

South Congregational Church, UCC

Annual Report

2023 - 2024

27 Pleasant St. Concord, NH 03301
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2023-2024 South Church Staff

Rev. Jared Rardin, Pastor

Rev. Dr. Leanne Tigert, Bridge Minister

Kayla Pingree, Administrator

Sue Berlenbach, Music Director

Alison Nyhan, Director of Christian Education

Abigail Charbeneau, Organist

Carlene Ruesenberg, Handbell Program Director

Walt Irvine, Sexton

South Congregational Church

July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024

Annual Report

Year in Review

CLERGY REPORT

Bridge Pastor – Rev. Dr. Leanne Tigert

As the Bridge Pastor for only a brief time, I am so aware of how much responsibility the lay/volunteer leadership and staff have been shouldering during this year. The love and devotion to this church as expressed through action and presence is remarkable – quite humbling and inspiring for this clergyperson.

During this bridge time, the pastoral work that I am focusing on spans a few areas of our life together.

First, to lead us through worship that is responsive to our needs during this time of transition: to honor the grief and losses we have known, and to move us forward into the new life that is calling us.

Secondly, to provide organizational support to leadership: council, and committees, and staff, as we navigate the present demands.

Thirdly, to provide pastoral care to those in need, and to support the Lay Visitors and Pastor's Aid working groups.

It is an honor to have the trust and support of the congregation at this time. I am grateful to be part of such a faithful community.

PRESIDENT REPORT

President – Betsy Clardy

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Psalm 46:1

South Church has had a tumultuous year and, for many of us, God has been a source of help. What makes me proud of South Church is how so many of you stepped up in the past year to help our church and each other. Our incredibly dedicated staff as well as all of you kept South Church functioning.

Volunteers kept South Church humming along, even as we prepared ourselves for Pastor Jed’s leaving. A dedicated search committee met every two weeks, culminating in a joyful call weekend in January for our next pastor, Pastor Tanya Sadagopan. The “Jed Jubilee” committee planned several special events to honor Jed including a cabaret, the Big Event celebration with a slide show, testimonials, and gifts, and a poignant, tear-filled farewell on Sunday, April 14. Many of you wrote letters that were included in Jed’s gratitude book.

The most painful loss this year was Alison Nyhan’s death. After 30 years of being the heart and soul of the church most of us couldn’t imagine South Church functioning without her. Again, volunteers stepped up in multiple ways, doing our best to temporarily fill her shoes. Members of Worship and Spiritual Life organized worship volunteers. Faith Formation organized Sunday school and childcare. Multiple individuals stepped up to help with all the tasks Alison had done so faithfully, decorating for Easter, writing condolence cards, inventorying, and organizing Sunday school and craft supplies, and much more. While Alison is irreplaceable, currently the Next Step committee is investigating what makes sense for us going forward. They are talking with the NH Conference and other churches to see what staffing model they use, and will be coming forward soon with some recommendations for us to consider. Meanwhile, Building and Grounds is working on plans for a Memorial Garden dedicated to Alison; and Faith Formation, along with Kevin Nyhan, will be considering how best to use the Alison Legacy donations the church received.

Praise for coping after Alison’s death wouldn’t be complete without a special acknowledgement to Kayla Pingree for taking on Alison’s administrative tasks in addition to her own job. We are truly blessed with excellent staff. Many of you have expressed your gratitude for the blessings of our music ministry which has been an inspiration and solace during this time, with Sue Berlenbach’s energy and skill in conducting, Carlene Ruesenberg’s leading the entrancing bell choir, and of course Abby Charbeneau’s amazing piano and organ skills. Many have also expressed thanks for Walt Irvine’s video/sound board skills and willingness to do all the (literal) heavy lifting required for the multiple events we’ve had this past year.

Given the loss of much institutional memory, and the need to prepare for our new Pastor, volunteers have been putting in a huge number of hours organizing, reviewing, and updating our administrative management and finances. Updates to bylaws, policies, and procedures as well as the work of the newly formed Finance Committee are described elsewhere in this report but please understand the hundreds of hours--of faithful determination, sweat and tears--these volunteers put in to have our church be on the best organized footing to welcome Pastor Tanya.

South Church is the religious home for us all, and I couldn’t be prouder of how so many of you helped us weather a painful year of transition. Pastor Jed left to us his extraordinary, loving legacy, and now with your amazing work in transition, we can look ahead with gratitude, strength, and optimism. This is truly a special community. Thanks to all of you.

STAFF REPORTS

Church Administrator – Kayla Pingree

It has been an intense year for everyone here at South Church! This congregation continues to astound me with its generosity; people are stepping up to volunteer wherever they can. I know that we, as a staff, couldn't have done it if South Church hadn't been there to support us!

Christian Education – Becca Yohe, Julia Wagner & Diana Zeller

These past months have been challenging for all of us on a variety of levels. After Alison's passing, we felt it was important to continue to offer programs and gatherings to support our children and youth. Becca has taken on the children's programming, and they have moved beyond just Sunday school with the advent of the "YYG" (Youngest Youth Group) and Fun Fellowship Nights with families and children. This night was a success, and we are planning more "YYG" events in the coming months. Julia continues to work with the Senior High Youth Group, and they recently returned from a mission trip to Ottawa. Diana has organized volunteers for the Nursery, so we are now able to offer Nursery care twice a month (a big shout out "thank you" to all the volunteers). Diana has been working with the Jr. High Youth Group; currently they are meeting monthly, and we hope to add additional meetings this fall.

