

374<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, January 28, 2018

# ANNUAL REPORT

For year 2017



*FIRST CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH*

(United Church of Christ)

1009 Main St., Branford, CT. 06405

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## **Ministerial and Administrative Staff**

Susan P. Trucksess	Associate Minister
Theresa Borchetta	Associate Minister, Youth and Families
Philip Rinehart	Director of Music & Adult Bell Choir
Katie Jones	Director of Vocal Choirs
Carol Titcomb	Youth Bell & Chime Director
Julia Novaco	FCCB Office Manager & CE Director
Pat Carroll	Bookkeeper
David Reif	Moderator
Jeff Buggee	Senior Deacon
John Woods	Sexton
Stephanie Linke	Director, Child Development Center
Parker Fox	Historian
Elisabeth Hyde	Web Administrator
Lil Sakai	Stephen Ministry Leader

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## **Mission Statement of the Staff of First Congregational Church**

Guided by the Holy Spirit, our mission is to teach the Biblical principles of love, care and respect for each other as exemplified through the teachings of Jesus Christ. Constant in our struggle to interpret the will of God in our lives and the life of the congregation we serve, we will lead by our example of prayer, outreach, teamwork, and creativity while nurturing the particular gifts of each person.

## **Welcoming Statement**

The First Congregational Church of Branford affirms the full diversity of God's creation and welcomes persons of differing views, of all national and ethnic backgrounds, and of all sexual orientations, without regard to worldly condition. We hope you will share your particular gifts and faith journeys with us and join us in our worship and work.

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# **374<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Branford**

Sunday, January 28, 2018

Immediately following 10:00am Worship Service

Meetinghouse

- Establishment of Quorum
- Call to Order
- Opening Prayer
- To approve the minutes of the 373<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting held January 29, 2017
- To receive the annual reports of officers, boards, committees and organizations affiliated with FCCB
- To transfer \$30,000 of the moneys realized from the 2013 sale of the Manse from the First Ecclesiastical Society Fund to the 2018 Operating Budget to offset ministerial housing compensation costs
- To transfer \$25,500 from the First Ecclesiastical Society to the 2018 Operating Budget for Capital Improvements for Lead Abatement and Electric Cost Reduction Lighting Project
- To act upon the proposed FCCB budget for 2018
- To elect officers, board and committee members and delegates of the church for 2018
- To take any other action that may properly come before this meeting
- Adjourn
- Benediction

## In Remembrance of Those Buried out of The First Congregational Church

*Linda Wood	2-14-17
Sienna Marie DiRienzo	2-14-17
*Victoria L. Dormer	3-2-17
*Elizabeth Mount	3-5-17
*Elsie Orff	3-19-17
*Barbara Mattson	4-1-17
*Edward Ochman	4-11-17
*Robert S. Hadley	4-23-17
*Robin Temple	4-23-17
*Marion Starkweather	5-3-17
*Jean Vansickles	6-12-17
Edwin Brown	6-15-17
*Angela Carrano	6-28-17
Kathleen R. Degen	10-4-17
Christopher J. Dickinson	11-5-17
*Earl F. Lind	12-9-17
<b>*Church Member</b>	

## **Youth and Family Minister's Report**

The middle school youth group was renamed CIA this year, which stands for Christians in Action. It is still a lively, energetic, and close-knit group. This group is made up of twenty to twenty-five enthusiastic and active youth from grades 5-8 with a heavy emphasis on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders. The Terrific Tuesday model of meeting every other Tuesday evening works very well. A highlight of the program is the connection with the First Baptist Church's group. They joined us due to limited resources and in turn they provided financial support and chaperones, and this has proven to be a wonderful and healthy relationship!

The group has formed a close bond and seems to enjoy their time together. The new school season saw an even mix of girls and boys. We did lose a number of 8<sup>th</sup> graders and some 8<sup>th</sup> graders have decided to participate in Confirmation class and CIA.

The middle school students were involved in several service projects, including food baskets for the Branford Food Pantry, and food drives. The food baskets were a combined effort with several other church youth groups in town. The youth collected enough food for 85 Thanksgiving baskets and 100 turkeys. They put together the baskets, and transported them and to the food bank. Once again it was great to see so many youth and parents come together to support the local Branford community. In the early spring we actually began a new ministry at the community dining room, cooking and serving meals on a Tuesday evening. This worked well, and we will continue this ministry in 2018. We also made picnic baskets for families from the Ronald McDonald House back in the winter. This was probably one of the most popular activities ever done with this group. We made care-packages for college students as well. Service has become a large component for CIA. One of our new ministries was collecting and sorting food for the "Feed Branford Kids" program. Many of the parents were enthusiastic about this ministry as well.

This year we continued the middle school overnight retreat at Killam's Point with senior high students serving as leaders. This peer-lead retreat seemed to really have an impact on our middle school youth and brought new children into our group. This has proven to be a very moving retreat and I believe powerful experience for all involved.

The senior high program has 50 to 65 members. We have done food drives, team building activities, Thanksgiving baskets, and speakers from AA, music ministry, and a life skills teaching group. We average thirty-five to fifty youth at each program. We had a new speaker this year, Daniel Trust, who is a refugee from Uganda. He proved to be a very powerful and moving speaker. Many of the youth said it made them thankful for what they have and that his story of survival, while difficult to hear, was uplifting as well.

There were several highlights in this program including a youth mission trip to San Antonio, Texas. Seventy-five youth plus chaperones participated in this weeklong mission trip June 25-July 2. The youth worked 8-10 hours a days. Many of the leaders involved in the previous trip to New Orleans felt as if the numbers were a little too high and we decided to go back to having trips with no more than 75 total.

The high school youth also participated in one midnight run activity to NYC, where they brought food and clothes to the homeless on the streets of NYC. Twenty-five youth and chaperones participated in this activity, with a waiting list of ten.

The Ronald McDonald Ministry continued in 2017. We went a total of two times and this was a wonderful ministry originally opened up to middle school and high school youth and their families. However, several people without children wanted to participate as well so this became a truly

intergenerational ministry and will continue next year. Also families with young children wanted to participate as well so we had children as young as five helping in this ministry.

The youth and family program sponsored two family nights; both were movie nights. They were both attended by 50-60 people. Some kids thought it was cool to hang out at church on a Friday night. It was very well received by families and many said it felt just like the drive-in movies. We had a number of non-church member families attend as well.

We added a new program this year called Advent Adventure. We had seventeen children between the ages of 5 and 10 participate in the day. We also were blessed with twelve high school youth and ten women from the church who worked hard to give the children a wonderful experience. For a nominal fee parents were able to have their children attend from 9:00 am to 2:00pm. Several Advent related activities were planned for the children in a rotation set-up. The stations consisted of crafts, storytelling, singing, and a movie. Lunch and a snack were included as well. Many people felt this was worth doing again next year. It was described by someone as a winter camp.

We have 12 students in our confirmation class. These students have actively participated in class discussions. We began a new mentor program with a church member and student. Each student was paired with an adult church member. They will have a total of 4 face-to-face meetings. This new program has received great reviews from both mentor and student.

Rev. Theresa Borchetta  
Youth & Family Minister

## **Associate Minister's Report**

### *Ponderings on 2017*

Traditionally, and most appropriately, the purpose of the Annual Report is to inform and detail the scope of the previous twelve months of ministry and mission by various parties in the church. This is a valid and important undertaking, but at the moment it is not exactly where I am heading in these ponderings. I am wrestling with the question not so much how we survived but how we might thrive, not so much with what we did (or didn't) do, but how we move forward.

