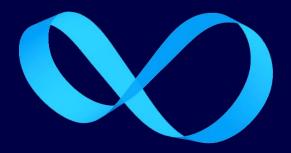
# KEENE VALLEY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



# "THE MOBIUS YEAR"







Presented to the Congregation Sunday, February 28, 2016

The Mobius strip is used at times to represent the universe. No matter where you start or how far you travel, the end is also the starting point. We have been on a journey together for almost 17 years and now find ourselves coming to an end and a beginning. Our corporate life and personal lives have rhythms, ebb and flow, progress and regress, yin and yang. Within this rhythmic pulse we grow, learn, produce, and thrive. The end, the beginning, are opportunities, and the future awaits.

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	AGENDA			
1.	Call to Order			
11.	Declaration of Quorum			
111.	Opening Prayer – Milton Dudley			
IV.	In Memoriam - Tolling of the Bell			
٧.	Honors – Milton Dudley			
VI.	Election of Officers			
	Moderator - Larry Shipps			
	Vice Moderator - Karen Glass			
	MSA - Martha Gallagher, Naj Wikoff, Martha Swan			
	Finance - Fritz Sabbow			
	Education - Vacant			
	Clerk – Liz Jaques			
	Members At Large:			
	Pam Gothner, Katrina Wagner, Maggie Sheldon, Phyllis Buchanan, Martha Gallagher			
VII.	Buildings – The Manse Project			
VIII.	Refugee Project Update			
1X.	2016 Bazaar and Quilt Show			
Χ.	Presentation of the 2016 Budget			
XI.	Pastor Transition Update			
XII.	Other Business			
XIII.	Adjourn			

# Minutes 2015 Annual Meeting

#### Sunday, February 22, 2015

- The meeting was called to order at 11:38 a.m. by Moderator Larry Shipps, who declared the presence of a quorum.
- 2. Opening prayer was offered by Milton Dudley, Minister.
- 3. The names of members of the church family and community who passed away in 2015 were read by Milton and honored with a tolling of the bell by Sarah Prince.



- 4. Larry presented the slate of officers as listed in the agenda for election. A motion to elect was made by Naj Wikoff and seconded by Anne Hurd. The motion was approved.
- 5. Milton requested approval to send two delegates to the UCCNY Annual Meeting in Silver Bay on June 5-7. Susy Doolittle made the motion which was seconded by Naj and approved. Milton noted that the keynote speaker will be Dr. Reza Aslan, internationally acclaimed writer and scholar of world religions, and that other church members might be interested in attending the keynote address.
- 6. Milton called attention to the report of the Manse Task Force concerning the future of the church's buildings and properties. He noted that the task force will be bringing options to the congregation for consideration in the months ahead and that the congregation will be asked to make decisions at intervals along the way. He encouraged community members to share their questions and comments with the Manse Task Force throughout the process.
- 7. Naj made a motion to accept the Annual Report as presented (with minor editorial changes to follow). Susy seconded the motion. The motion was approved.
- 8. Milton requested approval to hold the 2015 Bazaar and Quilt Show on August 7 and 8. Naj's motion to approve was seconded by Ingrid Carman. In the subsequent discussion, concern was expressed concerning leadership for this event. Karen Glass suggested that the motion contain the contingency that there be a leader selected for each venue. Milton noted that the moderator serves as the overall coordinator. The motion passed as amended.
- 9. Treasurer Fritz Sabbow reviewed the budget as published in the annual report. He also presented figures for the endowment (\$1,028,393) and the Rev. Frederica Mitchell Legacy Fund (\$175,004) which were not included in the annual report. He noted that the 2015 budget is projected to be about \$5000 less than actual 2014 due to an anticipated decrease

in pledges somewhat offset by a larger withdrawal from the endowment (the withdrawal rate remains at 4.5% but the endowment has grown). Taking into account a 2-3% increase in support of pastor and staff, overall expenses are anticipated to be very close to 2014. Whereas 2014 saw a surplus of \$2,633, a deficit of \$3,360 is forecast in the 2015 budget. An ongoing challenge is the collection of pledges.

10. The moderator led a lively discussion concerning pastoral transition, noting that Milton will be retiring in 17 months. A representative of UCC met with the Church Council in the fall and provided helpful information concerning their process. The Church Council plans to assemble a search committee before June. The committee will be tasked with writing an updated profile of the church to be submitted to the central offices of UCC in August, which will then be posted and interested individuals may apply. UCC recommends using an interim minister (who may not subsequently be hired) during the search process. The Search Committee will consider whether or not this is the path they want to follow. The plan is to also advertise the position in other venues.

On behalf of the Church Council, Larry asked for input from those present concerning the make-up of the Search Committee, specifically what stakeholders should be represented. Karen Glass recorded the ideas generated.

