

SOUTH  
CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH, UCC  
ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2025-2026



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**2025-2026 South Church Staff**

Rev. Dr. Beth Donaldson, Transitional Minister

Julia Wagner, Director of Christian Education

Sue Berlenbach, Music Director

Abigail Charbeneau, Organist

Carlene Ruesenberg, Handbell Program Director

Victoria Sepla & Mariah Edson, Administrative Assistants

Michelle Johnson, Bookkeeper

Walt Irvine, Sexton

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## South Congregational Church 187<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting: In-Person and Via Zoom Sunday, May 17, 2025

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 11:16 am by Moderator David Fries. A quorum of 32 members was confirmed, with 59 in attendance in person and 9 people on Zoom.

**Invocation:** The opening invocation was offered by the Rev. Dr. Tanya Sadagopan.

**Mission Vision Values song** – accompanied by Abby Charbeneau, lyrics by Peter Imse

### **Minutes from 186<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting:**

Janet Zeller made a motion to accept the minutes from the 186<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting held on May 18, 2024. Lynne Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Remembering those Who Have Died: Jonathan Stallsmith read aloud the following list of individuals who died in the past year:

(The first four names were inadvertently omitted in last year's meeting)

Edna Elle	Jane Bredeson
Ronald Haigh	Valerie Morgan
Bruce Hodges	Patricia Gerhan
Pandora Martel	Dorothy Byers
Christopher Scott	Bruce Bairstow
J. Yorke Peeler	Dode Rainie
Richard Ashleigh	Irving Robinson
George Lewis	Andrew DeTreville
Judith Todd	

Thank you to Martha Burham who has maintained the list of people who passed away over the past year.

### **Membership Report:**

President Betsy Clardy presented the membership report that is also published on page 46 in the Annual Report:

South Church Membership Numbers as reported to Conference March 2025

Received into membership through Transfer: 1

Received into membership through Confirmation: 0

Membership reported to the NH Conference, March 2025: 320

Total Increase in Membership: 1

Removed from Membership through Death: 12

Removed from Membership through Transfer: 6

Total Decrease in Membership: 18

Total Membership as of May 1, 2024: 320

Betsy Clardy noted that we have continued the process which started prior to Pastor Jed Rardin leaving to update, organize, and correct our membership list. This was last done around 2013. Member lists were kept in various locations, both paper and computer, and had numerous inconsistencies and errors. Many volunteer and staff hours were needed to get a single optimal list. Letters were sent to members who appeared to no longer be active inviting them to reengage. The transfers noted above were in response to that outreach. While this is a significant drop it appears to be from correction of bad data rather than a sudden drop in membership.

### **Update of Bylaws:**

The proposed changes to the bylaws were posted on the South Congregational Church website prior to the Annual Meeting. Betsy Clardy explained that the updates are needed to reflect the changes to the Faith Formation, dividing that ministry into two separate ministries: (1) the Christian Formation Ministry and (2) the Faith, Fellowship & Membership Ministry. In addition, Pastor Aid has recommended changing their name to Caring Companions. Other changes included deletion of Worship & Spiritual Life duties now more appropriately assumed by other ministries (e.g. Caring Ministries, Faith Fellowship & Membership Ministries) and elimination of outdated language. The section on parishioner discipline and membership termination was removed from the bylaws and the confidentiality requirements have been clarified and updated. The Job description for the church administrator was changed to Administrative Assistant and Bookkeeper, and it was noted that the bookkeeper handles all the financial information previously done by the Administrator. Notice of staff resignation changed from four days to what is delineated in job description.

Peter Imse made a motion to accept the bylaws changes as proposed, and the motion was seconded by Deb Imse. The motion was unanimously approved by those in attendance, including those voting via Zoom.

### **Nominating Report:**

Toni Callahan presented the nominating report, which is also detailed on pages 31-35 of the South Church Annual Report. Toni said that because Faith Formation has been replaced by two separate ministries, the Nominating Committee need to find staff for both of the new ministries. She said that Worship & Spiritual Life and the Nominating Committee are still seeking new members, and that individuals can call the church office if they are interested in serving on these ministries. Toni also said that if all of the positions in every board, ministry and committee were to be filled, that would total 136 positions - roughly one third of the overall church membership and a very impressive statistic. Toni wanted to take this opportunity to thank departing members and to express appreciation for all of their hard work and service.

Janet Zeller moved that the Nominating Report be accepted as presented and that we elect the officers, ministry and committee members as outlined in the report. Chris Simmers seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved, with a thank you to the Nominating Committee.

### **Financial Decisions**

The presentation on Financial Decisions included the following five topics:

- I. Summary of FY 2023-2024
- II. Year to Date FY 2024-2025 and Proposed Operating Budget FY 2025-2026
- III. Distribution of Community Building Maintenance Reserves
- IV. Managing the Proceeds from the Sale of the Community Building

V. Replacing the Lift

I. Summary of FY 2023-2024

Co-Treasurer Sue Marcotte-Jenkins presented a summary of the FY 2023-2024 budget, explaining that Sally Bird is also a Co-Treasurer but was unable to attend the Annual Meeting. The summary of the FY 2023-2024 budget is detailed in the South Church Annual Report, but the following provides an overview:

<u>STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY 6/30/24</u>	<u>FY 2023- 2024</u>	<u>FY 2022-2023</u>
ORDINARY INCOME	\$ 503,497	\$ 431,973
ORDINARY EXPENSES	<u>\$ 450,774</u>	<u>\$ 487,123</u>
NET ORDINARY INCOME	\$ 52,723	\$ -55,150
AUXILIARY GROUPS NET INCOME	\$ -1,521	\$ -2,474
IN-KIND DONATIONS	\$ 25	\$ 0
INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS	\$ 155,235	\$ 125,731
DEPRECIATION EXPENSE	<u>\$ 33,886</u>	<u>\$ 33,886</u>
NET INCREASE TO ASSETS	\$ 182,038	\$ 74,471

As part of her presentation, Sue explained that our assets total of \$183,000 reflects the increased value of invested funds and also the fact that South Church received an estate gift of nearly \$60,000. The Net Worth as of June 30, 2024 was about \$2.5 million. South Church no longer has long term debt, as the debt from the conversion of the heating system 10 years ago is now paid off.

Sue said that invested funds reflect the bulk of our net assets and that most of the permanent funds have a 4% spending cap on them. She said that even though South Church has Net Assets of \$2.5 million, it's important to realize that almost two million is restricted in some way – either through investments or by the purpose of the funds.

I. FY 2025-2026 Operating Budget

The presentation on the Proposed Operating Budget for FY 2025-2026 was divided into the following three sections:

- What We Expect to Receive
- What We Expect to Spend on our General Ministry
- What We Expect to Need from Investments to Support our Operations

Revenue – What We Expect to receive

We are on track for collection of pledges and South Church also received a \$30,000 gift that is specific for a Music Scholar's program that will be developed. This gift is currently earning money in one of our invested funds. Although our membership numbers are down, we reached our goal of increasing fundraising to \$10,000 and the

2025-2026 budget proposes increasing fundraising by an additional \$5,000. We are currently receiving revenue from rental of parking spaces and from outside organizations that use space in South Church.

#### Expenses - What We Expect to Spend on our General Ministry

The majority of the expenses are for staff compensation, benefits and payroll taxes - currently 65% of total expenditures. The personnel budget includes a 2 ½% increase for all staff and an additional increase for two positions to assure we are competitive with other churches. The bookkeeper hours will increase from 10 to 14 hours per week, because that job description has been reworked to include some functions previously performed by the church administrator. Other staff expenses include mileage reimbursement and the payroll service. There are also expenses related to copy supplies, insurance (this is currently under review and we are in the process of getting quotes from new brokers), ministry expense and maintenance and utilities.

#### What We Expect to Need from Investments to Support our Operations

This fiscal year we have projected a \$31,000 deficit and will cover this deficit with our invested funds. For the fiscal year beginning July 1 the deficit will go up to \$74,000. This deficit is due in part to lower pledges, an increase in the personnel budget, and no more rent from 6 South State Street. The deficit will be covered with 4% from sustaining fund and 4% from the Hoyt fund as well as a transfer from the organ reserve fund. This leaves a balance of \$22,000 and the budget committee recommends that we take 4% of the building sale proceeds to offset the remaining deficit.

## II. Repurposing Community Building's Maintenance Reserves

Peggy Scott has accepted the position of Co-Treasurer, as Sue Marcotte-Jenkins is stepping down from the role (although Sue will stay on the Budget Committee). Peggy began her presentation by saying that we owe Sally Bird and Sue Marcotte-Jenkins a real debt of gratitude for all of their excellent work.

Peggy said that the community building had substantial reserves set aside for maintenance, and the Budget Committee is recommending that the funds held in reserves for maintaining the Community Building be transferred into other existing reserve funds. The Building & Grounds Committee will have input into how these funds are used, except for funds that have already been committed for security of the building.

## III. Managing Proceeds from the Sale of the Community Building

The Budget Committee's recommendations for the \$605,000 in proceeds from the building sale are as follows:

- Create a new invested fund without spending caps, allowing the Community Building sale proceeds to increase in value while we imagine and strategize about how South Church will grow into our vision.
- Convene work groups in September 2025 to define what strategies, missions and programs to develop over the next three years. These planning groups will present options at or before the 2026 Annual Meeting.

The recommendation is to invest the money in an unrestricted fund without spending caps. When we reconvene in September, we will put together work groups to define missions and programs for which the money could be used. Proposals will be presented at the 2026 annual meeting for a vote by the congregation.

## V. Replacing the Lift

Peter Imse said that lift has reached the end of its useful life. There have been numerous repairs, and one member was stranded in the lift and needed the assistance of the fire department.

Research into the cost of a new lift included estimates from equipment vendors and contractors for replacement options. The recommended replacement option is to replace with a similar style lift for an estimated cost of \$110,000 - \$125,000 (likely to increase when final bids/contracts are received).

The recommendation for paying for the new lift is to acquire the basic lift and use a hybrid approach to finance it:

1. "Lend" ourselves the funds; paying 4% interest per year on the loan
2. Immediately run a limited capital campaign and apply for grants
3. Pay down the loan as campaign pledges and grant moneys are received
4. In 3 years, if an internal loan balance exists; convert the balance to a commercial loan

Discussion: What about timing and concerns about increases from tariffs? If approved today, we will go forward right away. It will be about a 4 month process to build the lift and then a couple of months to do the installation – so probably about 6 months in total. We would look for a fixed price agreement as soon as possible.

There were concerns about the recommendation to take out a commercial loan at the end of three years, if there is still a balance owed. Some people felt that we should try to pay off earlier or pay out of other funds instead of taking out a commercial loan. A suggestion was made that in three years we could vote to decide how to handle what is still owed. Others felt that the reason for the commercial loan provision is to give us the discipline to pay this off as soon as possible.