Of course, while it was a complicated year with ups and downs, disappointments and successes, joys and concerns, we did grow together in significant ways. We took risks (some of which turned out well, others not so much). We found some new ways of doing things (think of the Christmas Fair and coffee hour hospitality). We reached out to support another refugee family. We "hatched, matched and dispatched" in numbers. Members and staff pitched in willingly to contribute in many ways to doing the work of the church and keeping things going. We disagreed and reconciled (or not). We worshipped, we prayed, we learned, and we served. Together we have discovered strengths and affections and new commitments over this challenging year. And a pretty full year it was. Praise the Lord!

But our church, and every Christian church in the Western world, is moving in “uncharted” territory. The world around us is not as it used to be. Some call it a “post-Christian” world meaning that the seven-hundred-year-long era with Christianity at the privileged center of Western cultural life is over. That may be, but it does not mean that Christianity and the church is irrelevant. Rather it means we must adapt – find new ways of being and doing church, which are actually old ways. We need to be transformed. We need to become missionaries, expanding the work of the first apostles who carried out into the wider world the mission of Jesus who was embodying the purposes of God.

So, as we head into 2018 and the years beyond, I am asking myself, and you, these questions:

- How are we continuing the witness of Jesus who brought the church into existence?
- How are we extending the reign of God into our communities and the wider world? How are we being part of God’s saving purposes for the world?
- If we understand ourselves as God’s family, what is our purpose? In other words, what is God’s purpose and thus the purpose of God’s family? What is the family business of the family of God?

It’s not a matter of doing exactly what we’ve been doing, only doing it better. Tweaking it here, massaging it there. It is seeing this moment as *an opportunity put before us by God for adventure, hope, and discovery* (Tod Bolsinger\*).

The call of God to us is to hold on to what is universal and eternal, sustaining and enabling, comforting and challenging, and offer it to today’s world in ways that are accessible, effective, and exciting, empowering and inspiring. As the old hymn intones: *new occasions teach new duties, time makes ancient good uncouth; they must upward still and onward, who would keep abreast of truth.* \*\*

The truth is we are called to be missionaries in a missionary church in the face of a changing world.

Responding to this call will involve some anxiety, fear and potential loss. But I look forward to trying to answer it with you in the year ahead. After all, it is what we are here for. Not so much to preserve our institution, but to change the world.

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.* (Romans 12:2)

Peace and blessings,

Susan PT

Susan Power Trucksess, Associate Minister

\* *Canoeing the Mountain* by Tod Bolsinger (IVP Press, 2015).

\*\* *Once to Every Man and Nation*, words by James Russell Lowell (1819-1891).

## **Moderator's Report**

This has been an exciting, active and unusual year at First Congregational.

In June, with the assistance of the Conference and Consociation, we undertook a Situational Support Consultation – an intensive examination of our strengths and challenges. In August, Pastor Nada Sellers transitioned to a church nearer her home in Massachusetts. With a vacancy in the senior minister position, an interim search committee was formed, seeking an appropriate leader to help us through the multi-year process to a new settled minister. In the meantime, additional duties fell on Reverends Theresa Borchetta and Susan Trucksess. Then, around Thanksgiving, there were health challenges that required that we again shift ministerial responsibilities. Meanwhile, like all mainline churches, we face the challenges of declining membership and finances.

But, these changes have made us a stronger, more engaged congregation. Many of you were called on, more than ever, to assume leadership roles. On behalf of your fellow parishioners, thank you to all who have preached, acted as liturgists, led and participated in the church fair, guided the youth program, headed committees and taken on the myriad of tasks that make us an increasingly vibrant congregation. You will find descriptions of the activities of those committees elsewhere in the annual report. I urge you to read them, find ways of service that most interest you, and lend your time and talents to their work.

Now, as we enter 2018, the upcoming year is filled with hope and opportunity. We will have an interim minister in place, easing the burdens on our ministerial staff. We can begin to implement some of the recommendations of the Consultation report, starting with the reorganization of our committees, so that we can more efficiently fulfill our mission. We can continue to grow the resurgence of energy which has been reflected in our Stewardship campaign, youth work, and refugee committees. But, perhaps most importantly, as we have for over three hundred and fifty years, this church family can gather weekly to refresh our souls, focus on the eternal, and hear the word of God.

As Moderator, my personal thanks to all of you. To the ministerial staff, thank you for your leadership in a year which has called on you to invest additional time and effort. To Julia and Pat, thank you for the unseen work which makes First Congregational Church run daily. To all of you who have lead programs and committees, thank you for your new ideas and for your commitment. And to my predecessor, Betsy Hyde, thank you for your guidance and for steering us all through some turbulent waters.

As we enter a new church year, remember that God is still speaking. May we listen with open hearts and minds.

David Reif,  
Moderator.

# Endowment Report

## First Congregational Church of Branford

### Account Summary

\*\*\*All figures taken from attached Merrill Lynch CRC Report\*\*\*

Balance a/o 12-31/2017

Account	
<b>SEG</b>	\$2,692,925
<b>FES</b>	\$1,511,492
<b>SOLTESZ</b>	\$212,291
<b>Total =</b>	<b>\$4,416,709</b>

Cash Flow YTD

<b>Opening Balance</b>	\$4,301,159
<b>Contributions</b>	\$0
<b>Withdrawals</b>	(\$290,254) *Spend Rate: (6.75% YTD) (6.75% Annualized)
<b>Interest / Dividends</b>	\$131,532 (Figure excludes \$4,570 of December cap gain distributions)
<b>Appreciation / Depreciation</b>	\$269,702
<b>Current Balance</b>	\$4,416,709

Asset Allocation

Performance % (Through 12/31)

<b>Cash</b>	12.66% - \$559,155	+ 1.06%
<b>Stocks</b>	70.29% - \$3,104,505	+ 14.49%
<b>Bonds</b>	17.05% - \$753,048	+ 4.45%

Recurring Distributions

<b>FES</b>	\$7,465.83/month to Citizens Bank
<b>SEG</b>	\$712.24/month to Citizens Bank
<b>SOLTESZ</b>	\$1,071.92/month to Citizens Bank

## **Caring Ministry Annual Report**

*Clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together (Colossians 3).*

*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness.... (Galatians 5:22).*

Words from the Apostle Paul which offers wisdom, guidance, and encouragement for all followers of Jesus. Words which especially inspire and instruct those from our church who feel called to caring ministries.

### **The Stephen Ministry Program**

The **Stephen Ministers** in this ministry provide 1:1 care to people going through a difficult time, offering distinctive Christian care and support. At present we have 6 active ministers and 2 leaders who, in addition to their care of individuals, meet monthly for ongoing continuing education about issues we might face or studies to strengthen our faith development or our skills. We also make ourselves available for prayer and conversation each week after the 10:00 service.

### **The Friendly Visitor Program**

**Friendly Visitors** are people who visit on a regular basis (usually about once a month) members who are no longer able to worship with us on Sundays or participate in the various activities of the church – usually because they are home-bound or in care centers. Once active in our common life, the “visitees” welcome hearing a word about what is going on at FCC, but mostly they appreciate knowing that they are not forgotten. It is truly amazing what a phone call, a card, an in-person connection can mean.

Jesus said that when you *visit the sick or those in prison*, you do it to him. So Friendly Visitors not only gift the visitee but they honor Jesus. Currently our visiting team consists of only a few members, but as our congregation holds more and more people who would welcome this kind of personal connection with the church, we hope to expand this ministry in the coming year. The Deacons do a lot of connecting through their delivery of flowers and general outreach, but we really could use some more folks in this caring, friendly visitors ministry.

### **Knitting, Purling and Praying**

**Knitting, Purling and Praying** women do just that. They use their nimble fingers to weave (or crochet) yarn into items of warmth and care for all sorts of people. Folks who are ill or grieving, babies that are new to this world, homeless men and women on city streets, kids whose hands or feet are cold – all in need of reminders that they are cared for. And each garment bears a card that says, *Knitted by hand and threaded with prayer of love and hope, this is a gift for you, May it bring blessings of comfort, layers of warmth, and the knowledge that you are loved.* And the group prays...for the folks on their hearts, on our prayer concerns list, and for the blessings and banes of the world.

