



MCC
Memorial Congregational Church



July 2022 – June 2023
Annual Report

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REV. TOM O'BRIEN, PASTOR AND TEACHER

In many ways, this past year felt more like a return to something close to normalcy after three years of the COVID pandemic. We welcomed new staff and started to see a return of some of our programming and traditions in-person and we began to welcome home old and new friends.

Of course, I wasn't around to be a part of that as I was fortunate enough to take some time on sabbatical. For me, October, November, and December focused on renewing my mind, body, and spirit, including an amazing trip to the Holy Land focused on the women in Jesus' life. The trip provided me with spiritual renewal and many stories to share. It has been a great joy to share those memories with you. I'm also grateful for the work of the Sabbatical Planning Team and Rev. Lee Atherton as they partnered together to ensure that the congregation was cared for in my absence.

Your gift to me of this Sabbath time allowed me to return in January feeling re-energized and re-focused. While some of the past year felt like a return to normalcy, there is also a growing realization that the past three years have altered our world and our church in a number of ways. Some are positive; for instance, our reliance on technology during the quarantine has grown into a digital ministry that allows us to include folks who are physically unable to come into the church for worship or other meetings due to distance, health concerns, or other issues. Our streaming worship services, meetings, and book groups allows us to widen our circle of welcome outside of Sudbury – even outside of Massachusetts – and to lower barriers for a variety of participants.

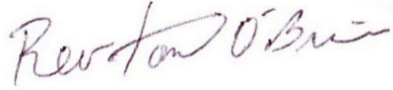
Not all changes are positive though. Church attendance is down across denominations and faiths, families face financial struggles, and mental health has suffered. However, this past year we have begun to hear God calling us to face these challenges as a church community. We've realized that it's time to take a look at the resources we have and examine what we really need to best fulfill our mission and vision. We're ending this programming year by starting to look forward as we reach out to experts outside of our church to help us have a conversation to discern where God is leading MCC next.

I have no idea where that discernment will lead us. The way that we do the work of the church may look different in the future, but I am confident that Memorial Congregational Church will be around for many years to come. I'm excited to enter this period of wonder and I invite everyone to be a part of the process. Every part of our community should have a say in where we are headed and how we will get there.

Many of the changes over the past few years have been out of our control. However, we can take charge of adjustments and shifts in the years to come by intentionally and prayerfully enter this discussion and listening carefully for God's ways to be made known to us.

I can't wait to see what's next. Thank you for continuing to join together on this journey of acceptance, connection, meaning, and purpose through the worship of God and the service of humanity.

peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Tom O'Brien". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Rev. Tom O'Brien
Senior Pastor and Teacher

CHURCH COUNCIL

Church council is the policy-making and primary governing body of the church, providing oversight and decision-making over matters pertaining to personnel, programs, activities, infrastructure, and financial status of MCC. At the core of our goals and actions is an ongoing commitment to promote the Memorial Congregational Church mission of “Inviting all on a journey of acceptance, connection, meaning, and purpose through the worship of God and the service of humanity.” And supporting our Vision of “A world fulfilling Jesus’ inclusive ministry of peace, love, and justice.”

Beginning August 23, 2022, representatives of all standing church ministries and working teams began to convene monthly, in-person and via Zoom, to thoughtfully deliberate and vote on a variety of issues which impact the overall well-being of our church community. Pivotal decisions have been prayerfully considered, debated, and implemented to carry on the mission and values of MCC. Reverend Lee represented the Senior Pastor in Council meetings while Pastor Tom was on sabbatical.

