagined. You continued to show up, Sunday after Sunday (okay, sometimes on Wednesday, or Thursday), to not only watch, but also engage with worship. You provided scripture readings, prayers, pictures, and so much more. As we begin to imagine what our *new* hybrid experience will look like, I encourage you to continue leaning in. God has shown us so many new possibilities during this time; this is the moment to continue stretching ourselves to see what God might do next.

I have also been so amazed with your faithfulness to Bible study on Zoom! I don’t think I’ve led a Bible study with better attendance. Additionally, Zoom has given us the opportunity to welcome new friends from California, New York, Pennsylvania, and Florida. God has drawn the circle of our community wider during this pandemic; I hope and pray you will continue to make space for those who can’t be physically present here in Andover. It is not only a gift to them, it is a gift to us as we learn and grow with even more siblings in faith.

I will resist the urge to use this annual report as a “goodbye.” But I want you to know that writing these annual reports has been a joy, each and every year. No matter what we’ve faced together, God has been faithful. Thank you for all the ways in which you’ve leaned into “boldly embodying God’s love and compassion.” I can’t wait to see what God does next.

With love,  
Pastor Alex

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

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The past 11 years with you have confirmed the call I felt when accepting this part time position in March 2010.

My official job description is to assist and represent the Senior Pastor, Associate 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.

Due to Covid -19 and social distancing, it was important to find other methods to keep in touch with the congregation. Since I was not able to visit in person during the pandemic, I wrote many notes of encouragement and enjoyed wonderful phone calls to those who were sick, grieving, or in need of encouragement.

Some of the highlights of this past year have included:

- Assisting with Sunday Worship Services
- Preparing video recordings of prayers and music for virtual worship
- Serving as staff liaison to the Board of World Service and attending their monthly meetings/Zoom meetings
- Facilitating the Prayer Partners Ministry, our own South Church Intercessory Prayer Group
- Participating in the South Church Choir and other small musical groups on special occasions
- Visiting and praying with members in the hospital, nursing homes, in their homes and by phone.

It has been my privilege to serve you and serve with you in the ministry of South Church this challenging year. A special word of thanks goes to Dana Allen Walsh and Alex Shea Will for their support, encouragement, and leadership. 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 Youth & Families***

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Beloved South Church,

I'm always grateful for the gift of engaging in ministry with you all, and that is even more true this year. This year has been beautiful, complicated, messy, wonderful, and so much more. As a church we've been given chances to boldly embody God's love and compassion in new and exciting ways. We've had the opportunity to rethink what it means to be the church, what it means to worship, and how we can connect with one another.

There are two things that particularly stand out in this regard when it comes to children and youth ministry: Wednesday Wonders and our Mission Experience this year. When Cathy and I started

Wednesday Wonders this year, it was born out of a desire to give children a chance to safely be together outdoors after having been online for school during the day. We offered music time, wild games, spiritual practices, Bible stories, and so much more. Children had a chance to move their bodies, explore nature, and develop their faith in new ways. These amazing children definitely brought the "wonder" to Wednesday Wonders each week!

The story is very similar for the Mission Week this year. As I look back now, I have to tell you that the entire week feels like a miracle. 32 youth and over 20 adults came together throughout the April vacation week for a very alternative spring break. Benches were built, swing sets were rebuilt, mulch was laid and walls were painted. Collectively, mission trippers gave 1,600 hours of service to South Church and our surrounding community. We came together with the purpose of Building Beloved Community. We lit candles in prayer, we celebrated, laughed, played and rejoiced that this time together could be possible at all. Youth learned just how capable they are. They are problem-solvers, community-builders, justice-seekers, and they bring the love of God to the world around them.

Even in a pandemic, youth and adults at South Church found ways to bring love and compassion to one another, and to a world so desperately in need of it.

As this year wraps up, I'm finding that there's so much to be grateful for: outdoor youth groups, Children's Chapels and Sunday School gatherings, hikes in the woods, scavenger hunts, online Storytime, and so much more. Every time South Church found a way to come together, God's love and peace and hope came, too.