Paul Martin noted that an excellent prospectus was put together some years ago when the state was looking for sites for a visitors interpretive center that might be easy to update and helpful in creating the church profile.

Bernie Webb raised the idea that the first task of the Search Committee should be to decide on the model we want. Do we want to stick with the traditional model of a full time affiliated pastor with benefits or do we want volunteer lay-leaders or something in between?

Ellen DuBois suggested that we survey church and community members as a part of the process.

Naj urged due-diligence in evaluating candidates. He also suggested that we learn from successful searches and proposed the Northwoods School as a model as they have had successful results hiring headmasters with and without an interim.

Judy Caner pointed out that the last search took three years, largely because there was a dearth of candidates. Pam Gothner reported that the UCC representative felt that we were in a good position to attract candidates due to our financial stability.

11. The meeting was adjourned at 12:33 p.m. as moved by Anne Hurd, seconded by Naj and approved by all.

### State of the Church Milton Dudley

As of today I have been your Minister for 6,026 days of a projected 6,210 day tenure. This means that I have 184 days remaining or about 3% of my total time at KVCC. I remember when I made the decision to retire back in 2012. I realized that I had over three years until that date. Why, there was a whole ton of stuff we could do, start, plan and accomplish in that amount of time. And, lo and behold, we will have accomplished some of it. The Sanctuary sports new windows, the Manse remodel is coming before the Congregation for vote, we have an important Mission effort with refugees looming and we are still exploring the idea of building housing for the community. That all sounds great! But, if I review the list of things I hoped to accomplish and did not... well, that's a different matter. Some items like the Church bus have gone by the wayside and others, more time consuming and grandiose, will have to wait for the next phase of your ministry here.

This year 1 am trying to concentrate on gratefulness and successes, and not dwell on the opportunities missed. That keeps me thinking forward and feeling positive, plus 1 am getting more and more comfortable letting some dreams, personal and professional, fade into the sunset. A good number of you have been here for all of my nearly 17 years at KVCC. I have gone from age 48 to 65 in that time and you have gone from wherever you were age-wise plus 17 years. I grow tired easier. I go to sleep earlier. I don't multi-task as well as I used to. I find it more challenging to attend all the great events in our community and region. I don't relate to many of the commercials on TV and the music scene doesn't fit my tastes. It's called aging and we are all experiencing it. What this means as a Congregation is that our needs and gifts are changing. The ministry we wanted and needed in 1999 is different from that in 2016. The community is different. The economy is different. The laws have changed and culturally we are not who we were just 17 years ago. That was before 9/II and the economic downturn. That was before terrorism, the Keene Community News, Ebola, drones, smart phones, cell towers, opencarry laws, Irene, equal marriage, monumental state budget deficits, and Dannemora escapes.

Back in 1999 I somehow landed in this Camelot of ministerial places and spent a lot of time pinching myself to be certain I wasn't dreaming. Every week, month and year brought something new and vibrant to our table. I could not believe how we were gelling, what we were planning, who was beginning to come in our doors, and how bright the future looked. Those early years were wonderful and gave me so much life energy to carry on this ministry and remain at KVCC. Some of the middle years brought personal and family challenges that I never thought I would face. The church continued to do very well and I was on the receiving end of your wonderful ministry and care during these darkest of times. I am not going to dwell on this, but I remember saying to myself again and again, "I am looking forward to looking back on this time".

The last five years have been profoundly fulfilling and very challenging. Our world has changed and our place in it has changed. We no longer have a financial future that sees rapidly growing endowments due to high interest being paid. Yet, we are thriving as a faith community. We are

fiscally, physically and spiritually very sound right now and the future is shimmering. The hard work done as a faith community has paid off and we are very fortunate to find ourselves with a healthy, forward thinking, progressive and vibrant church. Due to the generosity of members and friends we can sustain a fulltime, active and meaningful ministry in the North Country. As a result of hard work by members and friends we have direction and momentum, a real inertia going forward. A product of the funds we raised is an almost pristine looking New England style Congregational Church to use and offer to our community. We have gifted and energetic leadership, and strong support for our programs, committees and ministries. We have music "to live for" and are so blessed to have Rob, Lynn and a choir that is larger than the box some of them sit in. We also genuinely like each other (*most of the time*) are willing to worship, break bread, share coffee and conversation each week. We are very blessed to be located in a town that has a wonderful school, dedicated fire and rescue squads, libraries that reflect their hamlets, and a host of non-profits and businesses that make us a top tier place to visit and a bucolic place to live. We are very fortunate that we draw our membership from at least 10 Adirondack communities, presenting us with a more diverse and spicy faith stew. Life is good!

