

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Cheshire, Connecticut

2006 ANNUAL REPORT

Annual Meeting – January 28, 2007

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SENIOR MINISTER

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As Anne and I prepare to share our farewells with our church family here in Cheshire, I want to share with you just a few of the things that I treasure about this church. With apologies to Mr. Letterman, here are the Top Eleven—I couldn't stop at ten—things I love (and will miss) about the First Congregational Church of Cheshire:

11) **A Growing Culture of Care:** Care for one another is a central part of what it means to be church. Several years ago, our congregation recognized that we all need to find new ways not just to *feel* caring, but to *actively* care for one another. Concerned leaders within the congregation came together to form the Parish Care committee, establishing a number of connected caring ministries. These have grown and blossomed (especially with the wonderful leadership, equipping, support and coordination of Peggy Allen last year) to include the Stephen Ministry, as well as the rides, meals, small chores, caring crafts, cards, birth and baptism, telephone, and Caring Christian Visitor ministries. As these and other ministries mature and grow, our aim is to involve the *whole congregation* in some form of connected caring ministry.

10) **Children and Youth Ministries:** Our congregation makes a very big promise whenever we baptize a child.

And we take that promise seriously. Beginning with the outreach of our birth and baptism team, and an innovative, creative, safe, and nurturing church school program, and continuing on through an engaging confirmation program and exciting youth ministries (that have still only scratched the surface of their potential), the people of this church aim to support each child and family with constant love, Christian example, and faithful prayer.

9) **Music Program:** Always a strong part of our church's life, the growth in our music program in recent years has been breathtaking. I'm very sorry that I won't be here to experience Brahms' Requiem this spring!

8) **An Outstanding Staff:** I have been blessed to work alongside some truly remarkable people on this church's staff team. The current staff is made up of some extraordinary people who are committed to seeing First Church live into its full potential.

7) **The best corn chowder and strawberry shortcake on earth!** (and a revitalized Sunday fellowship hour to tide us over between them).

6) **Inspiring Congregational Worship:** Worship at First Church is traditional—but not traditionalist. We are deeply rooted in our heritage, but open to fresh, new expressions of prayer and praise.

5) **A Dedicated and Gifted Lay Leadership:** This is an absolute must for a healthy, growing church. I can't tell you how grateful I am to have served with so many faithful lay leaders. They've invested themselves deeply in the ministry and mission of our church and have taught me a great deal over these past ten years.

4) **A Growing Spirit of Welcome:** A 1962 survey of First Church concluded that the congregation was eager to overcome the "indictment that we are an 'unfriendly church.'" In our 2001 Envision process, we recognized that we still had work to do in that area. Our church's work is not yet done, but visitors who are welcomed on Sunday morning by a trained greeter, or who receive a gift bag at Easter or a home-baked loaf of cranberry bread at our Lessons and Carols Service know that warm hospitality is a priority for us.

3) **A Passion for Generous Outreach:** The smell of meatloaf being baked for Columbus House, the sound of a concert for Malawi AIDS orphans, the sights of grocery bags under the communion table, Easter baskets and Thanksgiving meals for Covenant to Care, Christmas gifts for needy children, youth and adults setting out to do hands-on mission work: these are all things I love about this church. This is a church that understands that it exists not for its own sake, but for the sake of God's world. And that understanding is growing.

2) **A Congregation That Rises to Meet the Challenges of Discipleship:** Following in the way of Jesus has never been easy. And there are difficult challenges ahead for this church. But the people of this congregation have a tradition of rising to meet those challenges, and I believe you will continue to build on that tradition.

1) **The Faces of Our First Church Family:** By God's grace, Anne and I and our children have called the First Congregational Church home. We have encountered God's presence in all of you, and thank God for our time among you. We will cherish the memory of our years in Cheshire and keep you in our hearts and in our prayers throughout our lives.

In Christ's Love,
Rick

ASSOCIATE MINISTER FOR PARISH LIFE

Sunday, January 7, 2007, was a day rich in marking the movement and the seasons of the Spirit. In worship we gathered together with the Dacey family to say goodbye on the final Sunday of Rick's ministry of the last ten years. But January 7 is also, and always, for me a day of saying hello: that day also marked the completion of my having served five full years as Associate Minister of Parish Life. The poetic cycle of God's timing is not lost on me; it is as the hymn writer offers: "From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see." This is but one marking for me of the movement of God among us. The Holy Spirit is at work at First Church in ways visible and invisible; our ministries as a congregation in 2006 bear the fruit of previous seasons of effort, and they hold within the seeds of promise of what yet will be.

I see God at work among us as we find ways to be the church together. As noted in other reports, the calling of the part time Associate Minister of Parish Care has been deferred for one year. The Search committee remains commissioned and ready for the word to reactivate the search. In the meantime, members and friends of our large church family continue to have need of caring ministries and pastoral care. How do we offer this care effectively and lovingly? How do we continue *and* grow the ministries that Peggy Allen so capably accomplished with us as our interim in Parish Care? To help with this need, I have offered to temporarily set aside portions of my call for this year that I may pick up *some* of the pieces of the Parish Care ministry that require an ordained minister do them. I am working with the Parish Care Committee and the Deacons to define those pieces. At the end of the year, it is my goal to take up again the pieces of my call that I now set aside as we all wait and trust that God is at work among us; with a plan "unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see."

I see God at work in our Welcoming Team. For over two years now we have been meeting to find ways to help us all greet and welcome those who come through our doors. Some 65+ people officially take turns as worship greeters. Their warm and welcoming presence is contagious – they remind us we all easily play an important part in this ministry of hospitality. In addition, at Easter we presented our visitors with gift bags. At the annual Strawberry Festival in June we offered First Church magnets and brochures and a series of tours of the sanctuary, while Joe D'Eugenio delighted all with a brief demonstration of the organ. Also in June, the Welcoming Team, Fellowship, and Membership Committees met for an evening to share their particular foci and to see how their pieces support the others' work. Out of this meeting came the idea of the September Church Picnic, held at Mixville Park, and the desire to meet and work together again because we sense that God is at work among us.

I see God at work in our Parish Life Team. This group now meets twice a month to engage the larger questions and practical work of faith formation. This team conceived and carried out the "One Question" small groups last winter. Our focus this fall has been to discern the needs of the congregation in this time of transition, and to offer groups and events that meet them. We are also looking at who is the church:

identifying those whom we are currently serving by our offerings, and asking who do we yet need to plan for because God is at work among us calling us to be more invitational and inclusive.

I see God at work among as we gather in various forms of worship and experiences beyond Sunday morning. Our once a month vocational prayers are meant to support us all in our daily work as Jesus' followers. Our personal prayers reach out in the tones and vibrations of seven pagers in our Prayer Pager Ministry. We have gathered for vespers at the church picnic, worshipped in the "Upper Room" of the parish hall at the Maundy Thursday supper, renewed our baptismal vows in the late night hours of Easter Eve, and one by one kept watch in the sanctuary between Good Friday and Easter morning, and one by one, prayed in the center of the labyrinth. Under Peggy's gifted and leading hands we have worshipped in the darkened stillness of the Lenten Pilgrimage services and in the light of God's healing work within and among us at two Healing Services.

I see God at work in our church calling us to equip ourselves and others for ministry in the wider church. Our congregation has a rich tradition as a teaching parish for Yale Divinity School students; Rick having supervised students as part of his ministry. This fall I took the Supervision Training at Yale that our congregation might continue this ministry. With Rick's departure, it is now my privilege to serve in that role with Lisa Horst, our very capable and gifted YDS student. Also, Martha Lape and I are the support team for Joellyn Jason as she spreads her youth ministry wings and takes part in the Associates in Christian Education Program cosponsored by Hartford Seminary and the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ. And there are others who are in the process of discerning their particular call from God. While it is not clear yet exactly where God will lead Lisa, Joellyn, and others, we can know that God is at work at First Church equipping the church of the future.

In your support of me, I have had the privilege of serving our New Haven Association the last three and a half years as both Vice Moderator and now Moderator. In addition to moderating the twice a year association meetings, I have stood in the place as association representative at ordinations and installations of newly called clergy witnessing the covenantal nature of our polity in action. What joy it is to be present at these moments where the fruits of faithful searches and faith-filled searching become a new thing, a ministry partnership begun. Thank you for allowing me this privilege as well as the opportunity for ministry on two wheels. This past summer Matt and I again co-led the Nutmeg Creation Tour, a week-long summer conference offered through Silver Lake for high school age youth. I see God at work as we travel the geographical terrain of our state and the spiritual landscape of our innermost selves and test our limits and self-perceptions around curves and corners and up hills to crests we cannot yet see.

These are but some of the places I see God at work, places where I give thanks for God's blessings and grace, places where I give thanks for you – for your presence, your leadership, your giftedness and ministries. I give thanks for my colleagues and our staff.

To be sure, there is much work to be done, work already known and work to be made known. With the new year of 2007 comes the season of our interim ministry, with David Buchan walking with us – a wonderfully rich opportunity for discerning God's presence and leading. May we prayerfully and confidently enter this time with the eyes of faith seeing that God *is* at work among us: "From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see."

Faithfully,
Alison

COMMISSIONED MINISTER OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

Ephesians 4:11-13

The Christian Education Ministry has many gifted individuals who have given of their time, talents, and vision in all areas of the Christian Education ministry. Without these dedicated individuals our programs would not be able to run. Thank you to all who have volunteered their time this year.

We continue to grow and develop our Workshop Rotation Model, Bible Journeys. I spend one day a week taking the research and lessons from the curriculum committee and shaping it into monthly lessons for our workshop leaders to use. Many people work tirelessly teaching workshops each month. Thank you to the many volunteers who have helped with this vision and plan. Special thanks to Cornelia Voils the CE Chairperson for all her hard work and hours of dedication to the Christian Education Ministry.

Worship and education are both important to the spiritual development of our children. Our younger grades continue to be blessed with dedicated teachers who use the Bible Quest materials and enable children to reap the benefits of this story-based curriculum. The weekly chapel service for the 9 o'clock children and monthly chapel service for the 11 o'clock children continue to be a vital piece of the Christian Education Ministry. This year we also experimented (April and May) with a modified Workshop Rotation Model for the younger grades. I adapted materials about peacemaking and developed it into easy to follow lessons for our teachers. The teachers and children loved this material. In the future we are going to need to find a new curriculum and teaching technique for this age group, as the Bible Quest we are using will be discontinued at the end of the 2008 church school year.

I have continued to co-lead confirmation with Rick Dacey each Monday evening this fall. This year we have 24 youth in the confirmation class. Rick and I have brainstormed for the rest of the 2007 year and created an outline that I will follow with a new team of leaders after his departure. Thanks to the many mentors who have volunteered to form a relationship with a Confirmand and have helped in the spiritual preparation for confirmation.

Special programs like Children's Day, Silver Lake Promotion, 4th Grade Bible Preparation, Summer Church School, Vacation Bible School and the annual Christmas Pageant are additional programs that have been a part of this year's church school program. Summer Church School this year was based on the Parables of Jesus. This was designed to fit the spiritual understandings of the preschool through 3rd grade age group. We averaged about 25-30 youth each Sunday through the summer.

Vacation Bible School was a little different this year. Budget cuts made it impossible to order a curriculum and originally we were going to cancel the program. Disappointed families approached the Board and asked us to reconsider so we formed the team which envisioned the three-day Christian Explorers Camp. Families paid a fee and we kept the budget within what was collected. However a high price was paid on my time as I wrote the lessons and did most of the shopping and budgeting. This meant that I had no time to write the Bible Journeys lessons or vision for the preschool. Writing VBS curriculum is not something that I could continue to do each year as the Church School program would suffer considerably.

