



**FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH** *of Essex Junction*
Love. Serve. Grow.

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

157th Annual Meeting

Sunday, February 2nd, 2025

11:15 a.m.

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WARNING FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF ESSEX JUNCTION
Sunday, February 2nd, 2025
11:15 A.M.

To the members of the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction,

GREETINGS IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST:

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction will be in the Sanctuary and via Zoom (using this web link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85425793810>) on *Sunday, February 2, 2025 at 11:15 A.M.* to act upon the following business:

- Article I:** To hear and act upon the reports of the Church Officers, Committees and Recognized Groups of the Church.
- Article II:** To act and vote upon the proposed budget for 2025.
- Article III:** To elect all church officers and committees required by the by-laws of the Church and others as may be necessary.
- Article IV:** To authorize the Finance Committee to borrow money and sign notes pledging the credit of the Church, if needed, to meet the current expenses of the Church.
- Article V:** To transact any other business which may properly be brought before this Annual Meeting.

On behalf of the Church,
Brenda Dawson, *Church Clerk*

AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING

Call to Order Judy Pomainville, President
Opening Prayer by Minister of Visitation, Mary McHugh
The Appointment of a Parliamentarian
Annual Meeting & Robert's Rules of Engagement

Declaration of Quorum..... Alison Wermer, Assistant Clerk

Church Membership Recognition Rev. Mark Mendes
Recognizing Five Year Increments of Membership
Recognizing our 50 Year Members
Honoring Our 50 Year Plus Members
The Necrology Report

Staff Reports..... Elizabeth O'Beirne, Children's Ministry Coordinator
Jen Kelly: Church Administrator
Bethany Blake: Music Director
Mary McHugh: Minister of Visitation
Rev. Ron Faux: Minister of Visitation
Kul Dahal: Cleaning Person
Laurie Chipman: Christian Education Director
Rev. Mark Mendes: Senior Pastor

The Meeting

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Closing Prayer Rev. Mark Mendes

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHURCH CLERK - 2024

Active Membership as of January 1, 2024: **356**

Active membership as of December 31, 2024: 349

Received by Letter of Transfer	4	Removed by Death	5
Received by Rite of Confirmation	0	Removed by Request	0
Received by Reaffirmation of Faith	13	Removed by Letter	0
Reactivated by Deacons	0	Removed from Membership by Deacons	19
		Changed to Affiliate Member	0
Total Added:	17	Total Subtracted:	24

Inactive membership as of December 31, 2024: 33

Non-member participants (adults & youth): 327

*Total members/participants: **676***

SERVICES

Regular: 86	Weddings: 2	Special/Holiday: 7
Funerals: 10	Off Site: 54	Baptisms: 2

MEMBERS RECEIVED

Rebecca Beerwald	Marian Lawlor
George Coolidge	Sarah Matt
Margaret Coolidge	Mary Elizabeth (Bee) McCollum
Nancy Daniels	Joyce Peipert
Lorrie Driscoll	Mary Ann Phelps
Sharon Flaherty	Jane Piper
Margie Gibson	Terry Potvin
Rob Gibson	Kim Shields
Janet Green	

COVENANT MEMBERS LOST BY DEATH

Dick Allen	Joyce Jacobs
Suzanne Eaton	Louise Kolvoord
Bruce Giannuzzi	Marilyn Vincent
Nancy Hayes	Russell Wilson
Carl Hoffman	

These names and statistics were compiled by Jen Kelly, Church Administrator

REVEREND MARK MENDES' SENIOR PASTOR'S REPORT - 2024

The three pillars of the church that draw people into our midst are Missions, Children/Youth Ministry, and Music. When we as a church invest our time, talent, and treasure into these three areas, then more people will come through our doors and decide to stay and join our merry band of Christ followers. And a vast majority of our members strongly support one of these three areas on ministry for they have been important in bringing joy, meaning, and purpose into their personal and faith filled lives. I have been pleased to see a slow understanding of this truth emerge and to see that understanding translate into budget decisions and the steady flow of volunteers spending their time and energy to make our three pillars strong. The countless hours, dedication, and passion devoted to these three areas is humbling and the reason why so many people come to church and pledge their money to our ministry.

We are a church of Outreach and Mission. Jesus tells us to feed and clothe people and so we do. Jesus tells us to love everyone and so we open our doors widely so that everyone can come inside and speak about justice so that God's blessings can be spread around liberally. We talk about race, LGBTQ issues, Christian Nationalism, immigration, the equality of the sexes, economic policy and systems, equity in the workplace, the environment, addictions, the homeless and drug use in Burlington, interfaith and ecumenical dialogues; all issues of justice and righteousness that Jesus brings to our attention and with which he commands us to engage. These subjects have various angles and varying opinions, but none the less, Jesus, and God before him, have asked us to engage these issues with a faithful heart, a sharp intellect and willing hands. I am so proud of our hundreds of members who care enough to act in some mission-oriented way. Perhaps the highlight of this aspect of our ministry, at least for those attending, was the Blackfeet Service Trip to Montana this past summer, a trip where seventeen people physically worked on the reservation to make the lives of a deeply oppressed group in our country a little better. Last year, our church gave away in some form or another \$ 107,172, which represents 21% of our actual budget: not bad for a little church in a little state! This includes gifts from the Missions Committee, money the Food Pantry spent to run their program [not a majority of the food they gave away though!] the Thrift Store, the Pastor's Fund, giving to the UCC, and our special offerings throughout the year as well as some minor gifts here and there.

We are a church of Music. We are blessed to have Bethany Blake and the Sanctuary Choir as well as Rick Dooley and the Finally @ First Band leading our music throughout the year supplemented with aplomb by The Men At First, Heavenly Harmony, Joyful Noise, the newly re-established Currier Bell Choir and the many people who volunteer to sing and play throughout the year. All of us have been deeply touched by their music and inspired to live more faithful lives. This year we were especially blessed to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of our organ and will soon have it cleaned and serviced to sound even better. Our quarterly concerts remain a witness to the importance of music and a vital outreach tool to get music lovers into our space. I am so proud of all of our volunteers and employees who make our church sing for joy.

We are a church that loves our children! It is hard to draw children and youth to church these days with all their activities, school projects, sports and familial responsibilities, but we as a church continue to invest in the staff and programs to reach out to them, changing as we go to match the ever-changing landscape of their lives. We believe that they and their families will be stronger and better equipped to deal with the vicissitudes of life if they incorporate the values and morals that Jesus taught. Many churches have given up their effort and financial investment in children and youth ministry, but there is nothing like having kids running around like they own the place or giving answers at the children's message or working to make the world a better place by doing some small task that will help a disadvantaged group in our society. To see minds and hearts learn to live into Christ's love is an amazing gift our church receives for investing in our greatest resource. I am thrilled we have so many volunteers dedicated to our Children's Ministry, and a program and a church that has the money and vision to continue investing time, talent, and money to children and youth.

Continued on next page...

Our worship time is when we as a community of faith come together. I strongly encourage everyone to come to church more often: we need your presence! The coronavirus is here to stay, much like the flu, but we need to admit that and move into the new paradigm of living with it and not letting it keep us home. It is a tremendous option to be able to worship from the comfort of our own homes, but there is nothing like singing and praying together or receiving hugs and hearing first-hand the good news that scripture and the pastor brings to the fore. As we have aged with coronavirus, we have seen people simply stay home the required amount of time and then return to worship. Many of our folk do not shake hands but instead give a fist or elbow bump to say hi, thus avoiding direct contact. Worship in 2024 saw quite a few changes: new communion ware, streaming 2nd service once a month, Drop in Choir, L.I.F.T [Living In Faith Together] Sundays where we actively work on some project to help people in the midst of worship, Mt. Philo Outdoor Worship, and our every popular pulpit exchanges.

We have also had great financial leadership that has kept us with a significant budget surplus of roughly \$36,000. Part of this is a result of not having the expense of two full-time pastors anymore, while some of it comes from staff transitions: hiring someone later than expected or leaving mid-year or not filling a position. Part of it also comes from our committees not spending all their budgets but rather living frugally, which of course comes from years of trying to make ends meet. We also had a tremendous effort from our Craft Fest team, who raised a record \$11,000 this year at the Craft Fest and the summer yard sale. Lastly, it comes from our regular members who are generous in their giving, some even offering more than their pledge! Great thanks to our financial officers for doing a great job.

There are other highlights from 2024 that do not specifically fit in one category or another, but helped to shape our life together:

- ◆ 17 Great New Members
- ◆ FCCEJ hosting the Vermont Conference's Annual Meeting
- ◆ Re-writing the By-laws
- ◆ Holding an Ecclesiastical Council for Josh Sharp as he journeys to ordination in the UCC
- ◆ Welcoming the Korean Cultural School to our Facilities
- ◆ Participating in the Essex PRIDE Event
- ◆ Being Honored by Dismas House at their 32nd Annual Meeting
- ◆ Losing some long standing members
- ◆ Being Invited to A.A.'s 40 Anniversary in our church Celebration
- ◆ Entering a Memorial Day Float in the Parade [with Opening Prayer by Rev. Mark]
- ◆ Leading a Worship Service for 1000 people at the Fairgrounds for Chris Baker
- ◆ Hosting the Scout Jamboree Sleepover on our Grounds
- ◆ Re-establishing the Called to Care Program
- ◆ Christmas Caroling to three Assisted Living Facilities
- ◆ Welcoming Bone Builders into our Facilities

Part of my job description is to engage in the wider church and community and although I have backed off of some of the groups I participate in, I remain active in a number of ways. I attend both the VTCUCC Annual Meeting and meetings of the Champlain Association where I serve as Treasurer and member of the Executive Committee. I have engaged with the MSSC this year as I have advocated for Josh Sharp in his journey to UCC ordination and attended Rev. Sally May's installation in Jeffersonville. I am an active member of the Essex Rotary and help with their Senior Christmas Luncheon and their golf tournament. I conduct a monthly service at Mansfield Place with the help of Rev. Ron, and Sue Wood on the piano. And I am friends with and share a periodic meal with Father Charlie Ranges. I also make myself available to non-church members of the community who need pastoral support and or help.

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As I near the end of my report, let me lift up our incredible staff. All of them do tremendous work and bring their hearts and minds to their tasks. Ron Faux and Mary McHugh have done fantastic work visiting people, helping with my Assisted Living worship services, organizing the Called to Care teams, helping to lead the Grief Support Group and assisting in worship throughout the year. Kul Dahal continues to keep our church clean and our grounds well cared for in a quiet unassuming way. Elizabeth O’Beirne does a great job reaching out to and corralling the kids and volunteers with our younger children. Bethany Blake is all in as she continues to wow us with her passion and expertise for fabulous music and leading our Sanctuary Choir. Under her leadership, the choir has grown for the first time since my arrival. And although Rick Dooley is not a paid staff person, I consider him a part of the staff for all he does in leading music at the Second Service with Finally at First; he and his group play magnificent music and inspire us all: Thank you Rick! And where would the church and I be without the steady and all knowing hand of our Administrator, Jen Kelly. She keeps tabs on all the ministry and groups using the church and resources both staff and committees and in our busy church which is quite a demanding role which causes her to wear many hats. Let me also welcome Munroe Shearer to our staff as he has just recently become our Social Media Person. He not only has the crucial knowledge of understanding our congregational church [he knows us] but he brings tremendous energy and expertise to the job. Lastly, Laurie Chipman, who does more to help this church grow and deepen their faith than anyone else that has worked here in my tenure. I still cannot imagine what ministry will be like without her and I will miss her dearly but totally understand her moving to be near family. Save the evening of March 21st for the party when we will remember her ministry, roast her a bit, offer her gifts and sentiments and wish her well in her dotage. God’s blessings old friend!

Lastly, I thank all of you. The church is not the building but the people and every day I am lifted up, nurtured, challenged, listened to and sometimes totally ignored. We laugh and grieve together. We seek to discern God’s will and truths in our lives and see where and how we fit into the Spirit’s movement in this world. I have served at FCCEJ longer than any other church, and it is a great honor and privilege to be in ministry with all of you. Blessed to be a part of you, I am ever yours in Christ.

Respectfully Submitted, 2024
Rev. Mark Mendes

First Congregational Church - Income & Expense Statement		
PASTOR DISCRETION FUND 02 - January 2024—December 2024		
INCOME	4000	
Transfer from Pastor Fund	4031	\$ 6,700.00
TOTAL INCOME		\$ 6,700.00
EXPENSES	5000	
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE	5400	
Emergency Housing	5401	\$ -
Direct member care/support	5405	\$ 5,625.00
Miscellaneous*	5510	\$ 2,400.00
Subtotal Administrative Expense	5400	\$ 8,025.00
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ 8,025.00
EXCESS INCOME\EXPENSES		\$ (1,325.00

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY COORDINATOR - 2024

It's been an amazing first year as the Children's Ministry Coordinator! I continue to learn and grow in my position and faith. I find delight sharing in the children's faith journey, and to be settling in more within the FCCEJ community and building priceless connections.

Spiritual Friends

On Communion Sundays, our children have the option of participating in Spiritual Friends. Historically, this has been for PreK through 2nd graders. However, in Fall of 2024, I decided to include PreK to 5th graders, and any youth that were interested in gathering during Spiritual Friends' time. We started the 2024-2025 Faith Formation year with a story telling presentation of Scripture. The children had fun participating in a new dynamic of this time together. Spiritual Friends will continue to be a simplistic model of peer group time, having the children share in a Scripture reading and craft.

Peer Groups

Growing in Grace and Gratitude curriculum is used for PreK-5th grade peer groups. I prepare weekly outlines for peer group leaders to follow. Over the past year I have sat in to observe and helped lead peer groups to get a sense of how the children are enjoying their Faith Formation time. I have also received valuable feedback from the peer group leaders and made some improvements to the structure of the peer group time.

Bible Sunday was a precious time to present the 3rd graders with their own CEB Bible. I found joy having some of them bring their Bible to peer group to read from.

JAM

Spring 2024, we combined JAM (Jesus and Me) with Junior Youth to learn about the liturgical year.