What about the future, the next five years and more? That I cannot speak to for a number of very good reasons. First and foremost, I don't have a clue what the future will bring. My vision, dreams, and five year plans in 1999 and 2004 and 2009, along with your support and help, have gotten us to this point. I don't have a vision for the next stage of this faith community... I really don't. But, I trust that God has a number of good people that are poised to come here and join you in living into your vision and dream whatever it may be. The second reason, more technical and ethical, is that I am to stay out of the arena of your future as a Congregation. It is critically important that I really, really, retire from being the minister at KVCC and move on to the next phase of my life. That is why we will be on the road a lot the first years. Yes, we want and plan to live here through our retirement years. To do that and to do justice to you and your next Minister, I must step back from my role and you must let me, even more - you must demand that I do. It is only as this happens that we will be free to build our new friendship in the days following my retirement. It is important for me to say, and you to hear, that I will not be doing ministerial functions in my retirement. I will not be an interim minister somewhere. I will not be doing weddings, baptisms and memorials. I am retiring from the ministry and don't have a clue what I will be doing. But, I have a very good concept of what I will not be doing and I need your help and support not doing it.

For the next 184 days a healthy chunk of my ministry, after worship and visitation, will be focused on the North Country response to an unprecedented international refugee crisis. I believe in my heart of hearts, my soul, that as Christians and Americans we must be part of the solution to this crisis. That response falls into three broad categories: (1) Direct and immediate financial support for international refugee assistance programs, (2) Hosting or supporting communities that are welcoming refugees, and (3) the most difficult, advocating and educating our nation to put an end to war, oppression and hopelessness that fuels the refugee pipeline. The USA, being a world player, is involved in wars and conflicts that, no matter how justified and right, are resulting in people fleeing their homes. I believe that since we are part of the

cause, we must be part of the solution; actually we must be a huge part of the solution. Yes, there are risks and we must work diligently to minimize those risks. Yes, there are challenges of housing and jobs in the North Country. But these refugees have nothing and are fearful for their lives and those of their families. Yes, there are many people in the North Country that need our assistance right now. We must not limit our work to one problem at the expense of the other. The same response of funding, support and advocacy applies to our neighbors as well. I hope that KVCC is a major player in the North Country response this year and for many years to come.

I estimate that there have been over one hundred deaths in this Congregation and in the community during my tenure at KVCC. Over the years, as that number began to mount, I came to understand some of the wisdom of the Methodist Church, which moves its ministers every five years so they don't become too attached to a community. To know someone five, ten, fifteen years or more results in a profound connection to their history, life journey and being. As I ponder this list of names, I feel deeply the loss of many of these souls. For some it was way too soon and I was angry at God for taking them from our lives. For some it was a blessing and I thanked God that we live in a time when people can die in peace and with dignity. The hardest losses were those who served as my guides, mentors and bellwethers. We all know that the older we get, the more death we experience, and that takes a toll on our life energy. I am happy to say that I believe in something beyond this life, call it the afterlife if you will, but something wonderful and indescribable. It's not so much that I want to see people again (although I want to reunite with all my dogs) as it is a belief that the Creator did not design all of this for us to have a short, blink of the eye, time slot. If I am correct, we can exchange some version of "highfives" in the afterlife. If I am wrong... well, we will never know it and no one can say, "I told you so". That's a win-win!

Today as I gaze out the office windows there is a light snow falling and the temperature hovers around 20°... an almost perfect winter day for me! Soon enough the mud will come, we will stand at the Keene Landfill vista on Easter morning... beginning the sprint to our boisterous summer season. I am planning some very special services in the summer season, celebrating our time together, experiencing some of my favorite music, musicians, hymns, and probably doing a couple of spicy and dicey things along the way. Don't be surprised if we sing a Christmas Carol or you hear secular, yet holy, music this summer.

Remember when Ivory Soap advertised itself as  $99^{44}/_{100}$  percent pure? I like to think of my time at KVCC as being  $99^{44}/_{100}$  percent bliss. The bumps along the way, we are after all human and flawed, did nothing to take away from the pure joy of being here, knowing you, and walking with this community on its faith journey. In advance, I thank you for all the 6,210 days we will have had together. I look forward to the final 184 and look forward to your journey in the years to come.





# Moderator Larry Shipps



Once again our church finished up the year with a pleasant budget surplus. Giving was up and expenses a little lower. Our summer Bazaar was a success and most of the hair that I lost on the back of my hands from grilling chicken has grown back.

The Church is in good physical shape. At a Congregational Meeting we voted to replace the nine windows in the sanctuary with new custom built energy efficient, transparent Marvin windows as long as the money could be raised to cover all costs. In three weeks the full amount was raised from a total of 47 pledges. The windows were in before Christmas and they're beautiful.