The Christmas Pageant this year was “The Best Christmas Present.” Many thanks to Linda Milton our director and Donna Andrews our props and sets person. Thank you also to Joe D'Eugenio, Leslie Tracey, Kelly Swartz, and the children's choirs for their work in preparing the children for the drama and music

of the pageant. Children also participated as shepherds, sheep and angels. It was a great job by all in the cast.

Quality ministry flows out of the whole body of Christ and their commitment to the education ministry of the church. Thank you to the many caring and dedicated volunteers that lead our various Christian Education ministries.....

- The Nursery continued to thrive under the direction of our Nursery Committee led in the earlier part of the year by Anne Dacey and in the fall by Elaine Daly. Each year the nursery committee recruits and trains our new caregivers and keeps the nursery running smoothly.
- Christians in Action (C.I.A.) have changed their name this year to Stepping Stones Youth Group and they continue to thrive under the leadership of Jim and Leslie Parys, Deb Brown, and Marge Williams. The Stepping Stones (5th and 6th graders) meet once a month and average 10-15 youth per meeting. It is an exciting ministry.
- Our Church School is blessed by the dedicated and committed teams of teachers, shepherds, and helpers teaching at both of our Church School hours. The Jr. High classes are learning in units (i.e. a different topic each month) again this year. Many Thanks to Tony Farina, Laura Knipe, and Don Lee for their ministry to this Jr. High age group.
- Grace Knipe is our ever faithful and dedicated Church School Superintendent. We are blessed by the many ways she attends to the details of our Sunday morning Church Schools and special events.

Many Thanks to.... Judy Monarca and Jessie Waszmer, our office support staff, for the many ways they support the Christian education ministry. Thank you to Fred and Pat Turner who are always ready and available to help with whatever task needs to be done to enable the Christian education programs to run smoothly.

I feel very blessed to be here in this church. It is a privilege for me to participate with you in worship, confirmation, chapel leadership, and leadership of the various programs of our educational ministries. I am eternally grateful to all of the many volunteers that give of their time to share in ministry and create the wonderful atmosphere we have here in the First Congregational Church School. Without your dedication, talents and gifts we would not be able to minister to children and families.

Debbie Gravell

The educational mission of First Church Cheshire will be to seek spiritual understanding through personal and corporate study of God's word. Our mission includes telling the story and spreading God's love and care through prayer and Christian example."

MUSIC DIRECTOR

One of the music program's greatest achievements in 2006 was how it reached out beyond our church walls into the larger community. We provided a variety of afternoon services and concerts to appeal to our church family as well as those from the greater community. In doing so, the community had several opportunities to experience some of what goes on here at First Church. We hope offering such exposure on behalf of First Church may lead to new church members and supporters. With the money obtained from free-will offerings, the music program was able to supplement the cost of its programs. We raised nearly 130% more of what was in the church budget to carry on and encourage our programs to grow.

The continued addition of our section leaders, Patricia Barbano and Paul Fletcher, has proven to be successful in the development of our choir which now boasts approximately 7-8 regular singers per voice

part, soprano/alto/tenor/and bass. Some of our newest choir members are high school students. This is important to recognize and acknowledge as it is so encouraging when our youth take part in the larger church community. It should be stated that Patricia and Paul helped organize and sang at the summer concert on the green which raised \$2000 for the music program. All of their time was donated to us. They truly "sang for their money." Their expertise and guidance is critical to our choir members and helps foster a sense of encouragement and support on a weekly basis.

The Youth Choirs continue to do well. The Primary Choir has approximately 20 K-third graders participating in a 30 minute rehearsal per week. They continued to sing once a month and participated in the Christmas Pageant and Children's Sunday. The Primary Choir continues to appeal very nicely to kids of that age. The Junior Choir consists of five girls who work hard together once a week to sing one or two anthems per month. I look forward to possibly re-vamping this program in 2007.

Organ and piano maintenance in 2006 presented some unexpected costs. The organ needed \$1000 of mechanical repair, beyond the \$1000 accrued from its twice-per-year tunings. The Mason piano in the sanctuary developed a crack in the sound board, most likely due to the fact that the temperature is inconsistent in the sanctuary. The \$1000 worth of repair to fix the sound board was also unexpected.

Overall, the music program continues to inspire a great sense of spirit, energy, and growth. Despite financial challenges, the music board chose to move forward with its vision to make things happen: accomplish more difficult and rewarding music, begin to organize the series of concerts that happen at First Church, offer our traditional services such as Lessons and Carols and Memorial Music Sunday in the afternoon, and to invite others beyond our church community to experience First Church in a way that they may not have otherwise.

Joseph D'Eugenio
Music Director

HANDBELL CHOIR DIRECTOR

Last year began as any other year. However, by December of 2006 Martha Lape and I had played at funerals for two of our dear members, Barbara Dowling and Nancy Bates. Barbara did not return to the Bell Choir in September because she was hospitalized with a terminal illness and Nancy had been in care for many years.

January of 2006 saw our full Bell Choir, Barbara Dowling, Anne Marie Jurgilewicz, Wendy Jurgilewicz, Annette Kelly, Martha Lape, Susan Mancinelli, and I perform at Beacon Brook facility in Naugatuck. As of September the following members said farewell: Annette who moved to St. Louis, Anne Marie who joined the Cheshire swim team, and Wendy who is back in school. Sue Walker rejoined our group and Michelle Earley-Battle will return after her son finishes his gymnastic meets.

The Junior Bell Choir and Chimes groups grew throughout the year until September when we settled in with returning Chime members moving into the Junior Bell Choir. Our January roster consisted of: Kaitlin Cavallaro, Jessica Frisco, Bridget and Madison Healey, Jillian and Jarrett Hissick, Anne Marie Jurgilewicz, Emma Lasher, Hannah Rojas, and Tyler and Karalyn Wright. Jessica played in both the Junior and Senior Bell Choir until September but had to cut back because she is now a member of the Cheshire Rams Marching Band. The Small Group Expos encouraged Alicia Gray and Caroline Thompson to join the Junior Bell Choir.

The following music was performed:

January – Ave Maria; February – Chordal Chimes; March – Pie Jesu; April - Exuberant Praise and Day of Resurrection; May – In his Care; September – When Morning Gilds the Sky; October – Bringing in the Sheaves and Amazing Grace; November – We Gather Together and Come, Ye Thankful People, Come; December – O Come Little Children, Silent Night/Stille, Stille, Stille, and Joy to the World.

INTERIM SENIOR MINISTER SEARCH COMMITTEE

In August of 2006, Rick Dacey notified the congregation by letter that he had accepted a call to the West Epping United Church in Sydney, Australia, and that his last Sunday at First Church would be January 7, 2007. With the mixed feelings of joy at this call and regret at his impending departure, Susan Hostage, President of the congregation and Susan Mancinelli, Senior Deacon, met with Kent Siladi, Conference Minister for direction on how to proceed.

Rev. Siladi advised us that the best (although not only) way to proceed would be to hire an interim senior minister to allow us adequate time to move on after Rick's departure, to make decisions about our future under the guidance of a skilled interim minister, and to allow a search team adequate time to find a settled minister who would be a good fit for our church. An interim search committee was convened composed of the following members: Mark Hall, Susan Hostage, Martha Lape, Jim Louys, Susan Mancinelli, and Jane Montgomery.

We updated the church's profile, developed questions, and read about ten profiles. After several interviews and much consideration, we selected Rev. David Buchan, interim minister at Brookfield, who accepted our call. Rev. Buchan comes to us very highly recommended. He has served in UCC churches in Maine, Connecticut, and Ohio. He has also done mission work in Africa. Retired after his distinguished career, he has served as an interim minister in Litchfield and most recently in Brookfield. Several members of the search committee attended worship at the Brookfield church. We are delighted to have Rev. Buchan joining us at the annual meeting on January 28, 2007.

Susan Mancinelli

YOUTH DIRECTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

The committee began working together in August, led by Debbie Gravell. We decided to call an Acting Youth Director, as time for planning the year was quickly passing.

We began with an overall review of our current youth program. During this time a survey was developed by Cornelia Voils and Will Arpaia with the expectation that the feedback from it would give the committee some insight as to the strengths and weaknesses of the youth program we currently have in place. The survey was taken by the youth, the parents of the youth, and the Resource Adults. With the information from the survey, we were able to envision what our youth program could grow into with the right leadership

After interviewing several candidates, we offered the position to the candidate that we unanimously thought best suited to bring our youth group to a new level of Christian understanding. Unfortunately, due to personal circumstances, the candidate refused our call.

After much discussion and with the support of staff and the Board of Christian Education, Debbie Gravell decided to call Matt McCaffery to the Interim Position of Youth Director. Peggy Allen was also asked to assist in the area of administration. Having this position filled allowed Debbie to focus solely on the Christian Education area of our church.

After calling Matt to the Interim position, we refocused our vision and decided to search for a permanent Director of Youth Ministry. We will continue our search process, looking for the person best suited to lead our youth on their continuing spiritual journey.

Many thanks to the members, Charlene Black, Chris Cowles, Laurie Mozian, Kelly Swartz, Katie Worden, and Geoffrey Wright for the many hours they have already committed to this search. The committee remains faithful to the challenge of finding the person the youth of our congregation deserve.

In Christ,
Ellen Wright

THE REVEREND BARBARA BARLOK

Report on the Four-way Covenant of the Rev. Barbara E. Barlok

The four parties of the Covenant of the Rev. Barbara E. Barlok are 1) the United Church of Christ 2) First Congregational Church of Cheshire 3) Interfaith Volunteer Care Givers of Greater New Haven (IVCG) and 4) Barbara.

Barbara is the Executive Director of IVCG, a Friendly Visitor program established in 1984 to assist older or disabled people by fostering independent living and reducing isolation. Religious congregations are equipped to recruit, train, and support volunteers who provide free neighborly services with compassion, faith, and love. Services include friendly visiting, respite, medical escort transportation, assisted grocery shopping, telephone reassurance, and help with light chores. Currently, seventeen Yale and Quinnipiac University students participate in our Adopt-A-Grandparent Program.

In 2006, more than 250 volunteers of all ages provided over 14,500 hours of free services to more than 400 frail and/or disabled older people. More than 19 training sessions were provided in all of our service towns. Eighteen new volunteers were recruited, trained and matched through an agreement with AARP. Twenty-two congregations are affiliated with IVCG, providing 80% of our volunteers.

IVCG is an affiliate program of Interfaith Cooperative Ministries in New Haven (a council of congregations.) In collaboration with three other affiliated agencies – FISH, Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen (DESK), and the Community Soup Kitchen – sponsor an annual Walk-A-Thon in October to raise funds to support all four agencies.

IVCG's third Talent Show, "On The Other Side of the Pew," will be held on March 4, 2007 from 2 – 5 pm at First Congregational Church of Cheshire. This is a fundraiser for IVCG that is lots of fun!

The major source of funding for IVCG comes through a grant from the Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut and donations from congregations.

IVCG coordinates the delivery of over 500 hot meals on Thanksgiving morning. This year, 16 hot meals were delivered to homebound people in North Haven on Christmas Day.

The monthly newsletter, Connections, is mailed to over 750 people.

Barbara presented an overview of the Friendly Visitor Program to the Stephen Ministers at First Congregational Church in September.

Elder Wisdom Sunday had to be canceled in 2006 because Barbara was overwhelmed with personal issues in May – a household move and Ron’s surgery. She preached twice in the First Church of Christ in Woodbridge.

Barbara represents First Congregational Church on the New Haven Executive Committee of the UCC and Cheshire Interfaith Housing.