#### Motions concerning Financial Decisions:

##### Motion: FY 2025-2026 Operating Budget

Marty Jenkins moved that we pass the operating budget as shown in the presentation (summarized earlier in these minutes). Jonathan Stallsmith seconded the motion. During discussion, Peter Imse indicated that he is not in favor of what is proposed, for two reasons: (1) it's not wise to take money from our investment to cover operating expenses and (2) we took a vote three years ago to right size our expenses and we have not achieved this. Peter said he is voting 'no' but the rest of the Budget Committee supports the recommendation.

It was further clarified that paying ourselves back for the lift will not have an impact on the FY 25-26 operating budget. Also, the intent is to pay for the lift 100% through a capital campaign.

The motion carried with the majority vote and the 2025-2026 operating budget was approved.

##### Motion: Redistribute the Community Building's Reserves

Lynn Morgan moved to redistribute the community building's reserves as outlined in the presentation (summarized earlier in these minutes). Deb Imse seconded the motion, and the plan to redistribute the community building's reserves was unanimously approved.

##### Motion: Manage the Proceeds from the Sale of the Community Building

Jonathan Stallsmith moved that we manage the proceeds from the sale of the community building as noted on the slides in the presentation (summarized earlier in these minutes), and the motion was seconded by Chris Simmers.

It was clarified that spending is capped at 4% as part of the recommendation. Finance will work with Pastor Tanya to convene the work groups, and Pastor Tanya said we want to make sure the congregation is included in these decisions and that we have as much input from the congregation as possible. In addition, we will need to look back on our mission, vision and values when making these decisions. There is a need for strategic budget planning going forward, and the Finance Committee has a strategic goal to build a 3-year budget plan including the results of these meetings.

After discussion, the motion carried and the plan to manage the proceeds from the sale of the community building was approved.

Motion: Replacing the lift

Janet Zeller moved that we approve the plan for the lift as discussed during the presentation, and the motion was seconded by Joan Bordon.

Marty Jenkins made a subsequent motion to amend the recommendations for payment, by changing “convert the balance to a commercial loan” to “we will consider converting the balance to a commercial loan.” The motion was seconded by Elieen Jones.

Discussion on the motion to amend: Some members supported the amendment, but there was also some opposition because we will be conducting a capital campaign to raise money to replace the funds taken out of the proceeds. Others felt that it would make the capital campaign more effective if we have the threat of a commercial loan.

Voting on motion to amend: 14 in favor and 26 opposed, and the motion to amend the language concerning the commercial loan was not approved.

We then returned to the original motion to approve the plan for the lift as outlined in the presentation (summarized earlier in these minutes). This motion was reiterated by Mike Gfroerer and seconded by Becky Field.

The motion carried and the plan for the lift was approved.

Appreciation: Thank you to ministries, committees, staff, volunteers, pledgers, and any and all who work to help carry out and support the mission of South Church. Council President Betsy Clardy received an extra thank you along with flowers and a card, and a well-deserved a standing ovation from for the many responsibilities she took on over the past year. Also, special thanks to the Finance Committee and Co-Treasurers.

Closing Prayer: Offered by the Rev. Dr. Tanya Sadagopan.

Adjourned: The 187<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting was adjourned at 12:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Sara Willingham

## South Congregational Church

July 1, 2025-May 1, 2026

Annual Report

Year in Review

### CLERGY REPORT

#### **Transitional Minister – Rev. Beth Donaldson**

A few years back I went through training at the University of Wisconsin to be certified as a Life Coach. I enjoyed the training tremendously and have found so much of what I learned very helpful in pastoral ministry. At one point we were invited to come up with identities/tag lines for ourselves that exemplified our coaching identities. Others came up with names like, “Change-maker”, “Companion on the Journey”, or “Wisdom Warrior.” I, somewhat reluctantly, came up with, “Both/And.” It didn’t sound like an identity at all. I shared it with the group as a way of asking for direction, and unanimously, they said, “Both/And.” It wasn’t cosmic, or pastoral, or ambitious. I didn’t really like it. But it seemed that it was what had emerged from my experiences there, and in my life.

Now, I am finding this identifier to be pretty descriptive of my time here as well.

Just four months ago, we began our ministry together. And you called me to be your Transitional Minister – to be both an Interim Minister, (here for a limited time) and potentially, a Settled Minister, (here for an undesignated amount of time). **Both/And.**

In this work, we are called, together, to be **in the present** – joining in worship, expressing pastoral care, joining in fellowship, serving the community, seeking justice and peace in the world, and tending to the administration of the organization that we are; **And**, we are called **to look beyond this moment**, both back at where we have come from, and forward toward where we want to be. **Both/And.**

- In these first months, (in the present)
  - **I have experienced the joy of creating, leading and participating in worship** with you all, including special services around Lent, Holy Week, and Easter; gathering around the Baptism of Carter Camarda; sending the Youth off on a Mission Trip, lifting up Eco-Justice, celebrating the Lift, and supporting the Giving From Gratitude campaign. Working with Abby, Sue, and Carlene, has been a great pleasure. A crew of lovely folk joined me in banner-making for Palm Sunday and Easter. (I hope we can do more.) And I thank you for the opportunity to preach, which is a spiritual practice that has become deeply important to me – thank you for your generous attention each week.
  - Beginning with some “Sharing Groups” after worship for the Sundays in Lent, and continuing with visits in a few homes, and visits in my office, **I have been able to do some pastoral care** with members of the congregation. I am humbled by the trust that is shown in these opportunities, and appreciate the value of this work as intrinsically important to the fabric of our life as a congregation.
  - Thank you to the “ministry of fun” who have hosted a few **opportunities for fellowship** – even though I was roundly embarrassed by my poor performance on Quiz Night in my lack of memory of Biblical Trivia! Being in these fun and more casual occasions has provided wonderful opportunity for me to get to know so many of you much better. Thank you.
  - Since I have been here, I have witnessed the many ways you all **serve the community and work for social justice**. You will read all about them in the reports below. I simply give thanks that I am

servicing a church that takes this aspect of our faith so seriously and does so with great generosity and kindness.

- Since my arrival, there have been many ways in which I have been able to jump into the **administrative aspects of local church ministry**. I have met weekly with the office staff and Walt. Along with the Personnel Committee and Past President of the Council, Betsy Clardy, we have addressed some complex staffing issues, which continue to need attention and hopefully will come to resolution soon. I have met only once with the music staff but look forward to working more closely with them as we move through the liturgical year. I have met with most committees on a monthly basis, and have appreciated learning more, every day, about how this church is organized, both formally and informally.
- Looking beyond this moment
  - We are living in an historic moment, full of profound challenges and dynamics. It is my belief that **the progressive Christian tradition (of which we are very much a part) powerfully expresses some of the critique, comfort, hope and vision that people are hungering for right now**. Looking back, many have memories of this church that can speak to how we look into the future. Looking forward, it seems likely that the challenges of our world will become even more profound. Please know that I am eager to engage in striving to find ways to help people know we are here – to welcome and engage new people in the life of this church – not only for our sake, but for the sake of being in ministry together (offering support and solidarity and encouragement) in these hard, hard times.
  - I am aware that **some visioning happened not too long ago**, and I offer that I would be glad to revisit this, and work on next steps, if there is interest in doing so. Some **strategic planning** on how we care for ourselves, (both in regard to our human resources and our material resources) AND how we welcome others, might be helpful. I am keeping an eye out for the opportunity to do this work when it is right to do so.

As part of the leadership of this congregation, I have been able to meet with the many **Committees and Ministries of the church**, and to take in ALL the ways you all are serving God, the world, and each other in generous and capable ways. And... there are **some initiatives that seem to need attention**, and perhaps ad hoc, or smaller groups, to tend to them. **Both/And**.

- Current Work: This document contains all the reports from the ministries of the church, fleshing out the incredible work you are all doing together. It has been an inspiration to read through it. I encourage everyone to do so as well.
  - One of the observations that I have been able to make through participating in church life for these first months is that there is some overlap and lack of clarity about which committee or body of the church is responsible for what. This is expressed most often in multiple people moving forward with initiatives (which is a positive indication of commitment to things and willingness to take responsibility) when this might need to be more centralized and stewarded in a committee.
  - One ball that I dropped already was supporting the Immigration Task Force in completing their work to become help SCC become an **Immigrant Welcoming Church**, (an official UCC designation, similar to that of being an Open and Affirming Church). I apologize to the Faith in Action Committee and all of the folks who have engaged in this important process. I hope we can pick it back up now and do what we need to do to complete the work, and then take that work into action. There are steps already being taken.

- **Potential Work:** From being part of these groups, conversations have arisen about addressing some key result areas that don't quite fit into the agendas of one particular committee and possibly need new (ad hoc?) groups to take them up as special foci. (Please don't read this list imagining that I am saying we should do all of this right away, and create new committees. I list them here just to be sure you know that I [and others] am aware of these needs, and there is some energy to seeing how we can help these things happen):
  - **Tech and Social Media:** A new website is in the works, which is exciting. We will need processes and policies for keeping it current. The Sunday morning tech work currently done by Walt could use some more trained people. Managing our Social Media intentionally could open doors of significant connection to the greater community.
  - **Eco-Justice Issues:** How can we more fully embrace and communicate our commitments to caring for creation, and caring for communities most affected by eco-injustice? How can we do this more than once a year in worship? A small handful of people will meet soon to begin to discuss and envision this.
  - **Adult Education Programming:** The Christian Formation Committee is ready to have a group work on shaping and implementing some programmatic opportunities for the adults in our church.
  - **Special Fundraising:** Stewarded by the Giving Committee, how can we bolster our efforts towards opportunities to raise funds for our operating budget while also enjoying community building both within and beyond our walls.
  - **South Church Branding:** Currently there are multiple church logos and tag lines circulating in our various communications. Choosing one of each and reiterating it wherever and whenever we can, might help us to be more recognizable as a distinct presence in this community.
  - **Church Growth and Vitality:** From a few different sources, I have heard the desire to focus on growing the church. This takes intentional effort. Timing and structuring the effort is important. When we are ready, I look forward to supporting this whole-heartedly.
- Potential programmatic opportunities (longings) I have heard expressed:
  - Women's & Men's Retreats
  - Scripture Study
  - SAGE Gatherings for older adults
  - Vacation Bible School

I have not, as yet, had the privilege to perform a wedding, officiate at a funeral, welcome new members or celebrate any confirmations. I was honored to be invited to baptize Carter Camarda and give thanks for that wonderful opportunity. I know there is one wedding coming up for which we will ALL celebrate – and that is **the wedding of Julia Wagner to Anthony Grice**. It is such a joy to support this wonderful life-passage for them. There is also one memorial service coming up in July for James Gorham, (whose son was a member here in the past.) Perhaps there will be new members to welcome soon... and perhaps a Confirmation Class will also happen in the fall? I enjoy these “priestly” functions of pastoral ministry, and the opportunities they give us to name what is important and join together in honoring God and one another.