The Manse project has continued to move forward. We are currently gathering quotes for all of the work: windows, electrical, plumbing, insulation, siding repair and painting. When all of the quotes are in we will make a presentation to the congregation for approval to proceed with the work. It would be nice to have the work done before the end of the summer.

Lastly, our search for a pastor to replace our retiring pastor Milton Dudley has begun in earnest. Last spring the congregation approved a Pastoral Selection Committee of fifteen church members representing (we hope) every segment of our congregation. That committee began working in the spring and has completed our church profile and submitted it to our UCC Conference Minister in Syracuse. That might sound simple but the profile requested by the conference runs over 26 pages long. It describes a great church and a wonderful congregation. Because of that, I think the committee is optimistic that our church will have many qualified, potential applicants. I certainly hope so because it will not be easy for us to replace a Pastor like Milton. What a good, long and successful run he has had. No matter how qualified his replacement is Milton will be missed up in that pulpit. Perhaps he will help me grill chicken when he returns from his many travels.



# Music Director Rob Hastings



The music program continues to prosper with the choir swelling to sometimes close to 30 singers of varying ages. It is a joy working with them and doing some often very challenging pieces.

Our Easter celebration included the hand bell choir and loads of festive music.

Choir Sunday was on Memorial Day and featured the entire Faure "Requiem". The choir and our accompanist, Lynn DeWalt, did a stellar job. It was a very special moment for our choir and the congregation.

The summer music program was organized by Bill Serjak bringing in lots of very talented musicians and groups to enhance the services. The choir sang once in July and August and invited as many summer visitors as could be rousted up. Consider joining in with us this next year!

Our regular choir practices began in early September. We spent a long time gearing up for the inevitable Christmas season. Our highlights then were a service of carols from around the world and a Christmas Eve song with hand bells, flute and choir. It was a rousing success and wonderful end to a very busy music year.

This next year I hope to continue to increase the scope of our music program. We are having our handbells refurbished and I am hoping to use them more often once they are fixed. If you have any interest please contact me.

### Summer Music Bill Serjak

The KVCC is fortunate to feature local and visiting musicians who bring a wide variety of talent to the church services during summer Sunday mornings. One of our goals is to promote the talent of local, young musicians to give them a chance to perform in front of a live and non-judgmental audience. The other is to provide the best of the local and summer talent available in the area.

In 2015, our guest artists included jazz accompanist Kevin Stolz, and students from Keene Central School. We also enjoyed the musicianship of Martha Gallagher (harp), Denis Gallagher (guitar), High Peaks (bells) Ringers, Charlotte Poletti (piano), and our own very accomplished choir. In addition, Seagle Music Colony provided singers for a service and Meadowmount School of Music annually provides us with some of the most incredible young string musicians in the world.

To quote one of my friends who does not typically attend the church, "if the music gets any better, I may go to church more".



I will be coming up on 13 years of prison ministry which has from the beginning been incredibly rewarding even though I never get to see or hear from these people again. These people are hungry for God's Word and to learn how to apply it to their lives by internalizing the spiritual wisdom which can help them remain strong when they get out—I continue to preach on Saturday morning at Adirondack Correctional and Sunday afternoon at Moriah Shock. I am doing a DVD series called "Dust to Glory" at Adirondack Correctional on Monday evenings. It is a survey of the Bible from beginning to end tracking God's promises both fulfilled and yet to be fulfilled. The services at Moriah Shock include the opportunity for individual prayer for the inmates' concerns.

1 still continue visits at Adirondack Medical Center and Essex Center. People will always need someone to listen whether they are in pain, dying, recovering, or just hanging in there.

I still participate in the weekly services on a rotation schedule, both at Essex Center and Uihlein. For the last year and currently I have been responsible for the scheduling of clergy at Uihlein. This also involves reminding them to show up.

The prayer group is somewhat inactive. I wish there were a better way to get concerns to my attention on a weekly basis.

I continue to assist with funerals, pastoral care, and substituting for services at the Neighborhood House, where I have also started a Bible study. We are currently discovering the mysteries of Revelation.

I continue to enjoy having seminary students, staff, faculty and alumni use the front part of my house free for vacations and retreats. I have had as many as 10 at once. I am able to interact with future evangelical leaders and they leave the place spotless.

### Community Minister Katrina Wagner

During 2015 my ministry continued to be mainly divided between KVCC during the summer months into mid-October that I spent in the Valley, and my home in New London, NH

Some activities while I was in the Valley included preaching at KVCC and at The Memorial Chapel of All Souls in St. Huberts, I also took part in four Memorial Services, and meetings of the Church Council and the newly appointed Search Committee. A particular highlight each Saturday morning was the chance to attend "Faith and Issues" gatherings and to enjoy the fellowship and rich discussion that followed our readings.