On a personal note, as I transition from your Minister for Youth and Families into the Interim Associate Pastor, my heart is full of gratitude for these last three years. I also have so much love and hope for whoever God calls to be the new Minister for Youth and Families. I feel so hopeful for them because, after caring for the children, youth and families of this church in varying capacities for the last seven years, I know that this new person will be welcomed with the same love and care you all have shown me - and what a gift that will be!

Love,  
Jenn

## ***Report of the Minister of Music***

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*Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.  
Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good for all others. -Galatians 6:9-10*

Each fall, the Music Ministry chooses a couple of verses from scripture to use as a focus for our year together; this year was no different, despite the difficulties that surrounded us. Even when our plans came to a screeching pandemic halt, this passage from Paul's letter to the Galatians gave us inspiration and strength to continue our ministry in new and bold ways.

I am incredibly thankful for all the incredible musicians who spent countless hours recording videos for our virtual choirs and ensembles. The arduous task of preparing all the music at home, finding the perfect recording environment, getting a take with a reasonable level of accuracy, and managing to send it into the right place at the right time so the video can be added in with the rest is no small task! The fact that we now have musicians who are regular participants in worship from Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Georgia, and Poland – yes, across the pond in Poland! – is a true testimony to how far our ministry can reach when we are willing to adapt to the changing needs of the world around us.

Yes, God is still speaking and we are doing our best to listen! In the year ahead we are excited to

welcome our new youth choir directors Jordan Jones and Michaela Barczak to our staff, we anticipate the arrival of our new Yamaha S7X piano to help lead worship in our sanctuary, and we carefully consider how we use our virtual musical knowledge to continue to expand the reaches of our ministry. God provides an abundant harvest when we continue to do the work of doing good for all others. In all our music God is glorified, so let us continue to sing our praise and thanksgiving!

Grace & Peace,

*Cathy Meyer*

## ***Report of the Community Service Ministry***

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The Community Service Ministry re-envisioned the 2020 Day of Service into a Season of Service offering a broad array of service opportunities over a 5 week period allowing participants more flexibility in when and how they provided service. The feedback from participants was very positive and this pandemic-related shift will become permanent as we encourage one another to prioritize meaningful and transformational service into our daily lives.

Throughout the year, we continued to support a range of local nonprofits through volunteerism and financial support. These included Essex County Habitat for Humanity, the Giving Garden, the Farmer's Market, Lazarus House projects, Pop the Trunk monthly food drives, School Food Rescue, Communities Together and a highly successful collection of over \$25,000 in Gift cards for NIN in lieu of the Thanksgiving Turkey Collection.

We worked with the Mission Team to support their work in discerning Monthly Mission partners for the worship services. Those donations have been hugely successful, exemplifying South Church's generous spirit. Over \$55,000 has been donated already in 2021. Some of the Missions supported in the last year include Dig Deep, Lawrence Boys and Girls Club, RIP Medical Debt, Violence in Boston, Honduras Hope, Essex County Community Foundation, Habitat and Andover Community Trust.

Community Service was part of a small group that explored a variety of volunteer software programs and Better Impact was selected as the platform for the church. That software is currently being rolled out for our local volunteer opportunities and will be fully launched heading into the fall.

*Ellen Arvidson, Chair; Jen Bouchard, Asst. Chair*

## ***Report of the Congregational Life Ministry***

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Congregational Life Ministry team developed new and innovative methods to create connections within our community. We personally delivered over 100 pumpkins to families with school age kids, as well as holiday poinsettias to our seniors and advent boxes to all members. Ellen Towson shared her gift for conservation by hosting a hiking series of the area AVIS and conservation properties. We pivoted our Sunday fellowship to a virtual format, with an emphasis on inclusion and providing a space for people to see and be seen by one another

*David Strong, Chair; David Digiannarino, Asst. Chair*

## ***Report of the Human Resources Ministry***

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The teams of HR developed a plan to support the ONCET initiative of embodying God's love through a strong, broad, easily accessible program of service, both within and outside our walls.