PARISH CARE MINISTER SEARCH COMMITTEE

This committee is the second Parish Care Minister Search Committee to be commissioned. Our committee was selected after the October 2005 Church meeting to discuss the position of Parish Care Minister. We were commissioned by the congregation in February 2006 during worship services.

Committee members included: Howard Murphy (Deacon), Kevin Ross (Trustee and Parish Care Ministries), Sue Chatfield (Stephen Minister and Parish Care Ministries), Nancy Demac (Stephen Minister), James Van Der Beek (Parish Care Ministries), Ken Euerle (Baptismal Ministries and CT Conference Representative), Lisa Canas (initially as Deacon until 2006, now on Board of Outreach). Kevin Ross is the designated Contact Person and Lisa Canas is the designated Chairperson.

During our first meeting in February, we undertook to clarify the Parish Care Minister’s job description. We did this based on recommendations presented by our clergy including the Interim Minister of Parish Care, Rev. Peggy Allen, our Senior minister, Rev. Rick Dacey, and our Associate minister, Rev. Alison McCaffrey. We also considered recommendations made by the Board of Deacons and the Parish Care Committee as well as those made at the October 2005 church meeting. In addition, we reviewed the exit interview of Rev. Donna Cassidy, our previous Parish Care Minister. Our job description met with approval by all the above mentioned parties. The description reflected that the twenty hour position would emphasize more leadership, to enable greater congregation led lay-ministries, and less emphasis on worship service participation.

In March, we contacted Rev. Kent Siladi, our UCC South Central Regional Minister, for guidance on initiating the Profile Search process. Ads were placed in ConnTact and UCC National Employment Opportunities. During late March our committee updated the Church Profile utilizing the 2003 Church Profile and the Annual reports of 1996, 2001, and 2005.

By April, postings for this position were in place with a deadline for accepting profiles by June 15, 2006. Our plan was to review, interview, and present a candidate for a Church vote by the end of summer 2006, accepting Rev. Allen's request to terminate her Interim Ministry by the end of July 2006.

We reviewed 10 Ministerial Profiles by June and decided to go forward with 4 interviews based on excellent references of these candidates by Rev. Kent Siladi. Interviews were conducted with 3 applicants on July 18th and 19th. The fourth applicant declined an interview due to a personal preference to preach at worship services. Those in attendance during interviews were Sue Chatfield, Nancy Demac, Jim Van Der Beek, Ken Euerle, Kevin Ross, Howard Murphy, Lisa Canas, Alison McCaffrey, and Rick Dacey. On July 25, 2006, the final interviews were conducted with two candidates and an unanimous decision was made to go forward with one of the two candidates.

On August 1, 2006, Lisa Canas informed the Executive Board that we were extending the Terms of Call to one of the candidates. Our planned meeting to negotiate Terms of Call between the Treasurer, Walt Ryan, Ruth MacDonald (Personnel Chair), and our candidate was delayed due to a family health crisis. By August 25, 2006, the Terms of Call was negotiated and we awaited our candidate’s response.

On September 8th, Kevin Ross received a phone call from our candidate declining our Call due to a family health commitment as primary care provider. Our committee met on September 14th with counseling from Rev. Matt McCaffrey and unanimously decided to go forward as a committee and restart the search process. We addressed the congregation on September 17, 2006 during both services. During October we received five new profiles. We met and decided to interview two candidates. We received Kent Siladi's approval of both candidates. Interviews were scheduled for November 20, 2006.

On November 18th, I received a phone call from Susan Mancinelli, Senior Deacon, that she had been requested by Susan Hostage, Church President, to inform me and our committee that our Church budget could not support our hiring of the part-time Parish Care Minister for the foreseeable future. Kevin Ross and I contacted our committee members and our planned candidate interviews.

We are still commissioned and ready to reactivate our search when funds are available to go forward with this much needed Parish Care Ministry position.

Respectfully,
Lisa M. Canas, chairperson

STEPHEN MINISTRY

The Stephen Ministry has been implemented at First Congregational Church for three years. The required 50 hours of training has been completed by eleven people, three of which were trained in 2006. This ministry has a minimum two year commitment and two of our eleven Stephen Ministers are presently on leave of absence, leaving nine active trained lay ministers. All of the Stephen Ministers have worked with at least one care receiver during 2006.

The following list gives specific data about the Stephen Ministry program for 2006:

▪ Number of care receivers assigned to Stephen Ministers	12
▪ Number of contacts made with care receiver	238
▪ Number of hours spent with care receivers	137

Types of issues care receivers are struggling with:

Divorce, recovery from and adjustment to injury or surgery, chronic illness, grief, depression, and adjustment to moving.

Until August Supervision of Stephen Ministers was provided at First Congregational Church of Southington. Beginning in September, supervision was held here, meeting the first and third Wednesdays of each month. The first meeting of each month includes continuing education as well as supervision. Topics for continuing education included: Barbara Barlok presenting the work of the Interfaith Volunteer Ministry of Greater New Haven, a video and discussion on adult children with aging parents needing care, and a visit and presentation at Slater's Funeral Home on what a care receiver might have to consider in making final arrangements for the loss of a loved one.

During the year, the Stephen Ministers have volunteered for other responsibilities beyond working with their care receivers. On the first Sunday of each month one Stephen Minister helps the Deacons with flower delivery to church members at home. They have also participated in the two Healing Services held in the Sanctuary. This fall some of the Stephen Ministers helped with making pastoral care visits during the transitional time of staff changes.

For several weeks this fall, one of Ten Reasons for Becoming a Stephen Minister was printed in the Sunday Bulletin. A number of people have since come forward expressing an interest in being trained beginning in January, 2007.

It has been a busy, but very rewarding year and I am very grateful for the commitment and dedication of all who have stepped up to participate in and support this vital lay ministry.

Sue Chatfield
Stephen Ministry Coordinator

EXECUTIVE BOARD

The year of 2006 was full of transitions and opportunities.

The Challenge 2006/Budget 2007

We began with an opportunity, an historical event, at our Church's Annual Meeting in January. At that meeting it was announced that a generous church family had made an unsolicited gift to the church of \$50,000 to fund a program to reduce our accumulated debt of over \$400,000. The family had offered to provide these funds on a matching basis, thus encouraging the formation of "The 2006 Challenge". What a gift! Shortly after the notice of this first gift, two other families approached the church and offered an additional \$100,000 in matching funds. With the assistance of more than 200 members and friends of the church, the goal of matching the \$150,000 was surpassed as of the end date of June 30 with the final total raised at more than \$350,000. By way of this report, we acknowledge the very generous donations of the three families, who have requested to remain anonymous.

The pledging for the 2007 budget did not go as well as had been hoped. Due to the fact that the pledges were below last year's budget by \$25,000, it was agreed at the Church Meeting in December that we would take the following steps:

- Defer the calling of the Parish Care Minister for one year.
- Defer the addition of a supplemental secretarial position in the office.
- Eliminate all salary increases.
- Eliminate funding for maintenance and repairs of buildings out of the current operating budget, including the repaving of Church Drive.
- Cut 30% from all board and committee 2006 budgets.

Money once spent paying the external loan will now be allocated to reserve funding for future building maintenance. The plan: once our capital reserves are consistently funded, pledges raised by the annual stewardship campaign will enhance and expand our ministries.

Communications Task Force

Early in the year we agreed to create an ad hoc committee to comprehensively evaluate the church's current communications (identify the short comings and gaps in our communication) and work with leadership to develop a structure to meet the needs of the church. The charge of the Communications Task Force was "to conduct a needs assessment and make recommendations for communications strategies that inform, equip, and unite the disciples of the First Church Community". The assessment was completed by the Task Force through focus groups, attendance at various board meetings, and open forum sessions. The list of recommendations was presented to the Executive Board in the fall with the plan to move ahead immediately on some of the items with further planning to take place on the remaining items. All boards enthusiastically agreed to make communication a priority. A second recommendation was that of determining the actual membership of the church, an important step in determining how best to

communicate with our membership. An ad hoc team was developed in response to that recommendation with the plan to conduct an assessment in the early part of 2007. A summary of the Communications Task Force report was presented at the December Church Meeting, a copy of the report was posted on the church web site, and printed copies were made available at the church office.

Staff and Lay Leadership Changes

The first of a number of transitions in the year was the retirement of the long time Treasurer, Marshall Tucker, and the Assistant Treasurer, Joy Deegan. Marshall and Joy served in their roles for a total of more than 50 years. The tireless devotion of these two very faithful servants of the church is hereby acknowledged. Moving forward, we also acknowledge the work done this year by the new Treasurer, Walt Ryan, the Associate Treasurer, Betsy Barber, and the Assistant Treasurer, Sara Buell.

Other positions in transition during the year were the Associate Minister for Parish Care and the Director of Youth Ministry. The Director of Youth Ministry resigned in August. The position is currently filled by the Reverend Matthew McCaffrey, who will serve in an interim capacity. He is working with the search committee to help discern the needs of the youth program of the church.

We were very fortunate to have the caring ministry of the Reverend Peggy Allen serving as the Interim Associate Minister for Parish Care until August of this year. Unfortunately, we were not able to fill the position with a settled minister by early fall and budget constraints for 2007 prompted the decision to put the search on hold. During this time of transition, we are fortunate that the Reverend Alison McCaffrey has offered to temporarily move the focus of her ministry from parish life to parish care.

The final staff transition was the resignation of our Senior Minister, Richard L. Dacey. Rick, who had served as associate minister for four years and senior minister for six years, announced his plan to answer a call to ministry at the West Epping Uniting Church in West Epping, Australia. We formally accepted his resignation in December with regret and sadness. The congregation celebrated Rick's ministry at a special worship service and reception on January 5, 2007 as well as in a Service of Farewell on January 7, 2007.

In response to the announcement of Rick's resignation, a search team was created to call an Interim Senior Minister. After reviewing profiles and conducting interviews, the search team called the Reverend David Buchan to assume the role of Interim Senior Minister. The Reverend Buchan brings both a wealth of knowledge and experience as a senior minister and as an interim. With his guidance as well as that of the current staff, we, the lay leaders of the church, look forward to continuing to search for who we are, and how we in the First Congregational Church of Cheshire will best be able to serve the Lord. The next step is to commission the Search Committee for the (settled) Senior Minister.

Planning for our Future ---Where is God calling us?

In the fall, the Executive Board discussed the need for identifying our future focus. Given the fact that the 2002 Envision Process, a five year plan, was now complete, it was time to begin another planning process. We agreed that a planning process would assist us in program planning and budgeting as well as in determining the skills we need in our settled senior minister. The long range planning team will work with the Interim Senior Minister to discern our history and our future. Part of that discernment will be a review of comments made at the Cottage Visits as well as a review of the information collected during the 2005 Stewardship visits. As the planning process will inevitably affect the By-laws, it is expected that we will come to the church membership with recommended changes to them in the coming months.

With the By-laws in mind, please find below a section of that document to remind us of our stated purpose:

The purpose of this church shall be to worship God; to preach and teach children, youth and adults the good news of Jesus Christ; to celebrate the sacraments; to encourage

individual growth in Christian fellowship; to continue the church's rich heritage in this community; to render loving service toward all people; and to strive for righteousness, justice and peace.

In closing, it is important to remember that we are blessed in many ways. We are blessed with strong lay leadership, to whom I give many thanks for this past year's work. Countless hours were spent by many in response to the needs of the church. We are also blessed with a wonderful staff. We have quiet and unassuming great strength in our Associate Minister Alison McCaffrey. We are very fortunate to have Debbie Gravell, the Minister of Christian Education, our Director of Music, Joe D'Eugenio, and our Interim Director of Youth Ministry, Matt McCaffrey. In addition, our church staff, Judy Monarca, Jessie Waszmer, and Fred and Pat Turner, complete a stable and organized church structure.