Back in NH, I was active in the Kearsarge Interfaith Leadership Council and at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. I conducted services at the Clough Center, a continuing care unit at New London Hospital, wrote occasional articles for the "Salt and Light" column in the Intertown Record, participated in seasonal ecumenical services and worked weekly in St Andrew's Thrift Shop. During the spring an exciting new challenge was preparing and leading a few sessions of a Novel Theology adult forum at St. Andrew's to discuss Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

I continue to be inspired and energized by the principles and work of The Center for Progressive Christianity and also treasure my continuing fellowship with the Society of St. John the Evangelist.

August 2015 marked the beginning of Milton's final year as our minister. It also marked the start of a transitional year for all of us. Now, we're beginning to blaze new trails and we can thank God that Milton has been the most worthy of inspirational guides. For me, it has been a privilege, an honor and a particular blessing to have worked with him and to know him as a beloved colleague and trusted friend.



Fellowship Committee Charlotte Lichtenberg

I am hoping that the flowers that adorn the altar, the entry way and the Van Santvoord room here at KVCC add points of beauty to our sanctuary. That is the goal of the Flower Committee!

This Committee has a separate account that receives donations throughout the year to cover the expense of the flowers. Thanks to the diligence of its volunteers throughout the year and the contributions of the church community following the Christmas display of flowers, we have a healthy account balance prior to the Easter outlay of expenses. Thank you again to all the community members that help us to continue this worthwhile endeavor.

The volunteers for this year are: Joanne Baldwin, Alana Both, Ingrid Carman, Susy Doolittle, and I. Alice Boardman will be a regular volunteer during the months of July and August. Linda Coe will continue as a resource person just in case someone needs a substitute. I welcome anyone who loves flowers to become a regular member or even become a substitute on our Flower Committee team!



As chairperson I am very appreciative of the efforts made by my volunteer group to enhance our sanctuary with beautiful flowers. A flower is truly a work of great art to be enjoyed by all.

### Grounds Committee Ingrid Carman

The Grounds Committee had a great year in 2015! Volunteers came out on several work days to do the winter clean up, top dress the beds with mulch, weed and do other maintenance as needed. May did see a re-infestation of the saw fly larva on the variegated dogwoods but to a lesser extent than in the past. Summer trimming was done by a skilled volunteer crew. Garden adopters kept their areas looking great! (Thank you Ruth, Susy, Sarah, Andy, Elizabeth, Charity & Jim).

In the Memorial Garden, more stones were engraved and laid including stones for past ministers of the church along the front entrance to the garden. Thanks to Linda Coe overseeing the stones and for placing the water feature and keeping it running. Lawn mowing was tackled by the paid team of Dylan Boyle and Brett Guerin. They kept the lawns looking good for Sunday services and special events. Not accomplished this year was the removal of two trees. These are expected to be done by March of 2016.

Special thanks to Liz, Joe, Neil, Mary Jane and Lynne, Tim & Rylie for being part of the go to crew. New volunteers are always welcome!



The major improvement in 2015 was the installation of new windows in the Sanctuary of the church. Seven large windows were replaced and the handles will be selected and installed this spring.

While the ramp and rails from the handicap parking area were installed in 2014, the staining was only partially completed last summer. The work will be completed this spring.

Some of the necessary tree work was completed but more will be done this spring.

The Manse washer has continued to be a problem for our tenant and it is hoped that we will be able to replace it with a more practical unit for the space.

We have had a person look at the roof over the kitchen wing and it is in need of replacing. We will pursue having it done this year and possibly combining with a complete re-roofing of the church if necessary and prudent.



#### Mission and Social Action Committee

Mission and Social Action saw a new shared leadership model emerge this year. Gallagher, Nai Wikoff and Martha Swan were named to an Executive Committee to oversee and promote the Mission and Social Action of our Church. Each brings to the committee a wealth of experience and talents. Their charge is to promote the Education, Advocacy, Direct Action and Fundraising work of the larger community.

MSA disbursed its budget as follows:

\$1,000 Advent Seed Money \$750 Keene Food Pantry \$750 Habitat for Humanity \$480 Refugee Relief Agency

\$420 (2) ¼ CSA Shares at Fledgling Crow

\$3,400 Total



Highlighting this year was the groundswell of support around the international refugee crisis. KVCC began with a Worship and Teaching Sunday, followed by a general meeting to gauge interest, hear ideas and set direction for our church. The outcome of this meeting was the formation of three committees: Sponsorship, Advocacy/Education, and Fundraising. Each of these committees met and worked toward a goal of having our church support efforts on behalf of refugees world-wide. On January 18th KVCC hosted a North Country Refugee Summit for Faith Communities. It was attended by over 75 people and was written up in at least four newspapers. We believe that this effort uncovered a regional desire to act and act now to help refugees, and we expect to see rapid development toward this goal. You can follow our progress on the Church website www.kvccny.com and clicking on the "Refugees" tab.