The final **both/and** that I would like to share with you comes with a promise and a request. Because of the dual aspects of my call, I have already experienced that I, on occasion, have been overly ambitious to offer my ideas and try to motivate change. (The Interim Minister in me sometimes overtaken the possibly Settled Minister in me.) I truly apologize if I have been too focused on this part of my sense of call here. My promise is that I will try harder to sit back more, to listen more, to learn more, and to discern more WITH YOU ALL, how we want to move into the future as a congregation. I want to honor and support the wisdom you all have, and if what I have to offer fits into that wisdom, I will gladly share it.

My request is that you bear with me. I have great affection for all of you and greatly desire to be of service. If I seem overly zealous, it is because **I am deeply inspired by what could be**. When my input is helpful – YAY! We all win. But when it is not, give me a signal – pull on your ear, scratch your nose, cross your eyes, or simply tell me. AND, if or when you want my input and ideas, and I have not already offered them, please ask. We are doing a dance, and my prayer is that it will be as graceful as we can make it together. Leadership comes from **both** the clergy and the congregation, **and** learning, serving, responding also come from both the clergy and the congregation.

Thank you all for this opportunity to be in ministry with you. It is a source of joy, purpose, and meaning for me. I look forward to these next months, as we continue to move through this challenging time as a body of Christ in worship, fellowship, service, communion, and love.

Beth

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

### ***President – Jonathan Stallsmith***

#### **A Year of Transition, Growth, and Renewed Purpose**

This past year has been one of significant change and profound spiritual deepening for South Congregational Church. As we reflect on our journey, we celebrate the resilience of our community and the grace that has guided us through seasons of transition.

#### **Pastoral Leadership and Spiritual Care**

The year began with the challenge of a sudden pastoral departure. During the ensuing period of discernment, we were blessed by the leadership of several guest pastors who sustained our worship life. We owe a debt of gratitude to Rev. Gayle Murphy, who provided steady and compassionate guidance through the busy Christmas season.

In January, we welcomed our Transitional Pastor, Rev. Beth Donaldson. Pastor Beth has been a true blessing, successfully bringing our congregation together through a consistent and powerful message of love. Her leadership is helping us heal, grow, and prepare for the next chapter of our ministry.

#### **Looking Toward the Future**

Our Search Committee has been working diligently on the vital task of calling our next Settled Pastor. They are currently in the process of finalizing the Church Profile, which will be available for congregational review this fall. We ask for your continued prayers for the committee and for the individual God is preparing to lead us.

#### **Stewardship and Campus Improvements**

Maintenance of our historic home is a shared responsibility, and this year we completed the much-needed renovation of the lift, ensuring our building remains accessible to all. An ongoing fundraising campaign is currently underway to cover these repair costs, and we are grateful for the generosity shown thus far.

Furthermore, the church received a significant estate gift this year. To ensure these funds are used in a way that honors our mission, the Faith in Action committee recently polled the congregation to gather diverse ideas for expanding our outreach programs.

## Mission and Community Engagement

Our commitment to “radical hope” and "extravagant love" was put into practice this year through a renewed focus on our immigrant neighbors. By learning about and supporting the immigrants in our local community, we have deepened our understanding of justice and hospitality.

## Upcoming Highlights

Change continues into the coming months as we prepare for a new website launch this summer. This updated digital presence will help us better communicate our message and connect with both long-time members and seekers in the digital age.

Through every transition, the spirit of South Congregational Church remains steadfast. Thank you for your continued dedication, your prayers, and your love for this faith community.

## STAFF REPORTS

### Church Administration

This past year has been a dynamic one in terms of the Administration of the Church. We want to thank the following people for helping us get through it with as much grace as possible:

- Many **members of the congregation** stepped up to help in the office with a variety of tasks. We could not have managed without you.
- **Michelle Johnson**, our Bookkeeper, stepped into the role of Office Manager for a number of months, after the departure of Pastor Tanya, working MANY hours.
- **Mariah Edson** was able to return to work in the office, gradually increasing her hours, since last November. We are glad to see her back.
- We were able to hire **Victoria Sepla** as a temporary Administrative Assistant while Mariah has been in the process of returning to full-time work.

Please take some time to thank and offer support to all of these people. The administration of this church is complex and requires quite a bit of time and attention to details. We have been fortunate to have such capable and talented people doing this important work.

Please note that we are still in a season of transition in terms of our administrative staffing, but we hope some of the clarifying of roles and office reconfiguring have helped. Please be patient as we work together – remember that everyone is working hard, and is eager to be of service.

**Director of Music Ministry - Sue Berlenbach**

The Music Ministry continues to bring beautiful music to the South Church community during our worship services.

The newest occurrence for the Music Ministry has been the addition of a new program for high school students - **The South Church Music Scholars**. This program was started with the help of a generous donation. South Church Music Scholars audition for membership in either Memorial Bells or Chancel Choir. Upon completion of each semester's membership, the Music Scholar receives a gift stipend. Our current Scholars are Natalie Crevier, who joined us in September, and Sophia Sturgis, who came in January.

Abby, our organist and accompanist, continues to work with many musicians who are congregants. She accompanies soloists and small groups, as well as Memorial Bells. She rehearses weekly with the Chancel Choir. Abby maintains excellent relationships with all those she works with. We are blessed to have her as part of the Music Ministry.

Carlene continues a great tradition of beautiful music with Memorial Bells. Memorial Bells play once per month at our 10AM service. They rehearse regularly on Wednesday evenings and on the Saturday before they play at service. Carlene collaborates with Abby when piano accompaniment is needed. Carlene joined Sue at Music Scholar auditions during September and February. Carlene welcomed and has been mentoring two new members this spring. One new member is a part of the Music Scholars program. It is a pleasure to hear the bells play and we are grateful for the role Carlene plays in our Music Ministry.

The Chancel Choir continues to sing on Sunday mornings. We have lost some choir members for various reasons throughout this year. However, we are thrilled to have two Concord High School students singing with us as part of the Music Scholars Program. We have welcomed many guest singers for various events and on some Sundays. Chancel Choir rehearses on Thursday evening in the chapel from 7:00 - 8:30 PM.

Cataloguing South Church's music library has continued this year. Since moving the music library to Room 1 on the first floor, we've been able to access music more easily. The next step regarding the library is to purge music that is no longer used and relevant to the groups we have. Both the choral library and handbell library are being cataloged on Google Sheets.

The Music Ministry looks forward to seeking out continuing education opportunities in the coming year. They are engaged throughout the community in professional level performances and professional organizations. The Music Ministry is grateful for our guest musicians and their contributions to our services. Music performance is a spiritual endeavor here at South Church and it is wonderful to have so many participants share their musical gifts in this way. We always welcome new members to share their musical gifts!

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Berlenbach

## **MINISTRY REPORTS**

### ***Worship and Spiritual Life (WSL) – Linda Kenison***

- Wayne Martin is currently the WSL member on the Church Council and the Settled Pastor Search Committee.
- Lynne is on the Pastor Parish Relations Committee.
- WSL Point Persons meet with the Pastor prior to the service to see if there are any needs for the service. Point Persons are also responsible for selecting an Acolyte to light the service candles and for making sure there are ushers.
- WSL members have assisted with Communion and serving as Lay Leaders.
- We worked on a budget proposal to cover worship-related expenses such as banners and so on.
- WSL is responsible for selecting where the remaining \$5000 from Bruce Bairstow's SC bequest is to be used for enhancing the sanctuary. WSL unanimously voted to spend around \$4000 to improve assisted hearing devices. This went to the Church Council and Finance Committee for final approval and is now part of the proposed budget present at the Annual Meeting.
- We welcome Pastor Beth to WSL. Beth has been an active and welcome participant.
- WSL is responsible for awarding the Cilley and Blake scholarships. We made good progress in revising the application but were unable to proceed due to a shortage of office staff. We will pick up the process this year.

Current WSL members are;

Lynne Morgan, Chair; Adria Cilley, Kathryn Bradley, Wayne Martin, Bonnie Ota, Joanne Varga, and Linda Kenison.

### ***Faith in Action – Faith Scofield***

The Faith in Action Ministry (FIA) is a team of four: Faith Scofield, Shasta Jorgensen and Suzanne Winchester. Zib Corell joined us in January of 2026 and two more church members will join us in September 2026. There are ongoing efforts to recruit new members.

*FIA Ministry, in cooperation with the clergy, is responsible for stimulating, educating, and guiding the congregation in ways to render loving service in the Concord community and throughout the world. This ministry shall select and present to the congregation a different organization to be sponsored each month for a special offering.*

We continue to strive to align our ministry with South Church's mission, vision and values. To provide support to our church community, the Concord community and regional and national charity needs.

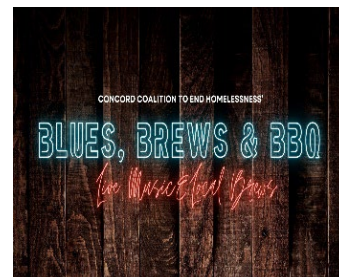
We meet monthly via Zoom to select Moment for Mission charitable organizations and initiatives. Each month we provided write-ups about the selected missions to be included in E-Lation and the Sunday bulletins. At

times, we presented the monthly Moment for Mission in worship services. We meet via Zoom, and in person when needed.



FIA supports South Church’s tradition of being a “Five for Five” congregation with donations to “Our Churches Wider Mission” (\$11,200.00), and the UCC’s four special mission offerings: Neighbors in Need (\$700.00), Christmas Fund (\$800.00), One Great Hour of Sharing (\$1,200.00), and Strengthen the Church. Donations are from church collection and FIA.

Last July and August the Moments for Mission focused on supporting some of Concord’s most vulnerable population through donations to the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness. The organization hosts two major fund raisers each year. South Church members stepped up, yet again, and donated \$700 to the Coalition’s Annual Blues Brews and BBQ.



In August, we were blessed to have

Miss Julianne visit South Church for a community music program! There was singing, dancing and bubbles! Miss Julianne is a children’s musician and music therapist. We hope to arrange another music program with this talented person. This event was funded through the Young Fund. The Young Fund was established in 1995 as an endowment to support young parents and their children.

September brought the celebration of the many diverse cultures of the city of Concord. To help support this colorful festival, FIA (South Church) was a sponsor for the Concord Annual Multi-cultural Festival. A donation of \$1,000 was provided to support and celebrate diversity. FIA will continue an annual sponsor donation of \$1,000 to the Concord Multi-Cultural Festival held each September.