Finally, we are blessed with each other. According to our church Covenant:

We bind ourselves in the presence of God, to be the people of God's covenant, to live and grow together in God's way as revealed in the Bible, to serve and support this church, and to love one another after the example of Jesus Christ.

Peace be with us all in this time of transition and opportunity!

Susan D. Hostage, President

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

Members: Joe Behuniak, Richard Cushing, Anthony DePaolo, Elizabeth Esty, Matt Glatt, David Hostage, Grace Knipe

Frequent volunteer: Ruth MacDonald

It was a tough act to follow: the successful fulfillment of the Challenge debt-reduction campaign to erase some \$400,000 of indebtedness. Some 205 families in the congregation rose to the challenge of matching \$150,000 in funds posted by three generous families in our midst and more that \$350,000 was eventually received.

During the summer and early fall, the Budget Committee of the Executive Board, with input from all boards and committees, assembled a budget-in-progress that included a requirement for more than \$800,000 in pledges, a daunting task. Thus the Board of Stewardship was charged to try to raise \$820,000.

The 2007 "Equipping Disciples" campaign began in September with an excellent introductory letter from Associate Minister Alison McCaffrey, who pointed out the need for financial support for the staff, buildings and grounds, and ministries of the church. A series of Cottage Meetings were offered, each attended by representatives of the Boards of Deacons, Trustees, and Stewardship. They were designed to allow any member of the congregation to ask questions or offer their opinions about the present and future of our church. These meetings were held at a variety of locations and at a variety of times over a two-week period so that anyone in the church who cared to participate had an opportunity to do so (the joys and concerns expressed by those who attended the meetings were noted and the compilation of those comments will be used by a long-range planning task force later this year). At the Sunday services during the Stewardship period, a number of members and friends of the church explained details of how church funds are put to good use to further the ministries of our church. Two more letters were sent from the Board of Stewardship, including details of the proposed use of collected funds, and pledge cards were to be returned by Pledge Sunday, October 28. It is important to note that this campaign was run on a

shoestring, at very little cost to our church. All materials were written and designed by members of the board. Members of the board donated paper and envelopes. Most of the expense of the postage was donated by members of the board. A new feature of the pledge card this year allowed those who pledged to indicate interest in supporting the church and its ministries through a list of volunteer opportunities. This information was then shared with the Nominating Committee.

As of January 2, 2007, 293 pledges totaling \$613,844 were received. There were thirty-nine new pledges, but approximately eighty-five people who had previously pledged chose not to do so this year. We recommend that these people be polled to ascertain why they have chosen not to pledge to support the church this year.

We wish to acknowledge the efforts of Grace Knipe, a true saint of the church, who has completed her term of duty on this board.

Respectfully submitted,
Matt Glatt and David Hostage, co-chairmen

BOARD OF DEACONS

Deacons are designated the “servant leaders of the church” charged with various aspects of the spiritual life of the church. This year the members of the Board of Deacons were Nancy Brunetti, David Brunetti (youth), Ford Cole, John Crowell, Joy Deegan, Tony Farina, Ken Hale (inactive), Don Lee, Jim Louys, Susan Mancinelli, Howard Murphy, Robin Sellati, Mark Sullivan, and Helen Wilson.

Baptisms/New Members – Deacons assisted with both the youngest and the newest members by reading scriptures at about 18 baptisms and by attending the preparatory sessions for new members.

Flowers – We also regularly delivered flowers and visited with shut-ins, those who had recently lost loved ones, members celebrating significant birthdays and anniversaries. Additionally, we delivered many poinsettias and Easter lilies.

Communion – This year Deacons participated in the special Seder arranged by Alison for Maundy Thursday, each sitting at one of the tables and serving in various capacities as called for by the program. This event expanded and deepened the meaning of Maundy Thursday for the many people who attended. Deacons also served communion monthly and at special services on Easter and Christmas Eve. Deacons are currently exploring the possibility of serving communion to homebound church members.

Sanctuary – Deacons are also responsible for the chapel and sanctuary. Deacon Ford Cole served on the committee to review the sanctuary use policy. New cushions, purchased by the Deacons and made by Linda Milton, currently adorn the pews. Recently, Deacons approved the placement of Rick’s piano in the sanctuary during the time he is in Australia. This will also be a benefit to Joe and the choir who plan to use both pianos during this year’s Memorial Music Sunday. Finally, after some study, the Deacons decided that the removal of the pews and installation of chairs in the chapel would not be in keeping with the original donors’ wishes and the plan was cancelled.

Parish Care – The Deacons thank Rev. Peggy Allen for her excellent work as interim Minister of Parish Care. She worked with lay leaders to create a variety of new programs as well as enhancing those already in place: support groups, card ministry, prayer pagers (originated by Alison), meals, and rides as examples. Unfortunately, after much effort on the part of the Minister of Parish Care Search Committee, the position had to be set aside for a year because of lack of funding in the budget.

Alison, with the support of the Deacons, has offered to temporarily put aside some of her Parish Life activities in order to help keep the Parish Care ministries going. Alison is also developing a plan to use Deacons and other lay people to build and support connections among church members. We hope to see this initiative develop in the coming year.

Scholarship – The Deacons, through a memorial scholarship program, provided scholarships to Paige Cowles, Kristen Mozian, and Paula Adams.

Rick's Departure – In October, the Deacons reluctantly accepted Rick's resignation. We will miss his leadership, his sermons, and the countless ways he and his family have become part of our church family. We wish them Godspeed on their journey to Australia and joy in Rick's new position there. We will celebrate his time with us at a farewell service and reception on January 5, 2007.

The Deacons approved filling the Senior Minister position with an Interim Minister and a Search Committee composed of Mark Hall, Susan Hostage, Martha Lape, Jim Louys, Susan Mancinelli, and Jane Montgomery has called Rev. David Buchan to fill the interim position. We welcome him to our church family. Early in 2007, Deacons will form a search committee to look for a settled minister.

New Deacons – Leaving the board this year are David Brunetti, John Crowell and Tony Farina (both of whom had filled one-year positions), Mark Sullivan, and Helen Wilson. Joining the board will be Elsa Bradford, Jackie Cole, Donna Mead, and Tony Farina (full term). Howard Murphy will serve as Senior Deacon.

Thank you to all the Deacons for sharing their time and talents.

Susan Mancinelli, Senior Deacon

BOARD OF OUTREACH

The Board experienced the best of times and the worst of times during the past year. We made some difficult decisions, endured some slings and arrows and yet emerged with a greater appreciation of our church, our brothers and sisters, and the love and grace of God. During the past two years we have tried to shift the focus of Outreach from a budget-based model to a mission-based model. For a number of years the Outreach budget has been shrinking both in real terms and as a percentage of the church's total budget, so we sought ways to involve the congregation in hands-on mission work.

We began this trend in 2005 (when Chris Albrecht and I were co-chairs) with a Mission Day in October held at several charitable organizations that First Church has traditionally supported. The Board sponsored two Mission Days in 2006 (March and October). In March we worked at two sites, Christian Community Action (New Haven) and Safe Haven (Waterbury), with over 20 people volunteering. In October we worked at three sites, Christian Community Action, Columbus House (New Haven) and Chrysalis (Meriden), with over 30 people volunteering. The work done by the volunteers was such that our partners could not have done it themselves due to lack of time and/or money. Those that participated gave much but also gained a deeper understanding of the missions and good works of our partner organizations. The Board of Outreach also gave substantial financial support to other mission work of the church directly (Youth Mission Trip) and indirectly (United Church of Christ).

I would like to thank all the members of the Board of Outreach who worked so well together under some difficult circumstances: Paul Adams (2007, outgoing Treasurer), Sarah Esty (2007, outgoing youth member), Henry McNulty (2007), Katie Worden (2007), Ken Anderson (2008), Matt McCaffrey (2008, Secretary), Leah Sanders (2008, Mail Coordinator), Sue Walker (2008), Lisa Canas (2009), Chris

Fitzmaurice (2009, incoming Treasurer), Heather Musante (2009, incoming co-chair), Beth Ross (2009, incoming co-chair) and the Rev. Alison McCaffrey, staff liaison. Special thanks are due to Paul Adams for excellent work during a financially turbulent year and to Matt McCaffrey for establishing an on-line forum for Outreach that has been a valuable tool during the past months.

Mark W. Hostage
Chairman

BOARD OF MUSIC

The Music Board had a very busy and successful year supporting, maintaining, and expanding the music programs at First Church. To these ends, we raised nearly \$10,000 over and above our \$6300 budget, by hosting concerts, recitals, and special worship services outside the usual Sunday morning hours. In addition to supporting the program, we look on these activities as an important way that our church can reach out to the community at large. We have been pleased to see that a significant number of non-church members have attended, enjoyed, and been touched by these events.

We are very fortunate to have an excellent Senior Choir at First Church. The Music Board has committed to supporting this choir by hiring professional singers as section leaders. This year, we welcomed back Patricia Barbano, soprano, and in September we brought in a new section leader, Paul Fletcher, baritone. Paul's wife Jessica also joined us, singing in the alto section. These singers provide stability to the choir, leadership in learning music and performing, and assist Joe with tasks such as warm-ups. The majority of the funds we raised this year were earmarked to support this program, which we consider vital to keeping the Senior Choir healthy and vibrant.

We would like First Church to be a welcoming place for other musicians, and are encouraging the use of our church for recitals. In 2006 we hosted two recitals, one by Riss Tarangelo, who was our alto section leader until May of this year. The other was by Daniel Balint, a talented singer and a senior at Cheshire High School. Our sanctuary has wonderful acoustics and makes an ideal venue for this type of event. We have worked with members of the Deacons and Trustees to help put together a sanctuary use policy that will ensure that only music that is appropriate will be presented in the sanctuary. We also addressed issues of appropriate compensation from outside performers for wear and tear on the church's musical instruments and for housekeeping, utility, and insurance costs.

The Music Board hosted two concerts in 2006: a performance by the Cantabile Vocal Quartet and a concert of American jazz standards and musical theater that was held outside on the green. Both were very successful. The concert on the green drew close to 400 audience members and brought in over \$2000. We are indebted to the many performers who donated their time and talents for these concerts, including church members Jack and Robin Sellati, our section leaders Paul and Patricia, and Joe's father Joe D'Eugenio Sr.

Last but not least, we held two special services on Sunday afternoons that were attended by many and most appreciated. In March, we held the annual Memorial Music Sunday service in the afternoon, presenting a Bach cantata. In December, we held a beautiful Candlelight Lessons and Carols service that included the full nine traditional lessons and carols, with special decorations inside and outside the church. Both services were very well attended by regular church goers as well as members of the larger Cheshire community.

All of these events came about because of the hard work of a dedicated group of volunteers, including this year's Music Board members and members of many other boards and committees too numerous to

mention. It has been a pleasure to serve as Music Board chair while working with such a wonderful, committed group of people. Our Music program grows stronger every year. It is a tremendous asset to the church and is becoming one to the whole Cheshire community as well.

Megan M. Stephan
Chair

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

This year began with much enthusiasm as we envisioned ways to bring our church school program to a new level of excellence. As the year progressed, however, we found ourselves seriously distracted as multiple waves of difficult news washed over us.