We know that there were lots of things that Alison had taken on during this past year; Vacation Bible School, 4th grade Bibles, Advent and, of course, the Epiphany Tableau. The hours and care that she spent working on programming and with the children and youth of South Church will never be forgotten. We now work to carry on her legacy.

Sunday School has focused on themes of kindness and how to relate the Bible's lessons to today. Children ages 4-12 years old were taught in a one-room classroom style. Some of the lessons include:

- Parable of the Mustard Seed, no small deed is too small.
- Hosana, how would we celebrate today?
- Palm Sunday - children's skit
- What is Communion anyway?? What is in a Prayer?
- Mothers of the Bible
- God's Love in Action

The Junior High Youth Group has gotten up and running these past couple of months. We began with Pizza & Planning, talking about where we have been and where we want to go. We have also had outings to Yankee Bowling Lanes, and a nature walk in June still to come.

The Senior High Youth Group continues to meet weekly on Sunday evenings for fun, fellowship, and Bible study. During school's April vacation, the group drove to Ottawa, Canada for a week-long mission trip. While there they participated in the Kitchissippi UCC service and worked around their grounds. They also worked at the Ottawa Mission and Ottawa Food Bank. The group is already talking about another mission trip next year and will be working on fundraising events throughout the year to help fund the trip.

We are looking forward to what the year ahead brings. Thank you to everyone who has helped to make all these events and programs possible. It truly takes a village.

Director of Music Ministry - Sue Berlenbach

The Music Ministry has fully returned to bringing live music to the South Church community during our Sunday services and musicians have been participating now at levels that we enjoyed before the pandemic.

Abby, our organist and accompanist, prepares beautiful music to complement our Sunday morning services. She has continued to work with Memorial Bells and the Chancel Choir on their music. She has excellent relationships with musicians in the congregation and includes them, as well, in preparing music for worship. She is an asset to our church community.

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 the Saturday before they play at service. Carlene's leadership throughout the year is greatly appreciated. She collaborates often with Abby.

The Chancel Choir continues to sing on Sunday mornings and our ranks are growing back to pre-pandemic levels. Many singers are returning to choir now that the threat of illness has been reduced.

Cataloguing South Church's music library is always an ongoing project. There are perusal binders of almost all the titles in the South Church choral music library. The choral library is cataloged on Google Sheets. The Memorial Bells music library is also being added to the online catalog.

I am thrilled that our Music Ministry has worked so hard, particularly during the past four years. We have made it through some difficult times and are happy to be back to normal music operations. Our singers, bell ringers, and other guest musicians are thanked and commended for 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.

MINISTRY REPORTS

Worship and Spiritual Life – Sally Bird

WSL has learned much about our role in worship and has taken an active role in providing acolytes and communion servers. Also, in the wake of our great loss of Alison and her tremendous contributions to worship, we have taken on, for the short term, seeing that we have ushers and lay readers. We continued our work with our Members in Discernment and have supported Cherie Shaw's ordination process. WSL has recently learned that we have two scholarships in our care and are developing a procedure for getting applications and awarding these scholarships to deserving members of our congregation in the coming year. We have also participated in a major reworking of the bylaws and will be providing input for policies and procedures for the work that we do. We have taken an active role in the transitions that have occurred this fiscal year from the Reverend Jed Rardin's departure through Pastor Leanne Tigert's bridge ministry, and now have the anticipation of working with the Reverend Dr. Tanya Sadagopan as she begins her ministry with us.

Faith in Action – Peggy Scott

The Faith in Action Ministry is a team of eight. Jean Eckrich, Faith Schofield, and Suzanne Winchester joined the ministry this year and Suan Hatem moved to a different ministry.

Thanks to the congregation's support, the Faith in Action Ministry acted on its mission of "stimulating, educating, and guiding the congregation in ways to render loving service in the Concord community and throughout the world." We met monthly via Zoom to select charitable organizations and efforts. Each month we provided write-ups about the selected missions to be included in e-Lation, the Sunday bulletins and website. We presented at church services or asked a member of the congregation to speak for a charity that they support.

We continued South Church's tradition of being a "Five for Five" congregation with donations to all five of the UCC programs: Our Church's Wider Mission (\$15,000 budget), Neighbors in Need, Christmas Fund, Strengthen the Church, and One Great Hour of Sharing. Total donations for these programs from both FIA budget and the congregation's Moment for Mission offerings are \$16,350 YTD¹ in comparison to \$16,500 last year.

We continued our focus on supporting local and New Hampshire-based charities. These included NH Food Bank, R.I.P Medical Debt, Concord Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH), and the South Church Relief Fund. Donations to date for these organizations totaled \$4,200².

We carried out a diaper drive for Waypoint in Concord to support their daycare center and monthly diaper pantry. We estimate that \$600 in diapers and wipes were donated through the generosity of the church membership.

Additionally, we donated \$2,500 each to The Friends of Aine and the Concord Music School – Immersive Therapy Programs from the H. Lyons Fund in memory of M. Pingree bringing the balance of this fund to \$0. We also received \$5,097.08 from the L. Gray estate and recently donated \$2,000 to the Concord School District Lunch program and \$1,000 in memory of Alison Nyhan to the Payson Center for Cancer Care. Ms. Gray was an educator and Department Chair - these donations are aligned with her love of students and teaching. There is \$873 from the Young Fund, and we are currently exploring opportunities for donations.