**“Becoming an Immigrant Welcoming Congregation”**

During September and October, FIA was busy with preparations for classes being provided to the members of South Church on Immigration. FIA developed the program through the Wisconsin Council of Churches, “Becoming an Immigrant Welcoming Community”. (Pastor Tanya) The course

**CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS**  
An Immigrant's Journey in Detention

An Exhibit of Photos, Words, and Art

November 8-29, 2025

**Opening Reception**

Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 5:00-6:30 pm  
South Congregational Church  
27 Pleasant Street, Concord, NH

This powerful exhibit of photographs, artwork and poetry illustrates the physical, social and emotional impacts of detaining and tracking an asylum seeker who escaped his war-torn African home due to death threats. A poet and artist, "Antony" expressed his anguish in writings and artwork. NH photographer Becky Field documented his life over a year and a half while he was shackled and detained under house arrest.



**South Congregational Church, UCC**

27 Pleasant Street, Concord, NH 03301  
www.southchurchconcord.org - (603) 224-2621

**Exhibit Hours**

DAYS: Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu: 9am-1pm  
EVENINGS: Tue, Wed, Fri: 6pm-8pm  
WEEKENDS: Sat 12-3pm; Sun: 9am-12pm

With gratitude for support from Temple Beth Jacob, NH State Council on the Arts, and South Church Faith in Action Ministry

was rewritten to reflect New Hampshire's Immigration history. The intention was to provide education about Immigration issues and how South Church members can provide support either individually, as part of a team or in collaboration with established local Immigration/Refugee Support Services. Classes were a reflection of learning in light of Biblical faith. An average of 15 people attended each class. The program, "Becoming an Immigrant Welcoming Congregation" consisted of 5 classes. The 6<sup>th</sup> class is in progress with Pastor Beth guiding the members of the class, and South Church in writing a covenant on "Becoming an Immigrant Welcoming Congregation".

In conjunction with the Immigration education series, FIA hosted an Immigration exhibit by Becky Field, "Crying in the Wilderness". After a successful opening reception, hosted by Faith in Action, the community was able to come and enjoy this beautiful exhibit throughout the month of November in Fellowship Hall. This was a deeply moving addition to our education about the difficult and frightening times for our Immigrant neighbors! Thanks to the many South Church members that helped cover the exhibit hours! The exhibit was supported by Temple Beth Jacob and FIA.

FIA arranged two great speakers to enhance the Immigration education series. They were: Ron Schneider, Chair of the NHCUCC Immigration and Refugee Support Group. Ron spoke about his visits to the detained Immigrants and Refugees at the Strafford County Prison. Ron also represents the NHCUCC Immigrant Support and Bond Fund. We were also fortunate to have Viola Kitusiime from the Granite State Organizing Project. Viola reviewed the past and present Immigrant and Refugee Policy. There is representation from South Church and FIA on both organizations.



In December, Faith in Action teamed up with Genesis for the annual Mitten Tree Project. The very generous South Church Congregation donated 225 mittens, scarves, hats and socks for the community in need. These items were distributed to the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness, Friends of Forgotten Children and Concord Hospital!

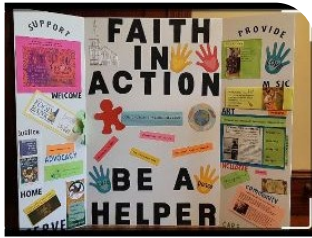
The annual Diaper Drive, in January, collected 4 medium boxes filled with diapers and wipes. This donation was made possible through the generosity of the South Church Congregation. Diapers were delivered to Waypoint along with a check for \$200. This annual outreach supports families, women and children for a very grateful Waypoint Center. The items support their diaper pantry.



FIA was blessed with an incredible \$30,000 donation in January of 2026. This generous donation was given by a previous dedicated church member, Judy Todd. The use of the funds was reviewed with the members of the church council and included research of established Concord area outreach programs. After much discussion, it was decided to use these funds for community outreach programs. A member wide vote was taken to obtain the congregation's input for suggested programs. The vote revealed the congregation's concerns for their community

in order: Homelessness, Education, Music, Elder Services, Veterans and Outdoor Activities. The intention is to align the outreach programs with some of Judy's interests and passions.

We will continue to work with Pastor Beth, the Council and church members, to establish the outreach programs.



Faith in Action participated in the Ministry Fair.



Faith in Action participated in "Prepared to Serve 2026" with the NHCUCC IRSG

## USE YOUR VOICE

In February, FIA arranged a class with Heather Barber and Leanne Tigert. They reviewed the legislative bill process, how to review upcoming bills, who to call with your input, how to oppose or support a bill and how to write a comment on an upcoming NH bill. This class helped educate members of the congregation and gave people the means to have our voices heard! It also encouraged becoming involved! Thank-you Heather and Leanne.



South Church became a Souper Star Sponsor for the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH) 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Souper Fest in April.

The members of South Church and Faith in Action donated \$1,000.00 to support the event. CCEH raised over \$20,000.00 to support programs for the homeless. And South Church was a SOUPER SUPPORTER!!

Moment for Mission plans for May include Strengthen the Church, and Pride Month is celebrated in June!

## Faith in Action will continue to support:

- The Relief Society as a Moment for Mission. Collection donation of \$346.00.
- Granite State Organizing Project (GSOP) Membership of \$1,000.00 per year. South Church is one of the initial five churches to join this multi faith organization. There are presently four South Church members on the GSOP committee. GSOP supports community projects affecting, housing, Immigration justice, Economic justice, Racial equity, Youth organization and a clergy caucus. Membership is meant to help strengthen South Church's social justice efforts and develop relationships with other churches and community. GSOP is involved with visits to NH State House, voting of bills, contacting legislators and senators and part of the "Raise Your Voces Interfaith March" to the State House.
- The Annual Multicultural Festival with hope that South Church may have a more visible presence.
- Family Promise and Friendly Kitchen through volunteering.
- NH Food Bank (Christmas eve \$1,500.00) and Friendly Kitchen (\$1,000.00) through Moment for Mission and church collections.
- The NHCUCC Immigration and Refugee Support Group. 2 church members are part of this organization. South Church Knitters raised \$2,100.00 from tiny hat donations for the Immigration Bond Fund.

- Concord Coalition to End Homelessness.

An area for continued exploration is the growth of community outreach programs with the inclusion of Pastor Beth, the church council and church members for the success of these programs. Though Pastor Tanya left South Church, Faith in Action stayed the course! We are fortunate to have the leadership of our new Transitional Minister, Beth Donaldson. She has provided support, guidance and new ideas.

Respectfully submitted April 17, 2026

Faith in Action Ministry – Zib Corell, Shasta Jorgensen, Faith Scofield and Suzanne Winchester

### ***Christian Formation – Jill Smart***

Last Spring, a decision was made to divide the tasks of the former Faith Formation Ministry into two separate groups, one called “Christian Formation” and the other called “Faith, Fellowship, and Membership.” The goals of the Christian Formation Ministry are to support the Christian Education Director, support the Safe Church Coordinators to ensure that volunteers meet the Safe Church Policy Guidelines, and organize activities and events that support faith formation for all ages. Since all of the members of this ministry are new, we have spent most of our time asking questions and determining how best to move forward with educational programming.

Throughout the year, Julia Wagner, the Christian Education Director, has participated in our monthly meetings and reported on the activities of the Sunday School program and Youth Group. This year, there are five youth group members, with three youth attending on average. Sunday School serves six to eight children. Julia has been teaching Sunday School and leading the Youth Group on her own for most of the year, so we are looking at different ways to share the work among volunteers from the congregation. We have also been looking for consistent help staffing the nursery so it is available every Sunday. Our goal is to find one paid person who works with an additional volunteer each week. If you are interested in helping out with any part of our youth ministry, we would love to hear from you! Activities held throughout the year included a Tea Light-Making Workshop, Christ the King Food Pantry Tour, Multigenerational Christmas Pageant, Kids Christmas Carnival (open to the community), Fat Tuesday Pancake Supper, and Youth Group Mission Trip to New Jersey.

As we look to engage more people in the youth work of our church, we have begun holding monthly Safe Church trainings for interested volunteers. These are facilitated by our Safe Church Coordinators, Cynthia Hogan and Cal Genzel, at 9:00 am on the first Sunday of each month.

When Pastor Beth arrived this winter, she began participating in meetings and has helped us discern what opportunities we would like to offer in the future. We have developed a sub-committee to focus on adult learning opportunities, such as a Christianity 101 course next fall. We have a few other ideas, but if you have suggestions for Christian education or would like to facilitate a book study or other learning opportunity for youth and/or adults, please let us know.

Committee members are Susan Hatem, Eleanor MacLellan, Kelly McPherson, and Jill Smart.

**Faith, Fellowship and Membership** – Cy Sherman

The Faith, Fellowship, and Membership Committee, aka the “Ministry of Fun” is comprised of four members: Cy Sherman, Susan Kusma, Peggy Mainusch, and Lorens Jorgensen. Our role is to create a vibrant community that attracts new members and keeps old ones.

*Lorens reports:*

This year our main goal is to look at the membership directory of the church. We have many different directories with different information in each one. We are currently trying to get one centralized list with the most up to date information for people. This will allow information to get out to people in a timely manner. We have been going through the directory to make sure we have the correct information on file. Soon we will be reaching out to clarify any misinformation. There is also a cell phone app people can download to get the most up to date information.

The Ministry of Fun also re-started coffee hour after worship. It has been great to have food, fellowship and fun after church. We have been aided by the lift being redone. We also have started a potluck series to show off our church’s culinary skills. We are actively thinking of ongoing events to do in the near future.

*Betsy Clardy's minutes of 3/18/26 report:*

Vickie, our temporary office administrator, has drafted a death reporting form to standardize our recordkeeping when someone dies. This will include date of death, family contact information, funeral information and other pertinent dates. It will also include check boxes that all of the various lists have been updated (Mailer Light, Flocknotes, Sign up Genius, directory and Church Windows).

Discussion took place regarding Time & Talent coordination. Betsy will share the list from last year's pledge drive (asking for this info) with the Church Council and our committee. Also discussed was starting a new member class.

*Cy reports:*

Part of the updating of memberships includes digging into the history of our clergy members over the years. Former church Secretary Mae Murdock was helpful in pointing out that part of the "new" walkway into the church's front door contains bricks on the left side border with the names and dates served by our eighteen ministers. Research will be done about the pastors to get more information.

Being the Ministry of Fun is quite new; we'll strive to have more progress to report next year.

**Buildings and Grounds** – Peter Imse

The Buildings and Grounds Committee is responsible for the maintenance, repair, upkeep and preservation of the Church’s physical property and grounds. The Committee meets monthly, and at other times as necessary. Current members: Chris Simmers, Gail Desjardins, Mike Gfroerer, Cindy Rogers, William Delker, and Peter Imse.

During the 2026 Fiscal Year, the Committee responded to ongoing maintenance and repair needs and continued its efforts to address numerous deferred maintenance projects that have not previously been addressed due to budget restraints.