The resignation of Glenn Root, Director of Youth Ministries in August, caused the entire Board to spring into a high energy pace. A search committee was formed and lengthy discussions relating to a replacement began. Debbie Gravell worked extraordinary hours to cover 2 full time positions as both the church school and the youth group were on the eve of a new school year. Board members assisted in any way that was possible. Shortly thereafter, Rick Dacey announced that he, too, would be leaving us. Rick had always played a major role with both the youth group and the Confirmation class. A new plan was now needed. Finally, in the fall, came the devastating news that the budget for 2007 needed to be reduced by nearly 1/3. Virtually every level of the church school, both youth groups, and the confirmation program will be visibly affected in 2007 by these reductions. The last 6 months have been difficult indeed!

To the casual observer, however, church school ran as smoothly as every other year. Will Arpaia created a wonderful DVD/slide show depicting the children attending the Bible Journeys program, with our choir singing "In His Words" in the background. The Bible Bucks program was instituted in February as an incentive for 4th, 5th, and 6th graders to bring their Bibles to church. In February, we also offered a family workshop on spiritual gifts and held the annual 4th grade Bible Potluck program. In the spring, the Pre-School 3 year olds through first graders enjoyed a trial workshop rotation format, we welcomed 21 Confirmands into our flock, the church school raised \$1,932.45 to benefit the Heifer project, and the entire congregation delighted in the Children's Day service themed, "Peacemakers." Over the summer, PS3- 2nd grade learned about the parables of Jesus and we offered a modified Vacation Bible School program entitled "Christian Explorers Club." Thirty children participated in this 3 day event. As we moved into the fall, in addition to working through the staff changes, we prepared for a new church school year, offered a new play group (coordinated by Anne Eisbach), invited 3rd grade children to the Communion Potluck Dinner, and collected 64 shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. The youth group program was supported with the creation of a foundational Safety Manual, safety policies, and Resource Adult training events. The "CIA" youth group changed its name to "Stepping Stones" and the 2007 confirmation class began with 24 members in attendance. Just recently we delighted in the annual Christmas pageant, coordinated by Linda Milton and Donna Andrews.

Recruitment of teachers and shepherds to staff the church school, and mentors for the confirmation class, has been particularly difficult this year. An enormous "thank you" goes out to all who gave of their time and talents and an extra special "thank you" to those who volunteered for the very first time.

Many thanks also to Grace Knipe, Joellyn Jason, Donna Andrews, and Peggy Allen who have helped above and beyond.

Finally, extraordinary gratitude to the members of the CE Board: Sherry Gray, Joellyn Jason, Donna Andrews, Sharon Fuller, Kate Hall, Rich Grudzias, Emilee Ziolkowski, Jim Parys, Will Arpaia, and Emily Cowles.

Respectfully submitted,
Cornelia Voils and Debra Bond, Co-chairs

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Routine work continues to maintain our grounds and 180 year old building. Due to increases in utilities and oil, we needed to pay close attention to our spending, and the priorities were required expenses, safety, and preservation.

In conjunction with the Executive Board, we hosted a reception for outgoing Treasurer, Marshall Tucker and Assistant Treasurer, Joy Deegan, each serving over 20 years each.

We started our year by having a special meeting, reviewing how we routinely did business. This caused us to create subcommittees to handle much of the routine business and report back to the full board with recommendations for action allowing time to discuss more pressing matters. The three major categories of the Trustees were identified as: Money (subcommittees – cash flow, investments, and budgeting and strategic planning); Facilities (subcommittees – buildings and grounds); People (subcommittees – human resources, management, and safety).

In trying to have a better handle on cash flow, we asked boards and committees to project their expenditures for the year. We also asked that a “Request for Payment” be submitted for large expenditures (\$500 or more), prior to committing the expenditure.

Due to changes in CT DEP regulations, we did not spray for ticks this year. This is consistent with the action of the Town of Cheshire. We reviewed the final draft of the regulations for the Historic District, and had representation at the Historic District Commission to discuss these regulations. The fire equipment was upgraded to assure that we are code compliant. We worked with the Deacons and the Board of Music to set guidelines for use of the sanctuary. We increased the space use charge for the day care program from \$300 to \$600 a month. We are in the process of reviewing the agreement between the church and the day care program. The floor under the steeple clock has been shorn up and reinforced to repair the sagging. The water conveyance system for gutter drainage was completed in the spring. Plans to repair Church Drive (in conjunction with the town), continue and the work should be started in the spring of 2007. After receiving a completed copy of our property map, we sent letters to our neighbors with abutting property, informing them of our property line. Some have structures on our property and while we do not intend to request they remove those structures, we are not relinquishing our right to the property through inaction. A new computer was purchased for the Youth Ministry Office. Funding to repair the sound board in the sanctuary piano was authorized and monies will come from the organ reserve fund. The resurfacing/replacing of the top level of the front steps was done in August with money from the Cornerstone Loan. With the work completed, the loan was converted to a mortgage and this allowed us to use the Challenge money to repay most of the loan. Later we approved use of Thorpe Fund monies, and borrowed from the building fund to pay off the Cornerstone Mortgage. The building fund money will be repaid from Thorpe Fund income disbursements in 2007.

The board voted to approve the proposal of the investment subcommittee to Total Return Investment and Spending Policy for the JP Morgan/Chase fund. This allows a set income based on the value of the fund on December 31, for the following year. The rate of income will be reviewed at least annually in November.

The trustees have volunteered to host and send church members to a session of *This Old House of Worship*, which is an educational program related to effective energy consumption, efficiency and conservation offered by the Inter-religious Eco- Justice Network.

There continues to be much work for the future as we maintain and preserve our historic building and implement our programs.

Katherine Duffendack,
Chair

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Although we were a small committee, it was one where commitment and enthusiasm were evident. Our goal was to determine how we can encourage people to join our church and how to best foster those relationships so that new members feel they are a part of the church community. Early in the year, we spent our time assessing what initiatives had worked in the past and what may need reevaluating. Some of the things we defined as important and acted on were:

1. Members of the committee took part in the Small Group Expo in the fall. This seemed to be a nice addition to the Parish Post and Bulletin invitations to consider church membership. The expo provided a personal introduction to what the membership process entails and connected faces to the committee. Questions and fears could be easily fielded face-to-face. Shepherds (members who are invited to match up with a joining family as a resource and connection to the church) were also invited to sign up. Twelve people signed up for the New Member Orientation.
2. A Shepherd Manual 101 was created for the church members willing to take part in this vital role of “shepherding”. It helped define the goals and expectations of a Shepherd. It is the shepherd who is able to create a more intimate relationship with the new member and helps he/she become familiar with the church opportunities and people. Although not a new role in Membership, the act of shepherding was given more attention after being looked at more closely. We have 7 new Shepherds as of October, 2006. They are: Phyllis Balser, Marilyn Donovan, Pam and Ken Euerle, Donna Mead, Carol-Lynn Murphy, and Gary Rowe.
3. New member orientation sessions have traditionally been held over the course of three weeks, 1 evening per week. For a variety of reasons, people often could not commit to all 3 sessions. Therefore, we introduced a one day (9 a.m. -2 p.m.) orientation that included babysitting services, lunch, committee members, new members, and their shepherds. This proved to be quite successful. It allowed more time to explore questions in greater depth and members were joined by their shepherds much sooner in the process, allowing new relationships to develop right away.
4. The annual picnic was replaced with a semi-yearly event. The thinking was that a celebration to mark the new member event should happen sooner after membership. Members who joined in October shared in a potluck dinner at a committee member’s home. The new members for 2006 are: Ken Anderson, Christine Baillie, Matthew and Katie Childs, Mark and Patti Dickinson, James and Jeannine Plaster, Bob and Bobbie Porter and Ernie and Martha Swartz. Committee Members, Shepherds and Alison McCaffrey attended. It was a wonderful evening of fellowship.
5. The Membership Committee meets once monthly, taking time off during July and August. Monthly meetings provide for a relationship within the committee and collaborative vision for its future.
6. Parish Post bios were provided for each joining member.
7. Letters of welcome were sent to each of the Shepherds.
8. Jim Murnane, Gary Rowe, and Jan Cowles attended the Men’s Breakfast on November 1 to discuss the present and future vision of the committee.

9. The calendar for new member orientation is published so that the sessions can be anticipated. Sessions will be held in the spring and the fall of each year. The next session will be March 3, 2007 with the reception to follow on March 18, 2007.
10. Fellowship, Welcoming and Membership met for an evening of programming, sharing goals and idea inspiration.
11. A questionnaire was developed as a guideline for how Shepherds might gather feedback from their new member families. It will provide information as to what was helpful, what wasn't helpful, and what would have been helpful as well as how they have become involved in the church. The information will be used for future membership planning. The intent is to collect this information twice yearly to ensure the committee's work is in-line with member expectations.

We are encouraged by the steps we have taken in defining our place within the church, to reach out, to become better observers and participators in helping people feel more welcome in the church. The spirit of the committee is contagious. Alison helped us grow in our vision as we grew more prayerful.

Committee Members: Joan Benedetto, Sharon Brenneman, Jan Cowles, Charles Jones, Jim Murnane, Gary Rowe and Julie Witte. (Kathy Fraher and Gene Weller respectfully withdrew due to personal conflicts. Pam Euerle has attended our meetings and will officially join next month).

*Do not neglect to show
Hospitality to strangers
For by doing that, some
Have entertained angels
Without knowing it*

Hebrews 13:2

Jan Cowles and Julie Witte
Co-Chairs

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

The Fellowship Committee coordinates hosts for the coffee hours at 9:00 and 11:00 each Sunday from September thru June. Additionally we assist with other hospitality activities such as coordinating the pans for the baking of cranberry breads which were handed out after the Lessons and Carols service.

Karin Arai

FLOWER COMMITTEE

The 2006 Flower Committee consisted of Betsy Adams (Co-Chair), Ruth Gleeton, Sharon Graver (Co-Chair), Lynn Hackett, Regina Hackett, Marge Kemp, Suzanne Lawson, Lori Mann, and Pat Musante.

The purpose of the Flower Committee is to coordinate the donation of the flowers that are given in honor of and in memory of family and friends as well as to arrange for the presence of flowers for weekly services and special events. A brief meeting was held in January to set up a schedule for the callers/runners. A description of the positions was handed out and explained. Prior to the annual meeting, the flower committee hosted the coffee hour with flower donation sign up for 2006. This will be done again the early part of the first quarter of 2007.

At both Easter and Christmas people were given the opportunity to sign up for the Easter Lilies and Poinsettia's. Two members in our congregation own plant farms so we will continue to work with two

different farms each year, one for Easter and one for Christmas. We continue to have the flowers/lilies delivered directly to the church. Any money that we had over and above expenses this year was given to the Outreach Board.

We worked with Alison McCaffrey again this year, creating special flower and palm arrangements for Palm Sunday which included palms hanging from the balcony. Over ninety lilies were purchased for Easter.

In November, Pat Musante resigned for personal reasons. The head of the Nominating Committee was contacted and a new member was found.

We continue to be fulfilled by the work that we do. With our assistance, those sick or shut in receive flowers weekly, not just during the holidays. The flowers help to brighten the lives of many.

At Christmas, we bought 80 poinsettias. Most were distributed to the sick and shut-ins.

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the flower program this year.

Betsy Adams and Sharon Graver,
Co-Chairs

HISTORY COMMITTEE

As an event is taking place, one doesn't usually stop to consider that something may be happening that is worthy of being included in our church's history.