**(Knitting, Purling and Praying Cont.)**

As the hymn goes:

*Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love,  
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.  
Before our [Maker's] throne we pour our ardent prayers,  
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.  
We share each other's woes, each other's burdens bear,  
And often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.\**

\* and of course we are also happy to celebrate good news and share a smile.

Obviously, the extension of compassion and caring is not limited to programs and identified ministries. Such pleasure, such work, is open (even essential) to all who seek to lead a life of faith, but we are grateful to those who have committed to living out their discipleship in these specific ways. God bless.

## **First Congregational Church of Branford**

**373<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting**

January 29, 2017

After establishing the presence of a quorum, Moderator Betsy Hyde called the meeting to order at 11:16 a.m. Pastor Nada offered an opening prayer.

**A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the agenda.**

**A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the minutes of the 2016 Annual Meeting.**

**A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the acceptance of the annual reports of officers, boards, committees and organizations affiliated with FCCB.**

**A motion was made, seconded and carried to transfer from the First Ecclesiastical Society Fund to the 2017 Operating Budget \$30,000 of the moneys realized from the 2013 sale of the Manse in order to offset ministerial housing compensation costs.**

## **2017 Operating Budget:**

Susanne Lendler-Marsh, chairman of Finance presented the proposed budget for 2017.

Discussion included:

- The \$125,000 deficit will be covered on an as needed basis from the Soltesz Fund. Long - term solutions are being actively pursued.
- Fund Raising ideas were proposed and the membership challenged to support them.
- Margot Hardenberg reported for Stewardship the good news that pledges received to date exceed the proposed line item by \$10,000.
- Moderator-Elect Dave Reif outlined planned future steps toward improvement of our financial situation.

**A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the proposed 2017 Operating Budget.**

**Nominating** – Deanna O’Connell

**A motion was made, seconded and carried to have the following members appointed to the Boards and Committees as listed in the Annual Report: Sarah Reinwald, Kate Dombrowski, Rodney Keith, Peggy Keck, Eleanor Radune, Cody St. Pierre and Norbert Church.**

Frank Shaw thanked Nora Vetrano for her years of hard work and service on the (Short Term committee and) the Killam’s Point Management Team, as Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, sometimes all three at once. A round of applause followed.

Kathy Fox thanked Betsy Hyde for her hard work and service as Moderator, recognizing the difficulty involved, followed by a round of applause.

Betsy Hyde offered thanks to everyone who has worked to meet our many challenges by being faithful servants of the church. She went on to remind us that the church is not a building, or the ministers, or the staff – the church is the people who love her. Betsy closed by stating that it has been an honor and a privilege to serve.

Dave Reif spoke to the hard work of Betsy and others this past year with “faces to the wind” meeting the challenge to move forward with no turning back.

**A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and carried at 11:50**

Pastor Nada offered the closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nora Vetrano, Clerk

## Clerk's Report 2017

### January

A motion was made, seconded and carried to take the actual amount of the final 2016 budget deficit from the Soltesz Fund (Approx. \$50,000), to square out all accounts.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to draw down previously encumbered funds from the Soltesz Fund, as needed for cash flow, on a month - to - month basis. Such action shall be reported on the monthly Profit and Loss Statement and reviewed by Church Council.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the proposed 2017 Budget to be sent to the January 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Congregation.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the request of Kathy Castellon to change her membership from Active to Friend of the Church.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the appointment of Bethany Parks to Land and Building.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to accept the recommendation of the Deacons to change the membership status of the following members as submitted:

1) Kevin Bartram	Remove	36) Timothy Jakubiak	Move to friend of the church
2) Pamela Lynn Bergatino	Remove	37) William Jakubiak	Move to friend of the church
3) John Boak	Move to friend of the church	38) Christine Janicki	Remove
4) Danielle Bourne	Remove	39) Helen Jasinka	Remove
5) Ricky Bourne	Remove	40) Carley Johnson	Remove
6) Kylie Broughal	Move to friend of the church	41) Justin Laudano	Move to friend of the church
7) Calla Cameron	Remove	42) Dawn Luhn	Remove
8) Melanie Cameron	Remove	43) Santha Martin	Remove
9) Philip Carloni	Remove	44) Kate Lauren Mascelli	Remove
10) Allison Castellon	Remove	45) Emily McColl	Move to friend of the church
11) Brian Castellon	Remove	46) Rome McColl	Move to friend of the church
12) Stephen Castellon	Remove	47) Suzanne McColl	Remove
13) Christine Cotton	Move to friend of the church	48) James McGaffin	Remove
14) Jesse Cotton	Move to friend of the church	49) Alisha McNamara	Remove
15) Gail Degoursey	Remove	50) Kelsey Mulligan	Remove
16) William Degoursey	Remove	51) Regan Mulligan	Remove
17) Ginger Dendas	Remove	52) Molly O'Brien	Move to friend of the church
18) Laura Ann Dest	Remove	53) Laura Orsene	Move to friend of the church
19) Sarah Eiseman	Remove	54) Sheri Peterson	Remove
20) Jessica Lynn Elliot	Remove	55) Kayla Christine Poirier	Remove
21) Ellie Fiskio	Remove	56) Christine Danielle Popolizo	Move to friend of the church
22) Elizabeth Fiskio	Remove	57) David Prahovich	Remove
23) Emily Fiskio	Remove	58) Barbara Rascati	Remove
24) Anthony R. Franko	Remove	59) Edward Jean Richowski	Remove
25) Stephanie A. Franko	Remove	60) Catherine Salsbury	Remove
26) Karen Freedman	Remove	61) Peter Salsbury	Remove
27) Barbara Gailey	Remove	62) Carol Ann Sanders	Remove
28) Amanda Jean Giordano	Move to friend of the church	63) Alex Squitero	Move to friend of the church
29) Christopher Giordano	Move to friend of the church	64) Chloe Squitero	Move to friend of the church
30) Richard Gotay	Remove	65) Grace Wood Squitero	Move to Friend of the church
31) Donna Hayden	Remove	66) Patrick Stout	Move to friend of the church
32) John David Heeckt	Remove	67) Margo Sweeney	Remove
33) Dana Hopper	Remove	68) Denise Tickell	Remove
34) Greg Howe	Remove	69) Kurt Tickell	Remove
35) John Parker (Jack) Howe	Move to friend of the church	70) Megan Tobin	Move to Friend of the church

## **February**

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the Credit Card Policy as presented by the Finance Board.

Moderator Dave Reif offered a thank-you to Betsy Hyde, noting her two very difficult years as moderator as well as her being very helpful during the transition.

A motion of affirmation was seconded and passed unanimously.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the proposed Grilled Cheese Fundraiser.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to re-appoint Dawn Richkowski and Morgan Gallapis, to the CE Board.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve Taryn Broughal's request to hold a fund raiser for The Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation on 5/27/27, subject to confirmation of liability coverage, number of adults, rules such as 'leave – no return' and clean-up.

A second motion was made, seconded and approved to waive fees for Taryn's event.

A motion was made seconded and carried to allow TAVF to participate in Jersey Mike's Day of Giving, The Northeast Fishing and Hunting Show in Hartford, the Memorial Day and Veteran's Day Parades as well as hosting the International Fly Fishing Festival in Branford the last week of April as requested.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the Youth Group's request to hold an Easter Flower Sale to support the Mission Trip, provided money is collected at the time the order is placed.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve Margot Hardenbergh's request that the church and town to work together to investigate a 375<sup>th</sup> celebration in 2019.

## **March**

A motion was made, seconded and carried to grant AUF permission to have a collection point for backpacks.