- Part of the team that researched and selected volunteer management software. Making it easier to serve will increase participation and as we each build our profile in the Better Impact program, allow someone looking for volunteers to reach out beyond friends or the usual suspects.
- Helped define organizational structure to support a robust service program, including creation of the new staff role of Volunteer Coordinator.
- Blog series on identifying our gifts and passions so that we each might reap the joy to be found in serving our God by serving one another.
- Staffed core functions of the church- no small feat in a pandemic!- to keep us not just running but amazing in this difficult year, as well as strongly positioned to hit the ground running when we are back together this Fall.

*Chair: Kate Jagger, Co-chair: Kristie Nardini*

*Service Central Team (Douglas Bate, Lysanne LaPierre, Amie Hellauer)*

*Nominating Team (Susan Henke, Amie Hellauer, Rachel Combs, Marc Henderson)*

*Delegates to the Southern New England Conference (Janet Clarke, Bill Schroeder)*

## ***Report of the Learning Ministry***

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The Learning Ministry is comprised of many dynamic groups: Youth Faith Formation (Christian Education and Youth Groups) Confirmation, Social Justice, South Church Pride, Faith Forum, Theology on Tap, Book Groups, Library and Historian.

Jenn Murray did an amazing job shepherding our youth through online programming for Sunday School, Storytime, S.O.S. and when possible the youth were able to meet outside in person. Wednesday Wonders, for our younger learners, became a go to event that encompassed music with Kathy, and lessons and activities with Jenn. A great event that was born out of the pandemic was the Journey to Bethlehem, an outside "Christmas Pageant" where families visited stations to hear the stories and make some crafts on the way. This was replicated at Easter with a Journey to Jerusalem. Members of the Youth Faith Formation team felt that these successful events should remain in the non-pandemic years. In addition, Youth groups for middle and high school were fortunate enough to meet in person outside the majority of the time. The icing on the cake was to hold a mission trip for the teens at South Church during April vacation! Jenn and Alex continued their tradition of leading confirmation during the 2020-2021 program year. They used a combination of online and in-person gatherings to frame the year. As we were unable to confirm those interested in confirmation last year, they combined them in one group this year. Jenn is looking forward to leading and re-imaging confirmation in the coming year. We are very excited about this year's SOS and VBS programming as we have hired four college interns from our South Church family to work with Jenn on these summer in person opportunities!

All of the uncharted groups thrived in this pandemic year. The Social Justice Coalition has had a busy year. The group has been working on criminal justice reform, legislative lobbying, voter registration drives, social justice book reviews, and more. South Church Pride also carried on over Zoom and will once again organize and run the pride parade this Sunday, June 13th! Faith Forum explored a number of topics including forgiveness, the role of prayer in our lives, dreams and spirituality, LBGTQ topics,

readings from the book "Four Hundred Souls" by Ibram X. Kendi, and monthly discussions focused on climate change. Friday night Bible Study, Book Groups and Theology on Tap were able to have some in person firepit gatherings after zooming for several months. The library has many fantastic additions and some of these were highlighted by church members in videos sent out in the Buzz! Char is our historian and she never missed a beat in creating video tours of our cemetery for us to archive. Although this was a hard year, it was definitely a year that yielded some creative and fun outcomes!

*Liz Roos, Chair; Mary Pritchard, Asst. Chair*

## ***Report of the Worship Ministry***

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Oh, what a year it has been! Many of us would rather forget this year, but here at South Church, the Worship Ministry team has been keeping our Sunday Worship going strong every week to keep us together (virtually) and lean into what we will become. Our worship service was a pre-recorded service a year ago on Sunday mornings where someone would press play, and off we would go. Today, it is a hybrid model with about 60% pre-recorded and 40% live. The live content helps us stay current with upcoming events, announcements, and, most importantly, communal prayers. Stay tuned for even more to come as we are planning what worship will look like this fall as we prepare to return to in-person worship. It will be exciting for everyone, in-person and virtual.