Here are some of the things that we want to record for those who will look back at what happened at The First Congregational Church of Cheshire in 2006:

- A Challenge made by a generous church family was presented to the congregation at the annual meeting in January – they would donate \$50,000 if the congregation could match it by March 31. The congregation gathered in the annual meeting accepted this challenge with great enthusiasm. Two other donors came forward later to make the total challenge amount \$150,000, with the additional \$100,000 to be raised by June 30, 2006. This challenge was met and exceeded, allowing us to retire the Cornerstone mortgage.
- Parish Care, under the direction of the Reverend Peggy Allen, made great strides in the ministries already in place and new ones initiated by Peggy; i.e. the Caring Christian visitors program, Card Ministry, and an expanded prayer pager ministry. Our second annual Healing service was held on April 2. Led by clergy and Stephen Ministers, it included scripture and prayer, with private intercessory prayer for those who desired it. We said goodbye to Peggy in July as her commitment with us ended. At that time, the Parish Care Search Team was close to hiring a permanent, part-time Associate Minister for Parish Care. Unfortunately, circumstances did not allow this to happen and the search was renewed. Budget constraints at the end of 2006 forced this position to be put on hold for 2007. The Parish Care Committee, under the direction of Jim Van Der Beek, is putting much energy into keeping the various ministries actively caring for our parishioners but there are many circumstances when a minister's direction is needed.
- Under Alison McCaffrey's direction, Parish Hall was transformed into a Biblical setting for Maundy Thursday. Following scripture narrative, we shared a meal in the Passover tradition as Jesus and his disciples would have shared it together, ending with communion.

- Amy Webb-Mower and Robin Sellati again put together spring and fall benefit concerts for the Malawi Ministry of this church. Over \$20,000 has been raised for our work among the orphans in Nthandizi, Malawi. This enabled a nutritional breakfast program to be established and provided money for schooling, etc.
- Lynda Bigler, our student intern from Yale Divinity School, concluded her time with us in May and we welcomed Lisa Horst, our new intern, in September.
- The Confirmation Class held its “Bread for Hunger” fundraiser on the Church Green in April with proceeds going to the Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans, benefiting hurricane victims in 25 counties in the area of New Orleans.
- The Board of Music, under Joe D’Eugenio’s direction, presented its first ever concert on the Green. It was on a beautiful Saturday evening in July (8th) when hundreds of people gathered to hear “The Great American Songbook”. Also new this year, was the return of the Lessons and Carols Service to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 17.
- For the second year, the State of CT Extension Service in Hamden gave the church Parson’s Japan chestnut tree saplings to use as a fundraiser. The saplings are the offspring of the church’s chestnut tree and the chestnut tree at the Bee and Thistle Inn in Old Lyme, CT.
- The 69th Annual Strawberry Festival was held on Saturday, June 10. The weather cleared just in time for the large crowd to enjoy 1,500 strawberry shortcakes, 500 hamburgers/cheeseburgers, and 600 hotdogs while listening to the tree bands. Over 80 church volunteers made this day a huge success.
- Our Team Steeplechase finished in the top ten percent of those teams participating in Cheshire’s American Cancer Society Relay for Life by raising over \$9,000 for the American Cancer Society. The team’s efforts were chaired by Betsy Adams and Anne Dacey.
- In August, our Senior Minister Rick Dacey informed the congregation that he had accepted a call for a five-year placement as the Team Leader at the West Epping Uniting Church in Australia. He will conclude his ministry at First Church on January 7, 2007. We are sad to see Rick and his family leave, but we wish them God’s blessing in their new ministry.
- In September, the All-Church Picnic was held at Mixville Park and a good time was had by all!
- Glenn Root, Director of Youth Ministry, informed the Board of Christian Education that he had taken a position in the private sector and would be leaving First Church on August 31. Because a suitable candidate was not immediately available, the Search Committee asked the Reverend Matthew McCaffrey to fill the position as an interim. Matt brings youth work experience to the position and was able to step right in.
- A Communication Task Force was formed mid-year to examine all the means of communication that take place in this church and to come up with a plan to improve our communications.
- The Mark Project, led by Rick Dacey and the Scripture by Heart group, met with an interested group of people who read and memorized the book of Mark and presented it in dramatic form on December 8.
- The congregation continues to extend its care beyond our doors through the dinners, gifts, household items, clothing, etc that is provided to individuals/families through our connection with a Covenant to Care social worker in Waterbury. Also, our Board of Outreach’s Annual Mission Day gives parishioners an opportunity to do “hands-on” work at several of the agencies we support monetarily.
- On a small note, the 5th and 6th grade fellowship group known as the Christians In Action decided to change its name to Stepping Stones.
- In addition to requests from church boards, there were several requests for information from individuals who were doing genealogy searches.

While some of the above seem may seem trivial, each note is important for someone who is trying to track the history of how and when something happened in our church.

Martha Lape
History Committee

VIDEO COMMITTEE

The Video Committee remains a sub committee with a representative from the Deacons as our liaison. This works out well as we need trained people to work the booth. We produce 3 video tapes and a DVD each week. The DVD is delivered to COX and one tape is placed in the library.

As of now, Brian Leonard and I are the only two adults serving on this committee and we need more help. We have two teenagers who are able to work both the booth and cameras but will be losing them to college. We are responsible for our own staffing which can be difficult at times.

We were able to have the equipment looked over by a professional at no cost to us and things seem to be running more smoothly. Occasionally, we do have trouble with the sound (there may be a short).

We have successfully taped most 9:00 church services and have taped other events by special request. You can watch our worship service on the COX Communications (channel 15) 6:00 p.m. time slot on Tuesdays. It has to be renewed four times a year and so far we have been fortunate to be able to renew for the same day and time.

Respectfully Submitted,
Betty Pritchard

CHESHIRE INTERFAITH HOUSING COMMITTEE

Vera Keane, a long time supporter of affordable housing in Cheshire, donated her home on Roslyn Drive to Cheshire Interfaith Housing. The house is currently being rehabilitated by volunteers to standards of a new house in preparation for a family that qualifies for affordable housing. A November tag sale of Vera's and other donated household items generated about \$650 and lots of publicity. A piano and two Hitchcock chairs are still available. Applications from interested buyers are currently being accepted. A committee will screen applications and interview potential homeowners. This is the sixth house that CIH has made available for affordable housing in Cheshire.

Bill Grime and Barbara Barlok represent First Congregational Church of Cheshire on the CIH Board of Directors.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

This year the personnel committee:

- Made a recommendation to the executive board regarding employee benefits, and reviewed conference guidelines on salary levels; the committee's stance is that church support health and retirement benefits are a primary concern for the equitable and just treatment of all employees
- Participated in negotiations for three positions: associate minister for parish care, interim youth director, and interim senior minister
- Conducted exit interviews with Glenn Root and Rick Dacey as they have moved on to new ministries in other settings
- Recommended to the bylaws revision committee a more active and involved statement of purpose for the Personnel Committee.

This has been a particularly active year for the personnel committee, especially in the fall. The good and faithful judgment of the committee members on behalf of the faithful servants of this church have been vitally important to our well being as a congregation in transition.

Ruth MacDonald
Chair

DELEGATES – CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE AND NEW HAVEN ASSOCIATION

During 2006, the clergy and delegates attended meetings of the New Haven Association and the statewide Connecticut Conference.

139th Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference

Over five hundred delegates and clergy attended the **Spring Session** on May 13 at the First Congregational UCC, in Middletown. Among the speakers at the meeting were Rev. Dr. Beth Nordbeck, (Andover Newton Theological Seminary) who discussed the heritage and development of New England Congregationalism. Updates on the progress of the Campaign for Silver Lake and preparations for General Synod 2007 were presented. Conference Minister, Davida Foy Crabtree, reviewed the continuing decline in local church contributions to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM), the gifts which support Conference, National, and International ministries of the UCC. While she celebrated the generosity of CT churches (including over \$680,000 donated in response to the Asian Tsunami and Gulf Coast hurricanes), she did report that basic mission support in 2005 fell by 9%. For 2006, the Conference Board of Directors anticipates a further 7% decline in OCWM Basic Support, which, when combined with other revenue decreases, will result in a \$132,000 shortfall. The Conference has reduced staff and mission support in order to help compensate for this decline. Two full-time positions were reduced to part-time, and support for most mission programs has been substantially reduced.

The **Fall Session**, attended by over 600 delegates and clergy, was held at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford on October 20-21. Highlights of this meeting included an address from Conference Minister Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree, a presentation illustrating the impact that CT Conference gifts have had on communities around the world from Wider Church Ministries Executive Minister Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte, and the finalized plans for the Silver Lake Campaign (*Now for the Future*). Delegates also attended four forums featuring personnel from Wider Church Ministries. Additionally, the delegates voted in favor of four resolutions: 1) Addressing Food Insecurity in Connecticut, 2) In Support of the Connecticut Commission for United Ministry in Higher Education, 3) Affirming Peaceful Alternatives to War on Iran, and 4) To Abolish Torture Now—Without Exceptions. The delegates also authorized a \$4,784,855 conference budget for 2007, based on a \$2,016,877 OCWM Basic Support goal and a \$5.00 per member contribution rate.

To celebrate Silver Lake and its fifty years of outdoor ministry, the 2007 spring session will be held May 12 on the Silver Lake grounds in Sharon. The major CT Conference event for 2007 will be to host the 26th General Synod of the UCC in Hartford from June 22-26.

Specific information about the General Synod and all CT Conferences activities is available at the conference website, www.ctucc.org.

Jay Knipe
Conference Delegate

THE WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The Women's Fellowship consists of three groups: The Tuesday Circle, Colonizers, and the Ladies Aid. There is a representative for each group who meet when needed. This year the three groups hosted an informal talk by Rick Dacey for all the women of the church; refreshments were included. The talk was well attended.

The Women's Fellowship donates to specific outreach projects. Each group meets separately once a month and has its own specific outreach and "in church" projects, the Christmas Fair and the Strawberry Festival being two of them.

We invite all the women of the church to participate in one or all of them.

MEN'S BREAKFAST FELLOWSHIP

The Men's Breakfast met eighteen times during the year with an average attendance of fifteen members. We meet in the Parish Hall at 6:30 a.m. on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from mid-September to mid-June. Members volunteer to provide a "Continental" style breakfast and to call the membership prior to each meeting.

There is a member or guest speaker for each meeting. Topics range from religious themes to Civic related subjects. These presentations usually spark questions from the group followed by spirited discussions.

Current members include: John Afman, Mohsen Akhavan, Wes Alexander, Russ Bristol, Chris Cowles, John Crowell, Bill Eagleson, Dick Eppler, Bill Gordon, Farshid Hakim, Bob Johmann, Dennis Lape, Joe Madden, Bob Mead, Dick Miller, Harry Payne, Roy Pritchard, Tom Reid, Marshall Tucker, and Marvin Turner.

A synopsis of each meeting may be found in the loose leaf binders, "Men's Breakfast Fellowship", located in the church library.

Bob Johmann
Coordinator

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Members: Jane Richards, Janet Gordon, Joan Kevorkian, Sally Blakely, Ruth Eppler, Ruth Gleeton

The Library Committee met on the first Monday of each month with the exception of July & August.

Objectives: To establish a collection of books, CD's, tapes and videos in the meeting of religious needs of the church family.

Responsibilities: Additions and deletions to the collection is the responsibility of the library committee. Recommendations from staff and the congregation will be welcomed and considered, but not binding in these decisions. In November, the Committee hosted a very successful coffee hour in the Parish Hall.

Collection Criteria: Materials in various media will be included if the Committee deems them appropriate for the church library. Books not signed out in at least 15 years are being discarded as we continue to weed out books. Discarded books are placed on a cart and are available to the congregation.

Major Accomplishment: The Children's Library book shelves were painted this summer. With Debbie Gravell's help we made a big effort to notify the children and parents of the change and encourage them to stop by, browse, and check out a book. For three Sundays in a row, Committee members assisted the Sunday school children in checking out books. We ordered special bookmarks and made them available to every child who visited the library.

Budget: Our budget is limited and we welcome donations or memorial gifts to purchase books.