## **April**

Eleanor Radune was elected Treasurer by e-vote.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to change the date of the September Church Council Meeting from 9/20/17 to 9/27/17.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to hold a Food/Fund Raiser on June 4, 2017.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve two fundraisers for CDC, a Paint Night in April and a Mixed Bag Sale in May.

## **May 7 Special Meeting**

A presentation describing the Situational Support Consultation (SSC), as requested by Rev. Nada Sellers, was given by Regional Conference Minister, Rev. Mary Nelson and Sandra Dixon, Leader of SSC.

## May

A motion was made, seconded and approved to allow the Parkinson's exercise program to use Pilgrim Hall on Friday mornings during summer, with the fee waived, providing: They have insurance coverage, they won't interfere with CDC, Day Camp or L&B calendars and they know it is not air-conditioned.

Dormer Fundraiser Request:

A motion was made, seconded and approved that the poster, with Julia's personal e-mail and phone rather than the church's, be e-mailed to the e-spire distribution list with the disclosure that this is not a church sponsored event.

**Land and Building Energy Savings Report:** Mike Giordano reported that an energy audit, in accordance with the Eversource Small Business Energy Advantage program, estimates that updating light bulbs and some light fixtures could save \$385/month. This would be a \$24,000 project, which with an available \$9,597 Conservation Fund Incentive, would cost us \$14,483. This amount would be paid back monthly out of our savings – the difference between what we had been paying and our actual bill. There would be no money out of pocket and no change to the budget. It was suggested that old inventory be given to KP.

A motion to approve the light bulb and fixture replacement project with no out of pocket cost as described above, was made, seconded and approved.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the appointments of Lily Ferranti as Jr. Representative to CE, and Frank Shaw to HR.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to allow L&B to sell the air conditioning units, which had been purchased last year for Pilgrim Hall.

## May 30 Special Meeting

A motion was made, seconded and approved to change the signers on the FCC bank accounts to Eleanor Radune, Susanne Lendler-Marsh and Julia Novaco.

Two signatures needed for amounts over \$3,000.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to ring the bells 49 times, (in remembrance of those killed a year ago in Orlando), at noon on June 12<sup>th</sup>, to raise awareness to end violence.

## June

A motion was made seconded and carried to allow Betsy Hyde to reach out to Trinity Episcopal and First Baptist Church of Branford to talk about the three churches working together on ways of addressing violence.

**Hospitality:** Deanna O'Connell reported that Linda Mitchell has resigned as the 'one woman' Hospitality Committee. Deanna handed out a proposal, which would identify ten Boards/Committees/groups to take responsibility for one month in the year. (July and August excluded). This would involve a contact person to take the lead and two servers. Also, possibly food donations would be asked for. In addition, a Spire request would be made for grocery card donations to fund milk, cookies and other expenses.

In addition, she would like to create a list of people willing to help with special events such as funerals on a case-by-case basis. To that end she presented a draft survey to be distributed to the congregation.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the above - described Hospitality proposal.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve a wine raffle at the Christmas Fair.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the resignation of Pastor Nada Sellers, which was submitted on June 15, 2017. As per her call, she will continue to carry out her duties for 90 days and will continue to receive salary and benefits during that time.

### July

A motion was made, seconded and approved to ratify the membership of Cheryl Tripp, Kathleen McMahon-Brown and Angela Eklund-Hunt, and to direct the Deacons to send a letter requesting that they come to church to enter into the traditional covenant of our church.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to direct the Moderator to send a letter to the ministers stating that membership not be offered without approval of Deacons and Church Council.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the recommendation of the Music Board to hire Phil Rinehart as Music Director at 20 hours per week, and to hire Katie Jones as Chorale Director at 15 hours per week.

### August 14 Special Meeting

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the formation of an Interim Minister Search Committee with the following members:

Claire Bennitt  
Jennifer McCaughtry  
Chip Marsh  
David Ridgeway  
Charles Swart

### August

A motion was made, seconded and accepted to approve the plan for a raffle of an Electric Battery Assist Bike and a helmet, and to provide seed money up to \$2,000.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to elect Wayne Jacobson to the Board of Deacons.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to spend up to \$5,000 from recurrent Building Maintenance for the rehabilitation of the Pine Room.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to retain Rev. Sarah Vetter for pulpit and other duties as necessary, at the rate of \$300/Sunday and \$40/hour for counseling or other duties.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to request donations to the UCC Hurricane Harvey Disaster Relief Fund at the next three Sunday Services.

## October 4<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting

**Messiah:** A motion was made, seconded and approved to allow the Messiah to be performed in our Meeting House on Friday, December 22, 2017, with the following conditions:

- We would donate the space
- The Messiah Group would provide insurance
- The Messiah group would provide a \$250 stipend for staff to clean and prepare for Sunday Services.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the report of the Situational Support Consultation.

## October

A motion was made, seconded and carried to authorize Stewardship to spend up to \$500 for an all members invited Brunch on Sunday November 19<sup>th</sup>, Commitment Sunday.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to appoint Katie Brown to the Board of Deacons.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve going forward with the Eversource Small Business Energy Advantage Program, Project: CT17-1046980. Said project to be funded from the Soltesz Fund with the understanding that the expenditure will be covered by projected energy cost savings.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to grant permission for the display of AUF 20th Anniversary Brochures and to include an article in the e-spire.

## November

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the request of the SSA group for a \$10 reduction in the room rate for next year.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve Eleanor Radune, Treasurer, as primary contact, and Pat Carroll, Bookkeeper, as secondary contact, removing Danine Foley, for the Intuit QuickBooks Desktop Premier Program and Desktop Payroll Module.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to reinstate Kendra Frisbee and Heidi Hunter as full members.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to remove, at their request, Angelic, Donald and Amelia Westfall.

A motion was made, seconded and approved to appoint Betsy Hyde to HR.

## December

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the request for four joint events of FCCB and the Branford Land Trust, to be held at Killam's Point in 2018.

## **Status of Committee Reorganization**

A group made up of the officers of the church (Betsy Hyde as immediate Past Moderator, Nora Vetrano as Clerk, Eleanor Radune as Treasurer, Laurel Van Wilgen as Registrar and Dave Reif as Moderator), plus Deanna O'Connell as chair of Nominating will be meeting to work out a process for consolidation. (How vs. What). Board and committee chairs, congregation, ministers and stakeholders will be engaged and recommendations will be reported back to Council.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to take \$25,500 from the FES Fund, with the approval of the congregation, for Capital Improvements for lead abatement and the Energy program.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to give preliminary approval to accept the proposed 2018 budget, with the addition of gutter cleaning and a withdrawal of \$25,500 from the FES Fund for capital Improvements (Lead and energy)

A motion was made, seconded and approved to accept the recommendation of the HR Board to pay Theresa her full salary, using all of her sick days for 2017 and 2018.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nora Vetrano,  
Clerk

## **Stewardship Board Report**

Stewardship met on a monthly basis, conferred with the Finance Committee on a regular basis, provided representation at the Church Council meetings and met with the deficit reduction committee. To help reduce the deficit there was a special Lenten Drive "Instead of Java" asking for members and friends during Lent to donate \$5 each week in place of coffee purchases, raising \$288, and there was a Matching Fund Drive to encourage new pledgers and increase pledges; this drive raised over \$6,000.

Stewardship signed up for the United Church of Christ's campaign, Journey towards Generosity, in the Fall. A series of four letters were sent out to members and friends; one from our ministers, two from Stewardship including a giving guide and step chart, and one from the bookkeeper acknowledging the amounts pledged. There were also two guest witnesses participating in our services, Marie Grande from New Reach and Chris George from IRIS (Integrated refugee and Immigrant Services) in New Haven. The committee also hosted a brunch on Pledge Sunday to which every member and friend was invited by phone call; calls were made by the committee and 14 other welcome volunteers. The brunch was well attended. To date over \$178,000 has been pledged for 2018 from 103 pledging units; follow-up calls will be made to those who have yet to pledge for 2018.