Rather than list the highlights of 2020 – let’s park 2020 somewhere; we don’t have to go over it, and let’s look forward to Fall 2021 and beyond. My new mantra is “lean into it!” Lean into everything we do as a church and lean into everything you do in life and enjoy it.

As we lean into **Boldly Embodying God’s Love and Compassion**, we have three bullets to highlight.

1. We are actively planning a return to worship/in-person experience in September with new A/V technology that will enhance our in-person experience and enhance the experience for our friends who will remain with us virtually. A win-win experience for all. We will have new sound speakers, new visual screens to broaden our experience and bring content from people and places we have never seen or heard from before, new cameras to capture the wider church, and new sound mixing technology, so the sound we broadcast is equal to the experience of being in-person. It’s going to be great!
2. A more special offering from our Music Ministry under Cathy’s leadership and our two new assistant choir directors. More children’s and youth choirs! A brand new Yamaha piano ready to burst with music and match our wonderful organ. Music and our music experience are central to who we are, and music will burst forth this fall. Our musicians and choirs have been cooped up too long and ready to praise God through our music fully.
3. Goodbye Alex, Hello Jenn! The Worship Team is actively preparing for the change of our Associate Pastor. We don’t have plans to replicate Alex. Instead, we want to support Dana and help Jenn (Interim Acting Associate Pastor) live out her vision and place her “belovedness” all over us more than she does today and in different ways. What that will look like, we don’t know but lean into it and let it happen.

So my friends, say see you later 2020, see you later Covid-19 pandemic. We are coming back, and we are going to be better, stronger, reach more people than we ever have, and provide a meaningful worship experience than you could ever imagine. Just lean into it and be a part of it. You will be glad you did.

With all my gratitude for the past year and all my faith in the goodness to come.

Ted Harris

South Church in Andover Nominating Slate June 2021	Term end (June)	
	2022	2023
<b>Officers</b>		
Moderator:		David Strong
Treasurer:	Chuck Crockett	
Clerk:	Bonnie Zeigler	
<b>Worship Ministry</b>	<b>Suzie Henderson</b>	<b>Lauren Olmstead</b>
In-Person Worship	Wayne Shaw	Serena Manning
Virtual Worship	Kath Mason	open
Live-Stream Worship	Lucas Bacchi	Tom Appleton
		Derek Holbrook
Music	Bob Tigelaar	Meg Grazian
<b>Learning Ministry</b>	<b>Mary Pritchard</b>	<b>Stephanie Aude</b>
Learning Team	Melissa Litton	Jen Beers
		Carolyn Finlay
		Ben Li
		Heather Abourjailly
		Lisa Anderman
<b>Community Service</b>	<b>Jennifer Bouchard</b>	<b>Greg Galat</b>
Missions	Andrea Stidsen	Rachel Daniels
	Steve Fink	Char Lyons
	Jan Holden	open
	Laurie Sorota	
<b>Congregational Life</b>	<b>David DiGiammarino</b>	<b>Jenn Priest</b>
Congregational Care	Meredith Moody	Peggy Little
	Terry Ebner	
Fellowship	Eileen Fogue	Greg Eichmann
		Carrie Eichmann
New Member/Welcome	Steve Longo	open
<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Al Joyall/Tim Ozirsky</b>	<b>John Wiggins</b>
Facilities Team	Renee Manning	Jay Arbo
	Seth Holden	Steve Cortner
<b>Finance</b>	<b>Jim McQuade/Dennis Fogue</b>	<b>James Bossieux</b>
Trustees of Trust Funds		Duncan Pyle (2023)
		Ted Jenknis (2025)
		Lenore Price (2027)
Giving	open	Chris Price
	open	
Memorial Gifts	Char Lyons	open
	Beth Kiker	
Sunday Offering Coordinator	open	
Audit		Anne Hemmer
<b>Human Resources</b>	<b>Kristie Nardini</b>	<b>Julia Rutherford</b>
Nominating	Amie Hellauer	Marc Henderson
	Rachel Combs	Rob Thomas
UCC Delegates		Susan Henke
		Kelly Ferguson
		open

***Minutes of the Special Congregational Meeting***  
***South Church in Andover, United Church of Christ***  
**Sunday June 28, 2020**

The meeting was conducted via Zoom. At 5:02 PM, it was apparent that a quorum was in attendance, with over 100 present by 5:07 PM.