We sincerely hope that church members take advantage of our extensive collection. Simply sign the book card, leave it in the box and return the book to the same location. We always list new additions in the Parish Post. Enjoy.

Janet Gordon
Chairman

CHURCH CLERK

Summaries of the minutes of Church Meetings held during 2006 are listed below. The complete minutes may be found in the Church Report and are available to interested parties.

Annual Meeting January 23, 2006 for the following purposes:

1. Accepting the Annual Report for 2005
2. Electing Officers, Board and Committee members
3. Conducting any other business that may properly be brought before the church.

Resolution: Items 1 and 2 were accepted and passed. Henry McNulty, a church member requesting the Church Budget be presented to the congregational members at the time of the Church Call, so all may be prepared for the Annual Meeting, presented item 3.

Church Meeting December 10, 2006 for the following purposes:

1. The Approval of the Final Budget for 2007
2. Accepting the Resignation of Senior Minister Richard L. Dacey
3. Hearing the report of the Nominating Committee
4. Hearing a report of the Communications Task Force
5. An update on the Search Committees

Resolutions: Item 1: The Final Budget for 2007 as approved by the Executive Board was presented by Walt Ryan, Treasurer. Item 2: The Resignation letter of Senior Minister Richard L. Dacey was read; there was a vote to accept Rick's resignation as of January 8, 2007. Item 3: The Nominating Committee Report was read; as this is a preliminary report, there was no vote necessary. Item 4: A summary report from the Communications Task Force was presented; the details are available both in the Church Office and on the Church Website. Item 5: A brief update was made on the status of the Ministry Searches. The Interim Senior Minister Search Committee reported that the interview process is proceeding well and the plan remains to call an interim in January, 2007. The Search Committee for the Associate Minister for Parish Care is on hold temporarily. Alison McCaffrey will move the focus of her ministry temporarily from Parish Life to the parish care ministry needs of the church during this time.

CHURCH STATISTICS

Total Membership as of December 31, 2005 **1044**

Admissions

Confirmation Class	22
Confession of Faith	3
Reaffirmation of Faith	7
Letter of Transfer	11
Total Admissions	43

Dismissions

Letter of Transfer	3
Transfer to Inactive	4
Deaths	12
Total Dismissions	19

Total Membership as of December 31, 2006 **1068**

ADMISSIONS

CONFIRMATION CLASS

Katya Amberg	Connor Murphy
Melanie Belanger	Eric Olander*
Chelsea Clouse	Lindsay Reihl
Jack Donahue	Sarah Roberts
Colby Gibbs	Bradley Runowicz
Samantha Granoth	Will Sayre
Steven Howard	Stephanie Turner
Joel Kelleher	Liz Visconti
Dan Leonard	Barbara Voils
Hannah Louys*	Alexander vonFischer
Valerie Massa	Geoffrey Wright

*baptism

CONFESSION OF FAITH

Kenneth Anderson
Jim Plaster
Marshall Robinson*

*baptism

RE- AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Katie Childs	Patti Dickinson
Matthew Childs	Carol-lynn Murphy
Maureen Crowley	Tina Poincelot
Mark Dickinson	

BY LETTER OF TRANSFER

Christine Baillie
Chris Fitzmaurice
Laurie Hart
Tim Hart
Jeannine Plaster
Dan Poincelot

Bob Porter
Bobbie Porter
Ernie Swartz
Martha Swartz
Christy Tomko

DISMISSIONS

TRANSFERRED TO INACTIVE

Gail Goddard
Amy LoGatto
Anne McBain
David McBain

FUNERALS AND DEATHS

Nancy C. Bates*
Lorraine Marie Brown*#
Horace E. Cogle, Jr.*
Alfred H. Dicks, Jr.*
Barbara S. Dowling*
David Euerle, Jr.
Susan Euler
Natalie Felske*
William Duncan Ferguson*
Eleanor Gravino
Thomas Grenfell

Paul Merriman Hotchkiss
Elizabeth Ives
Elenor Knickerbocker**
Lois Lalley*
Chief Chris Loudon
Barbara Merrill*
Warren Moon*
Ellen L. Morton*
Elizabeth Sanders
Gary Thiverge
Roger Waszmer*

*Member

**Inactive Member

*#2005 death (not included in 2005 Annual Report)

REMOVED BY LETTER OF TRANSFER

Nancy Gish Casella**
Sarah Dowling
Jennifer Lynn Mattson
Mary M. Mack

**Inactive Member

BAPTISMS

Connor William Atwater
Champ Keane Baumgarten
Alexandra Katherine Bradley
Payton Anne Bradley
Christopher Hamilton Childs
Lachlan Andrew Dacey
Amelia Sutton Devine
Caitlin Jessie Fanning

Jordan Keith Hallett
Kathryn Grace Lombino
Hannah Elizabeth Louys**
Aidan Tyler McCauley
Whitney Ann Milton*
Kayla Michelle Mingo
Kacey Rose Mitchell
Eric Roger Olander**

BAPTISMS (continued)

Colin Douglas Fanning
James Bernard Fanning III
Colby Bryce Fasano
Jackson Tyler Forlenza
Madelyn Elizabeth Forlenza
Trevor Brian Gould
Mason Christopher Graham

Pascal David Preud'homme
Sebastien Henri Preud'homme
Caitlyn Arianna Rivera
Marshall Keith Robinson*
Nichole Alexandria Stuart
Kalvin Ikaika-Loa Suarez
Jack Patrick Matthew Suomala

*Adult Baptism
**Confirmation Baptism

WEDDINGS

John Anthony Giorgio, Sr.	to	Audrey Ellen Barker
Andrew Neal Matzkin	to	Brenda Jean Prentice*
James Robert Plaster	to	Jeannine Margo LaPlante
Peter John Savage	to	Sharlene Marie Brennan
James Joseph Shanley	to	Kristen Louise Heiligman*
John Hilzinger	to	Juliet Pufahl

*Member

FINANCIAL SECRETARY

2006 – The year of “The Challenge” – and was it ever!

During 2006 we processed	\$1,066,235.47
Challenge Fund	361,133.27
Pledge payments totaled	590,543.15
Plate and Sunday school	60,486.94
Prepaid for 2007	25,745.00
Past year pledges	2,418.50

Other significant offerings were youth activities, Memorial Music, Christmas Fund, One Great Hour of Sharing, Aids Orphans, and Lent Event.

We counted and sometimes cheered during the season of the Challenge. Finally, we celebrated when the Challenge was met.

Our group meets, greets, and counts each Tuesday. Dennis Lape (our computer person) does much more than enter numbers; he multi-tasks as do Ann Madden and Louise Petrasko. Dick Mattson, Nora Adams, and Peggy Conant are alternatives, depended upon to step in when one of the regulars can't make it.

This has been both a special and challenging year.

Emma Norback
Financial Secretary

CHURCH OFFICERS AND BOARDS/COMMITTEES FOR 2007

<u>OFFICERS</u>		<u>TERM EXPIRES</u>
President	Susan Hostage	2008
Clerk	*Christine Albrecht	2008
Treasurer	*Walter Ryan	2008
Associate Treasurer	*Betsy Barber	2008
Assistant Treasurer	*Sara Buell	2008
Moderator	*Robert Giddings	2008
Assist. Moderator	*Dennis Clark	2008
Financial Secretaries	*Emma Norback	2010
	Dennis Lape	2008
	Ann Madden	2009
	Louise Petrasko	2008
Alternates	*Richard Mattson	2008
	*Peggy Conant	2008
	*Nora Adams	2008
Auditor	*Harry Black	2008
Historian	*Richard Eppler	2008
Women's Fellowship Rep.	*Addie Marx	2008

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Members-at-large	Dennis Lape	2008
	Mark Hall	2009
	*Kathy Duffendack	2010

BOARD OF DEACONS

Ken Euerle	2008	Jim Louys	2009
Susan Mancinelli	2008	*Elsa Bradford	2010
Howard Murphy (Sr. Deacon)	2008	*Jackie Cole	2010
Robin Sellati	2008	*Tony Farina	2010
Ford Cole	2009	*Donna Mead	2010
Joy Deegan	2009	*	(Youth) 2008
Don Lee	2009	*	(Youth) 2008

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Bill Gordon	2008	Lisa Mendes (co-chair)	2009
Martha Lape	2008	Kevin Ross	2009
Ken Stevens	2008	*Holly Crowell	2010
Ted Wright (co-chair)	2008	*Bill Eagleson	2010
Bob Mead (secretary)	2009	*Matt Glatt	2010
Ed Albrecht	2009	*Rich Kruczek	2010

BOARD OF OUTREACH

*Ken Anderson 2008
Matt McCaffrey 2008
Leah Sanders 2008
Sue Walker 2008
Lisa Canas 2009
Heather Musante 2009

Beth Ross 2009
*Amy Webb-Mower 2009
*Gretchen Bates 2010
*Joy Biggart 2010
*Sandy Chavez 2010
*Kerrie Dunne 2010
* (Youth) 2008

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Donna Andrews 2008
Sharon Fuller 2008
Kate Hall 2008
*Ellen Wright 2008
Will Arpaia 2009
Debra Bond 2009

Jim Parys 2009
Emilee Ziolkowski 2009
*Sue Branzell 2010
*Grace Knipe 2010
*Lynn Ryan 2010
*Peggy Allen 2010
*Kelly Swartz (Youth) 2008
* (Youth) 2008

BOARD OF MUSIC

Jennifer France 2008
Robert Giddings 2008
Roger Olander 2008
Audrey Finkenstadt 2009
*Judy Ozdemirer 2009

Melanie Pivrotto 2009
*Jane Bower 2010
*Marty Swartz 2010
*Tina Poincelot 2010
* (Youth) 2008

BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

Richard Cushing 2008
Elizabeth Esty 2008
*Norman Thompson 2008
*Mike Pownall 2009
* 2009

*Betty Pritchard (Secretary) 2009
*Tony DePaolo (Chair) 2010
*Ruth MacDonald (Exe Bd Rep) 2010
*Laura Whinfield 2010

FLOWER COMMITTEE

Lynn Hackett 2008
Marge Kemp 2008
*Karen Pettit 2008
Ruth Gleeton 2009
Sharon Graver 2009

*Lori Mann 2009
*Karin Arai 2010
*Kelly Bunn 2010
*Jenell Janes 2010

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Carol Tucker 2008
Marianne Eagleson 2008
Gary Rowe 2009

June Webster 2009
*Martha Triplett-Strollo 2010
*Jaclyn Hissick 2010
*(Youth) 2008

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Sally Blakely 2008
Ruth Gleeton 2008
Ruth Eppler 2009

Janet Gordon 2009
*Joan Kevorkian 2010
*Nancy Turner 2010

HISTORY COMMITTEE

Robert Mead 2008 *Martha Lape 2010
*Marshall Tucker 2009

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Mike Donahue 2008 Dawn Smith 2009
Steve Holtman 2008 *Bob Porter 2010
Dan Esty 2009 *Jolinda Heavens 2010

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

2008 Jan Cowles 2009
*Gary Rowe 2008 Charles Jones 2009
2008 *Phyllis Balsler 2010
Julie Witte 2008 *M'Liss D'Angelo 2010
Sharon Brenneman 2009 *Pam Euerle 2010

DELEGATES

CT CONFERENCE & NEW HAVEN ASSN.