Projects undertaken and repairs addressed by the Committee during the current fiscal year include:

- Evaluate options and order new windows to be installed in the Offices and Chapel of the Parish House
- Respond to problems with the heating system and arrange for repairs
- Respond to and arrange for repair of blockage in sewer line
- Sponsor All-Church Work Days, and perform major clean-out of portion of undercroft and other storage areas of the Church
- Contract for and oversee the installation of new lift
- Repair damaged light fixture in entrance hall
- Repair damage to Sanctuary carpet
- Prepare Beth's office for her occupancy
- Work with CCEH to install security lighting in the alley between our properties
- Work with staff to assure appropriate Winter snow and ice removal from walks and parking lot
- Lease parking spaces in Church lot to generate income for the Church
- Repair damaged doors in Parish House
- Arrange for and coordinate Sunday fire drill
- Replace damaged bulkhead
- Complete clean-up and restore exterior gardens and landscaping
- Work with Sexton to identify and arrange for regular repair and maintenance schedule
- Begin to address action items still to be addressed from 2014 Energy Audit including new low-flow toilets and motion-sensor light switches.

Pending items or projects on the Committee's to-do list, to be addressed when funding or time permits include (not in order of priority):

- A. Renovate downstairs Men's Room
- B. Upgrade Chancel lighting
- C. Address Sanctuary ceiling fan malfunction
- D. Install motion-sensor light switches
- E. Map electric breaker zones and timers
- F. Repair damaged portions and paint exterior trim
- G. Complete final Sanctuary and bell tower window upgrades
- H. Seal undercroft window wells
- I. Replace roof over Parish House lower-level emergency exit
- J. Explore solar panel options
- K. Explore air conditioning options
- L. Prepare Capital Reserve, Maintenance and Replacement Plan

M. Restore Sanctuary floor

N. Evaluate current status and function of air handler that serves the interior rooms at the lower level of the Parish House.

### ***Giving Ministry – Ann Walls***

The Giving Ministry had six active members last year, Carlene Ruesenberg, Gray Fitzgerald, Ann Walls, Lou Rosenthal, Warren Emley, and myself. These were enough hands (but we can always use more) to accomplish the work required for the biggest activity of the Giving Ministry--the annual pledge drive. In broad strokes, that effort includes choosing a theme, writing a mass letter, determining who it goes to, participating in several Sunday services, following up with non-responders, and helping say thank you to everyone who does respond.

Every pledge drive, each spring, supplies the number needed for planning the budget for the following year, voted on each May at the annual meeting. The Giving Ministry realizes that this basic financial support of the congregation is the foundation to build from. We need these pledges to meet payroll and maintenance and outreach expenses. The pledge drive for 2025-2026 fell in line with recent years, with a small decline again in number of pledging units and the total amount pledged.

The Giving Ministry is also active in coordinating various other financial support activities. For anyone who has the spirit and willingness to organize a fund-raising effort for the church, the Giving Ministry can be the point of contact to get Council approval and background advice, although this Ministry cannot supply labor or other needed logistics.

In the future, the Giving Ministry will be working with other church organizations to smooth the process of giving through various formats and from various sources. We will help make it easier to receive gifts from individuals, estates and foundations, for single or on-going purposes.

### ***Finance Committee – Peggy Scott***

#### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR SO FAR

During the fiscal year that began on 7/1/25, the Finance Committee has continued to meet frequently. Sally Bird and Peggy Scott have served as Co-Treasurers. They are joined on the Committee by the President of the Church Council (Jonathan Stallsmith) and the Chairperson of the Building and Grounds Committee (Peter Imse), immediate Past President (Betsy Clardy) and past Co-Treasurer (Sue Marcotte-Jenkins). Sally Bird, the Council Vice President is serving in dual roles on the Committee. Pastor Beth is actively involved with the Committee.

2025 has been a tumultuous year for the office staff. The office staff and volunteers have done an admirable job managing the office with the absence of Mariah for a period of time. Staff and volunteers stepped up into unfamiliar roles, covered the key functions of the church and managed the transition of Pastor Tanya and the arrival of Pastor Beth. We are utilizing an employment agency for temporary employees to assist with the administrative duties and special projects i.e., reconciliation of numerous membership lists. We are grateful for

the commitment of Mariah (who has slowly returned to work), Michelle and Victoria from the employment agency.

Other noteworthy changes during the current fiscal year have included:

1. The Sale of the Community Building

The proceeds from the sale of the Community Building have been invested with the United Church Funds and is accruing interest/dividends. The congregation did vote to transfer \$22,500 to the operating fund if needed. We are hopeful that church strategies, goals and priorities will be defined in the near future to utilize these funds.

2. Upkeeping our Building and Grounds and the Need for a New Lift

The New Lift was purchased and installed during the fall and is fully operational. To pay for it, the congregation voted for an 'internal loan' at 4% interest to be paid in full by June 30, 2028. We are fortunate to have received approximately \$80,000 in donations to date (including the Council's allocation of 20% of a major gift from the Judy Todd estate) and will be kicking off a matching gift program as part of our Everybody Needs a Lift fundraising drive on May 3.

The heating system in our Pleasant St facility required additional repairs to balance the heat between the floors. Additionally, repairs were required for the downstairs bathroom piping to alleviate back-up issues and correct the drain system.

Pastor Beth opted to use the office behind the Chapel. Painting and small renovations were completed prior to her arrival.

The new windows for the Chapel and Pastor Beth's office have been ordered and are due to be installed beginning in mid-April. We will eliminate the winter draft and hopefully see a reduction in heating costs with the new windows.

We are grateful to the Bairstow family for the gift designated mostly for music. The family agreed that replacing the Grand Piano in the sanctuary and dedicating it to Bruce Bairstow's memory was an appropriate use of the funds. The Grand Piano that is on loan has been moved to the Chapel.

3. Fundraising and Significant Contributions

Our fundraising activities year to date, although successful, have not yielded the revenue that we anticipated. Thank you to the many hands that made these events successful.

We have been fortunate to receive a number of bequests and legacy gifts this year. We are grateful for these donations and the impact they are/will have in our church. Please see the appended report.

BUDGETING FOR FY 2026-2027

The budget for FY 26-27 will be presented by the Budget Committee—made up of the Finance Committee and the Church Council-- for approval by the Congregation at the May 2026 Annual Meeting and, once approved, appended to this report.

This is a time of both radical hope and change for South Church. We have witnessed first-hand sweeping social changes since our pre-Covid years, with mainstream churches experiencing a decline in the number of members who attend church regularly, let alone the drastic changes in the geopolitical world that are an affront to our progressive Christian values. South Church's initial 2026 Pledge Drive, while extremely generous, did not match the total that was pledged last year. The Giving Committee has extended the Pledge Drive goal of closing an 18% budget gap. Despite these challenges, as of this writing in April 2026, we're appreciating some of the fruits of much hard work over the past few years. Moreover, we have the joy and love of a Risen Christ, and we have each other. God is good! Let us cast our nets and pull in all of those fish.



### ***Lay Ministry Visitors – Toni Callahan***

Lay Ministry Visitors continue to offer visits of compassionate listening to members and friends in transition, either by phone or in person, and, in doing so, to weave the fabric of the South Church community more tightly together. Each visitor makes one, or sometimes two, calls per month.

The Lay Ministry Visitors team went from twelve to nine members in the last year; three members resigned for personal reasons. The team now consists of: Jean Bragg, Toni Callahan, Herb Carpenter, Kathy Daniels, Ellen Fries, Nancy Haigh, Cindy Hogan, Bill Jacob, and Helen Porter. We feel there are still enough visitors to meet the needs of the congregation.

Our year began under the pastorship of the Rev. Doc. Tanya Sadagopan; Pastor Tanya valued and supported our ministry and attended our monthly meetings, until she left for Minnesota in October 2025. We finished the year 2025 and began 2026 on our own. In December 2025, we offered our Advent Service of Remembrance, which was very well attended and appreciated. The service has come to be cherished and valued by many; once again, over thirty members, friends, and relatives attended to name and to light a candle for a loved one dearly missed. Toni Callahan, head of the LMV, offered the reflection.

In February 2026, we welcomed the Rev. Dr. Beth Donaldson to our monthly meeting. We are delighted with her pastoral warmth, her support, her profound understanding of our mission and respect for our ministry, and with the wisdom she has shared with us since her arrival. She has already been able to guide us towards church members to whom we might offer a visit.

For all of us it continues to be an honor and a privilege to serve South Church as Lay Ministry Visitors. Please feel free to reach out to us or to Beth if you or someone you know might appreciate a visit.

Toni Callahan, Chair

### **Pastoral Visitors – Pam Young**

We continue to be a team of seven visitors: Eileen Gfroerer, Bill Jacob, Eileen Jones, Cy Sherman, Pam Young, Cheryl Simmers and Janice Dutton.

Pastor Beth has helped us refine our name to reflect our mission. We each visit 2 parishioners at least once a month. We hope to bring a caring South Church presence to them in their home or nursing facility at a time when they are no longer able to attend church.

We meet every other month and enjoyed having Pastor Beth join us in March.

### **Planned Giving Committee- Tina Annis**

The Planned Giving Committee at South Church remarkably has been present now for 20 years. Today we consist of three members- Tina Annis, Peter Imse and Oge Young. Our goal is to encourage Lifetime and End of Life gifts to our church. We call or speak in person with our church members. These financial gifts ensure that South Church will continue to thrive long after we pass, protecting those values we most cherish and providing the spiritual support we all enjoy.

The committee meets monthly to review the connections each of us have made since our last gathering. Often these contacts follow up calls from previous conversations. When we receive word of a gift to the church, we add that person's or family's name to our Legacy Plaque in Fellowship Hall. (Occasionally an individual requests anonymity and recognition is added as an anonymous gift).

Some gifts are 'restricted' directly, benefiting a certain need of the church, such as the music program or a building and maintenance project like the recent lift. Most gifts are 'unrestricted'. A few years ago, the church approved a plan to distribute the gift money as a 70-20-10 policy: 1) 70% goes to South Church Sustaining Fund, an endowment which significantly subsidizes our budget each year (withdrawing 5% annually). 2) 20% goes directly to the annual budget. And 3) 10% is contributed to our church Outreach Funds.

As a committee we keep a current list of our church membership and carefully track our asks. The most common response to an ask is that no one knows how much money we will have at the end of our lives, if any! The best solution to this quandary is to leave a small percent of your savings to the church, not a specific amount. The rest of our savings can be left to family or other organizations you want to support.

This year Planned Giving has seen several substantial End of Life gifts: Bruce Bairstow \$50,000, Myna Prevost \$30,000 and Judy Todd \$310,000. Lifetime gifts include: Mary Lee Allison \$10,000 and Anonymous \$4,600. We have been proud to see our Legacy Plaque continue to grow. As a committee, we want to answer any questions you may have, and we appreciate you lending your ear when we call.