We participated in the recent Ministry Fair in March.

Although it was another challenging year, through its Faith in Action Ministry, South Congregational Church made a positive impact through donations to diverse organizations.

We wish to thank Jed for his insights and support throughout the year.

¹ This amount does not include One Great Hour of Sharing, the April Moment for Mission. The outstanding OCWM pledge balance is \$2,500.

² This does not include the April through June donations.

Faith Formation – Bruce Bairstow

Alison Nyhan was the staff liaison to the Faith Formation ministry for many years, and an invaluable source of institutional memory and inspiration for new ideas. She was our constant reminder of the importance of the Faith Formation mission - cultivating and sustaining South Church community members. Her loss has been devastating on so many levels; including the awareness of the Faith Formation ministry of how she had expanded the role of Christian Education to encompass so much. We've spent the months since her passing helping to coordinate how to respond to such a loss.

Faith Formation organized Breaking Bread events in winter 2024 - the fellowship gathering in January served as a welcome to Pastor Tanya, and the February event was a celebration of Jed.

We have welcomed new church members and have been of support to them in their integration into the church family. Church school and the provision of nursery have continued. Youth groups remain vital. Creating the sense of belonging of all age groups is Alison's legacy and the ongoing mission of Faith Formation.

Buildings and Grounds – Will Delker

At the last annual meeting the congregation voted to change the name of the Property Stewardship Ministry to the Building and Grounds Committee ("BGC") to more accurately reflect the focus of our work. Located in the heart of downtown Concord, the church properties can and should play a pivotal role in our worship of God and as a community gathering spot to fulfill our charge to serve those in need by way of Jesus's example. Our mission is to preserve or upgrade our sanctuary, buildings, and grounds to maintain the heritage of over 150 years in our current location. To that end, we strive to make the space functional and inviting for current and future generations. In furtherance of these goals, the BGC undertook the following projects over the last fiscal year:

Pleasant Street Property—Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall

- Dedicated a plaque to memorialize the donors who contributed to the stain glass window restoration project.
- BGC, the pastor, the office administrator, and the personnel committee worked collaboratively to establish a uniform process of tracking and reviewing the Sexton's responsibilities in order to improve the efficiency and range of services provided by the Sexton.
- Re-roofed Fellowship Hall which had reached the end of its serviceable life and begun to leak.
- Replaced the shed which protects the Rose Window and horizontal stain glass window above the organ.
- Repaired the service lift to ensure access between the basement and fellowship hall for everyone who uses the church facilities.

- Began the process for budgeting for the replacement of the lift because that model has been discontinued and the company that made it went out of business. As a result, it will become increasingly difficult to find parts and qualified companies who can perform the repairs.
- Following substantial water damage caused by overflowing water in the choir bathroom and utility closet, Paradigm Plumbing performed extensive work on all three bathrooms, including replacing toilets, fixing leaks, and re-securing the sinks to the wall.
- Using the existing garden reserve fund and a grant from the Concord Garden Club, BGC entered into a contract with Tasker Landscaping to redesign the gardens on the east side of the sanctuary. Work will begin in the Spring 2024. This garden will be consecrated in the memory of Alison Nyhan for her long service on behalf of the church. This project is phase 1 of a multiple phase upgrade of the landscaping around the church.
- Explored a proposal arising out of a Vision Committee meeting to erect a bus shelter at the bus stop in front of the Church that would serve to protect our “neighbors” who use the bus service and provide us with the opportunity to post information about the Church.
- Obtained quotes and explored grant and/or tax credits for installation of solar panels on the church roofs but determined that the current financial constraints vs. pay-back window did not make such a project economically feasible.
- Continue investigation of the best way to address the air leaks around the windows in the parish house, chapel, and office windows.
- Obtained a quote and proposed sketch to update and redesign the basement men’s bathroom. The new design would convert this bathroom into a unisex facility with two private stalls. BGC is awaiting appropriation of funds to undertake this project.
- Obtained quotes for scraping and painting the exterior surfaces of the church.
- Ordered motion sensor light switches for lights throughout the church.
- Worked with the fire alarm company to upgrade the automated fire alarm notification system to be compatible with the Concord Fire Department’s network.
- Requested the finance committee review insurance policies to determine if we have adequate coverage for potential liability or losses.
- Continue to advocate for sufficient funds in the annual budget to permit the Committee to adequately preserve our facilities.

Community Building—6 South State Street

- Continue to rent available space to generate income for the church pending the sale of the property to the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH).
- Obtained written confirmation from the Attorney General’s Office that funds from the sale of the Community Building and associated escrow account can be repurposed to meet other church needs.
- Awaiting final approval of the federal budget so the CCEH can determine if it has the necessary funding to complete the purchase of the Community Building. The last extension on the purchase and sale agreement ends June 2024.

Giving Ministry – Ann Walls

The Giving Ministry oversees the yearly Pledge Campaign to fund the annual Church Budget. It also supports fund-raising initiatives, as authorized by the Church Council. The Giving Ministry “team” this year comprised of four dedicated members. We began meeting in September with a face-to-face meeting and continued meetings by Zoom, as needed. Kayla provided essential on-going support, technical assistance, and updates throughout the Campaign and beyond.