In Fall of 2024 we gathered to prepare homeless care kits. The intent is to make JAM more mission focused in 2025 with combining JAM with LIFT (Living In Faith Together) Sundays, along with other liturgical events.

Faith Formation Offering

The children/youth voted on their selections for the 2024-2025 faith offering to Heifer International. The main gift options are supporting mothers and children, how animals end hunger and poverty, and caring for the Earth. Thank you to all who continue to donate and support the children and youth ministry through this offering.

Acolyte Orientation

The children gathered to learn or to have a refresher on what is an acolyte. The lighting of the altar candles was the highlight of the time together. A few children were interested in signing up to acolyte in the future, and we continue to encourage them to consider greeting, ushering as a family and or ringing the church bell.

NEAUCE (New England Association of United Church Educators)

The NEAUCE conference in May 2024 was a wonderful experience of renewal, learning and creating meaningful connections. September 2024, I started to attend monthly NEAUCE meetings via ZOOM with other UCC educators. I obtain valuable support and insight to incorporate within my ministry at FCCEJ.

Elizabeth O'Beirne, Children's Ministry Coordinator

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR - 2024

I joined the staff here at FCCEJ in August of 2009. Where has the time gone?! What a journey we have had! 15 plus wonderful years that I wouldn't trade for anything. You all became my church family as soon as I walked through the door. I started out as a part time staff person working only with the children's programs, collaborating with the CE Committee, listening to parents, recruiting and gaining feedback from the volunteers while keeping the program ever moving forward. It is not the same program today. Many things have changed, and I expect things to continue to change here in the future. Church ministry is ever evolving as you listen, absorb, and make decisions help you to continue to grow and stay vibrant. I believe curriculum changed at least three times, a Junior Youth program for 5th & 6th graders was added, then a program for 3rd – 5th graders while switching the age groups for youth ministry to what it currently is today. In 2011, with the help of many in our faith community, we had the first Vacation Bible Camp in decades. VBC continued to grow and take shape, evolving into a morning or full day program (it's current format). We made it through the pandemic with our programs, being very creative and staying connected to families in the process. A church that can move with the times, keeping things relevant for all ages (so not afraid of change) is a vibrant church. Well done! Keep up the good work!

There have been many firsts for me over the years such as starting a Community of Practice Circle for CE staff of local UCC churches, following my training through the VT Conference. I think I'm the only original member of the circle. This group supports each other, shares ideas, meets monthly during the program year, and holds confidentiality. I have welcomed many to this circle, including Elizabeth as she learns, grows, and moves along her ministry journey. This group has been a 'rock' to me over the years and I know this will be true for Elizabeth, as well as your new Youth Ministry Coordinator (when they come on board). This group, otherwise known as V.A.U.C.E. (Vermont Association of United Church Educators), is the state chapter of N.E.A.U.C.E., which holds a continuing education retreat annually in May. So many awesome colleagues I have been blessed to meet and get to know over the years, working alongside several of them as the state representative and then treasurer on the planning team. This year Elizabeth and I carpooled, and I introduced her to many of my 'peeps'. So cool!

I knew 2024 was going to be different than all my other years here, and it did not disappoint. I was finally able to devote a large portion of my time to the Youth Ministry program here, thanks to the children's Faith Formation program now under Elizabeth's leadership. Youth often 'get the short stick' when it comes to ministry (time and money), and in a vibrant church like FCCEJ this does not work. Through each transition of staff for the youth, I saw the program becoming more and more fragile. I love being creative, going with the flow, meeting the youth where they are, remembering not to take it personally if they don't show up, and yet build a program and a space where they want to participate. You soon learn in youth ministry that you need to listen to their feedback, absorb it and find ways to continue to broaden their circle, welcoming their friends and introducing them to more adults in the congregation. You are their church family and community, which means you hold an important key to the success of a youth program. When you show up and participate this allows their faith to grow and deepen, whether they are thinking about it or even want it to. Finding ways to help them widen their circle of who they know helps bring them back to the church after they graduate from high school, college, and into their adult years, whether it's this church or another church.

This year I focused on outreach and mission, for both junior high and senior high youth which is something that resonated with both of them. Both of them participated in helping with childcare for the Annual meeting, being great mentors on Pretzel Sunday to the younger children, helping on Easter Breakfast, baking cookies for senior living facilities. On the Youth Summer Service Day they made a meal for Spectrum Youth, made and delivered cookies to a few of the local senior living facilities, along with the Respite House, and got a tour. Both junior and senior high participated and held key roles in helping the week of Vacation Bible Camp and the Christmas pageant be resounding successes for the younger children and the congregation as a whole. Senior High also made cookies for the college care packages and the Dismas House. Junior high created and presented a modern-day Good Samaritan skit to the congregation and made items for their Craft Fest table where donations were put toward the Faith Formation offering to Heifer International (this current program year). Junior high again planned, decorated, and hosted the Halloween Party for the whole congregation. They were incredibly pleased with how many adults participated.

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In the spring we had a “Move Up” party at Spare Time and invited all the upcoming 6th graders to join the junior & senior high youth, along with parents and the Youth Ministry Team. This fall the senior high youth helped give a fresh coat of paint to the Trans Youth sign out front of the church, along with a coat of primer to the Gym walls.

The Nursery staffing program for senior high youth continues to be a strong program that feeds our youth, young families and connects our youth to more adults of the congregation who volunteer in a supportive role, backing up the youth on Sunday morning (whether they just carry a pager or end up helping in the room as a second person). Mary Ann Phelps came on board in November to be the contact person who reaches out and keep nudging the adults to sign up on the online calendar. This is a huge weight off my shoulders, taking one important piece off my plate that frankly kept slipping through the cracks this year. Adult support people are key to keeping this program running smoothly. If you have volunteered or are thinking about it, please do your best to remember to sign up and support the youth, as well as our young families and the little ones among us.

FCCEJ is a great place to raise a family, join a church family, work on staff and grow in your faith. I have done all of this while growing in my role as your Christian Education Director. Each of the staff along the way have been key in this – Pastor Ryan, Mary, Jen, Catherine, Mark, Devin, Sally, Pastor Josh, Doug, Jenn, Bethany, Elizabeth, and through it all, Pastor Mark. I continue to enjoy sharing an office with Elizabeth, your Children’s Ministry Coordinator. We love catching up on Monday mornings, and chatting about how the week and Sunday went. Elizabeth has a great love for the church and the children! I know you will continue to help her settle in and support her, as you have me. She is putting her own spin on the program, which is so important and lovely to see.

Many thanks to our Christian Education Committee who continues to be a joy to work with, like all the previous year’s committees during my time here. They bring such passion, working hard to prepare and plan so that programs continue for all ages through and beyond this coming year. They have been a wonderful support. Please join me in thanking this year’s co-chairs Derek Lyman and Terry Livak, along with Lorinda Elliott, Micah Heaney-Forbes, Kevin McCullen, Jessica Moos, Mary Ann Phelps and Judy Roy.

Many thanks to our Youth Ministry Team who in many ways has been my right hand this year participating in JHY time, helping to plan youth gatherings, participating in the Youth Summer Service Day, mailing out youth birthday cards, and brainstorming new ideas. They are such a blessing! I know they will continue to be one for your next youth ministry staff person. They are: Bill Bickford, Jr., Jenny Bourn, Janne Giles, Micah Heaney-Forbes, Gretchen Owens, Terry Potvin, Barb Smith, and Carl Wermer.

Many thanks to the youth who have continued to fill my cup, lift my spirits, and share their energy, interests, and time. I pray you continue to show up, be yourself, and be a witness to all you meet that no matter who you are or where you are on your journey, you are always welcome here.

And to you, the congregation, don’t stop supporting the children and youth with your time, talents and energy. Participate, reach out, and let them get to know you. Share feedback with staff and ask questions. Help this church stay vibrant and remember to change things up every now and then.

So blessed to have been in ministry with you all these 15 plus years!!

Hope, Peace, Joy & Love to you all,

Laurie Chipman, CE Director

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MUSIC DIRECTOR - 2024

Another meaningful calendar year of music in worship has concluded! Our Community Concerts @ First series continues to generate interest with diverse genres. Come to the concert on Sunday (2/9) featuring the Mama Tried Bluegrass Band! Summer music featured youth instrumentalists, and I have encouraged congregational musicians to hop out of the woodwork and play/sing an introit! Please let me know if you would like to do something musical during church- I can accompany if needed.

On a personal “note,” special thanks to Denise Keating, Marie Johnson, Beth Volker, Rick Dooley, and all of the church staff for sacrificing their time, energy, and talent to keep the music running smoothly during my car accident recovery in December. Additional thanks to everyone who contributed to the meal train or helped our family with transportation, childcare, or other things. You all took time out of your busy lives to take care of us, and that is what a church community should be all about. My family is incredibly thankful for all that you give to make our church community a source of strength, faith, and love.

We tried something different on Palm Sunday by processing around the church while singing a traditional song (The Palms). This year’s Palm Sunday/Easter cantata featured several Sanctuary choir soloists, including folks who had never sung a solo in church before. The Joyful Noise choir youth sang on pageant Sunday, and the Currier Bell Choir played along with hymns at the 12/22 “carol sing” service. All of our ensembles are always seeking new members- you are welcome to sit in on a rehearsal to feel it out. Contact Jen Kelly for rehearsal days/times.

We continued the “Drop-in Choir” tradition, providing an opportunity for parishioners to occasionally sing with the Sanctuary Choir, without the weekly rehearsal commitment. There were four “Drop-in Choir” first Sundays in 2024. The dates for 2025 will continue to be on first Sundays, with a brief rehearsal at 9:30 am just prior to the 10:00 am service: 2/4, 3/4, 10/5, and 11/2. All are welcome, including youth.

On December 21st a group of FCCEJ folks went caroling at Mansfield Place, Maple Ridge, and Williston Place, where some of our parishioners reside. The residents were thrilled to have us. We hope you can join us in 2025!

Credit is due to Rick Dooley and the musicians of Finally at First, Bill Bickford and the Men at First, and Mindy Bickford and Marie Johnson for leading the Joyful Noise choir. Thanks to everyone who consistently help “behind the scenes,” including Ed Guild, Doug Olufsen, and the entire AV streaming crew. Finally, thanks to all of you for your enthusiastic participation in the music during worship!

Bethany Blake, Music Director

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR - 2024

October 2024 was my third anniversary of working at FCCEJ. There are thresholds in time, and at this juncture, we have reached a solid balance of trust and understanding. There is higher level of comprehension; from the polity of the UCC, to the procedures of FCCEJ, to the unique quirks of our committees and groups.

Rev. Mark and I both say “Sunday comes every week” so although other projects and task are always present, preparing for Sunday worship takes highest priority. This includes formatting and printing the bulletins, and any other materials needed, as well as generating lyrics and responses for our online worshippers, scheduling the streaming services, uploading the bulletin to our website, and providing links via email and our Facebook group.

Second to Sunday prep is managing the master calendar. The FCCEJ facilities are in use 7 days a week by both internal and external groups, year-round. Maintaining the calendar is quite time intensive and I do my best to keep it accurate. Having a real-time link to the calendar on our website is a lovely feature. I know that I can make an update and it will be reflected there immediately.

Other responsibilities include creating and distributing our monthly “Spirit @ First” newsletter, accounts payable, ordering supplies, and, new in 2024, attending the monthly meetings of the Communications Committee.

I am grateful to work with such a wonderful, talented staff. My heart is heavy as we prepare to wish Laurie farewell and am so appreciative of the dedication, passion, and love that she has given to the church. I look forward to welcoming Munroe as our Social Media “guru” and am excited to see what new and fabulous ideas he will bring to us.

It is a blessing to work for FCCEJ and serve you and the greater community. I feel very much a part of this faith family and I thank you for your support, your hugs, and the lovely cookies and other goodies.

Jen Kelly

VISITATION PASTORS REPORTS 2024

Rev. Ron Faux

First, I need to say "Thank you" to Mary McHugh and others for doing much of the visiting as I am now 87 and am slowing down.

Thanks for the opportunity to have great joy-filled visits with many of you. I have very much appreciated your sharing your stories with me.

There are quite a few of our church members that have difficulty getting out or are unable to get out. You may have heard, "Getting old is not for sissies." I encourage you to consider assisting us by visiting one or two of our church members.

I am reading a book by Sanjay Gupta, a neuro (brain) surgeon, titled: *"Keep Sharp – Build a Better Brain."* In writing about how we can build a better brain at any age, he says, *"Become a regular volunteer in your community. Those who volunteer tend to have less anxiety, depression, loneliness, and social isolation, as well as a sense of purpose. The 2018 AARP survey found that adults aged fifty or older who volunteer at least once a year have higher mental well-being scores than those who don't volunteer at least once a year. Consider taking a leadership role in a group or organization of which you are a part."* We are a great church because of the large number of volunteers. However, there is always a need for more help. Help keep our church great! Thank You.

May God continue to guide, bless and use you.

Rev. Ron

Mary McHugh

This past Spring, Called to Care was re-established. We have 14 Congregation members who are trained to do visits. Our group is visiting 7 members in their homes and 9 residential care members. Recently with the help of our whole congregation, we distributed poinsettias to our homebound and residential care members.

I have enjoyed visiting quite a variety of people this past year. A few I see regularly; others are more occasional. Some visits are by phone. Occasionally I send cards. Occasionally I will drop off soup. I have been averaging about 8 contacts per month.

Sharon Dettenrieder and I continue to offer a monthly grief support session with a couple months off over the summer. We have had 10 different individuals involved during the past year: 6 from our congregation and 4 from the general public.

I feel blessed to have been entrusted with these Ministries of Care! Thank you!

Mary McHugh

PRESIDENT & COUNCIL UPDATE - 2024

We begin every Sunday Worship Service with these words, *"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome in this place."* The invitation to all is hard to live into. All of the members and participants of this congregation, we all work to Welcome Everyone. Our Church is supported spiritually and financially by everyone who enters our church. Thank you one and all. We are Blessed.