Part of our mission is to encourage more legacy giving; two of our former members remembered the church in their wills.

Respectfully submitted,  
Margot Hardenbergh, chair, Colin Gershon, Bill Hall and Chip Marsh.

## **Finance Board Report**

From year to year, the activity of the Finance Board is ongoing. The Board meets monthly to review the financial activity of the past month and then reports on this activity to Church Council.

The year-end 2017 financial report with specific figures for income and expenses is provided elsewhere in this Annual Report.

In January, a proposed operating budget for 2017 was presented to Church Council that predicted that income would be \$125,488 less than expenses. The Council voted to present this budget to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting. The Council also voted to transfer money from the Ann Soltez Fund as needed to cover any cash flow shortages through the year. The proposed budget was approved by the Congregation. Through 2017, a total of \$60,000 has been transferred from the Soltez Fund to the operating account. The year ended with less of a deficit than predicted, due primarily to a reduction in expenses.

The proposed Operating Budget for 2018 is also included elsewhere in this Annual Report. This budget is a collaborative effort involving most Boards and Committees of the Church. The projected income is based largely on estimates provided by Stewardship and Endowment. Other Boards have predicted expenses for the activities they oversee. Clearly, the greatest expense is for Staff and for Land and Building. The Finance Board has tried to budget conservatively; the Operating Budget for 2018 predicts a deficit similar to 2017.

Additional activities pursued by the Finance Board have included:

- Bookkeeper transition: on June 1, Pat Carroll became our part time on-site bookkeeper. Her knowledgeable, gracious and cheerful presence in the office has been an enormous help to the church.
- Grocery Cards: this program requires a great deal of volunteer administrative effort for the amount of income it generates. The program will be streamlined in 2018, monitored by Finance Board and evaluated at year's end to determine if it's worthwhile to continue.  
Special thanks to Susan Trucksess who has tenaciously invested countless hours in support of Grocery Card sales.
- Credit Card Policy: a written policy for use of the Church credit card was approved by Church Council and discussed with the Staff.

Moving ahead into the New Year, the Finance Board will continue to monitor financial activity of the First Congregational Church of Branford, and strive to make decisions that reflect the Church's commitments, mission and faith.

Susanne Lendler Marsh, Peggy Keck, Wendy DeFrancesco and Eleanor Radune

## **Historian 2017 Annual Report**

The mail was checked weekly, but there was to correspondence requiring action.

## **Archive 2017 Annual Report**

The archive room was periodically updated with additional documents.

## **Church Fair Report**

The Fair faced some challenges as we are still transitioning from a Fair Coordinator to A Fair Team leadership model. The spirit of Christmas came early to FCCB, filling the church from Pilgrim Hall, through the halls and into the classrooms for the 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Fair on December 2nd. With each department doing a great job, the Fair grossed nearly \$15,000. Many members volunteered their time, talents and skills, not only the day of the Fair, but for many days leading up to the Fair. We appreciate all our volunteers and young people who supported the Fair and are especially thankful for those who have volunteered for many years to make the Fair a great success.

Fair Team

## **Diaconate Board Report**

2017 was a very challenging year for the First Congregational Church. The year found us without a Senior Minister and toward the end of 2017 we had yet another challenge to our ministerial staff with Rev. Theresa Borchetta being hospitalized. This has put a strain on an already burdened staff. The staff has really stepped up. Rev. Trucksess has been assisted by Rev. Sarah Vetter filling in. Throughout this process we have seen the Rev. Elizabeth Dorsi step in to help and at the end of December Rev. Wayne Jacobson has also graced our pulpit. From Pews to Pulpit! The Deacons have also assisted filling the role of liturgist.

Early in 2017 the Deacons completed a full review of the FCCB membership rolls which removed a number of inactive members and moved some younger members to "Friends of the Church". This provides us with a more accurate feel for our congregation and this information is forwarded on to the UCC for which we are assessed. On a sad note 2017 had 14 deaths of members and former members, however on a positive note we had 6 Baptisms in which the Deacons participated and is always a joy to be involved with. There was a confirmation class with 9 confirmands joining our church, many after attending Sunday School and growing up in the Church. We had 5 new members join the Church and 7 joined by Reaffirmation. The Diaconate is in the process of reviewing the membership rolls again as called for in the FCCB By-Laws.

Rev. Wayne Jacobson and Katie Brown joined the Diaconate in 2017 and we lost Bob Hadley from the Board of Deacons as he moved out of Branford; he will be missed. This leaves us with an open seat on the Diaconate.

The Deacons also continue to deliver the flowers that have graced our Meetinghouse to members that have suffered illness, a loss or for a joy such as the birth of a child or grandchild. Some are delivered to those who are unable to attend Sunday Services. This can be a very rewarding visit for both parties and the results of the visits are brought to the attention of the ministers. The ministers and staff determine who will receive the flowers.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jeff Buggee, Senior Deacon

## **Christian Education Director Report**

Sunday school in 2017 has had its ups and downs, but like always, we've pushed through.

The children continue to respond well to the "Shine" curriculum. Our teachers enjoy the simplicity of the curriculum and being able to understand its message, which then helps them to easily relay the message and learnings to the children. The Shine curriculum allows the children to come together and interact by moving, creating art and retelling stories. It also allows the children to sit and wonder, by putting themselves in the shoes of the person the story is about.

The children participated this year in the Palm Sunday service by handing our palms to our congregation, which they love being a part of.

Children's Sunday was particularly fun in 2017. The children led all of the parts of the service. The younger children were up on the altar and they ended up singing and dancing without even planning it! They had a lot of fun being in the moment.

Rally Day 2017 was much different this year. We had regular Sunday school classes and the entire congregation was invited to an all-church picnic down at Killam's Point. It was intended to be a low key function, where sides were brought to share with everyone and go along with the hot dogs. People were invited to bring their families and friends and any picnicking items they thought would enhance their experience.

The Christmas pageant this year was one an interactive version that we haven't quite done before. We had readers for particular parts and the congregation helped to sing the songs that went along with each part of the story. Children were invited to participate in every part of the pageant, and be any or all characters that they were interested in. This year, the pageant immediately followed the 10:00 am service in the Meetinghouse. Everyone was then welcomed to gather in Pilgrim Hall for coffee hour which was hosted by the Sunday school families. Carol Titcomb was instrumental in helping this year with the pageant. She washed and prepared costumes and played the piano for us. As always, her presence and assistance is greatly appreciated.

My hopes for the 2018 year are to continue encouraging our children and families to be more like Jesus and love God and God's people through activities and functions that everyone can participate in as well as regular class time. I hope to also help the parents and children learn what it is to be Christian and how to apply those principals to their everyday life.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Julia Novaco, Christian Education Director

## **Killam's Point Day Camp Report**

Killam's Point Day Camp had a total of 6 weeks of camp this year.

Two were located at the church and were named FCCB under the Sea, and four were located at Killam's Point. Attendance was low with the two weeks located at the church, but as a whole, they broke even and provided child care for children who got out of school and needed camp beginning June 12<sup>th</sup>! I plan on continuing to offer these two weeks at the church location because of the construction schedule for the next few years for Branford Public schools.

Camp was a blast for four weeks at Killam's Point! Kids enjoyed swimming, kayaking, nature hikes, games, arts and crafts, and class time. The greatest thing about this year at camp was that we were able to offer free breakfast and lunch to any child who wanted it.

Branford offers a summer meal program each summer for any children 18 years of age or younger to come and have two meals a day at no charge. I partnered up with Chartwells, the Branford Public schools lunch program, to offer children coming to camp those two meals as a part of our camp program.