The Pledge Campaign began in mid-January with a pledge appeal letter mailed to Church membership, both current pledgers and those who have not pledged to date. The letter described the importance of pledging for budget planning and listed 1) ways to pledge and 2) options for pledge fulfillment. In an effort to contain unnecessary costs, the letter included the fact that member pledging envelopes would be available only by request. Between mid-January and the end of February, we published short pledge appeal messages in three e-Lation publications, in the weekly Sunday bulletin and through two text messages. We also coordinated a weekly line-up of recruited members who provided pledging testimonials from the pulpit. The Campaign “messaging” concluded at the end of February, at which point Committee members, with help of Lorens Jorgensen, conducted phone and/or email outreach to previous pledgers who had not yet pledged.

As of April 2024, 136 pledged for a total of \$330,789. There were 31 new pledgers and 50 current pledgers increased their pledge. In the April 14 bulletin, a full page thank you listed to-date-pledgers.

Other pledge related activities were a Giving Committee- sponsored coffee hour in January, participation in the March Mission Fair, and a revision of the Church website “Pledging FAQs”.

Toward the end of the Pledging Campaign, the Giving Committee transitioned to a more in-depth discussion of fund-raising ideas and strategies. Lorens Jorgensen has once again been helpful in making several suggestions of fund-raising ideas. To date, we are considering the feasibility and worthiness of a Giving Tree, which would feature a "tree" with print descriptions of specific Church fund needs with a wide range of dollar amounts associated with each and fitting every budget. Donors (or groups of) would choose items they wished to sponsor by removing the description from the tree and donating to the church the specified amount on the description. Examples might be new markers for church school, communion juice for a month for year, or replacement of a worn-out appliance, such as a coffee maker. We would seek input about current funding needs from church staff, committees, and volunteer program leaders.

Another idea is a dinner (or dinner series), featuring “new American” foods prepared by Concord area chefs with an accompanying educational program of new American experiences shared with diners. A finite number of tickets would be sold to both the congregation and to the public. Lorens pursued and was successful at procuring a food license from the city which will hopefully enable us to serve food for public dinners.

While the idea of sponsoring a food-based fund raiser on church property during downtown June Market Days seems appealing, efforts to do this in past produced low profits due to competition with food vendors on Main Street and the cost of overhead. The idea continues to have merit as a means of presenting South Church to the community, particularly if the “happening” had an associated family or children’s activity, such as games in the parking lot.

Committee members this year were Jonathan Stallsmith, Joe York, Ann Walls, and Janet Zeller. We are grateful to Jonathan who represented the Giving Committee on the Church Council. A thank you to Kara for her ongoing support and to ALL who agreed to provide a pledge testimonial at either the 8am or 10am service. A special shout out of appreciation to Lorens Jorgensen, a cheerleader who assisted us with the final days of the Campaign outreach and provided worthwhile fund-raising ideas.

Finance Committee – Sue Marcotte-Jenkins

FY 2023-2024: Highlights of the Year So Far

The Finance Committee has been meeting often since Sue Marcotte-Jenkins and Sally Bird became Co-Treasurers in October 2023. They chair the Committee, which is new this year. In the 2023 revisions to SCC's bylaws, the Finance Committee's work was carved from the expansive responsibilities of our Giving Ministry. Sally and Sue tip their hats to Lorens Jorgensen and the Treasurers before him whose own hats included chairing the Giving Ministry and overseeing the annual pledge campaign as well as stewarding the Church's finances.

The new organizational structure has enabled Sally and Sue and the new Finance Committee to engage in a detailed and overdue study of South Church's financial management. We have been especially mindful of how, with Pastor Jed Rardin's upcoming retirement, we would be losing a key component of South Church's institutional memory along with explanations about the how and why of certain practices. With the Church Council and other ministries, we have worked hard to address discrepancies in the revised bylaws such as some that pertain to the division between the Giving Ministry and the Finance Committee. We are also closing some gaps between old policies and current practices, and we have started some new systems to ensure continuous improvement in the management of South Church's finances.

Taking a hard and objective look at oneself, or in this case, our beloved church, is difficult. Losing Alison Nyhan in the midst of this work has compounded our sense of tumult. We are reminded that responding to a calling is never easy and how blessed we are to be on this path with the likes of Jed, our Bridge Minister, Leanne Tigert, our past and present lay leaders and so many volunteers, and the real troopers on SCC's staff. The Finance Committee is particularly grateful for the great efforts over the past few difficult months by our Bookkeeper Karen Joyal and Church Administrator Kayla Pingree.

BUDGETING FOR FY 2024-2025

As of this writing in April 2024, some of the balls that were tossed in the air during the past year haven't quite landed. The sale of the Community Building to the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness was delayed while the Coalition worked amidst the dysfunction in the federal government to revise the terms of a government grant that was initially awarded for the purchase and renovations. The Coalition needs to apply all the grant towards the purchase alone. They initially paid South Church for the option to buy the property, and they paid more to extend the option a few months later. When the feds eventually revised the Coalition's grant, its funding was held up some more by Congress' delays in passing a federal budget. We hope recent progress in DC will mean a completed purchase agreement very soon.

The revenues generated by the Community Building this year (FY 2023-2024) covered the building's costs but not to the extent it has in previous years. At our Pleasant St. property, there were repairs to the roof and the Chancel Window shed that cost, in combination, about \$40,000, for which we had savings in reserves. We now need to rebuild those reserves.