The Executive Committee will be working to keep issues and programs before the Congregation that include hunger in our region, the corrections industry and incarceration, poverty and racism.



Pam Gothner, Liz Jaques, Larry Shipps, Charity Marlatt, Brett Lawrence, Jim Marlatt, Sarah Prince, Debby Rice, Fritz Sabbow, Bernie Webb, Milton Dudley

This Task Force was charged to review the state of the Manse and to explore the idea of building apartments on our land. Much of the year was spend talking with engineers, builders and planners. It was decided that the Task Force needed to divide into two separate efforts: (1) Manse, and (2) Apartment Construction. The Manse project will be coming before the Congregation shortly with a recommendation to remodel and upgrade the Office and Manse



Apartment. A proposal will be brought to the Congregation for discussion and vote. If the vote is in favor of remodeling, the work will proceed immediately. The possibility of building apartments on our land will take more time to investigate the cost, potential income and identify the benefits and risks in such a project. The Task Force will keep the Congregation updated on its progress with a goal of bringing a proposal before the Congregation this year.

# Bazaar and Quilt Show

We celebrate another fine year of our annual Bazaar and Quilt Show. The weather was great and the spirit was lively. This year we did not have the support of the YMCA bicycle group and one of our best vendors could not be with us. Yet, we had a great deal of help and experienced record crowds at our outdoor food venue. As always, the quilts brought wonderful color to our Sanctuary and all venues had a healthy year. We thank all the venue captains and those who helped with our food production and distribution. We decided to do it all again in 2016 and look forward to another fine event.

#### **Bazaar Disbursements**

\$7,375	Total
400	Purchase of AED (defibrillator)
375	Pastor's Discretionary Fund Emergencies
500	Pressure washing exterior of Church
1,100	Refugee Sponsorship and Support
\$5,000	Operating Budget



Pastoral Search Committee Mary Peabody



The committee of 15 members of the congregation, representing various constituents, began work in August. Mary Beth Peabody agreed to be lead contact with Ingrid Carman being second contact. The group began work on the UCC Church Profile document. This comprehensive document gives candidates in depth information about our church (who we are, how we function, what we have to offer a candidate) which can be used to decide if we're a church to which they would like to apply. Meeting monthly, working as a group, this document was completed as of the December meeting. Next a sub group edited the document and made it a cohesive whole. It was sent to conference minister, David Gaewski, along with the "Position Announcement" in January of 2016 for publishing on the UCC Conference website.

The Pastoral Search Committee recommended a seamless transition of ministers as opposed to the hiring of an interim minister. The recommendation was approved by Church Council. The anticipated timeline foresees interviews of applicants in the spring and hiring of the new minister by summer of 2016.



The Essex Association has not had their annual meeting yet, but there is some news. The church in Wadhams is no longer active and it is likely that the building will be put up for sale this spring. The annual meeting of the NY Conference is scheduled for June 10-12 in Rochester and we will need to send two voting delegates, not including me, to represent our church at that event. I will be there as the Essex Association Rep. to the NY Conference board.

**Essex Association UCC** 



# Pastor's Discretionary Fund Milton Dudley

This year funds that were raised by the community and kept in the PDF were distributed to the family of Eden Cenebaugh, who underwent eyesight saving surgery. These funds were used to support their travel and out of pocket needs not covered by insurance. PDF raised funds were used for social service requests of fuel oil, transportation, medical and prescription needs, purchase of a bed for a local family, clearing garbage from a local home, providing internet access for a student, scholarships and books for educational events, KCS Summer Basketball Program, KVNH Elevator Fund, and to enhance some of the less lucrative scholarships for

graduating seniors at KCS. There was a decrease in fuel oil need due to cheaper energy costs and a general decline in overall need due to an improving economy.

PASTOR DISCRETIONARY FUND

The balance in the PDF stands at: \$367.00.

Treasurer Fritz Sabbow

For the fiscal year that was expected to come in with a budget deficit, we ended up with a terrific surplus. Due to the strength of donors who gave above any levels they've given in the past, we ended the year with a total surplus of \$25,429. Every year, if a surplus occurs, the Finance Committee makes a recommendation on the use of those funds. This year, we wish to set aside these funds for three main purposes: 1) to help add funds to our Reserve for Major Repairs to be able to do some roofing repairs on the church, 2) to set aside funds for the new pastor transition and 3) to start a fund to help with the Manse renovations. The roofing repairs have been estimated but the other two purposes have yet to be fully defined. We think it prudent for the church to set funds aside during good times for future needs.