This Congregation chose to move forward with a staffing model which includes part time staff to help fulfill the various functions of the former Associate Pastor. The staffing model we are creating includes the Digital Marketing and Communications Specialist. The individual originally hired resigned. Munroe Shearer will be filling this position. Yeah!! The second position is the Youth Ministry Coordinator. We are still actively advertising and accepting applications for this position. Please pass the word!!

Our current staff includes Reverend Mark Mendes, CE Director Laurie Chipman, Music Director Bethany Blake, Church Administrator Jen Kelly, Children's Ministry Coordinator Elizabeth O'Beirne, and Custodian Kul Dahal. They are an incredibly hard-working team. We also have volunteer staff, Mary McHugh and Ron Faux. They serve as visitation pastors and lead other groups. Once again, we are Blessed!

Laurie Chipman will be moving on to retirement in 2025. We thank her for many years of leading the children and adults in Christian Education and Formation. Congratulations, Laurie!

The Committees of First Congregational Church of Essex Junction are so busy. If you view the online calendar for each week's schedule, the church is busy every day and evening. We are able to help support many important organizations, JUMP, COTS, and many others. Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop, Heavenly Food Pantry, clothe, feed, and contribute in so many ways. The Missions Committee successfully organized a team for a Service Trip to Montana. This included participants of all ages. Music and Christian Education and Formation contribute constantly to the spiritual well being of so many people. We have committees that keep the business of the church in order. There are many committees outlined in the FCCEJ By Laws, and subcommittees beyond that. All of the Committees are active, and we learn from every function they fulfill.

There are so many ways to contribute and become involved with our church, if you choose to help with one thing or many. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome in this place.

God is watching us; God is always present in our lives and our church. We are Blessed.

In the song *"God is Watching Us"*, Bette Midler:

From a distance, we are instruments, marching in a common band,
Playing songs of hope, Playing songs of Peace, They're the songs everyone
God is watching us, God is watching us, God is watching us, From a distance

Respectfully Submitted,
Judy Larrabee Pomainville, President

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE YEAR END REPORT 2024

HRC has worked hard this year deciding how to develop and manage a new staffing model. To move forward requires new job descriptions and concepts for this church during changing times.

Communications, this broad topic includes worship services, social media, physical mailings, Zoom, phones, and the list goes on. The Communications committee works diligently to keep church technology up and running, this involves many dedicated people. We had a Digital Communications staff member. Unfortunately that individual decided take a job elsewhere. The job description has been reviewed, posted, and Monroe Shearer has been hired for 10 hours per week as the Digital Marketing and Communications Specialist. Monroe grew up in this church. He does not live in Vermont, that emphasizes the need for Digital communications. We look forward to new ideas!

Laurie Chipman is retiring. We have been privileged to have her on staff for many years. This creates a vacancy.

We have posted a job notice for a Youth Ministry Coordinator. This job description is on the website. We hope everyone reads the posting and spreads the word. The best recruitment is word of mouth. We have a very exciting church, we can get youth involved in an exciting way.

HRC works through creating job descriptions, recruiting and hiring for the staff. New staff positions are approved by HRC and then by Council.

Big thank you to the members of HRC for all of the time and focus on building a great staff.

Respectfully,

Judy Pomainville, FCCEJ President

PASTORAL RELATIONS ANNUAL REPORT - 2024

Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) consists of 5 regular members of the Church, one of whom is the Vice President of Council. The Vice President will serve as Chair of PRC. The PRC meets at the request of the Senior Pastor, the primary purpose being to support the needs and concerns of the Pastor. PRC should meet with the Pastor at least two times per year, with additional meetings at the request of the Pastor.

During the 2024 church year, PRC met once. In general, PRC meetings are closed to persons not on the Committee. The committee offered an open forum to hear candid concerns and issues from Rev. Mark Mendes. We appreciate this seasoned group of Church members assembled to support our Pastor.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Stein, Vice President

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 2024

The Christian Education Committee has spent another busy and productive year with its program offerings for our children, youth, young adults and families. We said thank you and goodbye to a few members and welcomed new members, whose energy and ideas are keeping our committee vibrant.

Faith Formation utilized classroom space and remained flexible throughout the year, relocating as necessary to support other church initiatives. Attendance varied depending on the season, and children were grouped as needed to keep them engaged. The committee hosted a successful Pretzel Sunday and a Lenten Scavenger Hunt, as well as another wonderful Easter breakfast. Donations made at that event went into the Youth Fund to support future programs. In June the committee hosted the popular Ice Cream Social to wrap up the Faith Formation year.

The committee is working to support staff to make our ministry more intergenerational. Many thanks go out to the volunteers who continue to support the programs that build relationships among the children, youth and adults in our church. The committee truly appreciates your vital support.

Our Children's Ministry Coordinator, Elizabeth O'Beirne, completed her first full year of working with our PreK—5th grade children. She also works with the group JAM (Jesus and Me), which provides activities for third through fifth grades. In the coming year she will be adding hours to her schedule to continue and expand upon her work with children. We are blessed to have her doing this in addition to her full-time job.

Vacation Bible Camp offered a full day program for the second year, in which a majority of campers participated. This program was run by volunteers and paid youth to staff the afternoons. We have already started planning for this coming summer, and welcome the assistance of anyone wishing to help in any way. There was one successful weekend of family outdoor fun, with the other weekend canceled due to rain. Thank you to all who participated.

Prior to the start of each Faith Formation year, the committee continues to review and update our Safe Conduct Guidelines and training is provided for all volunteers that interact with children and youth. Volunteers and staff that work with children and youth are required to provide information and background checks are performed.

The CE Committee continues to operate the nursery with high school youth as paid staff for young families attending in person. Mary Ann Phelps is currently serving as a coordinator of the calendar for this program. There is a continuous need for adults to serve as a Nursery Support Person who checks in with the youth and ensures that they have what they need. This is a success, and families of our youngest children appreciate the nursery being open and available.

To kick off the new program year, CE again hosted the "Welcome Back Sunday" barbeque lunch. And again the weather caused us to host the event inside, including the bouncy house which was set up in the gym. The entire church family enjoyed a picnic style lunch and wonderful fellowship.

In December our church family was treated to another intergenerational Christmas pageant, the third year of doing this. We all enjoyed the antics of the *"Fumbly, Bumbly Angels"* and the age-old story of Christmas being presented in this wonderful way.

Other Fellowship activities continuing to go strong are Sermon Talk Back, Searchers, Book Groups, Friday Coffee Clatter, and Bridge Group.

A major focus of our work this year has been to prepare for Laurie Chipman's retirement in 2025. The committee has been working with Laurie to make certain all programs are documented in files, and we are continuing our work to make sure programs are carried on into the future.

Along with the Human Resources Committee, a job description has been created and postings are out to hire a Youth Ministry Coordinator to work with the youth of our church.

Thank you to all the volunteers who make our Christian Education programs a success. Without your time, energy and efforts, our programs would not be as successful as they are, and the time you give is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted by Terri Livak and Derek Lyman, Co-Chairs, on behalf of the Christian Education Committee: Kevin McMullen, Jessica Moos, Judy Roy, Micah Heaney-Forbes, Lorinda Elliott, Mary Ann Phelps, Laurie Chipman, CE Director, Elizabeth O'Beirne, Children's Ministry Coordinator, and Reverend Mark Mendes.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEACONS 2024

The Deacons had another busy year in 2024. While continuing to try and make worship a more inviting place for all, we also expanded our role during the summer to have streamed services so people who cannot travel to church could join us in worship. We've continued to have special services such as a Healing Service and our invited guest preachers have expanded our worship experiences. We also debuted our new passing intinction sets and despite a few glitches, we think folks will enjoy using them. Mary has expanded the Call to Care mission (her report has been submitted separately). There have been multiple new member classes and we've had great people join our congregation. We continue to reach out to Church members via phone calls, visits and cards. We continue to evaluate the sanctuary, discussing ways to use that space effectively and in the most welcoming manner that we can. We successfully filled the pulpit when Rev. Mark was on vacation, have encouraged our Deacons and congregants to share their Spiritual Journeys during worship – learning that others have had the same path to faith binds us closer together. We will continue to reach out to the congregation and other committees to improve our services during 2024. We are looking forward to celebrating World Communion Day and scheduling a Blessing of the Animals when the weather allows outside activities. Your Deacons are here for you – please reach out to us. We look forward to helping all along your spiritual journey in 2025.

Respectfully Submitted,
Judy McCullen, Co-Chair

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2024

The Communications Committee provides guidance and/or support for the sharing of information with our members as well as outside of the Church, including, but not limited to, the FCCEJ website, and social media.

2024 brought significant changes to the makeup of the CC Team. Long time CC member Andrea Sharp left after 2 terms and is now a Deacon. The CC also welcomed the addition of Jonah Moos and Amy Macintyre to replace outgoing members Jeff Brown and Hannah Tracy.

There was also a change in the role of Digital Marketing Communication Specialist with the departure of Andrea Hickey. Andrea did a great job of attracting attention to our social media posts by generating great content as well as effectively boosting posted content. The CC team is looking forward to working with Munroe Shearer as the new DMCS and helping to shape that role.

The Live Stream team was declared an ad-hoc subcommittee of the Communications Committee. This was done mostly as a way to include budget items needed for livestream under an official committee.

A major initiative of the committee this year was to create a short promotional intro video for the church. The effort so far has been to collect videos of various members describing why they go to FCCEJ. In 2025 we hope to identify snippets of the various videos to include in the promotional video and work with the new Digital Marketing Specialist in creating the video.

Thank you to the committees who keep an eye on parts of the fccej.com website and provide detailed updates that they would like reflected on the website. Having up-to-date content as well as new content ensures that the community views our website as a valuable source of information.

Respectfully submitted by Francis Gravel, Chairman

On behalf of the Communications Committee: Amy Macintyre, Jonah Moos and Church Administrator Jen Kelly.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HEAVENLY CENTS THRIFT SHOP - 2024

"The goal of the Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop is to serve the community, by offering gently used high quality merchandise at affordable prices and financially support philanthropic programs in the community."

It has been another very successful year at the shop, meeting and exceeding our mission of outreach in our community, as well as improving our building/space and operations. Our volunteer pool remains steady and we continue to receive donations of quality items. We find the "free" and "by donation" days at the end of each season very successful. Volunteers continue to explore new ways to recycle and reuse inventory that we are unable to sell, both to reduce the amount we send to Goodwill and to be more environmentally conscious. We currently have a source for denim jeans. OuterKnown, a recycling, reuse fabric business in St. Albans, accepts denim to recreate a variety of items. We also began saving clothing for Safe Harbor in Burlington. This fall we were able to have new carpet installed on our porch. We continue to open the shop the first Sunday of the month for Church members who attend the joint service to shop or drop off donations.

Due to our loyal and new customer traffic, generous community donations, and the many hours volunteers provide to keep our shop, neat, clean and organized, we were able to support the following organizations with \$1,500 each in June 2024:

- Building Bright Futures
- Champlain Family Services
- EJRP Scholarship Fund
- Janet S. Munt Family Home
- Jenna's Promise
- Let's Grow Kids
- National Alliance of Mental Health VT
- HomeShare VT
- VT Children's Trust Fund
- Stern Center for Language and Learning
- Project Hoepfner
- VT Community Fund
- Hunger Free VT

This Holiday season we were able to give \$1,000 to each of the following local organizations:

- Essex Rescue
- Essex Junction Fire Department
- JUMP
- Age Well Meals on Wheels
- Steps to End Domestic Violence
- Katie Currier Fund at VSAC
- COTS
- Outright Vermont
- Pathways Vermont
- The Essex Community Justice Center
- SPECTRUM
- VIEW (Voices for Inclusion Essex Westford)

In August we partnered with Heavenly Food Pantry so that they could give out Milk Vouchers to the families. The project is a success, and it was decided we give the Pantry \$1,500 twice a year to fund the Milk Voucher Program and enable the Pantry to buy other items, such as butter, around the holidays for their clients.

We also contributed \$500 to Essex CHIPS and \$500 to the Church Giving Tree. In addition, we gave \$1,500 to Essex Junction Recreation Parks Scholarship Fund and \$500 to the City of Essex Junction Recreation and Parks Giving Tree. It was decided that the Scholarship Fund would be for the ADL 8th Grade Trip to Washington, DC in the spring. In April, we gave \$1,000 each to Girls on the Run and The VT Vermont Community Fund Flood Response. Wreaths were purchased for the pastor and the front doors of our church. In total over \$37,000 was given to a variety of organizations.

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Many, many thanks to those who work behind the scenes to keep the shop clean, organized and appealing to customers, the volunteers who cover the shifts, those of you who make donations and our customers who continue to support our mission. We are grateful for your generosity! Consider joining our team at the shop in 2024 to help “Make Connections and Nurture Hope” in our community.

Submitted by The Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop Advisory Board: Sandy Tallman, Sue Wood, Ginny Coe, Mary Gratton, Bridget Meyer, Elaine Raymond, Dianne Arthur and Gail Cromie

HEAVENLY CENTS THRIFT SHOP 2024 FINANCES

Cash Balance (January 1, 2024)	\$16600.00
INCOME	
Sales	\$39726.00
Total Cash Available	\$56326.00
EXPENSES	
Contribution to Church	\$6,420.00
Electricity	\$594.00
Telephone	\$502.00
Philanthropic Donations	\$39030.00
Holiday Wreaths	\$128.00
Miscellaneous (Bank Fees & Supplies)	\$444.00
Shop Upgrade	\$1312.00
Total Expenses	\$49430.00
Cash Balance (December 31, 2024)	\$7896.00

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE - 2024

As we wind down 2024, we are again so encouraged by how our FCCEJ Hospitality Committee has spent this year maintaining safe and meaningful Fellowship activity. We spent 2024 getting back to our new normal with the recognition that safety and health are paramount. We were gratefully able to offer fellowship in the form of Coffee Hour on almost all Sundays and also were able to minister to many more families with funeral receptions. As we move into 2025, we hope for more opportunities to gather as a church community and share meaningful fellowship with each other. If anyone would like to join our committee or guest host or bake, please reach out to any one of our committee members for more information.