Church members Shanka and Ben Rice are conducting a technology needs assessment so we can develop a comprehensive technology plan to better support our various ministries as well as the worship experiences in our sanctuary for both in-person and remote participants. We have set aside some funds for some of these improvements, which we expect will take shape as we welcome Pastor Tanya.

There were in FY 2024 some unbudgeted personnel-related expenses and some unanticipated costs associated with the pastor search and Pastor Tanya's move to Concord. These were largely offset by an unexpected, large contribution to the Church by the estate of Leah Gray as well as savings from not immediately hiring new staff to fill Alison's many roles. We have had a growing amount of contributions that have been made outside of pledge payments, and our invested funds have done well this year.

This year's savings in personnel costs did have a positive impact on our progress towards our goal of reducing our personnel-related costs to half of the Church's annual income. The question of the extent to which we can afford to fill Alison's key roles with paid staff has renewed the difficult conversations we have had before about relying too heavily on our Legacy Funds for current operations. One solution is crystal clear: we must grow the income side of our budget. The great news is the capacity we have to do just that. In the midst of much loss and uncertainty of the past year--not to mention the turmoil of the pandemic, the renewed energy with which Church members have committed their time, talent, and treasure to our beloved South Church is inspirational. As one of several examples, the 2024 pledge campaign, generated 31 new pledgers!

The budget that we're presenting for adoption to the Church's membership for FY 2024-2025 has a name: Underpinnings for Success. Added to South Church's Mission and Vision work, it's a map for the next part of our journey. In these first miles, we are clearing the path, filling some potholes, and packing snacks for the road. And off we go.

Memorial Gifts Committee – Gyme Hardy

The Memorial Gifts Committee met on February 13, 2024, to review the history and work of the Committee which had essentially been unstructured for several years. The Church President, Vice President, Planned Giving Chairperson, Worship and Spiritual Life representative, Faith in Action Chairperson, a Co-Treasurer, and the Pastor comprised the Committee during this meeting. Included in the discussion was the importance of acknowledging contributions which can and should be delegated to volunteers, to include in-kind contributions as well as monetary contributions.

After considerable discussion, it was unanimously voted to approve the following: (1) Memorial gifts and donations made to honor living people are to be managed in accordance with the Church's general policies for contributions to the Church; (2) Individual contributions made to memorialize or honor a particular individual will be aggregated and considered one gift; (3) the Memorial Gifts Committee was disbanded. Management of memorial gifts are now incorporated into the Giving Ministry's responsibilities; and (4) a follow up meeting was to be scheduled to include the Pastor, Church Council Vice President, a Worship and Spiritual Life representative, and a representative from the Giving Ministry to recommend how to distribute the Memorial Gifts funds. The decision to disband the Memorial Gifts Committee was unanimously approved by the Memorial Gifts Committee, the Finance Committee, and Church Council.

On March 7, 2024, the follow up meeting was held to determine distribution of the Memorial Gifts funds. The decision was made to distribute the Memorial Gifts monies to the Building and Grounds Committee to be put toward the memorial garden for Alison Nyhan, to the Alison's Legacy Fund to be used for Church Youth Programs, and to a Pastor's Discretionary Fund to be used to upgrade the Church sound system in the Sanctuary.

Lay Ministry Visitors – Toni Callahan

Lay Ministry Visitors has continued to reach out to members and friends in transition, to offer a caring presence, either by phone or in person, and, in doing so, weaving the fabric of the South Church community more tightly together.

We began the year with seven active visitors: Jean Bragg, Herb Carpenter, Kathy Daniels, Nancy Haigh, Bill Jacob, Bonnie Ota, Toni Callahan, and with occasional visits by Oge Young.

In October, Pastor Jed led the Lay Ministry Visitors through a training weekend, and we are now thirteen strong, having brought back from past service Helen Porter, Ellen Fries, and Cynthia Hogan, and having added new LMVs, Heather Barber, Julia Emley, and Ryan Sahr.

Our full current list, in alphabetical order, is: Heather Barber, Jean Bragg, Toni Callahan, Herb Carpenter, Kathy Daniels, Julia Emley, Ellen Fries, Nancy Haigh, Cynthia Hogan, Bill Jacob, Bonnie Ota, Helen Porter, and Ryan Sahr. Each of us makes one or two calls per month; we have made over 120 visits since last year's report.

In December, we offered our Service of Remembrance, to allow any and all to remember a deceased loved one during the season of Advent. Pastor Jed gave a personal reflection. The service was well attended- appx. 30 people were present- and much appreciated by all, giving us reason to continue this tradition in the future.

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

Delegates Committee – Gyne Hardy

The Delegates Committee during fiscal year 2024 had five active participants, which is not in compliance with the NHUCC Bylaws, or the nine members stipulated in the South Church Bylaws.

Members of the Delegates Committee represented South Church at the fall 2023 Merrimack Association Meeting and the NHUCC Annual Conference, the spring 2024 Merrimack Association Meeting, Ecclesiastical Councils on an as-needed basis, and commencing in March 2024, the Greater Concord Interfaith Council. To cultivate interest for volunteers to serve on this Committee, three members of the Delegates Committee also participated in the March 10, 2024 Committee and Ministry Fair held at South Church. The Delegates Committee held two Zoom meetings during the 2024 fiscal year as required by South Church Bylaws.