I wish to thank the members of the finance committee who this year included Harrison Caner, Sam Fisk, Bill Serjak, Debby Rice along with our council moderator, Larry Shipps and minister, Milton. I also wish to thank Harrison for his many years of service to the committee and all the other posts he's held at the church. He has elected to step down and focus his talents on more important work, like taking care of Judy and walking, Merry, their dog. I thank him very much for his sage advice and carefully crafted financial graphics.

Our endowment fund, which includes the Frederica Mitchell Legacy Fund, had strong contributions this year, but did not fare well in market appreciation. In the fall, after much discussion and interviews, the Finance Committee selected a new investment advisory service – ARC Investment Planning and Management. Harvey Siegel, President of ARC is the manager of our portfolio and has done a good job in difficult market conditions. We look forward to safe and secure management under his guidance. As of 12/31/15, our endowment held at \$1,240,000. This year, the finance committee recommends reducing our draw from the endowment from 4.5% to 4.0% as our budget allows us to do so.



	2014	2015	2015	2016
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
ncome and Transferred Funds				
Church Collections				
Cash Contributions	9,061.00	19,920.00	6,888.00	6,000.00
Pledges and Other Contributions	105,181.00	85,000.00	112,776.90	104,000.00
Total Church Collections	114,242.00	104,920.00	119,664.90	110,000.00
Rental Income	10,700.00	9,950.00	9,200.00	9,950.00
Use of Facilities	1,067.00	1,000.00	1,432.00	1,000.00
Memorials/Business Donations	1,005.00	1,000.00	4,880.00	2,500.00
Misc. Income	-	-	943.00	-
Unallocated Funds from other Sources				
Church Bazaar donation	5,000.67	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
Special Fund Drive: to build up the Reserve for Major Repairs	± 1	-	-	-
Endowment Income (Intr & Dividends)	45,852.97	50,691.00	50,691.00	48,816.00
Income from Operations	177,867.64	172,561.00	191,810.90	177,266.00

Pledges came in as anticipated along with several gifts provided to the church in 2015 which were unexpected. Anticipating some reoccurance of funds received that weren't pledged, the 2016 Budget anticipates an increase over the prior year. Our number of members who pledge continues to be steady, but there are more members who prefer to not pledge, but still give regularly. This budget reflects a conservative level of those monies received.

The annual draw of funds from the Endowment on a percentage basis has been reduced for 2016 from 4.5% to 4.0%. As the value of the endowment continues to grow, our intent is to reduce the percentage we take as a draw to match our conservative manner of managing our budgets.

We have again budgeted funds from the Annual Church Bazaar into the Operating funds for the church. We do not plan on increasing the amount the church would receive from the net revenues of the Bazaar.

#### Expenses

#### Pastoral Expenses

Pastor's Wage, Housing allowance,	72,765.06	74,453.19	75,432.49	77,462.41
employment taxes and pension contribution				
Pastor's family health coverage costs	15,770.19	16,492.62	10,158.37	9,200.00
Other contractual reimbursments to Pastor	3,149.66	3,500.00	3,148.99	3,500.00
Substitute Pastor fee	600.00	800.00	1,150.00	1,200.00
al Pastoral Expenses	92,284.91	95,245.81	89,889.85	91,362.41

Expenses here include the Pastor's wage, housing allowance, Federal and State employment taxes as well as health insurance costs and other reimbursements per his contract. With a change in our Pastor for 2016, we kept the budget similar to the prior year expenses as we do not know fully the wage costs for a new minister at the time of this budget. We intend to offer the UCC health plan for the next minister rather than Excellus, as recommended by the conference.

#### Staff Payroll

Total

Total Staff Pavroll	28,315,12	28.335.83	28.801.86	29.814.78
Disability and Worker's Comp Insurance	1,756.26	1,275.00	1,703.45	1,750.00
Christian Ed Program and Nursery Care	930.00	650.00	-	-
Music substitutes, music program supplement	4,325.00	3,250.00	3,825.00	4,000.00
Music Director, Organist, Secretary and Bookkeeper wages & taxes	21,303.86	23,160.83	23,273.41	24,064.78

Expenses here include wages for our Choir Director, Church Organist/Pianist, Bookkeeper and Secretary. A wage increase is included in the 2016 budget for all staff positions. The summer music program is again supported with a budget in line with expectations.