Highlights of this busy and productive year include:

- Confirmed and discussed the role and purpose of Council to ensure new and existing members (and the new Chair) had clarity of purpose and authority.
- Reviewed and approved compensation Agreements for Rev Lee and Rev Marcus in their respective roles.
- A Council Task Force was established to research and report back on guidelines for temporary and occasional overnight use of Church property for emergency situations. It was determined that overnight use beyond emergency situations would require a capital investments in our facilities (and would require a broad church discussion).
- Approved adjustments in responsibilities and staffing within the Music Ministry (with no budget impact) – including hiring of new Director of Senior Choir.
- Further clarification and better management of the various restricted funds of MCC.
- Approved the initiation of a Task Force to investigate updates that may be needed to the Safe Church Policy.
- Approved an increase in the annual rental value of the new parsonage for the new fiscal year (July 2023)
- Reviewed and provided input to Stewardship on the 2023-2024 budget.
- Discussed and identified the need for a new Council Chair beginning July 2023.
- Discussed and identified the need for a new Moderator for Annual Meetings beginning at the May 2024 Meeting.

MCC completed a successful year as we move more and more to in-person worship and fellowship. As a church community, we have challenges and opportunities before us to consider how a new “hybrid” worship, fellowship, and community can be maximized to ensure our church community thrives for years to come.

Respectfully submitted,
Christopher D. Houlihan, 2022-2023 MCC Church Council Chair

RESTRUCTURING COMMITTEE

The Restructuring Committee met regularly from July 2022 to the present time. In August the committee created and sent out a survey to all members and friends of MCC for the purpose of determining how the church is able to meet their needs and wants. Approximately 50% of MCC's membership responded to the survey. Recurring themes from the responses included:

- A desire to engage in service
- Importance of connecting with each other
- Importance of worship and music
- Concern over world and national events

In addition, many of the respondents expressed a desire to have more:

- Intergenerational activities
- Small special interest groups/events for connection to each other
- More social justice/service activities

Because the ministries have many vacancies due to a variety of reasons the committee will make a recommendation at the Annual Meeting to delay any changes to the Bylaws pertinent to the committee restructure.

The Restructuring Committee has been concerned with low attendance and the impact it may have on sustainability including programming, finances, and general property maintenance. As a result, the committee has discussed how the greater church as we know it is evolving and what that will look like for MCC. On May 4th Karen Ziel from the Southern New England Conference of the UCC presented information to the congregation on how MCC may engage in an intentional practice of assessment and discernment to ensure that MCC thrives well into the future. Our hope is that MCC's mission of acceptance, connection, meaning and purpose may continue to make a positive impact on all we serve.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Colombo, Rick Hilperts, Chairs; Samantha Bower, Betsy Nikula, Dave Pendleton, Rev. Tom O'Brien, Karen Ross, Gail Wright; with guidance from Bruce Johnson

WELCOME AND CONNECTIONS MINISTRIES

Since the fall of 2022, the Welcome and Connections Ministries have functioned as one unit with the purpose of building and sustaining meaningful relationships among MCC members and friends. Small groups of 5-13 participants have met monthly to work on specific service projects, complemented by several individual and personal outreach activities.

An informal Chat Group began in September and is open to anyone regardless of age, gender, membership status, or interests. Activities to support our mission of welcoming, connecting and supporting those within and outside of MCC include:

- Created decorative holiday pinecone baskets to contribute for sale at the Silver Bells Fair
- Baked, packed, and delivered 10 “cheer baskets” of holiday treats to MCC members and friends
- Assembled 45 Valentine gift bags for students with special needs, as well as 40 bags of bracelets for women in local shelters, including supportive messages of acceptance and encouragement
- Engaged in discussion about prayer and created origami prayer cranes to give away
- Filled “bunny bags” to share with the youth of MCC on Palm Sunday
- Assisted with the packing of food bags for Open Table
- Provided home-made bread for the eight new members joining MCC in April, along with handwritten cards of welcome
- Delivered May baskets of donated flowers to members and friends
- An effort to acknowledge the significant work of volunteers in our community is being considered.

During several months we collected an “MCC by the Numbers” summary to identify trends in attendance and participation, results of which were presented to Church Council. Our next step is to collect similar information about volunteer participation.

In response to nationwide concerns about mental health and safety, plans are underway to host a program in late September on “caring for the social and emotional well-being of ourselves and each other”. Details to follow.