In faith,  
Oge, Tina and Peter

### **Delegates Committee – Cy Sherman**

This year's delegates are Kathryn Bradley, Kit DeVries, Liz Garlo, Susan Kuzma, Barb Nicholson, Cy Sherman, and Janet Zeller

**Annual Meeting attended**

NHCUCC Annual Meeting at Geneva Point Center - Attended by Susan Kuzma, Liz Garlo and Janet Zeller on October 25, 2025

**Services of Installations attended**

February 1, 2026 - Rev. Debbie Gline Allen at the Madbury United Church

Attended by Barb Nicholson and Cy Sherman.

March 8, 2026 - Rev. Dr. Andi Lloyd at the Church of Christ at Dartmouth College. Attended by Kit DeVries and Cy Sherman

April 19, 2026 - Rev. Derek Waldron at West Congregational Church.

**An Ecclesiastical Council attended**

February 15, 2026 - Shellie Brook at Hopkinton Church. Attended by Kit DeVries & Cy Sherman  
South Church was well represented at these gatherings!

**STAFFING MINISTRY REPORTS**

***Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) – Nancy Brown***

With the coming of our new Transitional Minister, the Rev. Dr. Beth Donaldson, the PPRC was reformed. Nancy Brown and Eleanor MacLellan joined as members of the Transition Team, Jill Smart carried over from the previous PPRC, Lynne Morgan represents the Worship and Spiritual Life Ministry and Richard Nelson joined the committee as a member-at-large from the congregation.

The PPRC goals are to assure both the pastor (Beth Donaldson) and the Parish (members of our congregation) develop and maintain good communication, transparency of actions and healthy relationships and to provide Pastor Donaldson with a safe and confidential place to discuss issues of concern, new initiatives, or other factors playing a role in her ministry.

Members of the congregation are invited to reach out to the PPRC with issues of concern. Although confidentiality is of primary importance, efforts will be made to assure members that any important feedback has been addressed with the pastor. Additionally, the PPRC, when deemed necessary, may act as a facilitator of conversations when there is a conflict between Pastor Donaldson and members of the congregation.

We have met formally with Pastor Donaldson twice since her arrival and plan to meet on a regular monthly basis going forward. Between meetings, we also work to answer questions, provide advice (when requested) and provide Pastor Donaldson with the information and support she needs to make our work together at South Church successful.

The PPRC helped develop a policy for Pastor Donaldson's paid leave and other time-related matters. We are working on a formal Four-Way Covenant which will address the relationships, responsibilities and mutual support between and among Pastor Donaldson, South Congregational Church, UCC, the Minnesota Conference, UCC (where Pastor Donaldson has ministerial standing) and the Plymouth Congregational Church of

Minneapolis, MN (where Pastor Donaldson is a member). The PPRC will initiate and participate in a formal evaluation of the Pastor's and Parish's work together at the end of the Pastor's first year.

### **Personnel Committee – Deb Kimball**

This year the Personnel Committee has been busy responding to personnel issues as they come up, particularly staffing adjustments in response to Mariah's medical absence. Mariah has been transitioning back to the office and plans to be back to fulltime this spring. Personnel participated in the hiring process of an office temp, Victoria Sepla, who joined us in January 2026 and has been a welcome addition to our staff. Michelle's job description was expanded during the first few months of 2026 during Mariah's transition back to work.

We finalized the rewriting of the Personnel Policies, the Personnel Handbook and job descriptions. Our goal is to review every 5 years and, when needed, to update job descriptions.

We continue to work with the Finance Committee with respect to salary recommendations and the annual budgeting process.

We continue to be grateful for our staff and all the work they do, especially during a particularly challenging year. As is our tradition we will be honoring them with an annual thank you event. We also conduct periodic visits and check-ins. The staff are currently Mariah Edson, Administrative assistant; Michelle Johnson, Bookkeeper; Susan Berlenbach, Music Director; Abby Charbeneau, Organist and Pianist; Carlene Ruesenberg, Bell Choir Director; Walt Irvine, Sexton, and AV Technician; Julia Wagner, Director of Christian Education and Victoria Sepla, Special Projects Assistant.

The Personnel Committee is comprised of Tammy Ciminesi, Ellen Fries, Deb Kimball, and Patty Fahey. We have gained a new member this spring with the addition of Mary Mosseau, so we are now full strength.

## **MISSION REPORTS**

### **Relief Society – Kathy Daniels**

*See the end of this report.*

### **Guild – Edie Dimick**

The primary responsibilities of the Guild are to prepare Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month. The Guild is also responsible for preparing any requested funeral receptions or receptions for special celebrations. We prepared a funeral reception for David Jordan on August 25, 2025, and a farewell reception for Pastor Tanya Sadagopan on October 12, 2025.

A few Guild members along with many others helped Beth make the banners used for Palm Sunday. That was a fun project!

### **Collections & Deposits Committee – Chris Simmers**

This past year, The Collections and Deposits Committee has had both challenges and rewarding experiences. The primary challenge was losing some Committee members, for various reasons, some permanently and some only temporarily. This meant that the remaining members had to step up and count more often than they expected. The committee members met the challenge with good spirits and without complaints.

The rewarding experiences included meeting the challenge of counting with fewer members, as well as continued success implementing tighter controls on the collection and accounting for the funds collected each week. A number of changes were put in place in the previous year regarding the handling of the Sunday collection plates and tightening up the counting procedures to improve accuracy and consistency among the Committee members. These improvements became more routine this past year, resulting in fewer issues with the results of the counting and the members having a greater comfort level with the process.

This coming year the Committee hopes to recruit a few new members to be able to get the average counting frequency of each member to once a month or less.

Many thanks to Sally Bird and Sue Marcotte Jenkins for their continued willingness to serve as emergency backup counters, and for their diligence in reviewing our work each week.

Last but not least, a BIG THANK YOU to our dedicated counters who show up every Sunday to help.

Respectfully Submitted by Chris Simmers  
Co-Chair of the Collections and Deposits Committee

### **Genesis Circle – Edie Dimick**

Genesis Circle fosters Christian Fellowship through activities and services to the church.

We meet on the first Thursday of every other month starting in October in classroom 6 at 12:00. We welcome new members to join us for a bring your own lunch and conversation time together.

In November and February, we had successful bake sales. The proceeds from our bake sales enable Genesis Circle to pay our church pledge and offer a financial gift to the Youth Group.

- In December, Genesis Circle along with Faith in Action, gathered and donated warm hats, gloves, mittens and scarves to people in need.
- In February we enjoyed our guest speaker, Liz Dane. Liz grew up in a zoo located in Vermont. We enjoyed listening to stories of her growing up with animals such as cheetahs and mountain lions as house pets! We learned about her very special elephant, Queenie. She would ride Queenie and perform with her at shows.
- At our April meeting our guest speaker was Rev. Kate Morse, Chaplain at Concord Hospital. We learned so much about the role of a Chaplain and spiritual care in a hospital setting.
- In January, members of Genesis provided coffee hour after our church service.

**LEGACY GIFTS RECEIVED IN FY 2025-2026  
THROUGH 4/22/26**

**PLANNED GIFTS**

Judy Todd Estate - \$311,249 Unrestricted

70% to Sustaining Fund

10% to Outreach Initiatives Reserves

20% to Everybody Needs a Lift Fundraising Drive (per Church Council)

Myrna Prevost Estate - \$30,327 Restricted

50% to Organ Reserves

50% to Music Reserves

Chris Scott Estate - \$10,000 Restricted

100% to Music Reserves

Bruce Bairstow Estate - \$50,000 Restricted

Purchase of grand piano and balance to sanctuary enhancements

**MAJOR GIFTS TO EVERYBODY NEEDS A LIFT FUNDRAISING DRIVE**

Anonymous Donor - \$15,000

Cobb Hill Construction - \$2,500

Anonymous Donor - \$10,000 and additional \$10,000 for matched giving (gifts in process)

**OTHER MAJOR GIFTS**

Anonymous Donor - \$4,600 Unrestricted

70% to Sustaining Fund

10% to Faith in Action Discretionary Funds

20% to Everybody Needs a Lift Fundraising Drive (per Church Council)

Mary Lee Alison - \$9,753 Unrestricted

70% to Sustaining Fund

10% to Faith in Action Discretionary Funds

20% to General Fund

**MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS**  
**Membership Numbers 2025-2026**

**Membership reported to the NH Conference, March 2025: 301**

Received into membership through Confession of Faith: 0

Received into membership through Reaffirmation of Faith: 0

Received into membership through Transfer: 3

Received into membership through Confirmation: 0

**Total Increase in Membership: 3**

Removed from Membership through Death: 11

Removed from Membership 2025 through Transfer: 2

**Total Decrease in Membership: 13**

**Total Membership as of May 1, 2026: 296**

**Confirmands: 3**

- Azryan Cook
- Clara Jorgensen
- Jay McPherson

**Necrology: 11**

- |                             |            |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| • Andrew DeTreville         | 01/06/2025 |
| • Dora (Dode) Merino Rainie | 02/06/2025 |
| • Bruce Bairstow            | 02/10/2025 |
| • Myrna Prevost             | 07/11/2025 |
| • W. Robert Frizzell        | 07/29/2025 |
| • David Jordan              | 08/01/2025 |
| • Bradley Hosmer            | 09/15/2025 |
| • Mary Jo Alibrio           | 10/08/2025 |
| • Janet Kinnier             | 10/11/2025 |
| • David Morrison            | 11/04/2025 |
| • Charles H. Hathaway III   | 11/14/2025 |

**Nominating Report**

**Nominating Committee – Toni Callahan May 2026**

**South Congregational Church Ministries and Committees, September 2026-June 2027**

(The names in **bold print** are the heads of ministry and/or members who serve on the Church Council. Those who have signed on this year or who have agreed to extend their terms of service are in *ITALICS*.)