I decided to move the camp bus stop to Sliney School so that children could take advantage of the meals program, but also allow easier access for the buses. Parents were able to drop their children off at 8:15am and head to work. Children had the option of free breakfast and then got onto the buses at 8:45am and headed to camp. Coolers of sandwiches, milk, juice and snacks were transported by the buses as well to camp daily. The summer meals program also provided us with hot dogs and buns on Fridays for our cookouts.

Plans for 2018 include two weeks located at the church and four weeks located at Killam's Point. Dawn Perrotti, Meghan Abate and Gio Esposito had a blast directing in 2017 and are eager and excited to come back for the summer of 2018.

The children of our community look forward to this camp all year long. It is almost a must for children in Branford to attend KPDC at some point in their life. It is an integral part of "growing up"; not only in the friendships that form, but in the children's' individual faith journeys as well. KPDC will continue to instill a lifetime of memories with fun themes, and all of the exciting activities the children have grown to love over the years.

Respectfully Submitted

Julia Novaco, KPDC Program Director

## **Christian Education Report**

The Christian Education Board's mission is to provide opportunities for our congregation to participate in the educational offerings FCCB has to give. We do that by supporting our Sunday school program, supporting our Vacation Bible School program, and making available a wide variety of topics and times for our congregational family of all ages to learn about Jesus Christ and his ministry and teaching and how we can apply them to our daily lives. We also try to provide resources for our congregation to study and learn about Jesus Christ and His plan for our church.

We strive to support our children and families in this journey, by nurturing their growing faith through worship, education, fellowship and service.

Dawn Richkowski resigned from her chairperson position due to moving so Jennifer McCaughtry currently is the sole chairperson. We have changed the "God Squad" back to "Sunday School". We continue to work with the "Shine: Living in God's Light" curriculum which has been well accepted by the CE board, teachers and students.

Due to the early release of Branford schools, Killam's Point day camp offered 2 weeks of camp at the church to assist parents with child care and there were 4 weeks at Killam's Point.

We had lots of change within the church and ministers so the adult education program has not had as many offerings as we were hoping but 2018 is a new year!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jennifer McCaughtry

## **Youth Music Program**

The Youth Music Program has continued to offer chorus, chimes and Middle School Bell rehearsals through the 2017 year. Students presented during worship services about once a month per music ensemble.

Youth music directors were Mrs. Kelliann Festa, choral director until May of 2017 and Katie Jones from September until December of 2017. Mrs. Carol Titcomb continued as the chimes and Middle School Bells director. Tuesday afternoon rehearsals often coordinated with Youth Group Activities which were led by Rev Theresa Borchetta. Youth singing has been moved to 11:00 on Sunday morning. Both singing and ringing students participated in the intergenerational service on Christmas Eve.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Carol Titcomb, Youth Bell and Chimes director and Katie Jones, Vocal Choir Director

## **Killam's Point Management Team Report**

The Killam's Point Management Team (KPMT) of the First Congregational Church of Branford (FCCB) is responsible, in conjunction with the Land and Building Board, for the maintenance of FCCB's land and buildings at Killam's Point, and is charged by the FCCB Church Council with responsibility for the operation of the Killam's Point Conference Center (KPCC).

At its first meeting after the FCCB Annual Meeting, the Team welcomed two new members: Paula Harrington who was elected as Co-Chair and Rod Keith. Both new Team members bring a wealth of experience, a love of the property and a desire to see it preserved. At the same time, we mourned the departure of Nora Vetrano and Frank Shaw, both of whom served KPMT for many years and, especially, managed the rebuilding of the structures and grounds after the devastation caused by Hurricane Irene in late August of 2011 and subsequent, but not as extensive, damage a year later caused by Hurricane Sandy. The KPMT will be forever indebted to them for their tireless supervision of the repairs, their conscientiousness and thoroughness in seeing the job completed and their attention to detail in the process. THANK YOU, NORA and FRANK!!!

Our caretaker continues to keep the roads, the grounds, the Point House and Shepherd house in good repair. The second floor of the Point House for overnight guests has been spruced up with new carpets, the kitchen floor was replaced and other minor repairs have been tended to in a timely manner. We purchased an outdoor table and new chairs for our guests to enjoy the deck that was completed a couple of seasons ago.

In conjunction with the Branford Land Trust, we hosted several guided nature walks on the property for the public to enjoy the beautiful trails through upland forest, the productive marshes and breath-taking views of the Sound. In fact, the October program was profiled in the Hartford Courant and was very well-attended. We expect this collaboration to continue into the next season, providing programs that are open to the public, sharing the stunning beauty, serenity and fragility of the Point.

Financially, Killam's Point saw a positive year. After several seasons of reduced use, we found our calendar very busy. In addition to the Killam's Point Day Camp and Take-a-Vet-Fishing events and church services, we have a number of returning clients every season. Killam's Point was also blessed with a monetary remembrance from Mrs. Betty Mount, long-time member of the FCCB.

As the Team looks forward to the 2018 season, we expect to have our very own on-line presence at <http://www.killamspoint.org/>. This is in addition to our tab on the church's website. Thanks to the expertise of Betsy Hyde, a visit to our website reveals some stunning photos of Killam's Point in all its splendor and an awesome overhead drone video produced by a former Camp Counselor. Potential clients will be able to virtually visit Killam's Point, review the Guidelines for use and complete the necessary forms to reserve a place on our calendar. Our hope is to streamline the reservation process and make all pertinent information available to the entire Team in up-to-the-minute detail. We will also commence a marketing program to promote our retreat center to potential new clients from the Connecticut area.

In addition to the regular members of the team, many volunteers, (some members of our church and others not), continued to contribute their time and effort to the Killam's Point Ministries in 2017. The Killam's Point Management Team wishes to thank them all and, as 2018 begins, looks forward to their continued support, as well as that of all of the members of The First Congregational Church of Branford.

### **The Killam's Point Management Team**

Co-Chairs Paula Harrington and Bud Beccia, members Rod Keith and  
Treasurer Peggy Keck & Secretary Carol Titcomb  
Tony Buonfiglio – Resident Caretaker (ex officio),  
Jeff Buggee – Reservations Coordinator (ex officio)

## **Music Ministries**

This past year saw some changes in the church's music leadership. The positions and responsibilities of the Director of Music and those of the Organist were redistributed. Philip Rinehart assumed the title of Director of Music, and his duties include remaining as church organist and assuming the same responsibilities as the previous music director with the exception of directing the vocal choirs. Katie Jones was hired to lead the choral programs at the church. Carol Titcomb continues to direct the youth bell choir. The combined salaries of the music staff remained the same.

The congregation enjoyed several special musical performances this past year. We had a brass group at Easter and there were a variety of guest musicians over the summer. Hot Cat Jazz played for us in the fall, and the Bach Magnificat was performed for Advent. Our vocal choir continues to sing almost every Sunday, the youth choir every month, and the bell choir also performs every month in season.

Looking ahead, we hope to see continued growth of the music ministry of the Church. Several new singers joined the choir for Christmas Eve services and we hope to lure more regular performers as the congregation grows.

For 2018, the budgeted withdrawals from the two Dickie Funds will provide revenues in the neighborhood of \$21,700, to be spent on special musicians, new music, piano and organ maintenance, etc. We spent slightly less than was budgeted for 2017 and anticipate being able to stay within budget in the coming year as well.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Ridgway, Music Board Chairperson

## **Human Resources Board Report**

During 2017, the Human Resources Board supported the church through a variety of personnel issues and transitions, all the while experiencing significant turnover within the committee.

In June, Rev Nada Sellers submitted her resignation from the position of Designated Term Pastor which was effective in August 2017. The HR Board assisted with transition planning, including reviewing and adjusting staff hours and responsibilities for the interim.