The Delegates Committee submitted revisions to the 2023 Bylaws as part of the review and correction process, wrote their Policy and Procedures, and in keeping with the current Bylaw requirement to apprise the congregation of their activities, submitted written reports to the Church's electronic newsletter e-Lation.

STAFFING MINISTRY REPORTS

Pastor-Parish Relations Committee – Emily Geoghegan

PPRC met regularly with the Pastor this past year and dealt with the multitude of issues which arose concerning Pastor Jed's retirement, and his exploration of disability benefits. Sally Bird joined the committee as the representative from Worship and Spiritual Life and Bill Jacob represented PPRC at Church Council meetings.

Personnel Committee – Ellen Fries

This year the Personnel Committee has been actively responding to personnel issues as they come up. We updated the Church By-Laws that were pertinent to our committee. We continue to work on re-writing the Personnel Policies and re-creating a Personnel Handbook.

The Personnel Committee mourns the death of Alison Nyhan. We hope to help in the search and hiring of someone to take on some of the many tasks done by Alison when the Next Chapter Committee makes their recommendation to the Church Council and a decision is reached about who needs to be hired, hours, salary, etc.

We continue to be grateful for our staff and all the work they do, honoring them with an annual thank you event, and visits and check-ins periodically. The staff are currently: Kayla Pingree, Administrator; Susan Berlenbach, Music Director; Abby Charbeneau, Organist and Pianist; Carlene Ruesenberg, Bell Choir Director; and Walt Irvine, Sexton and Audio-Visual Zoom coordinator.

The Personnel Committee is made up of Carolyn Kerr, Tammy Ciminesi and Ellen Fries, and is welcoming new members Adria Cilley and Deb Kimball.

Pastors' Aid – Toni Callahan

For most of the past year, the Pastor's Aid has consisted of six church members: Eileen Gfroerer, Bill Jacob, Eileen Jones, Ray Phelan, Cy Sherman, and Pam Young, with Toni Callahan as meeting coordinator and liaison to the Lay Ministry Visitors. As of spring recruiting, 2024, there are three new members: Ben Rice, Cheryl Simmers, and Janice Dutton, bringing the total to nine visitors.

For most of the past year, Pastor's Aid members have been calling, monthly, if possible, on twelve members of the congregation who no longer find themselves able to attend church. That number will soon be fourteen, and both groups, Pastor's Aid and LMV, are attuned to making sure that all who might benefit from Pastor's Aid be invited, as the need arises. With Zoom as an established part of Sunday worship, the lines have become a bit less clear, but our tendency is to offer Pastor's Aid to all senior members who no longer attend church in person, to offer them a regular, in person contact with another church member.

With South Church now operating with only one pastor, the Pastor's Aid connection to some of our senior members is more valuable than ever. The group looks forward to working with Pastor Tanya and to helping her to stay connected to these important members of the congregation.

Nominating Committee – Toni Callahan

The Nominating Committee began meeting on March 6, 2024. Present at the first meeting only, were Jed Rardin, Betsy Clardy (as Head of Council), and Becca Yohe, to represent young families.

The Nominating Committee consisted of: Toni Callahan, Zib Corell, Cy Sherman, Chris Simmers, Pam Young, and Janet Zeller. Meetings continued, almost weekly, till our last one on April 25, 2024.

The Ministry Fair on March 10 was a huge help to the Nominating Committee, raising awareness in the congregation about opportunities to serve and to become more involved with the church.

We believe that all committees and ministries now have their minimum number of members, with the exception of the Guild, which has 11 out of 12, and Planned Giving, which would also like to find one more member to serve on their committee.

Some other committees, besides the Guild and Planned Giving, while currently meeting their minimum have room for more members, should anyone be interested in serving on them. These are Faith Formation, Faith in Action, Worship and Spiritual Life, Giving, Buildings and Grounds, and the Nomination Committee. There are still many ways to serve South Church!

The Nominating Committee is proud of the results of its efforts this spring. We are also extremely aware that these good results were only possible because so many South Churchers said "Yes!" when we contacted you. We are honored and grateful to serve such a vibrant and committed congregation.

MISSION REPORTS

Relief Society – Kathy Daniels

The Relief Society was founded in 1882 by Franklin Evens in memory of his wife with \$200. This humble gift has increased and enabled this committee to help those in our parish and in the community by providing one-time assistance to people asking for help through Pastor/Parishioner requests. The committee is funded through contributions given by the congregation during communion in October, contributions in memory of loved ones, and interest from vested funds.

Guild – Edie Dimick

The primary responsibilities of the Guild are to prepare Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month and to host any requested funeral receptions or celebrations.

The Guild prepared funeral receptions for: Douglas Kilgore, Ronald Haigh, Alice Pickett-Hale, Jackie Hartford, Alison Nyhan, and Patricia Knight.

The Guild prepared a welcome reception for Pastor Tanya after her candidating sermon on January 21, 2024. The Guild prepared a reception for Jed after his “big event” on April 13, 2024 and a reception on April 14, 2024 after his last sermon.

Collections & Deposits Committee – Adria T. Cilley

It has been a good year for this committee as members stepped up and volunteered their time on Sunday mornings to count the gifts of money from the congregation. Our congregation continues to be very generous!