#### **Buildings & Grounds**

Buildings & Grounds Interest Group	-	2,500.00	43.20	500.00
Custodian Service	7,436.00	7,500.00	7,985.00	8,000.00
Snow Removal / Lawn Care	3,535.00	3,500.00	3,005.00	3,000.00
Other Alarm Service Costs	1,116.87	1,100.00	1,196.98	1,200.00
Reserve for Major Repairs	5,000.00	-	25,429.21	5,000.00
Repairs & Maintenance: Routine general maintenances	558.84	750.00	427.99	500.00
Buildings & Grounds Expenses	17,646.71	15,350.00	38,087.38	18,200.00

Total Buildings & Grounds Expenses

Total Buildings & Grounds Expe

#### Ministry

Willistry				
Worship Interest Group	704.05	350.00	291.64	350.00
Mission & Social Action Group	3,500.00	4,668.00	4,553.00	4,764.00
Fellowship & Other Worship Svs	457.65	600.00	766.90	800.00
Music Dept Expenses	39.68	500.00	662.22	650.00
Total Ministry Expenses	4,701.38	6,118.00	6,273.76	6,564.00

Budget levels were based on the most current year spending. The Mission and Social Action budget is based on a 3% allocation from the total of the Church pledges, open plate funds and the Endowment contribution to the Operating funds.

#### Property Expenses

Water - Manse	405.00	105.00		
	425.00	425.00	425.00	425.00
Water - Church	515.00	515.00	515.00	515.00
Heat - Manse	4,536.81	4,100.00	3,066.65	3,500.00
Heat - Church	4,320.50	5,000.00	2,725.07	3,000.00
Electric - Manse	799.53	720.00	690.70	720.00
Electric - Church	1,026.74	900.00	1,013.79	1,000.00
Telephone - Church	334.92	336.00	366.52	380.00
RE Property Taxes	2,327.02	1,350.00	1,710.38	1,500.00
Liability & Fire Insurance	3,230.00	3,100.00	3,362.00	3,400.00
Internet Service	300.00	300.00	325.00	325.00
Propane - Kitchen	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	-	-	-
Total Property Expenses	17,815.52	16,746.00	14,200.11	14,765.00

In 2015, we realized much lower heating costs not only due to the conversion to propane from oil, but also due to in general lower costs of fuel. We also should be realizing a reduction in our property taxes paid for the apartment in the manse by filing reports with the town assessor.

#### General & Other Expenses

Copier Service	3,585.12	3,000.00	4,117,55	4.000.00
Postage	147.00	300.00	196.00	300.00
Supplies	2,927.09	3,200.00	2,655.39	2,800.00
Total General and Other Operating Expenses	6,659.21	6,500.00	6,968.94	7,100.00

Budgeted levels were determined based on current year spending.

#### Church Wider Obligations

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Essex UCC Association	1,362.00	1,375.00	1,589.00	1,600.00
OCWM (UCC Our Church's Wider Mission)	6,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	6.000.00
Conference Expenses	449.85	250.00	( <del>4</del> )	
al Church Wider Obligations	7,811.85	7,625.00	7,589.00	7,600.00

We budgeted for thet same level of support to the Essex UCC Association and to the National Church as in the last three years.

Operating Expenses	175,234.70	175,920.64	191,810.90	175,406.19
Net Operating Income	2,632.94	(3,359.64)		1,859.81

Our 2015 fiscal year was a very positive year due to some unexpected and sizable donations provided to the church, aside of funds given for the Windows campaign. With two years of higher contributions to the church, we anticipate 2016 will also be higher than we've previously budgeted. This helped us support funds to our reserve for major repairs, to provide for wage increases to our Pastor and all our employees in order to continue to keep our church in line with similar church wages. Our hope is that with a strong 2015 and a provision made to help pay for repairs to the church roof, to provide some funds for the transition of our next minister and an effort to set aside some funds to begin the process of renovaing the church manse, we can look at 2016 as a great start to a new year of supporting our church.

#### **Statistics**

BAPTISMS: Sophia Katherine Smith, Phebe Elloie Thorne Grant

**WEDDINGS:** Jessica Putnam and Matt Noll, Eliza Wethey and Jenny Huarhua,

Jessica Kernan-Dudley and Ewen McDonough

**DEATHS:** Gay McMullen, John Butterworth, Anitra Pell, Carl Bigelow, Eillen Marsh, Gus Knight, Katherine

Merle-Smith, Lorie Gregory, Nancy Lee, Neil Hendrickson, William Orchard, Jack Mulligan, Josiah

Byram, Phyllis Feinberg, Wendy Hopper, Art Tichnor, Carolyn House, Argenta Reed.

MEMBERSHIP: Christopher Blaicher, Sheila Blaicher, Tim Robinson, Lorraine Duvall, Paul Martz, Pat Martz,

Ruth Kuhfahl.

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KEENE VALLEY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2015