The Moderator spent several minutes giving instructions about the protocol for the meeting, so the attendees would understand how to ask questions and how to vote during the Zoom session. We used three tools from Zoom – the Chat function, the Raise Hand function, and the Mute function. Voting was conducted by using the Raise Hand function, with multiple rounds for any zoom attendee who included multiple members of a household. Questions were submitted using the Chat function, and the questions will be presented by designated members of the meeting leadership. When the floor was opened for comments, it was requested that comments be concise and submitted by using the hand raising function.

Marty announced that the meeting would be recorded and started the recording.

Dana opened the meeting with a prayer.

Alex shared the high-level approach to phased re-opening. The first phase of that approach will be to have small gatherings – such as small meetings – outdoors on the Church grounds. This will not include worship. Worship in the sanctuary is one of the last pieces in the re-opening roadmap, and we are not planning to use the sanctuary for worship anytime through the fall. We are following CDC and state guidelines throughout. His remarks were in the form of announcements, and he invited anyone with questions to follow up with him or the Moderator outside of the meeting.

Dave Welbourn presented the governance motion, to amend the by-laws for a one-year period. The motion was seconded, and Dave proceeded to present a slide deck that reviewed the rationale for the change (outdated by-laws, huge number of volunteers needed for long-term commitment to committees, little cross-coordination, good ideas acquired from sister churches.) The new approach, which has been adopted by other churches as many as 10 years, organizes the church into 7 ministries, who can commission chartered teams, self-guided teams, and/or ad-hoc teams as the service interests of the congregation evolve. This approach leads to the ability to tap a larger pool of potential volunteers and to be more inclusive – while requiring shorter, more informal terms of commitment to projects, themes, and efforts.

A second issue that has affected churches is the growing size, broad charter, and frequent turnover of Council members. The new governance proposal supports a smaller Council, including the 7 ministry chairs, and expects the Council to be a strategically focused body. Dave reviewed examples of the functions of each Ministries, including the activities we must do as a church, as well as self-guided functions (e.g., the Library). In answer to a question about Deacons, Dana envisioned a larger pool of Deacons, not obligated to a central committee, but able to volunteer as their interests lead them.

A second question concerned whether the Audit function should be Chartered, vs Ad-hoc. The Finance Ministry will be required to ensure that audits happen regularly.

Dave stressed that the motion includes a specific time frame – it's a one-year trial of the governance model, with constant review, and then an opportunity to revisit it within one year, within the context of newly crafted by-laws to be approved by a 2021 special congregational meeting.

In response to a question about a future charter for the new Council, Dave focused on the current by-laws, which are overly detailed and not reflective of the dynamics of our congregation and mission. The new by-laws will present a high-level framework for the responsibilities of the Ministry and Council, and they will be supported by operational charters or outlines that will provide more details about the objectives and protocols by which each Ministry will do their work.

David Floreen offered an amendment to the main governance motion to have the Council agenda posted at

least 2 days before the meeting, and the main decisions and actions communicated to the broader congregation promptly after each Council meeting. The amendment passed by hand raise voting (98-5-1) and thereby was added to the governance motion. The motion passed (110-0-1). The Moderator thanked Dave Welbourn for his leadership.

Amie Hellauer presented the nominating slate of the officers and ministry chairs, which was approved by a hand-raise vote. The slate was approved (106-0-1).

Al Joyall provided a presentation regarding the sanctuary ceiling repair – important because it's a long-term safety issue and an opportunity because the sanctuary is currently unused. The project would proceed over 12-15 weeks, with the repair work preceded by 2 weeks of setup (scaffolding, etc.). The budget for the project is estimated at \$350,000-\$450,000, and the group is seeking an authorization from the congregation for up to \$450,000. The presentation included details regarding how the first \$350,000 would come from existing funds, and we would seek the additional funds from the TOTF, either as a loan or grant, only if deemed necessary to complete the project.