Our committee would like to thank all the FCCEJ members for their support and assistance in the kitchen. This year we have embraced our commitment to fellowship and hospitality in a user friendly environment and have been able utilize our space more fully and efficiently! Also a huge thank you to our committee members, Sue Conti, Cindy Longwell, Joyce Peipert, Beth Poratti, and Jill White for all their hard work and dedication in providing all of the FCCEJ community with the time, space and hearty treats to grow together in fellowship. It is greatly appreciated by all! This year I am saying ‘see you soon’ to the committee as I am moving on from our committee after two amazing three year commitments. I will miss our amazing team greatly but know that FCCEJ will be in capable hands with all of them!

Respectfully submitted by Jen Dooley, Chair, Hospitality Committee

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HEAVENLY FOOD PANTRY 2024

The Heavenly Food Pantry saw yet another increase in 2024, experiencing 1,100 visits representing over 3000 household members who received food assistance. A total of roughly 80,000 pounds of food was distributed on pantry days. This resulted in a 9.3% increase in visits from the previous year. Just under 10% of the total visits involved families of 6 or more.

Beginning in March, the pantry was asked to shorten their set up time for their Monday pantries. This meant that rather than being able to set up tables and food in the Fellowship Hall in the morning, volunteers began after 1:30pm and needed to have everything ready for the pantry to open at 5:30. Volunteers have been flexible in adjusting their hours to help and the pantry is grateful. There were no changes made to the Thursday pantries as they have an earlier opening at 3:00.

To free up space in the gym that was used for food storage, permission was given to use one of the classrooms across from the Program room for excess storage. Racks were purchased and this room currently holds food as well as shopping carts used on pantry days. The small room in the West Wing across from the Education office is also used for food drive storage and should be available until the West Wing is rented.

With all the activity of the food pantry, it was decided that the Board would begin meeting monthly as opposed to the current bimonthly schedule. Meetings are set for the second Tuesday of each month.

In March the food pantry was given a dedicated phone line to be used for delivery requests and other food pantry business. This should enable the food pantry to conduct food pantry distributions without the assistance of the Church office.

The local bread outlet store closed abruptly in March which meant the end of fresh sliced bread donated to the pantry. Sliced bread is now purchased until a new supplier can be located.

The solar eclipse in April necessitated the moving of the Monday pantry from April 8 to a week later so families visiting the pantry as well as volunteers could enjoy this once in a lifetime experience.

After a generous donation from a local dentist, it was decided to ask other dental offices in the community to contribute toothbrushes and toothpaste to be given to families visiting the pantry. These items had been purchased by the pantry and through the generosity of several dental offices, toothbrushes, toothpaste and dental floss was able to be provided at the pantry without cost.

The Vermont Food Bank held its annual Hunger Conference at Killington Resort this year and three committee members attended, coming back with new ideas to improve and expedite service to the community, including automation of the registration process, which will be phased in during 2025 with the financial support of a \$2680 grant from the Food Bank.

The food pantry was the recipient of several food drives throughout the year, including the Postal Workers drive in May, several drives conducted by the Rotary, Lions Club, Holy Family, SomaVT and 3 local schools. The pantry held its own drives at the Church lawn sale in August and at the polls for Primary Day in August and Election Day in November. These drives brought in roughly 3 tons of food for the pantry!

Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop generously offered to help the pantry establish a milk voucher program for families visiting, offering a coupon good for a free gallon of milk once a month and redeemable at Central Beverage. The shop covered the cost of milk for three months and then agreed to fund the program with \$1500 twice each year. Thank you very much!

The pantry is seeing more non-English speaking families coming to the pantry. Translation phone apps help with communication, but persons who speak French, Spanish and even Portuguese and are willing to help are encouraged to contact the pantry.

The food pantry page on the Church website continues to be updated with current information, including ways to donate and volunteer. It is hoped that soon the ability to donate money directly from the website will be available.

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Due to the continuing increase in visits to the pantry as well as increased costs for items needing to be purchased, the decision was made to return to the pre-pandemic policy of allowing one visit per month beginning in January 2025. This was a difficult decision but needed to maintain the quality of items available to our families.

We are very appreciative of the many people who help make the food pantry run smoothly and are always looking for volunteers who are willing to help with food pickups and deliveries, sorting, stocking and helping on food pantry days. Please contact the pantry at (802)878-5745 Ext. 4 if you are interested. It is a great group, and we would love to have you join us!

Respectfully submitted,

The Food Pantry Committee: Mary Richer, Suzanne Reardon, Val Gabert, Anita Guild, Mary-Ellen Grove, Elaine Raymond, Lisa Clark, Betsy Weischedel, Mary Morris and Mark Mendes.

HEAVENLY FOOD PANTRY 2024 RECEIPTS & DISBURSEMENTS

Receipts

Contributions & Bequests Received.....	\$17673.31
VT Food Bank Capacity Grant.....	\$2,620.00
Total Receipts	\$20,293.31

Disbursements

Contribution to FCCEJ Operating Budget.....	\$2265.18
Equipment & Supply Purchases - Shelving	\$385.16
Equipment Repair & Maintenance-Freezers	N/A
Operations Items - Bags, etc.....	\$325.72
Pantry Items (Food)	\$8998.63
Pantry Items (Personal Hygiene).....	\$4249.48
VT Food Bank Capacity Grant - PantrySoft, etc.	\$2620.00
Vermont Food Bank.....	\$2756.71
Total Disbursements	\$21,600.88

Net Receipts (Disbursements)	(\$1,307.57)
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MONTANA SERVICE PROJECT—2024

In June of 2024, FCCEJ sent an intergenerational service team to the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana to work on projects identified by the Blackfeet community. Our Team of seventeen met early at the Burlington airport to start the journey west. Despite being bleary eyed, we could feel our excitement for the week ahead. Over the past year, we had built our team and learned about each other, Global Volunteers and history about The Blackfeet Tribe. We were excited to be culturally immersed and learn more about the Blackfeet community. Our team stayed at the Community College in Browning, MT which is located in northwestern Montana along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains and is bordered on the north by Canada and on the west by Glacier National Park.

We arrived in Browning by early evening and met Rosie, our Team Leader. We partnered with Global Volunteers who coordinate service trips. They provide a place to stay, linens, groceries, transportation and assisted us with planning our additional activities. For the leaders, this is a great benefit, as everyone can participate. Global Volunteers works only with communities where they have been invited and work with local leaders to identify areas where the community would like assistance.

Saturday evening we had dinner and spent time reviewing their handbook and rules, dividing up housekeeping chores (breakfast, cleanup, trash etc.), and signing up for either the journal or message of the day reading. We had Team Building activities and set goals for the week. On Sunday, most of us went on the Community Tour, where we spent much of the day driving and learning about The Blackfeet Reservation and Glacier National Park. The Blackfeet were originally nomadic but were forced into this land area with poor soil. We learned that they are forgiving people and live in the present. A small group of our team attended a Sweat Lodge event. The sweat is a spiritual opportunity, where the tent is heated to a very high temperature, the Chief prays over each person, and chanting and praying occurs while in the tent. Our Team members who attended were quite moved by this experience.

Our team of volunteers spent Monday through Friday at various worksites. Our days began between 7-7:30 am with our Message of the Day, Journal reading breakfast and cleanup. Our volunteer crews were at our worksites by 8 am and typically ended around 4 pm. Our Vermont Team was a group of hard-working individuals who spent little time resting. We were tired by the end of the week!

Our volunteer opportunities included:

- FAST Blackfeet, the local food pantry distribution site, where we stocked shelves, handed out food, and assisted with checking families in. FAST Blackfeet is also partnering with community members, working with, and teaching how to garden and grow certain foods. Foods grown, are then split between the community member and the food pantry. One morning a small team prepared the soil, dug, and added compost and topsoil to build a garden.
- Eagle Shield, which is their local Senior Center. Meals were prepared and served. On two different days, Mark and Ashley each had an opportunity to ride with Linda and deliver 80 meals throughout the community. In their journey, they truly got a sense of what the housing conditions of the local community were like. We found that everyone in Browning was so grateful.
- Local School: Some members of our team spent time volunteering outside at a local school. The back side of the school is stick built, so first it needed to be scraped and then painted. This was a project that some members of our team saw to completion, and we could see such joy in their faces in getting the job done.
- Community College: Some members of our team spent their time at the Community College preparing the soil and planting berry bushes for their greenhouse. Keep in mind that this is all manual work when digging and compost and topsoil needed to be added. Shovels and wheelbarrows were used, there were no rototillers and tractors. Once that project was completed, the next project was digging/building a 5k trail/running path where they raked, added landscape paper which was then tacked down so stones could be added to the path. This would be an ongoing project, continued after we left.

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- Sundance Ceremony: There was an opportunity to help build a Teepee for the Sundance Ceremony. Our team was invited to attend the ceremony on Friday, which was spiritually moving. Our team also had an opportunity to build a second teepee for some women who traveled and were staying there.

Our Team was able to experience cultural learning and have a little fun too! We learned that we need to take care of ourselves so that we can take care of others. We spent time at the Native American museum learning about various tribes, clothing, tools, weapons, and history. We had an evening out for dinner. We went hiking in the park. We spent an evening at a Ranch where we were able to horseback ride and were served hamburgers from the cattle raised. We felt so grateful to have this experience.

This service project trip is funded from three sources – individual team members, the church, and team fundraising. Our team hopes to see you on March 8, 2025, for our eighth annual Cabin Fever Calcutta. Proceeds from this event support our service trips.

Our intergenerational team of seventeen was so grateful for their opportunity to learn about the Blackfeet Tribe and to work on service projects there. Our 2024 team members were: Ashley, Lisa, and Matt Clark; Bill Coddington; Sharon Dettenrieder; Christine, Dave, Sam, and Mae Dewey; Cathy Lapierre; Mark Mendes; Gretchen and Isabelle Owens; and Heather, Terry, Addie, and Tristan Stein.

We are most appreciative of the support of church members, the Mission Committee, and Church Council for their support of this intergenerational service trip. Planning has begun for our next trip in 2026 that will be led by Lisa Clark and Betsy Weischedel. Let them know if you are interested.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Clark & Sharon D. Dettenrieder

Montana Service Project Team Leaders

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MUSIC COMMITTEE - 2024

The FCCEJ Music Committee has been very busy in 2024! Our committee tasks include keeping the pianos and organ tuned and in good repair, supporting all our choirs and musical groups, coordinating with music staff (Bethany Blake) and clergy (Mark Mendes), all while keeping within our budget. Our church is blessed to have so many incredible musical groups. The Sanctuary Choir, led by Bethany Blake, has had a very successful year sharing spiritual music from many genres. We are grateful to Rick Dooley for leading Finally at First and providing toe-tapping music at second services. Bill Bickford, Jr has kept Men at First blending its beautiful harmonies for the enjoyment of our church as well as many other churches throughout the state. Heavenly Harmony, led by Bethany, has graced our church several times throughout the year. We are fortunate to be able to keep the Bell Choir going with help from an outside director and Joyful Noise gets together a couple of times a year with the help of Mindy Bickford and Marie Johnson.

A big accomplishment in 2024 was the organization of the music library. With the help of the Sanctuary Choir, mainly Doug Olufsen, the music was organized in boxes and lined up on shelves for easy access. Thank you, Doug!

We were very excited to celebrate the 40 Year Anniversary of our beautiful organ!! This celebration is being done in two parts. The first was a celebration during worship services on November 17. During the service we shared a brief history of the organ, showed a pedagogical video explaining how our specific organ is constructed, and had a 40th birthday celebration after each service in the fellowship hall. The second part of this celebration will be held in March after the organ is cleaned and repaired. This organ concert will feature past FCCEJ organists Catherine McMaster and Wayne Schneider, as well as our current organist, Bethany Blake. We have a very special Organ keeper on our committee, Ed Guild has looked after our organ for all of its 40 years in our church! We can't thank Ed enough for all his help with the organ video, its history, and annual upkeep! We also want to extend a thank you to the Music Committee members as well as our sub-committee, Carolyn Toof, Betty Busciglio, Denise Keating, Andrea Sharp, and Beth Volker for all the hard work on this 40th Anniversary celebration!

Many thanks to the Music Committee, Joanne Irwin, Amanda Palmer, Laure Cunningham Firkey, Whitney Noel, Laura Marthaler, Ed Guild and Mindy Bickford. A HUGE thank you to Amanda Palmer and Joanne Irwin for their many years of service who are stepping down this year. We want to extend a warm welcome to Stephanie Fields and Heather Stein who are joining us in 2025. We could still use one more member if anyone is interested.

Respectfully submitted,

Mindy Bickford, Music Committee Co-Chair

USHERING COMMITTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT 2024

The Ushering Committee is responsible for recruiting volunteers to usher/greet for our services, an important part of having a welcoming environment at our Church. We are thankful for the many people who have signed up to cover services over the last year and for those who step up when ushering has been unable to schedule coverage. The committee itself has been limited by having just 3 members to do recruiting in 2024.

We have made progress rebuilding a list of members to call about ushering, but it is not fully up to date yet. We are also doing more to keep track of who has served recently, trying not to contact the same people more than 2 or 3 times a year.

Ushering uses Sign-Up Genius which allows volunteers to schedule slots themselves if they chose to. To access this from the Church web site use "Serving Others" -> "Get Involved" then find the Sign-Up Genius icon on the right of the page -> link there for ushering / greeting / acolytes.

Carl Wermer, for the Ushering Committee.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MISSIONS COMMITTEE 2024

The Missions Committee started 2024 with generous support from the church of \$6,000, which at first glance looks like a 100% increase but due to some confusion in 2023 the Jamaica (Montana) trip was included in this \$6,000 instead of being considered as a separate funding line item.

In May, the Missions Committee voted to donate \$1,500 to the Jamaica (Montana) trip. Going forward the biannual service trips will be accounted for in a separate line item.

The funds to support the Community Concerts and the Racial Justice groups will also be separate line items.