Welcome and Connections will continue to work together with staff and with the Restructuring Committee to define and fulfill its purpose of creating and implementing meaningful connections among members and friends of Memorial Congregational Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen S. Ross and Sharon Colombo

PROPERTIES MINISTRY

It was another busy year for your Properties Ministry. Managing the Church, the Old Parsonage and the New Parsonage keeps us fully engaged with life at MCC. This Properties Annual Report is fashioned after our meeting agendas since they best reflect our mission here at MCC. Key agenda items for the past year are consolidated below. If, after reading our report, you feel like you might enjoy being part of our team please contact one of the names below. We would love to talk with you.

Properties Ministry - Meeting Agenda FY 2022-2023

(Sample agenda)

Jill Baker, George Connor, John Drum, Carol Hannauer, Ed Hawkins,
Jane Roddy, Sus-ann Lancoon

Financials:

- Repairs Fund: annual funding of \$18,000. Amount presently remaining = \$7937
~debit examples: inspections, fire safety repairs, plumbing, thermostats, defibrillator etc.
- Two major Properties financial events: (1) Prior Co-op lease adjustments netted MCC a plus \$3500. (2) Monitoring of our NGRID gas invoices netted MCC a plus \$2932.

Council Report:

- Here you would find a listing of Church Council action items especially those that are particular to the Properties Ministry, e.g., capital projects/funding requirements, temporary overnight shelter issues, alcohol usage by user groups, restricted funds usage.

Utilities:

- Administration, monitoring, and review of Gas (NGrid) and Electricity (Eversource) costs/usage.
- Ongoing investigation of comprehensive HVAC (boiler/heat pump) and Solar options, solutions and feasibility. How can they work together and what would be the initial cost, the ROI and the payback period.
- Service contract options sought for Church, OP and NP.
- Seek affordable improvements such as thermostat upgrades to WIFI and reporting capability. Thermostat administration and lighting timer admin.

Safety:

- Annual inspections: Church building (Sudbury Building Dept), Elevator (Stanley), Fire sprinkler (Carlisle), Fire panel (ADT), Fire extinguishers (Keane), Backflow (Sudbury Water District)
- Carlisle to replace 29 defective sprinkler heads and several leaking sections of black pipe in the dry system and a valve control on system 2.
- AED equipment updated, sprinkler compressor cycle rate monitoring.

Cleaning:

- Radiant Cleaning, our cleaning company, is allowing us a flexible schedule. General cleaning is 1-2 times a week and on different days depending on the time of year and our program schedules. Ames Hall floor and certain rugs also receive periodic cleaning. The cost of cleaning supplies is stable.
- Republic Services trash pickup is now needed about every 6-7 weeks, more than during height of the pandemic but still less than before it. The dumpsters are now locked.

Co-op:

- A much improved 3-year lease was executed with the Sudbury Cooperative Preschool. We were able to receive pro bono legal work in constructing the new lease.
- The Co-op underwent a substantial upgrade to the playground. They also replaced their shed with a new one. Britta has inquired about renting additional storage space.

Church building and grounds:

- Drainage issues persist in the parking lot. Water collects in Tom's office and the meeting room. A plan to correct that is being developed.
- Some exterior wall areas need power washing periodically.
- The accordion doors need repairs or replacement.
- The school wing needs new windows, several panes have been replaced this year.
- Silver Fern continues to provide landscape services in exchange for equipment storage in the upper parking lot.
- Steve Weir continues to plow and sanding the parking lot. The parking lot lines need to be painted periodically.
- A new secure mailbox has been installed.

Ames Hall:

- A handicapped ramp solution is needed as well as a handicapped accessible bathroom.
- Flooring repairs done on the stage.
- A few roof leaks have been noted and are either repaired or planned for repair.

New Parsonage

- Plumbing repairs were done on the second-floor bath.
- Basement sump pump water solution needed. Gutters need periodic cleaning.
- Geothermal HVAC system failure, needs repairs.