Bill Schroeder raised a concern about the \$80,000 operational contribution. He did not feel that we should use the money from COVID relief to repair the ceiling – as opposed to redirecting it or even returning it. Al responded that we were very fortunate to receive the loan. In the short term, we responded to uncertainty by acquiring the loan and those funds are in fact being applied to salary and housing as intended. In the interim, we have found that our giving allocations have been maintained and we haven't encountered a decrease in income, so we have a surplus in giving that could be applied to the ceiling project. That total operating surplus is a multifactor event, including significant savings in program costs.

The Chair of the Giving Committee contributed that she feels the COVID situation is a long-term problem, not a short one, and she was uncomfortable spending funds that we may need to deal with the pandemic. Her concern and the concern of others was mostly focused on the \$80,000 described as operating surplus.

Dave Floreen commented that the project clearly needs to proceed and relatively soon, but that the source of funding is a conversation that seems to need to proceed beyond the current meeting. Anne Hemmer commented that the sanctuary ceiling is a true safety issue, we need protect the people who are in the sanctuary, and the current price is much lower than what we have seen previously – thus the work should proceed as soon as possible.

Discussion proceeded, with the idea to remove the \$80,000 from the plan for funding the proposal. Nancy Miller commented that the ceiling is a true safety concern that will be a long-term serious problem if not addressed soon. Candy Dann commented that it might be better to finalize the bids and funding over the next 3-4 weeks, and then seek a brief congregational meeting to vote on the project.

Dana commented that the project could also be partially supported by a small limited fund-raising campaign targeted for the ceiling. Linda Zimmerman proposed that, since she's not comfortable with either the \$80,000 or the \$25,000, she would like to separate the vote for the project from the vote for how it will be funded. Others commented that we have a significant endowment that can be applied to emergency needs, such as this, and that we need to remember this is a safety issue, for our children, pastors, and choir, as well as the congregation as a whole.

The initial motion offered was to approve a vote on the sanctuary ceiling project at tonight's meeting. The motion included a statement that the actual approval of the project would require a 2/3 majority. The motion passed 91-5, thereby opening the possibility of voting on the project at the current special meeting.

The second motion, which described the project scope and high-level sources of funding, was then presented. Discussion included full support for the proposal as stated, vs. asking for some delay until we have a specific funding plan. Jim McQuade provided some information that suggests we have more options to fund the project, and Linda Zimmerman suggested that we adjust the motion to substitute \$281,000 for the \$350,000 – thereby permitting us to tap into an appetite to fund this project without

tapping into the operating funds as originally described.

Al agreed to adjust his motion to substitute the \$281,000 for the \$350,000 to come from available funds, and the attendees voted unanimously to move forward with the ceiling project.

Dana closed the meeting with a prayer at 8:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Zeigler, Clerk

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***Minutes of the 310th Annual Meeting***  
***South Church in Andover, United Church of Christ***  
**Sunday February 7, 2021**

We confirmed the presence of a Zoom quorum at 11:00 AM. Marty reviewed the agenda and meeting protocol.

Dana opened the meeting with a prayer.

Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted with two minor corrections to the header of the copy in the Annual Report pdf.

The Moderator invited the congregation to post *Greetings\** in the chat and welcomed Glenn and Jennifer Rogers to the honored group of people who have been members for 50 years.

In his opening remarks, the Moderator sent thoughts out to everyone – noting that we have all made it through a challenging year. He shared some of the high points for which is grateful, including the willingness of the congregation to explore a new governance model, to staff the model with strong leadership, and to pursue tools such as new volunteer management software to support new modes of operating. In addition, we've taken the opportunity to pursue infrastructure projects, such as the sanctuary ceiling work, the purchase of a new piano, and the selection of tools to support audio-visual production – all while the sanctuary is unavailable for worship.