MINISTRIES

Joe Holstein 2008
Pam Euerle 2008
Ken Euerle 2008
John Afman 2009
Karen Gravino 2009
* 2009
*Jack Sellati 2010
*Norman Thompson 2010
*Laura Whinfield 2010

GREATER WATERBURY INTERFAITH

Hugh Larson 2008
Farshid Hakim (alternate) 2008

CHESHIRE INTERFAITH HOUSING

*Barbara Barlok 2010
*Wilson Grime 2010

USHERING COMMITTEE

Ken Euerle 2008
Dick Mattson 2008
Steve Canada 2009
Jim Lyke 2009

*Noureen Hakim 2010
* 2010
*Hugh Larson (9 Youth Chair) 2010
Mark Hostage (Asst. Youth Chair) 2009

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

*Betsy Adams (chair) 2008
*Mark Hostage 2008
*Ann Izzo 2008
*Suzanne Lawson 2008
*Roy Pritchard 2008
*Penny Schuckers 2008
*Charlene Black 2008
*Anne Giddings 2008
* 2008
* 2008

**First Congregational Church of Cheshire
Statement of Receipts and Disbursements
for the Year Ended December 31, 2006**

	2006 Actual	Proposed 2007 Budget	Revised 2007 Budget	F / (U) to Proposed
Receipts				
Pledges and Prepaid	\$ 608,558	\$ 597,000	\$ 624,338	\$ 27,338
Plate and Church School	60,482	55,000	55,000	-
Carryover	2,419	-	-	-
Checking Account Interest	11	100	100	-
Trust Fund Income	18,302	25,000	25,000	-
Use of Facilities & Miscellaneous	4,857	2,500	2,500	-
Rent-Whiting House	8,400	8,400	8,400	-
Rent-Daycare	4,800	7,200	7,200	-
Initial Offerings	187	200	200	-
Music Committee Fundraisers		4,000	4,000	-
Reserve Funds				-
Total Other Income	99,458	102,400	102,400	-
Total Receipts - Budget Items	708,016	699,400	726,738	27,338
Staff Salaries and Benefits				
Senior Minister				
Salary	47,302	47,302	46,393	909
Parsonage Allow	4,500	4,500	21,491	(16,991)
Soc Security Allow	5,493	5,493	5,281	212
Annuity	10,052	10,052	9,085	967
Health Insurance	14,846	15,588	6,621	8,967
Disability Insurance	1,077	1,077	974	103
Equity Paym Fund	4,116	4,300	-	4,300
Travel Allowance	2,004	2,000	1,961	39
Total	89,390	90,312	91,806	(1,494)
Assoc Minister				
Salary	31,360	31,360	32,300	(940)
Parish Life				
Housing Allow	22,200	22,200	22,866	(666)
Soc Security Allow	4,097	4,097	4,220	(123)
Annuity	7,498	7,498	7,723	(225)
Health Insurance	9,751	14,670	14,670	-
Disability Insurance	803	803	827	(24)
Travel Allowance	26	1,000	1,000	-
Total	75,735	81,628	83,606	(1,978)
Assoc Minister				
Salary	4,083	-	-	-
Parish Care				
Housing Allow	10,500	-	-	-
Soc Security Allow	875	-	-	-
Travel/Prof Exp	65	-	-	-
Total	15,523	-	-	-
C E Director				
Salary	39,748	36,704	37,805	(1,101)
Annuity	5,139	5,139	5,293	(154)
Health Insurance	7,128	7,484	7,484	-
Disability Insurance	601	551	568	(17)
Travel/Educ Allow	496	500	500	-
Total	53,112	50,378	51,650	(1,272)
C E Youth				
Salary	20,659	27,671	28,501	(830)
Director				
Health Insurance	9,180	6,885	6,885	-
Travel/Educ Allow	513	1,000	1,000	-
Housing Allow	2,400	-	-	-
Total	32,752	35,556	36,386	(830)
Music Director				
Salary	36,402	36,400	37,492	(1,092)
Annuity	5,096	5,096	5,249	(153)
Health Insurance	13,971	14,670	14,670	-
Disability Insurance	546	549	565	(16)
Total	56,015	56,715	57,976	(1,261)
Handbell Choir Director-Salary	6,292	6,292	6,481	(189)
Office Manager/ Secretary				
Salary	38,105	38,000	39,140	(1,140)
Annuity	2,215	1,900	1,957	(57)
Total	40,320	39,900	41,097	(1,197)
Assistant Secretary-Salary	18,852	16,500	16,995	(495)
Supplemental Clerical Allowance	-	-	-	-
Sexton (Cleaning Service)	23,534	23,000	23,690	(690)
Sexton (Part Time)	10,740	12,750	13,133	(383)
Social Security Tax	14,670	15,200	15,658	(458)
Total Salary & Benefits	436,935	428,231	438,478	(10,247)

**First Congregational Church of Cheshire
Statement of Receipts and Disbursements
for the Year Ended December 31, 2006**

	2006 Actual	2007 Budget	2007 Budget	F / (U) to Proposed
Yale Student Interns		3,000	3,000	-
Pastoral Sabbatical Reserve		-	-	-
Conference & Seminar Exp-Staff	688	500	500	-
Career Devel / Higher Education		-	-	-
Professional Exp-Senior Minister	455	500	500	-
Professional Exp-Assoc Minister	662	500	500	-
Total	1,805	4,500	4,500	-
Total Staff Salaries & Benefits	438,740	432,731	442,978	(10,247)
Maintenance & Operation				
Office Supplies	5,099	5,000	6,000	(1,000)
Mailing/Postage	4,866	2,205	2,205	-
Printing	4,328	5,000	5,000	-
Office Machine - Maint Contract	3,583	-	-	-
Office Copier (C.E.) Maint Contract		500	500	-
Office Machine - Purchase	2,777	-	500	(500)
Office Machine - Lease		6,200	6,200	-
Fuel Oil				
Church Building	10,418	14,000	14,000	-
Parsonage	3,075	3,500	3,500	-
Telephone				
Church Building	1,946	2,250	2,250	-
Parsonage	489	750	750	-
Gas	4,615	8,700	8,700	-
Electricity				
Church Building	9,835	11,724	11,724	-
Parsonage	1,673	2,165	2,165	-
Whiting House	3,112	3,168	3,168	-
Water				
Church Building	979	800	800	-
Parsonage	399	400	400	-
Whiting House	474	500	500	-
Grounds - Maintenance	8,370	10,000	10,000	-
Insurance - Property & Liability	24,697	22,500	22,500	-
Insurance - Workers Compensation	4,552	4,275	4,275	-
Bldg Maint & Church Building	6,213	14,000	14,500	(500)
Repairs	16	1,000	1,000	-
Parsonage	580	1,000	1,000	-
Whiting House	580	1,000	1,000	-
Supplies & Services	4,959	5,500	5,500	-
Fire Alarm Maint Serv	3,343	3,500	3,500	-
Sewer Use Charge	1,493	1,800	1,800	-
Insurance Appraisal Fee	185	190	190	-
Cornerstone Mortgage Interest	20,861	4,000	4,000	-
Total	132,937	134,627	136,627	(2,000)
Reserves for Major Repair/Improvement				
Organ Maintenance Fund	2,500	9,800	9,800	-
Exterior Major Projects	3,000	12,250	12,250	-
Interior Major Projects	3,000	9,100	9,100	-
Administrative & Office Equip Reserve	2,500	1,750	1,750	-
Bldg, Mechanical & Misc	2,000	2,100	2,100	-
CE/Music Special Fund	1,000	-	-	-
Total	14,000	35,000	35,000	-
Christian Education				
Bibles	356	-	250	-
Educational Training	796	-	840	-
Conferences	-	-	-	-
Youth Ministry	4,364	-	4,900	-
Curriculum (Books) Church Sch	2,359	-	2,500	-
Curriculum - Confirmation	3,327	-	2,750	-
Curriculum - Adult	669	-	750	-
Supplies	3,537	-	2,500	-
Audio Visual	511	-	300	-
Church School & Family	648	-	750	-
Vacation Church School	(238)	-	-	-
Retreats	-	-	250	-
Summer Church School	99	-	280	-
Nursery	41	-	125	-
C I A	347	-	370	-
Background Checks	250	-	380	-
Postage Youths Ministries		-	340	-
Postage Christian Education		-	615	-
Total	17,066	14,500	17,900	(3,400)

**First Congregational Church of Cheshire
Statement of Receipts and Disbursements
for the Year Ended December 31, 2006**

	<u>2006 Actual</u>	<u>2007 Budget</u>	<u>2007 Budget</u>	<u>F / (U) to Proposed</u>
Music Board				
Music Board	1,058	-	900	
Office Supplies	30	-	200	
Fees and Licensing	830	-	250	
Instrument Maintenance	1,866	-	1,250	
Hire of Musicians	3,164	-	1,100	
Substitute Organists	200	-	270	
Professional Memberships		-	200	
Recording costs and credits		-	450	
Section Leaders		-	4,500	
Handbell and Youth choirs		-	343	
Total	<u>7,148</u>	<u>8,372</u>	<u>9,463</u>	<u>(1,091)</u>
Other Boards & Committees				
Executive Board	169	-	430	
Pastoral Search Expenses		-	1,800	
Website Committee	119	-	175	
Board of Deacons	1,770	-	2,400	
Parish Care Program	1,933	-	3,000	
Video Committee	117	-	700	
Membership Committee	798	-	430	
Fellowship Committee	145	-	175	
Historian		-	430	
Library Committee	203	-	175	
Stewardship Board	2,342	-	2,000	
Flower Committee	(1,016)	-	100	
Lay Delegates	195	-	430	
Welcoming / Hospitality	247	-	430	
Treasurer & Fin'l Secretary	636	-	975	
Total	<u>7,658</u>	<u>9,350</u>	<u>13,650</u>	<u>(4,300)</u>
Outreach				
UCC, State, Nat'l, World Missions	36,000	-	24,000	
Greater Wtby Interfaith Ministries	5,200	-	3,500	
New Haven Christian Com Action	5,200	-	3,500	
Discretionary Giving	7,563	-	10,700	
Youth Ministry-Mission Trip Res	6,000	-	6,000	
UCBWM - Foster Child	450	-	450	
Fuel Oil	2,800	-	2,000	
Food	2,800	-	2,000	
Fish of Greater New Haven	650	-	250	
Shelters	3,780	-	3,500	
Killiam's Point		-	-	
Cheshire Interfaith Housing	1,000	-	500	
Covenant for Care	2,345	-	2,000	
Yale Divinity School	875	-	-	
NH Assoc Scholarship Fund	1,700	-	1,700	
Taeria Fdn Helping Hands	1,300	-	1,000	
Back Bay Mission	400	-	300	
Will Santa Find Me	-	-	300	
Cromwell Children Home	250	-	200	
African AIDS/Orphans	700	-	700	
Habitat for Humanity	1,000	-	500	
Fellowship Place	400	-	300	
Webster Correctional Institution	200	-	300	
Heifer Project	400	-	200	
Small Groups Outreach	100	-	200	
Cheshire Dept Human Services	400	-	300	
Prison Ministry	3,500	-	1,500	
Total Discretionary	<u>85,013</u>	<u>59,600</u>	<u>65,900</u>	<u>(6,300)</u>
CT Conference dues (\$4/member)	4,176	4,176	4,176	-
Denominational Dues (NH Assoc)	652	1,044	1,044	-
Total Outreach	<u>89,841</u>	<u>64,820</u>	<u>71,120</u>	<u>(6,300)</u>

**First Congregational Church of Cheshire
Statement of Receipts and Disbursements
for the Year Ended December 31, 2006**

	<u>2006 Actual</u>	<u>2007 Budget</u>	<u>2007 Budget</u>	<u>F / (U) to Proposed</u>
Total Disbursements - Budget Items	707,390	699,400	726,738	(27,338)
NET RECEIPTS OVER DISBURSEMENTS - BUDGET	<u>626</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>