**OFFICERS**

<b>President</b>	Jonathan Stallsmith	1st Term	2027
<b>Immediate Past President</b>	Betsy Clardy	1 yr position, ending	2026
<b>Vice President</b>	Sally Bird	1st Term	2027
<b>Moderator</b>	David Fries	16th Term	NT
<b>Co-Treasurers</b>	Sally Bird	1st Term	2027
	Peggy Scott	1st Term	2027
<b>Clerk</b>	<i>Sara Willingham</i>	<i>2nd Term</i>	<i>2027</i>

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

<b>President</b>	Jonathan Stallsmith	1st Term	2027
<b>Immediate Past President</b>	Betsy Clardy	1 yr position	2026
<b>Vice President</b>	Sally Bird	1st Term	2027
<b>Moderator:</b>	David Fries	16 <sup>th</sup> Term	NT
<b>Co-Treasurers</b>	Sally Bird	1st Term	2027
	Peggy Scott	1st Term	2027
<b>Member at large</b>	Sue Marcotte Jenkins	2nd Term	2027
<b>Buildings and Grounds</b>	Peter Imse		

**MINISTRIES**

**Faith Fellowship & Membership** (up to 5 members)

Susan Kuzma	1st Term	2028
<b>Lorens Jorgensen</b>	1st Term	2028
Peggy Mainusch	1st Term	2028
<i>Barb Smith-Delahunt</i>	<i>1st Term</i>	<i>2029</i>
Cy Sherman	1st Term	2028

**Christian Formation** (up to 6 members)

Jill Smart	1st Term	2028
<b>Eleanor McClellan</b>	1st Term	2028
Kelly McPherson	1st Term	2028
<i>Susan Hatem</i>	<i>1st Term</i>	<i>2029</i>
Jill Smart	1st Term	2028
<b>Eleanor McClellan</b>	1st Term	2028

**Faith in Action** (6-9 members)

<b>Faith Scofield</b>	1st Term	2027
<i>Tracey Osborne</i>	<i>1st Term</i>	<i>2029</i>
Suzanne Winchester	1st Term	2027
<i>Jean Eckrich</i>	<i>1st Term</i>	<i>2027</i>
Shasta Jorgensen	1st Term	2027
<i>Zib Corell</i>	<i>1st Term</i>	<i>2029</i>

**Worship & Spiritual Life** (9-12 members)

<i>Lynne Morgan</i>	<i>1st Term</i>	<i>2029</i>
<b>Wayne Martin</b>	1st Term	2028
Bonnie Ota	2nd Term	2028
Adria Cilley	1st Term	2028
Linda Kenison	1st Term	2027
Kathryn Bradley	1st Term	2028
Kathryn Bradley	1st Term	2028

**Giving** (6-12 members)

Gray Fitzgerald	1st Term	2027
Warren Emley	1st Term	2028
<b>Marty Jenkins</b>	1st Term	2027
Lou Rosenthal	1st Term	2028
Carlene Ruesenberg	1st Term	2027

**Personnel** (5 members)

Tammy Ciminesi	2nd term	2027
Deb Kimball	1st	2027
<b>Ellen Fries</b>	1st	2028
<i>Mary Mousseau</i>	<i>1st term</i>	<i>2029</i>
<b>Patty Fahey</b>	1st	2027

**Pastor Parish Relations** (5 members generally; 4 members for one year transition)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Year</b>
<i>Lynne Morgan</i>	<i>1st</i>	<i>2027</i>
<i>Jill Smart</i>	<i>1st</i>	<i>2027</i>
Eleanor MacLellan	1st	2027
Richard Nelson	1st	2027
<b>Nancy Brown</b>	<i>1st</i>	<i>2027</i>

**SPIRITUAL CARE & VISITATION (no term)**

**Pastoral Visitors**

Eileen Gfroerer
<b>Pam Young</b>
Bill Jacobs
Janice Dutton
Eileen Jones
Cy Sherman
Cheryl Simmers

**Lay Ministry Visitors**

<b>Toni Callahan</b>
<b>Nancy Haigh</b>
Jean Bragg
Helen Porter
Herb Carpenter
Cynthia Hogan
Kathy Daniels
Bill Jacob
<b>Ellen Fries</b>

**COMMITTEES**

**Nominating Committee (5 - 8 members)**

<i>Ann Walls</i>	<i>1st Term</i>	<i>2029</i>
<i>Marty Jenkins</i>	<i>1st Term</i>	<i>2029</i>
<i>Betsy Clardy</i>	<i>1st Term</i>	<i>2029</i>
<i>Betty Jacob</i>	<i>1st Term</i>	<i>2029</i>

**Collection & Deposit**

Adria Cilley
Richard Nelson
Lorens Jorgensen
Janice Dutton
Christine Frost
Carlene Ruesenberg
Chris Simmers
<i>Rick Wagner</i>
Laura Landry

**Food Train Coordinators**

Mary Lynne Rahlson
<i>Lucy Kilgore</i>

**Church Guild (12 members)**

<b>Edie Dimick</b>
Cy Sherman
Deb Imse
Cheryl Simmers
Tracie Carpenter
Eileen Jones
Lorraine Fournier
Kit DeVries
Kathy Gullage
Deb Lincoln
Suzanne Winchester
Lucy Kilgore
Peggy Martin
Pegi Frosthalm

**Building & Grounds (6 members)**

<b>Mike Gfroerer</b>
Peter Imse
Gail Desjardins
Chris Simmers
Will Delker
Cindy Rogers

**Planned Giving**

Tina Annis
Peter Imse
Oge Young

**Safe church supervision**

Cal Genzel
Cynthia Hogan

**Relief Society**

<b>Kathy Daniels</b>
Pam Young
Nonnie Hall
Sarah Sadowski
Ginny Mierins

Nancy Betchart
Mary Rosenthal
<i>Faye Craighead</i>

**Delegates** (7-9 members)

<b>Cy Sherman</b>	4th Term	2027
Kit DeVries	2nd Term	2027
Liz Garlo	1st Term	2027
Susan Kuzma	1st term	2027
Barbara Nicholson	1st Term	2027
Janet Zeller	1st Term	2027
Kathryn Bradley	1st Term	2028

The Nominating Committee, which began meeting in late February of 2026, consisted of: Toni Callahan, Cy Sherman, and Pam Young. With one or two exceptions, we have been meeting weekly on ZOOM, till our most recent meeting on May 5, 2026. Let me say now: if you see a mistake in the above roster, please contact me, so that a correction can be made for the permanent records.

The March 1st Ministry Fair was a fun way to kick off our nominating season. If you were there, however, you will remember that virtually everyone present was serving and/or had served on a ministry or committee for multiple years, and that therefore very few were looking to join a committee or ministry. Nonetheless, the fair was great fun and did help fill a few key positions for the year ahead. South Church has approximately 320 members, and just over 100 of them are serving on a ministry or committee, with at least 15 members serving on more than one.

While we were able to provide the minimum number of members for most groups, the following committees or ministries were hoping to increase their numbers: Christian Formation, Faith in Action, Collections and Deposits, and the Guild.

If anyone in the congregation is interested in serving on one of these committees, please feel free to contact any of us on Nominating or on the ministry or committee itself. We also tried but were unable to find someone to learn to work with and to learn from our current co-treasurers. South Church could really benefit from one or two more people on the finance committee. Please let us know if this is a way you could serve the church.

In conclusion, as was true last year, approximately one third of our members are serving on ministries, boards, and/or committees. We on the Nominating Committee are impressed with how many South Church members are actively serving our church programs, and we know that so many are putting their faith into action in other ways that serve Concord and the world. We are honored and grateful to serve such a vibrant and committed congregation. Thank you.

Submitted by Toni Callahan for the Nominating Committee, May 7, 2026

**SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
CO-TREASURERS REPORT  
FOR  
FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025  
(7/1/2024 – 6/30/2025)**

**Financial Highlights**

**CO-TREASURERS REPORT**

**SOUTH CHURCH'S NET WORTH, 6/30/2025**

As of June 30, 2025, the assets of the Church exceeded its liabilities by \$3,203,832, an increase in the Church's **net worth/net position** over FY 2023-2024 of \$788,317. This net increase reflects FY 2024-2025 income to the Church's investments, including the gains from the **sale of our Community Building** in December 2024. The sale price of \$610,000 netted \$605,425 after paying government and transfer charges of \$4,575. Church member and Attorney Peter Imse volunteered his legal services in support of the entire transaction, which was a huge cost savings. (Thank you, Peter!)

At the Annual Congregational Meeting in May 2025, Church members voted to invest the proceeds from the sale of the building in an unrestricted invested fund, without spending caps, while the Congregation undertook a visioning and planning process that would help determine the strategies and programs that will harvest the most from these funds, part of God's bounty. The congregation also decided to distribute the balance of funds that had been reserved for maintenance of the community building among other existing reserve funds. The distribution of these reserves was based on the Budget Committee's recommendation-- the majority of these funds was allocated to another reserve fund the Church has for maintaining our remaining property. That reserve fund needed replenishing so we can undertake some long-deferred maintenance.

On June 30, 2025, the Church's combined ending balances in its **invested funds** with United Church Funds amounted to \$2,316,109. (This was an increase of \$772,567 as compared to the combined balances on June 30, 2024. An accounting of the Church's invested funds as of June 30, 2025, and as of May 7, 2026, is attached at the end of this report **(Table A)**. Most of these funds are, to some extent, subject to restrictions made either by the donors or the Church. Withdrawals from many of the funds are capped by law, the donors, or the Church's membership.

In Fiscal Year 2024-2025, in addition to the proceeds from the sale of the Community Building, the Church added to our investments a **\$30,000 gift for funding a new Music Scholars program**.

## INVESTMENTS IN CAPITAL ASSETS 6/30/24 – 6/30/25

In addition to the major gift to the Church for the Music Scholars program, we received, at the end of the 2024-2025 fiscal year, a **gift of \$50,000** from the estate of Bruce Bairstow. The funds were allocated to the Summer 2025 purchase of a grand piano, with any balance designated for sanctuary enhancements. (None of the gift was spent before the end of FY2025.)



At its annual meeting in May 2025, the congregation elected to replace the Church's very old **lift** (elevator), which had broken down repeatedly and was nonfunctional for a significant portion of the year. Because of the urgency to restore universal access to the upper and lower floors of the building, the congregation agreed to begin the construction and installation of a new lift as soon as possible and pay for it with a loan from our own Sustaining Fund. The Church will pay off the loan, with 4% interest, over three years with donations obtained through a fundraising drive. At the end of three years, any balance still due on the loan will be converted to a commercial loan.

## SOUTH CHURCH'S FY 2025 BUDGET PERFORMANCE/FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

In Fiscal Year 2024-2025 ordinary expenses exceeded ordinary revenues by **\$70,580 (a deficit)**. (See **Table B** at the end of this report.) After accounting for non-operating ("below the line") revenues and expenses, total revenues exceeded expenses by \$768,330. Of note:

- ✓ The net income earned from the Community Building, including its sale (\$614,548);
- ✓ Adjustments for transactions by the Relief Society (\$-6,725);<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ Gains on the Church's invested funds of about \$ 179,990 (most of which were from dividends)

To help offset the operating deficit, in March 2025, we transferred **\$35,641 from our permanent investment funds**. At the start of the fiscal year, given that we had an operating surplus in FY 2023-2024, we transferred **\$13,000 from our operating bank account to our invested reserves**.

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<sup>1</sup> Although SCC's Relief Society's outreach to the wider community is integral to our mission, most of its revenues is not from our ordinary operations but from the investment earnings of contributions that have been designated to the Relief Society's purpose since its beginning in the 1800s.

## Expenditures on Property Improvements and Sanctuary Enhancements

Although in FY 2024-2025 there were no singular capital expenditures that warranted depreciating, there were noteworthy expenditures on property improvements and what we have called sanctuary enhancements. These included improvements to the office that was used by Pastor Tanya Sadagopan (who arrived in June 2024) and upgrades to the audio-visual equipment in the church sanctuary. The cost of a good portion of these improvements was covered by prior-year revenues that the Church Council designated to these purposes.