Missions donations included organizations such as Steps to End Domestic Violence, Easter Flowers for homebound church members, Spectrum youth organization, JUMP, VIA, Age Well, COTS, and FCCEJ Craft Fair.

Missions Committee had been planning more community wide programs beginning with January 5th LIFT Sunday; assembling kits for unhoused people, as well as holding several informational meetings with Age Well presentations of their services available.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marie Sullivan, Missions Chair

TREASURERS REPORT - MISSIONS COMMITTEE 2024

December 31, 2024

	Budget	Balance
	\$6,000.00	\$210.59
Racial Justice		\$0.00
Balance Fund Investments		
CD-Missions		\$8,012.68
Missions Reserve		\$2,197.05
Service Trips		\$25,960.76

Funds in bold are those whose balance is part of the Monthly offerings.

Mission Committee is responsible for these 7 of the annual 12 offerings.

	FCCEJ Missions-Donations YTD	
Feb	Outdoor Ministry Program	
Mar	One Great Hour of Sharing	\$565.00
Jun	Strengthen the Church	\$575.00
Sept	Seminary Offering	
Oct	Neighbors in Need	\$699.00
Nov	Heavenly Food Pantry	
Dec	Christmas Fund Offering	\$930.00
	Marie Benway for Calcutta Auction Spectrum	\$250.00
	Transfer to Mission Trip per vote at March meeting	\$1,500.00
	March Concert - Ma-et-Vient for Steps to End Domestic Violence	\$337.50
	April Concert - Vermont Virtuosi for Montana Trip	\$20.50
	Cots	\$300.00
	Easter Flowers	\$400.00
	Oluchukwa Ebele	\$100.00
	Eric Agnero	\$100.00
	Jeetnan Khadka	\$100.00
	Jeetnan Khadka	-\$100.00
	JUMP	\$500.00
	September Concert - HairPeace for Spectrum	\$0.00
	Chili Grab and Go - AGE WELL	\$515.00
	Spectrum Car Wash for auction- Ann Marie Sullivan	\$250.00
	November Concert - Alicia Chapman/Bethany Blake for VIA	\$400.00
	JUMP	\$500.00
		\$7,942.00

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEE COMMITTEE - 2024

The Trustees are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of all our buildings and grounds, including our 150+ year church and two adjacent properties, the Sawyer House and the Parsonage. 2024 marked the first year with no capital campaign projects, but somehow we still managed to keep very busy!

The following summarizes the major infrastructure and maintenance projects of 2024:

- Secured new telecommunications contract with Burlington Telecom, switching to internet-based phone service and avoiding a costly rate increase
- Major elevator repair (piston-repacking) completed by Otis Elevator; renewed multi-year service contract with Otis following competitive bid process
- Major boiler repair to replace the second condensate return pump
- Repaired rotting fascia boards on exterior of Admin Wing side of building
- Completed LED lighting upgrade by retrofitting all existing ceiling fixtures (Vermont law banned sale of fluorescent tubes starting January 2024)
- Replaced small water heater tank in the ADA bathroom near Fellowship Hall
- Completed informal structural review of the sanctuary; structural engineer reported that a full assessment would be required if any changes are made to the floorplan (e.g. removal of pews), but that no further action is needed if no changes are made. Changes to the floorplan will change the load capacity (fixed pew seating allows for higher load than open seating)
- Added new motion detection security system to prevent intruders after-hours
- Repainted Parsonage porch railing and porch ceiling (thank you Dennis Conti!)
- Repaired Sawyer House porch area (thanks Bill Coddington!)
- Sealed parking lot pavement cracks and re-stripped (thanks Bill!)
- Began new compost pick-up service
- Purchased two new zone valves for the heating system (work to be completed in 2025)
- Purchased new bottle filler to replace old water fountain on second floor (work to be completed in 2025)
- Working with Vermont Gas to replace our meter in 2025
- Solicited competitive bids for replacing the failing siding at the parsonage
- Completed lead inspections for all rental properties (state requirement)
- Completed required ongoing annual inspections and maintenance for the boiler, elevator, lift, alarm systems, fire extinguishers and kitchen fire suppression system
- Continued lawn fertilization and weed control efforts, including fall aeration by Dan Petherbridge. Caring for the lawn helps the lawn withstand heavy use for outdoor worship/fellowship, programs for children/youth and fundraising activities.
- Secured new snow removal contract with SD Landscapes for 2024-2025. The fixed-price contract includes a set number of snow hauls for the season. We have asked the vendor to try their best not to exceed this number to minimize any further charges, however there is only so much we can control. Even a relatively small storm requires snow removal or snow piling somewhere. Unfortunately, our options are limited in terms of where snow can be piled – the lawn (not ideal because it destroys the lawn every year and then there is a cost to repair it), the old daycare playground (which might cause flooding in the parsonage and would require removal of the new fence), and the parking lot (which would mean less parking available for worship and other activities during the winter months, and which may limit access for emergency vehicles).

Continued on next page...

West Wing (former daycare) Renovations:

- Completed asbestos testing in the West Wing and discovered that some asbestos abatement will be required before any wall demolition can take place (estimated cost of \$14-17K based on the existing plans to remove the bathroom and add an accessibility ramp)
- Painted ceilings, hallway walls and the two largest rooms in the West Wing to make them more welcoming and usable while the church determines future use of that space.
- Ordered a new door to replace the existing metal door from the parking lot; existing door does not close properly without additional force (new door to be installed in March 2025)

Given the high costs involved with renovation and the abatement required, Trustees recommend waiting until a future tenant is secured, or a definitive plan is in place, before moving forward with any further West Wing renovations. It is prudent to ensure that these will meet the needs of the new tenant/use before proceeding.

None of the above could have been accomplished without the generous financial support of our congregation, and the countless hours our wonderful Trustee volunteers gave. Thank you to all the Trustees for their tireless efforts and expertise: Phil Bourn, John Burnett, Bill Coddington, Dennis Conti and Frank Smith, and our two ex-officio volunteers Ed Guild and Art Winslow. It has been such an honor and a joy to work with you all, long meetings and all. I also want to recognize Mike Bottamini for helping maintain our lawn and gardens again this year, and to everyone who helped spruce up the landscaping in the spring and fall.

As several long-time Trustees end their terms, Dennis Conti, Frank Smith and myself this year, Ed Guild and Art Winslow last year, and John Burnett next year, we look to the next group of dedicated leaders to take care of Our Home. We hope the church will continue to invest in preventive maintenance and key infrastructure, and allocate some funds from the annual operating budget to replenish the Capital Fund each year. Additional resources are also needed to care for the two aging rental properties. The siding on the parsonage and barn is failing and needs to be replaced next year. The Sawyer House ramp needs to be replaced. Trustees recommend setting aside some of the rental income from each property for larger infrastructure projects.

We recognize that taking care of our buildings and grounds takes a large share of the church's financial resources and a significant amount of volunteer time, but these are important investments that support all the amazing ministries of our amazing church.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaki McGeary, Trustee Committee Chair

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PLANNED GIVING COMMITTEE 2024

The Planned Giving Committee launched a new Planned Giving Plan early in 2023 in order to educate members and friends of FCCEJ regarding the opportunities of and long-term benefits of planned giving.

Now, nearly two years since implementation, the plan is working as more church members learn about the components of the plan and the benefits to our church. Newsletter articles have included testimonials from Legacy Circle members. In May, a seminar was conducted by an estate planning attorney highlighting estate planning, wills, and elder care.

Church members were also given the opportunity to notify us about their commitment to include FCCEJ in their will or estate plan. Those who did so are now charter members of the Legacy Circle and include the following:

- Ann Grey
- Cathie Goodheart
- Beth Volker
- Marie & David Johnson

The Planned Giving Committee recommends that all church members review the various ways in which a planned gift can leave a long-term legacy for future generations. To notify the church, please complete the Letter of Intent for Planned Gift available on the FCCEJ website under Fund Raising/Planned Giving.

Respectfully submitted,

David Johnson, Chair Planned Giving Committee

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE - 2024

The Nominating Committee wishes to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has agreed to serve on a committee and to those whose terms are expiring—the work it takes to keep our church thriving for its members and the larger community requires the efforts of many. They include our own Janne Giles, who served faithfully on the Nominating Committee, and Kaki McGeary, who is leaving Trustees and joining us in 2025.

After much deliberation and brainstorming, we have made significant strides in rethinking how we approach committee service. This year, we shifted from the traditional “cold call” process to a more proactive and collaborative model. Dedicated liaisons from our committee now work closely with the other committees to confirm terms of service and identify suitable new members as needed, fostering stronger connections and ensuring continuity. In September, we hosted a successful Committee Fair, Together We Serve, Together We Thrive, which highlighted the impactful work of each committee and energized the congregation around the value of serving. As we look ahead to 2025, we will continue refining this process to make committee service a meaningful and seamless experience for all.

Our work for 2025 is not complete, though, so we will continue to seek a few more volunteers to fill two remaining open positions. Please send a note or call one of us on Nominating if you feel called to serve.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Starkey

Continued on next page...

FCCEJ Officers for 2025

President.....	Judy Pomainville	Assistant Finance Secretary.....	Linda Bogardus
Vice President	Terry Stein	Treasurer.....	Dan Petherbridge
Clerk	Brenda Dawson	Assistant Treasurer	Matt Clark
Assistant Clerk	Alison Wermer	Internal Auditors	Betsy Weischedel,
Finance Secretary	Ann Gray		Alan Kinney

Committees for 2025

Christian Education (8-12)

Name	Date
Jessica Moos	2025
Kevin McCullen	2025
Terry Livak (C)	2025
Derek Lyman	2026
Micah Heaney-Forbes	2026
Lorinda Elliott	2026

Communications (4)

Name	Date
Francis Gravel (C)	2026
Amy McIntyre	2027
Beth Warren	2028

Deacons (12)

Name	Date
Alison Wermer - C	2025
Bob Driver	2025
Donna Burnett	2025
Rusty Sargent	2025
Judy McCullen - C	2026
Maureen McKenzie	2026
Gary Hartman	2027
Allison VanSteensburg	2027
Jim Glatz	2027
Andrea Sharp	2027
Paula Sargent	2027
Riley Elliot	2027

Hospitality

Name	Date
Sue Conti	2025
Cindy Longwell	2025
Beth Porratti	2026
Jill White	2027
Joyce Peipert	2027
Gorden Starkey	2027

Missions (8-12)

Name	Date
Marie Benway	2025
Sharon Dettenrieder	2025
Gail Cromie	2025
Peter Schmalz	2026
Linda Bogardus	2026
Marty Hopkins	2027
Ann Marie Sullivan - C	2027
Lori Gianuzzi	2027
Marian Lawlor	2029
Betty Busciglio	2029

Music (6)

Name	Date
Amanda Palmer	2025
Mindy Bickford - C	2026
Laura Marthaler	2026
Whitney Noel	2026
Joanne Irwin - C	2027
Terry Potvin	2027
Heather Stein	2028
Steph Fields	2028

Nominations (6)

Name	Date
Elaine Raymond	2026
Lauren Starkey - C	2027
Mary Ann Warren	2027
Sandy Tallman	2027
Kaki McGeary	2027

Pastoral Relations (5)

Name	Date
Vice President	N/A
Carolyn Rushford	2025
Myrna Doney	2025
Brenda Dawson	2026
Riley Elliot	2027

Planned Giving (6)

Name	Date
Stewardship Chair	N/A
Treasurer	N/A
Finance Chair	N/A
Matt McGeary	2025
Dave Johnson (C)	2026
Darryl Koch	2027

Stewardship (6)

Name	Date
Heather Stein	2025
Kathryn Brennan - C	2026
Emily Guziak	2026
Alex John	2027
Beth Volker	2027
Open Position (1)	

Trustees (6)

Name	Date
Phil Bourn	2025
John Burnett	2026
Bill Coddington	2026
Andrew Beebe	2027
Rob Gibson	2027
Open Position (1)	

Ushering (6)

Name	Date
Carl Wermer (C)	2025
Justin King	2026
Melisa Gibson-King	2026
Aimee Koch	2027
Open Position (2)	

Vermont Conference Delegates

Name	Date
Brenda Dawson	
Open Position (3)	

Church Association Delegates

Name	Date
Brenda Dawson	
Open Position (1)	

C – current chair

() number allowed by the bylaws

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT - 2024

We've experienced another incredible year at FCCEJ! We started the year by approving a balanced budget at Annual Meeting. We finished 2024 with a sizeable surplus of \$33,529.17 that Church Council voted to move to the Capital Restricted Fund. Our members and supporters continue to back the daily operations and incredible missions that our Church has become known for. We support a successful Thrift Shop, a thriving Food Pantry as well as several local community groups. We have a vibrant Music program and Mission projects that give locally and serve nationally. Our Community Concerts continue to be successful as they draw crowds. This by no means is an exhaustive list of the programs bolstered by the Church.

In December, Church Council approved a deficit budget with total expenses of \$511,825.59, exceeding projected income by \$6,399.59. This was arrived at after careful consideration of how each committee uses funds to carry out the work of the Church.

The Stewardship Committee continued their hard work including the importance of pledging to support the Church. We had another successful pledge drive with 153 pledge units pledging a total of \$345,640.00 for 2025. Knowing how members plan to give to the Church in the coming year helps us best budget the funds to support this amazing work.

We continue to be fortunate to have a dedicated Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer as well as Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretary. While these are volunteer positions, they spend hours weekly to track and monitor the Church's finances.

We truly appreciate the time spend by this incredible group of folks.

Endowment

Our Endowment Fund has continued to grow over the past several years as the markets rose. We convened an Endowment Subcommittee in September to review the Church's current investment options. While we have benefited along with the broader US stock market runup, we elected to transition our investments into what would be considered a more conservative approach, with more weight on capital preservation. We have transitioned into the UCF Balanced Fund with a target allocation comprised of 40% Fixed Income and 60% Total Equity. Total account market values over the past years for the Endowment Fund:

12/21/2021 - \$732,008.04

12/31/2022 - \$599,717.33

1/31/2023 - \$639,792.24

11/28/2023 - \$636,000.00

12/31/2024 - \$800,220.62

Memorial Fund

Thank you to all who made gifts to honor the memory of a loved one. The year end Memorial Fund balance is \$15,071.25. During the fiscal year 2024 the Memorial Fund gifts allowed us to contribute \$769.00 toward the installation of a new water bottle filling station as well as \$3392.00 toward new audio-visual tech equipment.