Other staff turnover in 2017 included the resignation of Kelliann Festa from the position of Music Director, which resulted in the appointment of Phil Rinehart to the position of Music Director and Katie Jones to the position of Choral Director. Bookkeeper Danine Foley, an independent contractor, also resigned with the position filled by Pat Carroll.

During 2017, the HR Board lost two members through resignations, Janet Ryan in January and Laura Grosso in November. We thank them both for their hard work and dedication in supporting the church through some turbulent times. New members joining the HR Board in 2017 were Frank Shaw in July and Betsy Hyde in November. Despite these additions, the HR Board continues to operate well below the recommended staffing level.

Throughout the year, the HR Board addressed a variety of personnel, staffing, staff oversight, compensation and benefits related issues. We continued to review and finalize staff job descriptions, and started the process of reviewing and updating the FCCB Policy and Procedure Manual. Work on the Manual will be a key focus in 2018.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Human Resources Board  
Susan Winkel, Frank Shaw, Betsy Hyde

## **Camp Totokett Report**

### MISSION STATEMENT

Camp Totokett is a one-week summer camp experience for children ages 6-13, who have HIV/AIDS in their families. It is a safe, caring environment that provides a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, urban/suburban community that pairs campers with high school mentors.

This year, our 22<sup>nd</sup> summer, was a different year for Camp Totokett. Because of our church association with two refugee families during the year, we decided to expand our vision to include refugee children. These children face the same issues of loss, family upheaval etc. Ten refugee children did attend camp along with 30 of our usual cohort. The refugee children came from Syria, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Their English and attitudes were great. They eagerly tried swimming and kayaking, new experiences for them. We were fortunate to have as a mentor, a young man who spoke Arabic. His skill came in handy when a camper cut her foot and was calmed by words in her own language.

Our co-director, Tim Dinneen was named Person of the Week in the Sound (March 5, 2017) and the reporter did a wonderful job explaining how Camp Totokett was a life-changing experience for him as it is for almost all who volunteer.

This special week was made possible by the adult and high school volunteers who gave up a week of their summer to create an atmosphere where campers are engaged in all the various activities, new friendships are made, and bridges are built between different communities. We also depend on the support of the congregation and community for donations of food, dollars and other talents. We especially appreciate the work of the food committee and kitchen crew who provide two snacks a day and lunch for about 125 people.

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara Colley, on behalf of the committee

## Mission Board Report

Mission Board Members:

Kate Dombrowski, Betsy Dorsi, Rowena Gatta, Rod Keith, Susan Miller, Sarah Reinwald

The Mission Board, through the generosity of our church members, friends, and guests, assists others in our community, the nation, and the world. Working with a budget of \$5,000 that was augmented by special collections, the Mission Board was able to donate locally, nationally and internationally.

From our \$5,000 budget, the following amounts were allocated:

Recipient Organization	Amount	Special Collections from the Congregation	Amount
Branford Education Children's Fund	300.00		
Camp Totokett	500.00		
Children's Defense Fund	250.00		
Columbus House	250.00		
Compassion International	250.00		
Connecticut Food Bank	300.00	UCC Hurricane Harvey and Irma	\$3107
Continuum of Care	300.00	The UCC, through their Disaster Relief Fund sent aid to those affected by the hurricanes.	
Fair Haven Parents' Ministry	250.00	Easter: One Great Hour of Sharing	\$1972
FCCB Christian Ed. Youth	250.00	This is an organization that transforms lives through health, education, agricultural and emergency relief initiatives in one hundred and thirty-eight countries, including the United States	
Feed Branford Kids	250.00	Just in June	\$305
Holy Joe's Café	250.00	Over 100 pounds of food and the cash donations were split between the Branford Food Pantry and the Community Dining	
Loaves and Fishes	250.00		
Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast	100.00		
Operation Gift Card	300.00		
Near East Foundation	300.00		
New Reach	250.00		
SARAH Foundation	250.00		
Samaritan's Purse	119.40		
UCC Neighbors in Need	250.00		
<b>Total</b>	<b>4969.40</b>		

Room.	
Thanksgiving Collection	\$2229
Divided equally between:	((\$743 donated to each organization listed to the left)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Branford Counseling Center Fuel Assistance Program</li> <li>• Branford Food Pantry</li> <li>• Community Dining Room</li> </ul>	
Christmas Collection	Amount not available at time of report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Split two-thirds going to the Ministers' Compassion Fund</li> <li>• One-third supporting the Asian Rural Institute.</li> </ul>	(In 2016 it was \$2387)

We thank the members and friends of the First Congregational Church of Branford for their caring displayed through their support of these many gifts to those in need.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Miller, Chair

**Scholarship Program Report**

The purpose of the First Congregational Church of Branford Scholarship program is to provide some financial aid to needy and worthy young men and women who are members or are children or grandchildren of members of The First Congregational Church of Branford (FCCB). Applicants for a scholarship grant must be a senior at a private or public secondary school, who are planning to attend a post-secondary school. Scholarship grants are given to the recipients for use during their first year of post-secondary education and are paid in two halves. The first half of the grant is paid to a recipient after confirmation of the school the recipient will be attending. The second half is paid to a recipient after the recipient provides to the Scholarship Committee a copy of their first semester transcript, showing they have achieved at least a "C" average.

The following are the students who we awarded scholarships to in the Fall of 2017:

Morgan Lombard \$500  
Samuel Dormer \$1000  
John Tedeschi \$750

The FCCB Scholarship Committee congratulates these recipients and wishes them continuing success with their academic careers.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Scholarship Committee

### **Land and Building Report**

The mission of the Land and Building Board is to maintain and oversee the operation of the Church-owned buildings and properties for the use of the Congregational membership as our budget permits. This also includes the properties at Killam's Point where the Land and Building Board works as partners with the Killam's Point Management Committee. The members of the Land and Building Board are tasked with accomplishing this mission by hiring contractors, finding volunteers from the Congregation or performing the work themselves.

The Land and Building budget is the second largest of all the Boards and Committees. The majority of our budget is used for items such as heating fuel, electricity and insurance. As I write this, the final numbers are not in for 2017, but I believe we ended the year within our approved budget.

Far and away the most notable project in 2017 is the new LED lighting being installed throughout the church both inside and outside the building. Most of the lights have just had the bulbs and where needed the ballast replaced. In some areas we have all new fixtures. The broken hall lights in the CE hallway down stairs are a good example. Like the replacement of the oil-fired boiler to a gas-fired unit in 2016. The new lighting will reduce our electric bill for 2018 allowing us to lower the budget for Utilities by \$5,000.

Other projects included bringing the Pine Room back to usable / rentable condition. All new seat cushions and window shades were installed. The walls were washed as well as the rug being professionally cleaned. The Branford Counseling Center has rented the room for its Secret Santa project this year and were very happy with the room.

The board members and volunteers also completed many tasks to maintain and repair our church throughout the year. Please be sure to thank them for their efforts and many hours of their time.

The Land and Building Board would like to extend a most heartfelt thanks to the night watch caretakers who walk thru the building after everyone has left for the day to make sure all the lights are off and the doors are locked. Please extend your thanks to caretakers: Neil Titcomb, Paul Chaplin (who have stepped up all year long for whatever needed doing) and Mike Giordano.

The L&B Board will continue to work as partners with the Killam's Point Management Committee with respect to ongoing and upcoming needed maintenance projects at Killam's Point.

To aid in the Land and Building Board's mission, all members of the Congregation are encouraged to bring issues they see with the condition of the Church's buildings and properties to the Board's attention.

Respectively submitted,

The Land and Building Board  
Mike Giordano - Chair

## **Refugee Welcome Committee**

The Refugee Welcome Committee (RWC) had taken a break after the departure of our first official co-sponsorship, a widowed mother and five-year-old twins from Iraq, who wanted to be near family in Texas.