We are fortunate to welcome five new members to our committee and look forward to working with them. We will be having orientation sometime in June to acquaint them all with our procedures and security measures.

Genesis Circle – Edie Dimick

Genesis Circle fosters Christian Fellowship through activities and services to the church. We meet every other month starting in October of each program year. We have a brief meeting and enjoy having lunch together.

In November we held a quilt raffle, and on Palm Sunday we had a bake sale to raise money for our treasury. The proceeds of these fundraising events help us to ensure our yearly church pledge.

In February, Genesis collected warm socks, hats, and mittens that we distributed along with Faith In Action to the Coalition to End Homelessness and area schools.

At our April Meeting, Jed came to visit with us. It was a wonderful opportunity to spend some time with him before his retirement.

Bylaws, Policies, and Procedures – Gyme Hardy

At the January 2024 Church Council meeting President Betsy Clardy tasked Vice President Gyme Hardy with coordinating an as-needed review of and corrections to the 2023 Church Bylaws as well as the updating and writing of Church Policies and Procedures.

Updates and corrections to the Bylaws were submitted by Worship and Spiritual Life Ministry, Faith Formation Ministry, Personnel Committee, Flower Committee, (Co)Treasurers, Finance Committee, Pastor's Aid Committee, Delegates Committee, Nominating Committee, and Faith in Action Ministry. All updates were posted on the South Church website prior to the May 19, 2024 Annual Church Meeting for review by the congregation before a vote to approve at the Annual Meeting.

Many Policies and Procedures were found to not exist in a centralized location, if they existed at all. Considering the upcoming arrival of a new Pastor, it was decided this would be an opportune time to rectify this situation. All Committees and Ministries were asked to review and update whatever they had for written documents and to begin the process of writing new Policies and Procedures to delineate and codify their respective responsibilities. This project is a large undertaking and, of necessity, an ongoing process, as not all Policies and Procedures could be completed by the time of the Church's Annual Meeting. During the summer of 2024 all completed and Church Council approved Policies and Procedures will be compiled into a manual by the Church Administrator and Church Council Vice President which will be kept in the Church office. New and updated Policies and Procedures will be added to the manual on an ongoing basis following their approval by the Church Council.

Minutes of the 185th Annual Meeting 2023

Sunday, May 21, 2023 – Sally Bird, *Clerk Pro-Tem*

The meeting was called to order by Moderator *pro tem* Michael Gfroerer at 10:30 AM. Counting both in-person and Zoom attendance, a quorum was declared. The Reverend Jed Rardin gave the Invocation. Minutes of the 184th Annual Meeting were next on the agenda; York Peeler moved their acceptance as printed in the Annual Report, Warren Emley seconded the motion, and the minutes were accepted.

The Reverend Jed Rardin read the Necrology, remembering those members who passed away in the prior year. He also led an appreciation for the ministries, recognizing those members who were just completing their terms.

Alison Nyhan presented the Membership report, stating that as of the end of June, which included those who would be joining the church in June, the church membership stood at 553 members.

Alison also presented the nominating report. Members coming on the ministries are as follows:

Faith Formation – Deb Imse and Diana Zeller-Norris

Faith in Action – Jean Eckrich, Faith Scofield, and Suzanne Winchester

Worship and Spiritual Life – Lynne Morgan

Giving Ministry – Jonathan Stallsmith, Ann Walls, and Janet Zeller

Property Stewardship – Susan Hatem and Ben Rice

Personnel Ministry – Evelyn Eddy and Ellen Fries

Pastor's Aid – Jennifer Reynolds

Lay Ministry Visitors – Jennifer Reynolds

Collection & Deposit Committee – Pegi Frostholt, Lorens Jorgensen, and Chris Simmers

Church Guild – Tracie Carpenter

Zib Corell moved acceptance of these new ministry members, the motion was seconded, and passed unanimously.

Toni Callahan presented the covenant proposed to make South Church a Racial Justice Church. She moved we adopt the covenant and Janet Zeller seconded the motion. With only one comment and a few negative votes, the motion passed.

Lorens Jorgensen presented the 2023-2024 budget, presenting highlights of costs that will be altered due to the selling of 6 South State Street building and the ministerial change after Jed retires. One question dealt with endowments; Lorens stated that nonspecific donations are divided up as follows: 20% to the Operating Budget, 10% to Faith in Action, and 70% to the Endowment fund. After Peter Imse spoke about underfunded reserves in the budget, Zib Corell moved to amend the budget to increase the Financial Review reserve from \$1000 to \$5000 and to change the name of the line item to Financial Audit reserve. Alice Pickett-Hale seconded the motion but it failed on the vote. Lorens then moved to accept the budget as presented, Janet Zeller seconded the motion, and it passed.

Janet Zeller then moved that the updated bylaws be approved. Ro Metcalf seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

There was no other business to bring before the membership so Jed led the congregation in singing the first verse of Amazing Grace as the closing prayer. The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 11:35 AM.