While talk of money and finance is often seen as boring and something to be avoided, the continued financial support of our Church and the astute management of its assets has helped us remain a vibrant community.

Sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to this success; we truly are blessed.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Stein, Vice President, Dan Petherbridge, Treasurer, Matt Clark, Assistant Treasurer, Ann Gray, Financial Secretary, Kaki McGeary, Kathryn Brennan, Rev. Mark Mendes

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE - 2024

In 2024, the Stewardship Committee consisted of six members: Kathryn Brennan (chair), Emily Guziak, Alex John, Heather Stein, Beth Volker (scribe), and Beth Warren. We were strongly supported by Dan Petherbridge (treasurer), Ann Gray (financial secretary), and Mark Mendes (Senior Pastor).

The music concert series, Community Concerts @ First, continued with four concerts in 2024. Alex John, Gretchen Owens, Joanne Irvin, Bill Bickford, and Kathryn Brennan formed the music concert series committee this year with Beth Volker joining in the fall. Several volunteers also provided help with additional facets of the concerts. We welcomed Va Et Vient, Vermont Virtuosi with flutist Laurel Ann Maurer and pianist Michael Sitton, Hairpeace, and Alicia Chapman on Oboe with Bethany Blake on keyboards for the 2024 concerts. The church received \$523 and \$583 was donated to Steps to Prevent Domestic Violence, the service trip to the Blackfeet Reservation, and Vermont Interfaith Action. There will be four concerts in 2025.

The theme for our fall Stewardship campaign was *"What is Stewardship? What does it mean to you?"* In October, we delivered pledge packets (including letter, pledge card and a financial trifold) to the congregation. In November, we reminded folks to pledge at several services. And in December, we did follow-up emails and phone calls. We worked closely with Ann to narrow the list of people who pledged last year but did not submit pledges for 2025. Our marketing campaign included videos, a physical thermometer showing our progress, a banner, fliers, newsletter articles, and updates to the website. We relied on additional support from Jen Kelly and the Communications Committee.

We once again used drama as a lighthearted way to encourage folks to pledge with Emily Guziak's original skit *"Stewardship: What does it mean to you?"* Bill and Mindy Bickford, Bill Bickford Sr., and Jen Kelly joined Stewardship committee members Kathryn Brennan, Emily Guziak, Alex John, Heather Stein, and Beth Volker for a "typical" Stewardship meeting. Everyone involved had a good time and the audience loved it!

In our non-pledge drive months, we wrote newsletter articles about other Stewardship topics including stewardship towards each other, special offerings, per capita dues, and questions about pledging.

The following numbers reflect the faith of our members and their understanding that a church with a strong financial foundation is essential for our future:

	Last year/2024	Current year/2025
Number of pledging units:	161	153
Total amount pledged:	\$340,144	\$345,640

- **41** people increased their pledge this year - THANK YOU!
- **47** people decreased or ceased to pledge
- **20** Pledges from last year are still outstanding, if they pledge the same as last year this will total an additional **\$29,010**

Thanks to everyone who not only kept up paying their pledge in 2024, but also continued to pledge in 2025. Our church will continue to thrive with your generosity.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathryn Brennan, Stewardship Chair

SCOUTS BSA TROOP 624 - 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

Scouts BSA Troop 624 had a good year. We remain a small but active troop. In 2024, the troop was involved in several great camping activities, including a week at Mt Norris Scout Reservation. At Mt Norris, Troop 624 shared a campsite with Troop 778 of Bradford, VT.

The troop participated in the Essex Junction Parks & Rec pumpkin carving, and two Eagle Projects.

In 2024, Reilly K. and Ben E. earned their Eagle Awards. Ben's project involved building shelves for Rice Memorial High School. Reilly's project was the clearing, tilling, and seeding of the old daycare playground behind the parsonage. Reilly's project included removing an asphalt sidewalk as well as removing large quantities of playground equipment and woodchips. Reilly's work leaves a "blank slate" for our Church to pursue new projects.

BEFORE



AFTER



The troop does face challenges, as do many others. The troop needs more Scouts, parental involvement, and leaders. In recent years many troops around the country have closed due to a lack of Scouts (for example, the only troop in Syracuse NY recently closed). We are expecting a group of Cub Scouts to cross-over this Spring, which will be the first Cub Scouts entering the troop since COVID. But while we are a small troop, we have good energy.

2024 brought a new Scoutmaster, Tullus Bergeron. Tully (as he is called) is a very recent Eagle Scout from Troop 624. At 21 years old, Tully is probably the youngest Scoutmaster in the State. He has great enthusiasm for Scouting, working as a volunteer at Mt Norris during the summers, while completing college work at CCV and starting his career as an apprentice funeral director.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kevin McCullen (Chartered Organization Representative)

CUB SCOUT PACK 630 - 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW



Dear Members of First Congregational Church of Essex Junction,
As we usher in the new year, I am filled with immense gratitude and pride as I reflect on the wonderful journey of Cub Scout Pack 630 over the past year. 2024 has truly been a banner year for our pack, marked by significant growth, active community involvement, and memorable adventures under new Cubmaster Paul Wolf's leadership.

Service Projects and Community Involvement

Our Pack has been enthusiastic about serving our community and participating in meaningful service projects throughout the year.

Continued on next page...

In May, we joined forces with other volunteers for the statewide Green Up Day Good Turn, demonstrating our commitment to environmental stewardship. November saw us proudly marching in the Scouting Salute to Veterans Parade, honoring those who have served our country. In total, the Pack members logged 29 Community Service Hours.

Supporting the Heavenly Pantry has been another cornerstone of our service efforts. Our scouts and their families have continuously provided valuable assistance to this vital resource. Additionally, we were privileged to take part in the Annual Scout Sunday service at First Congregational Church of Essex Junction, following an unforgettable overnight "*camping*" trip right here on the church grounds.

Welcoming New Families and Growth

One of the most exciting milestones of 2024 has been the remarkable growth of our Pack. The pack grew from 29 to 47 Scouts, making us one of the fastest-growing Packs in Vermont. It has been a joy to see our Pack family expand and embrace new members with open arms.

Activities and Adventures

Our calendar has been brimming with engaging activities and adventures that have fostered camaraderie, skill-building, and fun. The Pinewood Derby showcased the creativity and competitiveness of our Scouts, while the Metro Rock Sleepover and movie night brought smiles and laughter to all. Summer was particularly eventful as we sent 11 Scouts to Day Camp at Champlain Valley Exposition and had 2 Scouts attend the summer resident camp at Mount Norris Scout Reservation in Eden.



We made concerted efforts to reach out to new families, hosting events such as Mini Golf, Ice Cream and Archery, and Movie Night. These activities culminated in the exhilarating "Rocket into Scouting night," where our Scouts constructed and launched soda bottle rockets, sparking excitement and curiosity.

Our adventures continued into the autumn as 34 Scouts and parents participated in the Cub Scout Autumn Adventure weekend at Mt. Norris Scout Reservation in October. We have already planned an exciting calendar of activities for 2025, ensuring that the spirit of Scouting continues to thrive.

Fundraising and Achievements

Our annual Popcorn Sale, which shifted to the spring in 2024, was a resounding success. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of our Scouts and their families, we exceeded our fundraising goal. We also completed our annual charter renewal on time, ensuring that our Pack remains vibrant and active.

Scouts earned a total of 213 Adventure Belt Loops and 15 Ranks in 2024.



Looking Ahead

As we look forward to 2025, we are filled with anticipation for the many adventures and opportunities that lie ahead.

Our commitment to service, community, and the development of our Scouts remains unwavering. We are grateful for the support of the First Congregational Church, which has been instrumental in our success.

Thank you for your continued partnership and for being an integral part of the Cub Scout Pack 630 family. Together, we are shaping the leaders of tomorrow and making a positive impact on our community.

With heartfelt gratitude and best wishes,
Mark Saxon, Committee Chair, Cub Scout Pack 630

TREASURER REPORT 2024

A complete accounting of the 2024 finances, including the 2025 budget, may be found in the statements on the following pages. We ended the year with a \$32,529.17 surplus which the Church Council voted to move to the church reserve, specifically the Capital Reserve restricted fund. There was endowment distribution.

Income and expenses for 2024 were budgeted at \$473,935. Income came in higher at \$504,740.81 and expenses, \$471,211.64. The surplus was achieved primarily due to pledges and loose offering coming in much higher than anticipated.

For 2025, the Finance Committee presented an unbalanced budget with income/expenses of \$505,426 and expenses of \$511,825.59 resulting in a deficit of about \$6,400. Most committees came in a bit higher on their budget than 2024 with a couple significantly higher. The majority of staff will receive a 2.5% pay increase, with normal utility increases and building and grounds expenses. We again anticipate an increase in both pledge and loose income. Overall payroll costs are a bit of a moving target due to the unknown exact timing of the hiring for vacant positions.

A majority of the Church Council approved the deficit budget to be presented to the congregation.

For more information on the details of the proposed 2025 budget, please see the statements at the end of this annual report. As usual, the Finance Committee will closely monitor income and expenses throughout 2025 and make adjustments/recommendations as necessary.

Dan Petherbridge, Treasurer

Matt Clark, Assistant Treasurer

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITORS - 2024

January 21, 2025

DRAFT


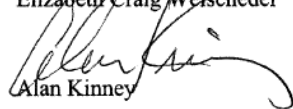
The Income and Expense Statement for the year ended December 31, 2024 of the First Congregational Church appears to accurately reflect the receipts and disbursements for the period, as does the operating statement of the Thrift Shop and the Pastors' Fund. Based on bank reconciliations, and analyzing several income and expense categories there appears to be no changes to the annual Income and Expense Statement.

These procedures were substantially fewer than those required for an independent audit, review or compilation. As stated in prior years, this audit is substantially less in scope than an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.

While these procedures were substantially fewer than those required by an independent external audit, they nevertheless provide the members and other stakeholder of the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction with confidence that the practices and procedures employed by the managers of the Church's funds are rigorous, thoughtful, diversified and studiously followed.

Additionally, the Church's insurance and payroll policies and procedures were examined as part of the 2024 internal audit. The policies and related documents were available, well organized, and current.

Respectively Submitted,


Elizabeth Craig Weischedel

Alan Kinney

Internal Auditors

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - INCOME & EXPENSE STATEMENT

GENERAL FUND 01, January 2024 - December 2024

		2024 Actual	2024 Budget	Difference	Budget %	2025 Budget
INCOME	4000					
CONTRIBUTION INCOME	4010					
Pledges	4030	\$ 373,382.65	\$ 358,000.00	\$ 15,382.65	104.30%	\$ 378,000.00
Initial offering	4035	\$ 290.00	\$ 500.00	\$ (210.00)	58.00%	\$ 300.00
Loose Offering	4040	\$ 32,262.48	\$ 26,000.00	\$ 6,262.48	124.09%	\$ 32,000.00
Special Appeal	4045	\$ 2,275.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,275.00	227.50%	\$ -
Fund Raisers	4050	\$ 12,925.87	\$ 11,300.00	\$ 1,625.87	114.39%	\$ 11,000.00
CC & amazon Rebates	4055	\$ 896.50	\$ 800.00	\$ 96.50	112.06%	\$ 900.00
Rent	4070	\$ 23,820.00	\$ 22,020.00	\$ 1,800.00	108.17%	\$ 23,220.00
Parsonage Rental	4072	\$ 38,400.00	\$ 38,400.00	\$ -	100.00%	\$ 38,400.00
Per Capita Offering	4075	\$ 2,998.89	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,498.89	199.93%	\$ 3,000.00
Building Use - Regular	4080	\$ 7,140.00	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 640.00	109.85%	\$ 7,000.00
Building use - Misc	4090	\$ 1,923.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 923.00	192.30%	\$ 1,750.00
Christmas Offering	4095	\$ 2,378.45	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,378.45	237.85%	\$ 2,500.00
Wedding income	4100	\$ 100.00	\$ 500.00	\$ (400.00)	20.00%	\$ -
Funeral income	4105	\$ 350.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 150.00	175.00%	\$ 200.00
Misc income	4107	\$ 2,265.18	\$ 2,700.00	\$ (434.82)	83.90%	\$ 1,000.00
Subtotal Contribution Income	4020	\$ 501,408.02	\$ 471,420.00	\$ 29,988.02	106.36%	\$ 499,270.00
INTEREST INCOME	4500					
Banking Interest	4510	\$ 6.92	\$ 15.00	\$ (8.08)	46.13%	\$ 6.00
CD Main Church Interest	4525	\$ 629.25	\$ -	\$ 629.25	0.00%	\$ -
Church CD	4535	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 6,000.00
Money market Interest	4540	\$ 2,696.62	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 196.62	107.86%	\$ 150.00
Subtotal Interest Income	4500	\$ 3,332.79	\$ 2,515.00	\$ 817.79	132.52%	\$ 6,156.00
TOTAL INCOME		\$ 504,740.81	\$ 473,935.00	\$ 30,805.81	106.50%	\$ 505,426.00

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - INCOME & EXPENSE STATEMENT