We started 2017 deeply involved with the unofficial support of the John Semahoro family, refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo who had relocated from New Haven to Branford. RWC members worked to include the three older children in Branford Youth Soccer; we provided bicycles and helmets to John and his oldest son; we connected the mother and children with English instruction in the Family Learning Class; we explored the possibilities for childcare; and offered tuition-free summer camp positions at Killam's Point. Many people provided many rides for the family in various combinations! Donated mattresses and tables circulated from donors to the Semahoros to another, better established, refugee family in town.

The Semahoros subsequently also elected to move to Texas, for financial and climate reasons.

Very early in 2017, political circumstances at the national level prompted us to give the "green light" to the Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS) in New Haven, indicating that we were ready and willing to accept co-sponsorship of a new refugee family. Those same circumstances resulted in an offer of a family of seven, but even a week of full-time searching by members of the steering committee failed to produce any accommodation, so that we had to decline the offer.

In November, we were offered the co-sponsorship of a family consisting of a married couple from Afghanistan, coming to the USA under the Special Immigrant Visa program. This is a program which, after extreme vetting, awards permanent United States resident (green card) status to qualified applicants who have assisted US forces in Afghanistan.

In the eleven day period between the offer and the arrival of the couple, the RWC was able to find and rent excellent housing, procure renters' insurance, reserve a moving truck, put together a team of strong, willing movers from our church and the Evangelical Free Church, move the furnishings from storage provided by a church member at no charge, arrange for utilities, stock the apartment with appropriate food, and set up the apartment to provide a warm, welcoming home. On December 6, we met our new family in New Haven, and since then have been working through the myriad of arrangements to provide financial support, health care, Social Security registration, and cultural acclimatization so essential to secure resettling.

Our agenda for 2018 includes helping to find employment, and English education through Branford's English as a Second Language program, and learning the bus transportation system.

What an extraordinary blessing it is for every member of our committee to be able to help people in need in this manner, and to start deserving people on the path to becoming productive United States citizens! The financial support from all of our contributors, along with the time, talents, and professional skills of our volunteers, allows us to provide help to needy people, to welcome strangers into our midst, to fulfill a humanist and Christian mandate.

Respectfully submitted,

William D. Hall, Chair, Claire Bennitt, Betsy Hyde, Sue Miller, Judy Hall, Kathy Fox, Connie Hanrahan, WendyTarry

## **Registrar's Report**

### CHURCH REGISTRY

Active members, January 11, 2017	374
New members received	5
Confirmands received	9
Baptized	6
Married	0
Letters of transfer – sent/received	0
Active Members	374
Removed to Inactive Roll	0
Moved to Friends Roll	0
Affiliate Members	0

### MEMBERS WELCOMED

#### **June 11, 2017**

Matthew Fraenza  
Stephanie Fraenza  
Angela Hunt  
Kathleen McMahan-Brown  
Cheryl Tripp

Respectfully submitted,

## **Treasurer's Report**

In April, I was elected Treasurer of the First Congregational Church. At that time, an outside bookkeeper was in charge of the books including payroll, bank reconciliations, check deposits, bill payments and reports to the Committee Chairs as well as coordination with the Finance Committee. Communication was minimal. Earlier in the year, the bookkeeper stated concern over the amount of time she was spending on Church business and in May she handed in her resignation with a 2 week notice. It was decided that the position would be moved back on site with a full charge bookkeeper present 4 days a week, 5 hours a day. Full charge bookkeeper Pat Carroll was hired June 1. Immediately, payroll was turned over to Paychex which cost the same as the Intuit Desktop Payroll being used off site. Intuit was contacted to help with downloading "QuickBooks for Churches" from off site to the Church. All signature cards at Citizens Bank were updated. A review was done of the Chart of Accounts and the resulting Balance Sheet and Income Statement generated by QuickBooks. The Chart of Accounts was re-constructed to give the Church the reports needed. Our concern was to reconcile not only the Bank Statements but also account postings. Priority was given to generating correct Pledge Statements. Because half of the year was over, it was decided to work with what we had spending time on reconciliation and how best to setup up the system to be able to generate the reports needed with a "click of the button." The new Chart of Accounts has been generated and as of January 1, 2018, closing balances will be forwarded and a new year will begin.

Accounting will always be a work in progress as are the missions and commitments of the Church which change over time. I would like to thank Susanne Lendler Marsh for all of her time, great advice and Church knowledge and Pat Carroll for her hard work in making this all come together.

Respectively Submitted,

**Child Development Center**  
**FYE 8/31/17**

<b><i>Income</i></b>	Actual FYTD August 2017	Budget FYTD August 2017	Variance Better Than (Worse Than)
Fundraisers	100	1,000	(900)
Misc.	3,641	0	3,641
Registration	0	3,750	(3,750)
Tuition	673,939	631,554	42,385
<b><i>Grand Total Income</i></b>	<b>677,680</b>	<b>636,304</b>	<b>41,376</b>
<b><i>Expenses</i></b>			
<b><i>Staffing:</i></b>			
Health Insurance	3,460	4,000	540
Life Insurance and AFLAC	731	300	(431)
Payroll Expenses	6,825	4,844	(1,981)
Payroll Taxes	49,883	48,441	(1,442)
Replacement	44,736	34,000	(10,736)
Salaries	491,021	450,411	(40,610)
<b><i>Sub Total</i></b>	<b>596,657</b>	<b>541,997</b>	<b>(54,660)</b>
<b><i>Operational:</i></b>			
Church Contribution	21,600	21,800	200
Cleaning	7,803	7,000	(803)
Food	4,770	5,000	230
Medical Supplies	2,224	2,500	276
Paper Products	6,436	7,000	564

Playground	5,046	10,000	4,954
Repairs/Maintenance/sewer	479	1,000	521
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>48,358</b>	<b>54,300</b>	<b>5,942</b>
<b>General:</b>			
Advertising, Postage and Phone	195	150	(45)
Consulting	1,951	500	(1,451)
Contingency	0	1,000	1,000
Dues/Subscriptions	283	150	(133)
Workers Comp and AD&D	10,783	11,500	717
Legal	0	1,000	1,000
Office Supplies	7,398	7,000	(398)
Permits/Fees	1,209	635	(574)
Special Events	8,138	4,000	(4,138)
Visiting Nurse	1,866	2,000	134
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>31,822</b>	<b>27,935</b>	<b>(3,887)</b>
<b>Classroom Costs:</b>			
Activity	880	1,200	320
Supplies	1,050	1,000	(50)
Enrichment	1,482	6,000	4,518
Equipment	4,474	1,500	(2,974)
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>7,886</b>	<b>9,700</b>	<b>1,814</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>684,722</b>	<b>633,932</b>	<b>-50,791</b>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>-8,431</b>	<b>1,273</b>	<b>-9,703</b>

## Child Development Center Report

The Child Development Center of the First Congregational Church of Branford continued to get positive feedback in 2017 from current and prospective families.

Our enrollment continues to hold steady and we have a wait list in many of our classrooms. We continue to actively participate in early childhood advocacy programs such as the Branford Early Childhood Collaboration and the School Readiness Council, to help increase awareness of the importance of early childhood education. Our current families continue to make referrals to our program helping us keep our enrollment up.

This year, we decided to try a new program for the children, we now offer children's cross fit twice a month. We also continue to offer biweekly music and movement classes and weekly Spanish classes.

Our continued mission is:

- To provide a healthy and safe learning environment for children of all abilities.
- To promote personal and professional growth of children, families, and teachers.
- To design our curriculum based upon the physical, intellectual, emotional and social development of each individual child.
- To utilize the community as a learning tool.
- To honor each child as a unique individual and to respect the creativity that they possess.

Thank you all for your support over the past year. We look forward to continuing to work together in the new year and always welcome inquiries about our program.

Respectfully submitted,  
Stephanie Linke  
Director, Child Development Center