Dana presented the “Unsung Hero” awards to Lucas Bacchi, who has supported the hybrid worship model with his AV-technology skills, Betsy Davis, who leads the sanctuary ceiling project as she has many other capital projects for the church, and Eileen Forgue, who has reviewed all our insurance policies and recommended significant improvements in cost and quality.

Dave Floreen presented a status report on 2020-2021 giving. For 2020, total giving, including pledges received and targeted campaigns, came close to \$850,000. For 2021, to date we have \$653,000 in pledges against our \$684,000 target, with the average pledge up by 2.7%. The Giving Team is confident that, over the next few weeks, and by following up with those who haven't yet pledged, we can reach the goal. Challenges included that no new members joined last year (although new members joined in January 2021) and that a small number of members with a regular pledge history passed away.

Marge Chiafery gave the report the Missions Team, which operates as part of the Worship Ministry. In 2020, our giving for Core Missions totaled \$61,790, Emergency Relief totaled \$8000, and the “loose offerings” giving for Monthly Mission Partners totaled \$55,073. In addition, the former Day of Service evolved to a month-long effort, and the donation of gift cards for the Thanksgiving fundraiser was well above expectation at \$17,500.

Al Joyall summarized the work of the Facilities team, which is now part of the Finance Ministry. The Sanctuary Ceiling project, with a \$450,000 budget approved in 2020, is repairing the ceiling by reattaching it to the structure above, then re-plastering and painting the ceiling. This project is expected to

complete in March, 2021. Smaller projects included a new security system, with 90% of the \$20,000 cost covered by a security grant and a new fire protection system, a \$55,000 investment paid for by insurance after a lightning strike, with only the \$10,000 deductible paid by the church. Jim presented the 2021 Budget, which comprises \$695,985 in expected income against \$720,664 in expenses. The shortfall of about \$25,000 will be covered by allocating the 2020 surplus to the 2021 budget. The budget passed unanimously.

The Trustees of the Trust Funds report was given by Jane Ingram. The Trust Funds delivered very good performance during 2020, with 10.5% return for the Cemetery Fund and 10.4% return for the Trust Fund. All allocations during 2020 were associated with the express purposes of the Funds; no special allocations were distributed. Total funds balance at year end was \$3,555,482.

Dana began the Pastors' Report with a voice-annotated slide presentation describing the activities of the church throughout 2020. She then reviewed three new Pastoral initiatives that she is driving during 2021:

- *Attract newcomers to worship and retain our virtual audience.* Dana said that we've acquired a virtual audience, and she'd like to retain that audience when we return to the sanctuary. This initiative will prepare the sanctuary for blended multimedia worship by including screens and an enhanced sound system. In addition to bringing virtual and physical participants together, the initiative will prepare the sanctuary to better host talks, musical presentations, and community events. Dana is currently pulling together stakeholders and imagining what our enhanced audiovisual experience might look like.
- *Invest in becoming a volunteer hub for the Merrimack Valley.* Dana has pulled together a small group from three different ministries who have worked together to select a volunteer management application. The group have realized that they need someone to implement the package and to serve as volunteer coordinator – a part-time position Dana hopes to fill this summer.
- *Build a strong community youth music program.* This initiative combines youth activities and music to provide a parent-friendly experience without disruptive drop-offs and pickups. To ensure that all youth choirs could meet at the same designated time each week, the initiative includes provisions for additional staff to be supervised by Cathy.

Total cost for the three initiatives is about \$75-100K, which will cover first two years. These funds are being raised by the pastor working directly with individual donors within the church.

The final topic of the annual meeting reviewed engagement between South Church and area UCC organizations. Alex, who is moderator of the Northeast Association, identified the new conference minister (Reverend James D. Ross II) and reviewed some ways to engage with the association. Janet Clarke reported that Reverend Darrell Goodwin is the new executive minister of the Southern New England Conference of the UCC, which held first annual meeting in December.

Alex closed the meeting at 1245 PM with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Zeigler, Clerk