The supplies for the construction of a custom-built book- and stole-case that amounted to \$931 were covered by one of our invested building funds. (The labor was donated by Church member Bob Murphy. Thank you, Bob!)

### Budget vs Actual

There were a variety of factors that contributed to the variances between the Church's actual budget performance and what had been projected for FY 2025. On the revenue side of the budget, **pledge payments and other contributions** to our general funds (plate offerings, individual & family gifts, gifts and grants from trusts, and memorial gifts) fell short of our budget projections by about \$26,400. **Special collections**, including our monthly Moments for Mission offerings and Christmas and Easter offerings also didn't meet our projections.

Revenues earned via **fees and fundraising** came close to budget projections. We received \$1,720 more than we projected in rental revenues, while our fundraising for general operations fell \$1,604 short of projections. Revenues raised specifically for our Youth Ministries fell short of projections, but we also spent less on Youth Ministries as we struggled with finding a permanent Christian Education Director and Church School staff.

**Personnel expenses** were less than budgeted. This can be attributed in part to the gaps in staffing our Christian Education programs as well as a complete turnover in our administrative staff during the Summer of 2024. The job descriptions of the departed administrative staff were reorganized; all finance-related responsibilities were rolled into the position of Church Bookkeeper, which was filled by Michelle Johnson. She was hired as a W-2 employee, whereas our former bookkeeper was an independent contractor. This change meant an increase in our personnel costs and a decrease in



professional/contractual fees. As our new administrative team adopted new systems for managing data and communications, we saw an increase in technology costs, such as new computer applications.

The Church's FY 2024-2025 **Personnel Costs: Budget ratio** was 63%. In comparison, this ratio for FY 2023-2024 was 61% and the year before that it was 63%. Church membership adopted, in 2022, the goal of reducing this ratio to 50%. FY 2024-2025 was the last of these three years.

The Church's **outreach** beyond our own walls is managed by the Faith in Action Ministry (FIA) and the South Congregational Church Relief Society. The latter mostly supports individuals in need. The Relief Society is not supported by the Church's operational revenues. It is fully financed by the earnings of an invested fund that had grown from its modest seed funding in the 1800s, to almost \$340,000 in value by the end of FY2025. The Faith in Action Ministry's monthly collections, called Moments for Mission, dropped significantly in FY2025, but we still made impactful gifts with additional operating funds that FIA disburses at their discretion. With these discretionary funds, South Church became in FY2025 a founding member of a local chapter of the Granite State Organizing Project. We encourage you to read the annual report by the Faith in Action Ministry for more information about their undertakings in the past couple of years, including a new emphasis on reaching out to immigrants.

Some of the line-by-line differences between what was budgeted for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, and our actual experience resulted from challenges we had in interpreting our former financial reports. The Church's financial management team took the bull by the horns and, in FY25, inaugurated a reorganized Chart of Accounts. The Church owes Michelle, our then-new Bookkeeper, a debt of gratitude for persevering through the challenges of learning the idiosyncrasies of a church's finances along with the ins and outs of the software we have that tracks our members and donors, while also suffering through the complicated transition to the Church's new Chart of Accounts. Thank you, Michelle!

**Prepared by**

**Sue Marcotte-Jenkins, FY2024-2025 Co-Treasurer**

**Submitted by**

**Sally Bird and Peggy Scott, FY2025-2026 Co-Treasurers**

**May 2026**

SCC INVESTED FUNDS

TABLE A

June 30, 2025, and May 7, 2026

	INVESTED FUNDS	Value as of 6/30/2025	Value as of 5/7/2026	NOTES
<b>PERMANENT FUNDS</b>				
<b>---Sustaining Fund (A) and (B)</b>				
	SCC Sustaining Fund	\$ 791,276.64	\$ 1,064,598.83	Source of loan for construction of lift - includes 90% of Judy Todd's estate gift
<b>---Endowment Funds (B) and (C)</b>				
	SCC Elizabeth M. Hoyt Music Fund	\$ 252,886.31	\$ 278,536.46	Music focused
	SCC H. Blake Scholarship Fund	\$ 14,451.86	\$ 16,666.14	Scholarship
	SCC G&V Cilley Scholarship Fund	\$ 8,682.01	\$ 10,012.25	Scholarship
	SCC F J Sulloway Trust Fund	\$ 17,714.84	\$ 20,429.06	No record of restrictions except to maintain the Historical Market Value
	SCC O&P Young Fund for Families	\$ 10,720.15	\$ 11,971.02	Youth/families with children focused
<b>---Church-Designated Funds</b>				
	SCC Relief Fund	\$ 339,255.36	\$ 383,836.50	Withdrawals are managed by Relief Society, mostly used for individuals in need
	SCC Women's Retreat	\$ 8,301.32	\$ 9,573.23	Donated by participants in Women's Retreats in support of future retreats
<b>RESERVES (D)</b>				
<b>---Repair and Maintenance Reserves</b>				
	SCC Maintenance Reserves	\$ 133,354.39	\$ 152,128.54	
	SCC Garden Maintenance Fund	\$ 4,403.68	\$ 5,078.41	
<b>---Technology &amp; Equipment Reserves</b>				
	SCC Replacement Reserve (Tech & Equip)	\$ 15,402.01	\$ 13,596.00	
<b>---Operational/Program Reserves</b>				
	SCC Organ Fund	\$ 25,536.37	\$ 46,944.94	
	SCC Financial Audit Reserve	\$ 13,555.59	\$ 17,670.08	
	SCC Sabbatical Expense Reserve	\$ 17,920.94	\$ 22,704.28	

*South Congregational Church, UCC Annual Report 2023-2024*

	SCC Music Scholars	\$ 31,124.97	\$ 35,479.71	Restricted to Music Scholars program
	SCC Music Reserves	\$ 0.00	\$ 25,725.89	New; Music focused; funded by estate gifts from Chris Scott and Myrna Prevost
	SCC Outreach Initiatives Reserves	\$ 0.00	\$ 31,898.07	New; Restricted to Outreach Initiatives; funded by estate gift from Judy Todd
<b>TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED INVESTED FUNDS</b>				
	SCC Community Bldg Sale Proceeds	\$ 606,607.47	\$ 676,349.05	Original deposit was \$605,425
	SCC Pastor Search Reserve (Self-Insurance Fund)	\$ 24,915.07	\$ 24,702.73	Bal of funds for former pastors' out-of-pocket health exps
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 2,316,108.98</b>	<b>\$ 2,847,901.16</b>	
<b>A. Fair market value must not fall below \$250,000; includes Church-Designated and Historic Endowment Funds</b>				
<b>B. Available return is capped.</b>				
<b>C. Meets legal definition of Endowment. Donor restricted. Historical Market Value must be maintained</b>				
<b>D. Church-Designated Reserves for facilities and equipment acquisition, maintenance, repair, and replacement, and for program or operational expenditures that do not recur annually, and for emergencies or special initiatives</b>				

TABLE B

**FY 2025 BUDGET PERFORMANCE/STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES 6/30/25**

Ordinary Income/Expense	FY 2024-2025	FY 2023-2024
<b>INCOME</b>		
PLEDGE PAYMENTS	\$ 296,555	\$ 294,552
SPORADIC CONTRIBUTIONS & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS	\$ 78,331	\$ 173,300
GRANT INCOME	\$ 5,000	\$ 16,000
FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES	\$ 14,357	\$ 7,866
RENT INCOME, PLEASANT ST.	\$ 12,720	\$ 11,755
MISC INCOME	\$ 123	\$ 24
<b>Total Ordinary INCOME Budgeted \$ 448,050</b>	<b>\$ 407,086</b>	<b>\$ 503,497</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>		
STAFF COMPENSATION - Salaries/Wages, benefits, taxes	\$ 295,815	\$ 273,979
OTHER STAFF-RELATED EXPENSES	\$ 5,597	\$ 26,039
FUNDRAISING EXPENSES	\$ 1,942	\$ 628
ADMINISTRATIVE	\$ 17,705	\$ 17,966
MANAGEMENT EXPENSES	\$ 29,878	\$ 29,531
MINISTRIES EXPENSES	\$ 53,148	\$ 51,630
MAINTENANCE EXPENSES-PLEASANT ST BUILDING	\$ 42,734	\$ 22,954
UTILITIES-PLEASANT ST BUILDING	\$ 25,817	\$ 28,047
MISC EXPENSES	\$ 5,031	
<b>Total Ordinary EXPENSE Budgeted \$478,637</b>	<b>\$ 477,667</b>	<b>\$ 450,774</b>
<b>NET ORDINARY INCOME Budgeted (\$30,587)</b>	<b>\$ (70,581)</b>	<b>\$ 52,723</b>
+ MAJOR RESTRICTED GIFTS	\$ 80,000	
+ NET AUXILIARY GROUPS INCOME	\$ (6,725)	\$ (1,521)
+ NET COMMUNITY BLDG INCOME	\$ 614,548	\$ 9,462
+ INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS	\$ 179,990	\$ 155,235
- DEPRECIATION EXPENSE	\$ (28,901)	\$ (33,886)
+ IN-KIND DONATIONS	\$ 0	\$ 25
<b>TOTAL NET INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 768,331</b>	<b>\$ 182,038</b>

**Note:** At the start of the fiscal year, given the Church had an operating surplus in FY 2023-2024, **\$13,000 was transferred from the Church’s operating bank account to its invested reserves.** Later, in March 2025, to help offset the growing operating deficit, **\$35,641 was transferred from the Church’s permanent investment funds to its general checking account.**

**RELIEF SOCIETY:**

**3-31-26 - Treasurers Report**

UCC Investment Dividends Total as of 1/5/26 - \$1,533.30

Total interest deposited in **checking** for 3-31-26 - \$0.07

Total interest deposited in **savings** for 3-31-26 - \$7.57

The **MCSB Savings** Account balance as of the statement dated March, 2026, is \$21,499.26

The **MCSB Checking** Account balance as of the statement dated March, 2026 is \$2,244.47

The **Quickbook Checking** Account balance as of March, 2026 is \$1,778.28

**UCC Investment Funds** - total interest as of February, 2026 is \$1,533.30

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**Donations**

**Relief Society has donated**, as of March 31, 2026 various requests totaling \$1,118.00

Off Street - \$855.00

Resource Center - \$263.00

EAN - Requests to help out through surrounding churches -

Pastor/Parishioners Fund -

**Thanksgiving Donations**

Friends of Forgotten Children

School Nurses -

Boys & Girls Club - (scholarship fund)

Family Friendly Meals

Windmill Restaurant

Friendly Kitchen

(Next year consider donating to Way Point)

**Each June committed with all churches to each give \$100 towards a shower for the Resource Center.**

Kathleen Daniels

Treasurer

*Note: Details of these accounts are on file in the office if you are interested in seeing them.*