GENERAL FUND 01, January 2024 - December 2024

		2024 Actual	2024 Budget	Difference	Budget %	2025 Budget
EXPENSES	5000					
PASTORAL STAFF	5050					
SENIOR PASTOR	5060					
SP Salary	5061-001	\$ 68,797.18	\$ 67,986.10	\$ (811.08)	101.19%	\$ 69,685.65
SP Health Insurance	5064-004	\$ 27,827.89	\$ 27,673.00	\$ (154.89)	100.56%	\$ 29,535.90
SP SECA	5065-005	\$ 6,432.47	\$ 7,281.31	\$ 848.84	88.34%	\$ 7,570.65
SP Professional	5066-006	\$ 582.84	\$ 750.00	\$ 167.16	77.71%	\$ 750.00
SP Programmatic Expenses	5067-007	\$ 341.35	\$ 400.00	\$ 58.65	85.34%	\$ 600.00
SP Annuity	5068-008	\$ 13,373.83	\$ 13,325.27	\$ (48.56)	100.36%	\$ 13,658.39
SP Life & Disability Ins	5069-009	\$ 1,438.89	\$ 1,400.00	\$ (38.89)	102.78%	\$ 1,400.00
SP Mileage	5070-010	\$ 768.49	\$ 600.00	\$ (168.49)	128.08%	\$ 750.00
SP Other	5072-012	\$ 463.37	\$ 400.00	\$ (63.37)	115.84%	\$ 500.00
SP Housing Allowance	5073-002	\$ 27,162.01	\$ 27,194.44	\$ 32.43	99.88%	\$ 27,874.26
Subtotal Senior Pastor	5060	\$ 142,235.87	\$ 142,137.09	\$ (98.78)	100%	\$ 147,010.12
PASTOR OTHER	5080					
Pastor trans/sabbatical	5091-011	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ -	100.00%	\$ 500.00
Subtotal Pastoral Staff	5050	\$ 147,688.32	\$ 147,510.12	\$ (178.20)	100.12%	\$ 152,824.85
SUPPORT STAFF	5150					
Administrative Assistant	5165	\$ 33,646.92	\$ 33,670.03	\$ 23.11	99.93%	\$ 34,511.75
Soc Med Mrktg Spec	5170	\$ 5,640.50	\$ 11,440.00	\$ 5,799.50	49.31%	\$ 16,250.00
Education Director	5175	\$ 44,381.34	\$ 44,176.00	\$ (205.34)	100.46%	\$ 11,315.85
Child ministry coordinato	5176	\$ 9,489.66	\$ 10,400.00	\$ 910.34	91.25%	\$ 16,900.00
PT Youth Coordinator	5177	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 24,200.00
Nursery Staff	5180	\$ 2,030.70	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 469.30	81.23%	\$ 2,500.00
Custodian	5185	\$ 18,324.17	\$ 16,904.16	\$ (1,420.01)	108.40%	\$ 20,332.00
Music Director	5195	\$ 35,278.86	\$ 35,303.00	\$ 24.14	99.93%	\$ 36,185.58
Subtotal Staff Salaries	5151	\$ 148,792.15	\$ 154,393.19	\$ 5,601.04	96.37%	\$ 162,195.18

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - INCOME & EXPENSE STATEMENT

GENERAL FUND 01, January 2024 - December 2024

		2024 Actual	2024 Budget	Difference	Budget %	2025 Budget
BENEFITS	5250					
Staff Annuity	5260-008	\$ 6,184.68	\$ 6,184.64	\$ (0.04)	100.00%	\$ 1,584.22
EMPLOYER EXPENSES	5300					
Payroll Taxes	5305	\$ 11,377.08	\$ 11,811.05	\$ 433.97	96.33%	\$ 12,586.35
Workers Comp Insurance	5310	\$ 2,849.00	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 351.00	89.03%	\$ 3,000.00
Payroll Charges	5315	\$ 1,731.48	\$ 1,600.00	\$ (131.48)	108.22%	\$ 1,800.00
Subtotal Employer Expenses	5300	\$ 15,957.56	\$ 16,611.05	\$ 653.49	96.07%	\$ 17,386.35
Subtotal Support Staff	5150	\$ 170,934.39	\$ 177,188.88	\$ 6,254.49	96.47%	\$ 181,165.75
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE	5400					
OFFICE EXPENSES	5410					
Newspaper	5413	\$ 764.00	\$ -	\$ (764.00)	0.00%	\$ -
Other Advertising	5414	\$ -	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	0.00%	\$ 500.00
Offering Envelopes	5421	\$ 277.46	\$ 300.00	\$ 22.54	92.49%	\$ 300.00
Contribution fees	5423	\$ 300.67	\$ 250.00	\$ (50.67)	120.27%	\$ 250.00
Office Supplies	5430	\$ 2,256.10	\$ 2,000.00	\$ (256.10)	112.81%	\$ 2,500.00
Postage - First Class	5440	\$ 1,568.28	\$ 1,200.00	\$ (368.28)	130.69%	\$ 1,400.00
Printing	5450	\$ 675.75	\$ 300.00	\$ (375.75)	225.25%	\$ 300.00
Mileage Reimbursements	5470	\$ 409.17	\$ 400.00	\$ (9.17)	102.29%	\$ 400.00
ED-Professional development	5491	\$ 868.98	\$ 500.00	\$ (368.98)	173.80%	\$ -
ED - Programmatic expense	5492	\$ 61.90	\$ 110.00	\$ 48.10	56.27%	\$ -
Staff Training	5495	\$ -	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	0.00%	\$ -
Admin. Miscellaneous	5496	\$ 378.99	\$ 450.00	\$ 71.01	84.22%	\$ -
Church leadership expense	5500	\$ 84.52	\$ 150.00	\$ 65.48	56.35%	\$ 150.00
Special event	5501	\$ -	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	0.00%	\$ -
Bank Charges	5513	\$ 20.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 80.00	20.00%	\$ 100.00
Subtotal Office Expenses	5410	\$ 7,665.82	\$ 6,460.00	\$ (1,205.82)	118.67%	\$ 5,900.00
PHONES	5515					
Church Phones	5517	\$ 2,286.61	\$ 2,900.00	\$ 613.39	78.85%	\$ 3,000.00
Cell Phones	5525	\$ 166.87	\$ 300.00	\$ 133.13	55.62%	\$ 300.00
Subtotal Phones	5515	\$ 2,453.48	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 746.52	76.67%	\$ 3,300.00
INTERNET	5550					
Website	5555	\$ 162.81	\$ 270.00	\$ 107.19	60.30%	\$ 290.00
Internet Access	5560	\$ 1,188.00	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 112.00	91.38%	\$ -
IT expenses	5565	\$ -	\$ 580.00	\$ 580.00	0.00%	\$ -
Subtotal Internet	5550	\$ 1,350.81	\$ 2,150.00	\$ 799.19	62.83%	\$ 290.00

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - INCOME & EXPENSE STATEMENT

GENERAL FUND 01, January 2024 - December 2024

		2024 Actual	2024 Budget	Difference	Budget %	2025 Budget
COMPUTER EXPENSES	5570					
Computer Hardware	5572	\$ 1,364.09	\$ 1,000.00	\$ (364.09)	136.41%	\$ 1,000.00
Computer Software	5574	\$ 1,109.90	\$ 500.00	\$ (609.90)	221.98%	\$ 1,000.00
Support Contracts	5576	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 2,000.00
Subtotal Computer Exp.	5570	\$ 2,473.99	\$ 1,500.00	\$ (973.99)	164.93%	\$ 4,000.00
Contract Services	5577	\$ 392.49	\$ 3,750.00	\$ 3,357.51	10.47%	\$ -
EQUIPMENT	5580					
Copier Contract	5583	\$ 2,925.71	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 74.29	97.52%	\$ 7,000.00
Parking lot use	5590	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ -	100.00%	\$ 500.00
Subtotal Equipment	5580	\$ 3,425.71	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 74.29	97.88%	\$ 7,500.00
Subtotal Admin. Expense	5400	\$ 17,762.30	\$ 20,560.00	\$ 2,797.70	86.39%	\$ 20,990.00
BUILDING MAINT CHURCH	5600					
Building Insurance	5610	\$ 18,990.00	\$ 14,000.00	\$ (4,990.00)	135.64%	\$ 20,000.00
UTILITIES	5630					
Electricity - Church	5635	\$ 7,884.43	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 115.57	98.56%	\$ 8,000.00
Water & Sewer - Church	5645	\$ 1,205.56	\$ 1,000.00	\$ (205.56)	120.56%	\$ 1,200.00
Fuel/Gas - Church	5655	\$ 8,672.32	\$ 8,500.00	\$ (172.32)	102.03%	\$ 8,000.00
Waste	5665	\$ 2,634.00	\$ 2,060.00	\$ (574.00)	127.86%	\$ 3,000.00
Subtotal Utilities	5630	\$ 20,396.31	\$ 19,560.00	\$ (836.31)	104.28%	\$ 20,200.00
BUILDING MAINTENANCE	5700					
Cleaning Supplies	5710	\$ 1,334.95	\$ 1,300.00	\$ (34.95)	102.69%	\$ 1,365.00
Snow Plowing - sand/salt	5730	\$ 12,142.31	\$ 12,000.00	\$ (142.31)	101.19%	\$ 12,250.00
Mowing/Landscape	5731	\$ 1,928.68	\$ 1,871.00	\$ (57.68)	103.08%	\$ 1,900.00
Elevator Maint/Inspection	5732	\$ 3,898.96	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 601.04	86.64%	\$ 2,780.00
Capital Projects	5733	\$ 8,690.68	\$ 4,000.00	\$ (4,690.68)	217.27%	\$ 4,000.00
Lift Mainte/Inspection	5734	\$ 375.00	\$ 650.00	\$ 275.00	57.69%	\$ 675.00
Repairs/Maintenance	5740	\$ 11,503.57	\$ 6,000.00	\$ (5,503.57)	191.73%	\$ 7,000.00
Routine Main/Contracts	5745	\$ 5,782.94	\$ 4,320.00	\$ (1,462.94)	133.86%	\$ 5,240.00
Subtotal Building Maintenance	5700	\$ 45,657.09	\$ 34,641.00	\$ (11,016.09)	131.80%	\$ 35,210.00
BUILDING MAINT SAWYER	5800					
Water/Sewer - Sawyer	5810	\$ 574.74	\$ 500.00	\$ (74.74)	114.95%	\$ 500.00
Fuel/Gas - Sawyer	5830	\$ 2,316.53	\$ 2,200.00	\$ (116.53)	105.30%	\$ 2,600.00
Routine Maint. - Sawyer	5840	\$ 1,041.12	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 958.88	52.06%	\$ 2,000.00
Capital Exp - Sawyer	5845	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	0.00%	\$ -
Subtotal Building Maint Sawyer	5800	\$ 3,932.39	\$ 5,700.00	\$ 1,767.61	68.99%	\$ 5,100.00

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - INCOME & EXPENSE STATEMENT

GENERAL FUND 01, January 2024 - December 2024

		2024 Actual	2024 Budget	Difference	Budget %	2025 Budget
BUILDING MAINT PARSONAGE	5900					
Water/Sewer - Parsonage	5910	\$ 388.71	\$ -	\$ (388.71)	0.00%	\$ -
Fuel/Gas - Parsonage	5930	\$ 711.60	\$ -	\$ (711.60)	0.00%	\$ 700.00
Parsonage Property tax	5935	\$ 4,679.71	\$ 4,000.00	\$ (679.71)	116.99%	\$ 11,000.00
Routine Maint. Parsonage	5940	\$ 1,461.23	\$ 3,400.00	\$ 1,938.77	42.98%	\$ 3,400.00
Capital Exp - Parsonage	5941	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	0.00%	\$ -
Subtotal Building Maint Parsonage	5900	\$ 7,241.25	\$ 8,400.00	\$ 1,158.75	86.21%	\$ 15,100.00
Subtotal Building Maint Church	5600	\$ 96,217.04	\$ 82,301.00	\$ (13,916.04)	116.91%	\$ 95,610.00
CAPITAL RESERVE	5960					
Capital Reserve	5961	\$ -	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	0.00%	\$ 2,000.00
Subtotal Fixed Expenses	5010	\$ 432,602.05	\$ 429,560.00	\$ (3,042.05)	100.71%	\$ 452,590.60
DEPARTMENTS/ COMMITTEES	6000					
MISSIONS DEPARTMENT	6010					
Main Mission Budget	6015	\$ 5,789.41	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 210.59	96.49%	\$ 8,000.00
Service Trip	6020	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 6,000.00
Racial Justice	6030	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 1,000.00
Subtotal Missions Department	6010	\$ 5,789.41	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 210.59	96.49%	\$ 15,000.00
COMMUNICATIONS	6150					
Communications	6160	\$ 1,951.39	\$ 1,500.00	\$ (451.39)	130.09%	\$ 2,000.00
Comm equipment	6165	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 1,000.00
Subtotal Communications	6150	\$ 1,951.39	\$ 1,500.00	\$ (451.39)	130.09%	\$ 3,000.00
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	6200					
Curriculum	6201	\$ 542.59	\$ 800.00	\$ 257.41	67.82%	\$ 400.00
CE Supplies	6204	\$ 1,102.45	\$ 1,050.00	\$ (52.45)	105.00%	\$ 1,100.00
Junior High Youth Group	6205	\$ 668.73	\$ 800.00	\$ 131.27	83.59%	\$ 1,050.00
Senior High Youth Group	6206	\$ 1,175.84	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 24.16	97.99%	\$ 1,500.00
Confirmation	6208	\$ -	\$ 550.00	\$ 550.00	0.00%	\$ 550.00
Adult Education	6209	\$ 10.81	\$ 400.00	\$ 389.19	2.70%	\$ 400.00
CE Resources	6210	\$ 47.10	\$ 300.00	\$ 252.90	15.70%	\$ 300.00
Vacation Bible Camp	6211	\$ 2,280.93	\$ 1,500.00	\$ (780.93)	152.06%	\$ 1,800.00
CE Program Enrichment	6213	\$ 339.62	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 960.38	26.12%	\$ 1,400.00
CE - Other	6214	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 1,000.00
Young adult group	6216	\$ 225.85	\$ 100.00	\$ (125.85)	225.85%	\$ 100.00
Jesus and Me (J.A.,M.)	6217	\$ 202.29	\$ 400.00	\$ 197.71	50.57%	\$ 400.00
Subtotal Christian Educa- tion	6200	\$ 6,596.21	\$ 8,400.00	\$ 1,803.79	78.53%	\$ 10,000.00

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - INCOME & EXPENSE STATEMENT