Membership Numbers 2023-2024

Membership reported to the NH Conference, March 2023: 482

Received into membership through Confession of Faith: 0

Received into membership through Reaffirmation of Faith: 0

Received into membership through Transfer: 0

Received into membership through Confirmation: 0

Total Increase in Membership: 0

Removed from Membership through Death: 6

Removed from Membership through Transfer: 0

Total Decrease in Membership: -6

Total Membership as of May 1, 2024: 476*

**Prior to leaving, Pastor Jed Rardin went over the membership list with President Betsy Clardy and updated those members he thought had become inactive. Per bylaws, inactive members are those for whom we don't have an address or who, for a period of two years, have not communicated with the Church or contributed to its support. 144 members were made inactive based on these criteria. After Pastor Tanya's arrival this summer, for those where we have an address, we will be sending letters with an update regarding South Church news and seeing if they want to reengage with South Church.*

Nominating Report

Officer, Ministry, and Committee Rosters 2023-2024

OFFICERS

President:	Betsy Clardy	2 nd Term	2025
Vice President:	Gyme Hardy	1 st Term	2026
Moderator:	David Fries	15 th Term	NT
Co-Treasurers:	Sue Marcotte-Jenkins	1 st Term	2025
	Sally Bird	1 st Term	2025
Clerk:	Sarah Willingham	1 st Term	2025

MINISTRIES

Faith Formation Ministry: (up to 9 Members)

Deb Imse	1 st Term	2026	Becca Yohe	1 st Term	2027
Sandy Sargent	1 st Term	2027	Leigh Cheney	1 st Term	2027
Diana Zeller-Norris	1 st Term	2026	Lucy Kilgore	1 st Term	2027

Faith In Action Ministry: (up to 9 Members)

Jean Eckrich	1 st Term	2026	Faith Scofield	1 st Term	2026
Shasta Jorgensen	1 st Term	2025	Suzanne Winchester	1 st Term	2026
Pegi Frostholt	1 st Term	2025	Fran Irvine	1 st Term	2027

Worship and Spiritual Life Ministry: (up to 12 Members)

Joel Eaton	1 st Term	2025	Becky Field	1 st Term	2025
Julia Wagner	1 st Term	2025	Bonnie Ota	1 st Term	2025
Cherie Shaw	2 nd Term	2025	Joanne Varga	1 st Term	2027
Carolyn Kerr	1 st Term	2027	Linda Kenison	1 st Term	2027
Lynne Morgan	1 st Term	2026			

Giving Ministry: (up to 12 Members)

Jonathan Stallsmith	1 st Term	2026	Janet Zeller	1 st Term	2026
Ann Walls	1 st Term	2026	Carlene Ruesenberg	1 st Term	2027
Joe York	1 st Term	2025	Gray Fitzgerald	1 st Term	2027
Marty Jenkins	1 st Term	2027			

Buildings and Grounds Committee: (up to 9 Members)

Debbie Carley	Will Delker
Mike Gfroerer	Peter Imse
Gail Desjardins	Chris Simmers

STAFFING MINISTRIES

Personnel Ministry: (up to 5 Members)

Tammy Ciminesi	2 nd Term	2027	Deb Kimball	1 st Term	2027
Ellen Fries	1 st Term	2026	Adria Ciley	1 st Term	2027
Patty Fahey	1 st Term	2027			

Pastor Parish Relation Committee*: (up to 5 Members)

Lynne Morgan	1 st Term	2025	Steve Murray	1 st Term	2025
Jill Smart	1 st Term	2025	Leanne Tigert	1 st Term	2025

**PPRC members chosen by Worship & Spiritual Life Members and Pastors*

SPIRITUAL CARE AND VISITATION MINISTRIES

Pastor's Aid:

Eileen Gfroerer	Ray Phelan
Bill Jacobs	Cy Sherman
Eileen Jones	Pam Young
Cheryl Simmers	Ben Rice
Janice Dutton	

Lay Ministry Visitors:

Heather Barber	Nancy Haigh
Toni Callahan	Cynthia Hogan
Jean Bragg	Bill Jacob
Herb Carpenter	Bonnie Ota
Kathy Daniels	Helen Porter
Julia Emley	Ryan Sahr
Ellen Fries	

COMMITTEES

Collection & Deposit Committee:

Bruce Bairstow	Kevin Yohe
Lorens Jorgensen	Janice Dutton
Adria Cilley	Christine Frost
Tom Fahey	Pegi Frosthalm
Laura Landry	
Kevin Nyhan	Carlene Ruesenberg
Chris Simmers	Richard Nelson

Church Guild:

Tracie Carpenter	Cy Sherman
Deb Imse	Eileen Jones
Edie Dimick	Deb Lincoln
Lorraine Fournier	Cheryl Simmers
Pegi Frosthalm	Kit DeVries
Kathy Gullage	

Delegates:

Kit DeVries	2 nd Term	2027	Cherie Shaw	3 rd Term	2027
Cy Sherman	4 th Term	2027	Joanne Varga	3 rd Term	2024
Susan Kuzma	1 st Term	2027	Jonathan Stallsmith	1 st Term	2027
Janet Zeller	1 st Term	2027	Liz Garlo	1 st Term	2027
David Reynolds	1 st Term	2027			

Flowers:

Dianna Powers	4 th Term
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Nominating:

Toni Callahan	1 st Term	2025
Janet Zeller	1 st Term	2025
Chris Simmers	1 st Term	2026

Cy Sherman	1 st Term	2026
Pam Young	1 st Term	2026

Relief Society*:

Kathy Daniels
Nonnie Hall
Ginny Mierins
Mary Rosenthal

Pam Young
Sarah Sadowski
Nancy Betchart

Planned Giving*:

Tina Annis
Peter Imse
Oge Young

**committee self-appoints members*