GENERAL FUND 01, January 2024 - December 2024

		2024 Actual	2024 Budget	Difference	Budget %	2025 Budget
MUSIC	6275					
Prof Expense - Music	6277	\$ -	\$ 150.00	\$ 150.00	0.00%	\$ 150.00
Organ Supply/Substitute	6280	\$ 400.00	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 1,200.00	25.00%	\$ 1,000.00
Piano Maintenance	6281	\$ 180.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 20.00	90.00%	\$ 300.00
Organ Maintenance	6282	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -	100.00%	\$ 2,000.00
Music Senior Choir	6285	\$ 1,289.74	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 10.26	99.21%	\$ 1,000.00
Music Junior Choir	6286	\$ -	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	0.00%	\$ 100.00
Music Bell Choir	6288	\$ 76.96	\$ -	\$ (76.96)	0.00%	\$ 500.00
Music Womens Choir	6290	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 200.00
Guest Musicians	6291	\$ -	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	0.00%	\$ 600.00
Equipment	6292	\$ -	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	0.00%	\$ 500.00
Licensing	6295	\$ 1,189.88	\$ 1,100.00	\$ (89.88)	108.17%	\$ 1,500.00
Music supplies	6298	\$ 25.45	\$ 100.00	\$ 74.55	25.45%	\$ 450.00
Subtotal Music	6275	\$ 5,162.03	\$ 7,600.00	\$ 2,437.97	67.92%	\$ 8,300.00
DEACONS	6300					
Communion/Worship Sup	6310	\$ 683.15	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 316.85	68.32%	\$ 1,200.00
Advertising - Deacons	6315	\$ -	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	0.00%	\$ 100.00
Evangelism	6330	\$ 871.24	\$ 500.00	\$ (371.24)	174.25%	\$ 500.00
Deacons - other	6340	\$ 235.42	\$ 200.00	\$ (35.42)	117.71%	\$ 450.00
Candles	6341	\$ -	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	0.00%	\$ 200.00
Devotionals	6342	\$ -	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	0.00%	\$ 100.00
Palms	6344	\$ 74.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 26.00	74.00%	\$ 100.00
Call to Care	6345	\$ 232.30	\$ -	\$ (232.30)	0.00%	\$ 500.00
Pulpit Supply	6350	\$ 800.00	\$ 400.00	\$ (400.00)	200.00%	\$ 800.00
Subtotal Deacons	6300	\$ 2,896.11	\$ 2,600.00	\$ (296.11)	111.39%	\$ 3,950.00
HOSPITALITY	6400					
Hospitality Supplies	6410	\$ 567.15	\$ 750.00	\$ 182.85	75.62%	\$ 750.00
Fellowship Meals- Funeral	6420	\$ 69.33	\$ -	\$ (69.33)	0.00%	\$ 250.00
Subtotal Hospitality	6400	\$ 636.48	\$ 750.00	\$ 113.52	84.86%	\$ 1,000.00
CONFERENCE EXPENSE	6450					
Delegates/Conference	6465	\$ (41.54)	\$ 700.00	\$ 741.54	-5.93%	\$ 700.00
Per Capita/Association	6470	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00	\$ -	100.00%	\$ 400.00
Per Capita/Conference	6480	\$ 5,000.08	\$ 5,000.00	\$ (0.08)	100.00%	\$ 5,000.00
Basic Support	6490	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	100.00%	\$ 10,000.00
Subtotal Conference Expense	6450	\$ 15,358.54	\$ 16,100.00	\$ 741.46	95.39%	\$ 16,100.00
STEWARDSHIP	6500					
Stewardship Supplies	6510	\$ 219.42	\$ 425.00	\$ 205.58	51.63%	\$ 425.00
Planned giving	6511	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 460.00
Subtotal Stewardship	6500	\$ 219.42	\$ 425.00	\$ 205.58	51.63%	\$ 885.00
Subtotal Departments/ Committees	6000	\$ 38,609.59	\$ 43,375.00	\$ 4,765.41	89.01%	\$ 58,235.00
RESERVE	6710	\$ 33,529.17	\$ 1,000.00	\$ (32,529.17)	3352.92%	\$ 1,000.00
Subtotal Expenses	5000	\$ 504,740.81	\$ 473,935.00	\$ (30,805.81)	106.50%	\$ 511,825.60
Income less expenses		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	\$ (6,399.60)

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - INCOME & EXPENSE STATEMENT

RESTRICTED FUNDS, January 2024 - December 2024

	Account	Income	Account	Expense	Net
Capital Fund	4209-103	33,529.17	7209-103	5,749.28	27,779.89
Christmas Fund	4212-104	780.00	7212-104	930.00	-150.00
Faith Formation	4215-105	861.25	7215-105	852.75	8.50
Endowment donation	4218-106	100.00	7218-106	100.00	0.00
Flower Fund	4221-107	3,172.00	7221-107	2,832.00	340.00
Food Pantry	4224-108	20,923.31	7224-108	21,600.88	-677.57
Memorial Fund	4233-111	2,730.00	7233-111	850.00	1,880.00
Mission Reserve	4239-113	1,014.00	7239-113	0.00	1,014.00
Hand Bell Choir	4226-131	0.00	7226-131	900.00	-900.00
One Great Hour of Sharing	4245-115	540.00	7245-115	540.00	0.00
Organ Fund	4251-117	2,000.00	7251-117	0.00	2,000.00
Pastor's Fund	4254-118	5,981.00	7254-118	4,541.34	1,439.66
Music Committee	4248-118	0.00	7248-116	800.00	-800.00
Sabbatical	4255-133	500.00	7255-133	0.00	500.00
Combined Youth	4260-120	183.25	7260-120	0.00	183.25
Vacation Bible Camp	4281-128	750.00	7281-128	0.00	750.00
Essex Eats Out	4282-129	577.75	7282-129	376.24	201.51
Missions - service trip	4283-130	26,084.24	7283-130	51,728.97	-25,644.73
Outdoor Ministries	4285-134	615.00	7285-134	-100.46	715.46
Music series	4287-136	4,171.00	7287-136	5,454.49	-1,283.49
Jacob Mission Fund	4288-137	20,000.00	7288-137	0.00	20,000.00

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 2024 BALANCE SHEET (UNAUDITED)

Consolidated - For The Year Ending December 2024

	Account	2024	2023	Change in value
ASSETS	1000			
BANK ACCOUNTS	1050			
CHECKING ACCOUNTS	1100			
Thrift Shop Checking	1115	\$ 7,895.56	\$ 16,599.88	\$ (8,704.32)
Pastor fund checking	1120	\$ 540.06	\$ 1,865.06	\$ (1,325.00)
Main checking - Church	1130	\$ 33,280.64	\$ 65,380.42	\$ (32,099.78)
Subtotal Checking Accounts	1100	\$ 41,716.26	\$ 83,845.36	\$ (42,129.10)
SAVINGS ACCOUNTS	1200			
Main Savings	1210	\$ 60,706.97	\$ 10,700.05	\$ 50,006.92
CD Main Church	1225	\$ 195,629.25	\$ -	\$ 195,629.25
Money Market Account	1230	\$ 9,618.12	\$ 201,921.50	\$ (192,303.38)
Subtotal Savings Accounts	1200	\$ 265,954.34	\$ 212,621.55	\$ 53,332.79
Subtotal Bank Accounts	1050	\$ 307,670.60	\$ 296,466.91	\$ 11,203.69
INVESTMENTS	1300			
Endowment Fixed Inc 2R	1335	\$ 5,847.06	\$ 168,973.66	\$ (163,126.60)
Endowment Fixed 2R G/L	1336	\$ (5,847.06)	\$ (6,911.80)	\$ 1,064.74
Endowment Balanced	1337	\$ 815,117.67	\$ -	\$ 815,117.67
Endowment Bal Gsin/Loss	1338	\$ (14,897.05)	\$ -	\$ (14,897.05)
Endowment Total Equity 4R	1345	\$ (118,521.42)	\$ 498,691.05	\$ (617,212.47)
Endowment Ttl Eq 4R G/L	1346	\$ 118,521.42	\$ 38,956.75	\$ 79,564.67
CD-Missions	1370	\$ 8,027.79	\$ 7,967.84	\$ 59.95
CD-Food Pantry	1380	\$ 44,581.29	\$ 42,503.24	\$ 2,078.05
Subtotal Investments	1300	\$ 852,829.70	\$ 750,180.74	\$ 102,648.96
FIXED ASSETS	1500			
BUILDINGS	1600			
Church property	1610	\$ 1,217,000.00	\$ 1,217,000.00	\$ -
Parsonage	1620	\$ 308,200.00	\$ 308,200.00	\$ -
Sawyer House	1630	\$ 257,600.00	\$ 257,600.00	\$ -
Subtotal Buildings	1600	\$ 1,782,800.00	\$ 1,782,800.00	\$ -
Subtotal Fixed Assets	1500	\$ 1,782,800.00	\$ 1,782,800.00	\$ -
TOTAL ASSETS		\$ 2,943,300.30	\$ 2,829,447.65	\$ 113,852.65
LIABILITIES	2000			
CURRENT LIABILITIES	2010			
PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS	2201			
	2250			
	2265	\$ 909.21	\$ 909.21	\$ -
PASS THRU CONTRIBUTIONS	2300			\$ -
	2306	\$ 455.00	\$ -	\$ 455.00
	2307	\$ 380.80	\$ -	\$ 380.80
	2315	\$ 589.71	\$ 734.14	\$ (144.43)
	2318	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ -
	2319	\$ 1,364.00	\$ -	\$ 1,364.00
Subtotal Pass Thru Contributions	2300	\$ 2,839.51	\$ 784.14	\$ 2,055.37

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 2024 BALANCE SHEET (UNAUDITED)

Consolidated - For The Year Ending December 2024

	Account	2024	2023	Change in value
OTHER CURRENT LIABILITIES	2400			\$ -
Building Use Deposits	2410	\$ 700.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 600.00
Security Deposits	2415	\$ 4,620.00	\$ 4,620.00	\$ -
Subtotal Other Current Liabilities	2400	\$ 5,320.00	\$ 4,720.00	\$ 600.00
Subtotal Current Liabilities	2010	\$ 9,068.72	\$ 6,413.35	\$ 2,655.37
TOTAL LIABILITIES		\$ 9,068.72	\$ 6,413.35	\$ 2,655.37
NET ASSETS	3000			
UNRESTRICTED	3100			
Unrestricted Net Assets	3110	\$ 1,952,431.09	\$ 1,931,430.79	\$ 21,000.30
DONOR RESTRICTED	3200			
TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	3201			
Capital Fund	3209-103	\$ 70,200.15	\$ 42,420.26	\$ 27,779.89
Christmas Fund	3212-104	\$ -	\$ 150.00	\$ (150.00)
Faith Formation	3215-105	\$ 459.25	\$ 450.75	\$ 8.50
Flower Fund	3221-107	\$ 1,299.10	\$ 959.10	\$ 340.00
Food Pantry	3224-108	\$ 17,200.46	\$ 17,878.03	\$ (677.57)
Hand Bell Choir	3226-131	\$ 550.77	\$ 1,450.77	\$ (900.00)
Memorial Fund	3233-111	\$ 15,071.25	\$ 13,191.25	\$ 1,880.00
Men at First	3236-112	\$ 1,519.63	\$ 1,519.63	\$ -
Missions Reserve	3239-113	\$ 2,197.05	\$ 1,183.05	\$ 1,014.00
Music Committee	3248-116	\$ 6,959.67	\$ 7,759.67	\$ (800.00)
Organ Fund	3251-117	\$ 13,700.00	\$ 11,700.00	\$ 2,000.00
Pastor's Fund	3254-118	\$ 20,767.62	\$ 19,327.96	\$ 1,439.66
Sabbatical	3255-133	\$ 3,875.00	\$ 3,375.00	\$ 500.00
Senior Choir Robe Fund	3257-119	\$ 363.12	\$ 363.12	\$ -
Combined Youth	3260-120	\$ 9,781.10	\$ 9,597.85	\$ 183.25
FCCEJ Camp Scholarship	3279-127	\$ 1,820.62	\$ 1,820.62	\$ -
Vacation Bible Camp	3281-128	\$ 985.18	\$ 235.18	\$ 750.00
Essex Eats Out	3282-129	\$ 2,138.33	\$ 1,936.82	\$ 201.51
Mission - service trip	3283-130	\$ 27,400.76	\$ 53,045.49	\$ (25,644.73)
Outdoor Ministries	3285-134	\$ 1,111.01	\$ 395.55	\$ 715.46
Music series	3287-136	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 3,283.49	\$ (1,283.49)
Jacob Mission Fund	3288-137	\$ 26,500.00	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 20,000.00
Subtotal Temporarily Restricted	3201	\$ 229,649.05	\$ 198,543.59	\$ 31,105.46
PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED	3300			
Endowment - QE	3310	\$ 391,993.74	\$ 400,772.58	\$ (8,778.84)
Endowment Balanced	3311	\$ (14,897.05)	\$ -	\$ (14,897.05)
QE unrealized (gain/loss)	3315	\$ 256,563.54	\$ 256,563.54	\$ -
Endowment	3320	\$ 3,098.00	\$ 3,098.00	\$ -
Endow - unrealized (g/l)	3325	\$ 109.77	\$ 109.77	\$ -
Endow 2R unrealized g/l	3326	\$ (5,847.06)	\$ (6,911.80)	\$ 1,064.74
Endow 4R unrealized g/l	3327	\$ 118,521.42	\$ 38,956.75	\$ 79,564.67
CD-Missions	3330	\$ (1,972.21)	\$ (2,032.16)	\$ 59.95
CD-Food Pantry	3335	\$ 4,581.29	\$ 2,503.24	\$ 2,078.05
Subtotal Permanently Restricted	3300	\$ 752,151.44	\$ 693,059.92	\$ 59,091.52
Subtotal Donor Restricted	3200	\$ 981,800.49	\$ 891,603.51	\$ 90,196.98
TOTAL EQUITY		\$ 2,934,231.58	\$ 2,823,034.30	\$ 111,197.28
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		\$ 2,943,300.30	\$ 2,829,447.65	\$ 113,852.65