Old Parsonage:

- New tenant and new improved lease signed June 1, 2022. Family Promise and the Boston Housing Authority (BHA).
- Extensive renovations performed by church members and professional contractors to substantially upgrade the house for the new tenancy.
- Subsequent work: Kitchen sink repairs done last Fall, gutters cleaned, termite treatment performed, hot water heater replaced.

Rentals, Rates and Processes etc.:

- Website traffic driving interest in our available rental space. Physical improvements to the Parlor and Ames Hall noted.
- Ames Hall rental photos have been updated on our website: www.mccsudbury.org/rental/
- Annual review of rental rates and policies.

Other maintenance and repairs:

- This list is too long to enter here, ask a Properties member.

THE CLERK

In accordance with the bylaws, the Clerk submits each year a report of active members of MCC. Active members may vote at congregational meetings, may serve as elected members of Ministries (formerly “Committees”), and may be elected officers and officials of the church. However, the number of people who are part of our faith community is larger including children and youth and adults who are not members but are active in person and online participants in worship and programs.

This year the report covers the period May 1, 2022, through May 15, 2023. It also includes a correction of last year’s numbers. Hard work by Ann Boland has now reconciled our online Breeze system as our “official” guide to members with our former paper and other computer records.

The result is that our count of active Members as of May 2022 should have been 140 not the 143 we reported. The following statistics are based on the revised number.

Summary of Active Membership

Active Members as of May 1, 2022	140
New Members – Affirmation & Transfer	7
New members – Confirmation	0
New members – Restored from Inactive	0
Transfers & Resignations	1
Transfers to Inactive Status	4
Deaths	1
Active Members as of May 15, 2023	141

Membership Details

New Members – Affirmation & Transfer	Cathy Abraham, Lee Atherton, Sue Guertin, Walter Guertin, Patty Houpt, Kim Snow, Dorothy Vander Meulen
New members – Confirmation	
New members – Restored from Inactive	
Transfers & Resignations	Marie Machecek
Transfers to Inactive Status	Bob Young, Emma Young, Kristine Young, Reid Young
Deaths	John (Jack) Mohr

Other than looking after membership, the Clerk occupies herself with a few other chores: the annual non-profit corporation filings with the MA Secretary of State’s office, the annual UCC National survey, as executive officer liaison to Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, signing legal documents on behalf of the church, keeping minutes of Church Council and Annual meetings, and assisting the Moderator with preparation and conduct of the annual meeting. I am extremely grateful for the support of Betsy Nikula, who this year took minutes at Council meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Gail W. Wright, Clerk of the Church

MCC ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP—MAY 15, 2023

Abrams, Laura (1968)
Alving, Ruth (2019)
Bahlkow, Barbara (2011)
Baird, Laurie (2016)
Baird, Martha (2016)
Baker, Jill (2006)
Baker, Nelson (1976)
Barnes, Sally (2019)
Beaven, Marilyn (1993)
Bell, Sue (1981)
Borah, Holly (2016)
Borah, Randy (2016)
Bower, John (2019)
Bower, Samantha (2019)
Brown, Ruth (1959)
Burns, Brian (2011)
Caputo, Katherine (1984)
Chizzo, Olivia (2013)
Chizzo, Rebecca (1998)
Colombo, Sharon (1987)
Connor, George (1990)
Connor, Melinda (1990)
Corthell, Craig (2019)
Corthell, Erin (2019)
Couchon, Valerie (2011)
Curtis, Heather (1996)
Curtis, John (2013)
Curtis, Robert (2011)
Cutler, Betsey (1971)
Cutler, Hal (1959)
Daley, Linda (2001)
Davidson, Lola (2018)
Davidson, Luke (2018)
Davis, Lorraine (2011)
Dean, Lucy (1985)
Dowd, Claire (2013)
Dowd, John (1999)
Dowd, Paul (2013)
Drum, John (1970)
Drum, Ken (1972)
Emanuelson, Diana (2019)
Fisher, Bobbi (1998)
Fox, Dan (2018)
Fox, Kristen (2018)
Fryer, Jill (1970)
Fullerton, Gail (2000)
Gastan, Millie (2003)
Greer-Morrissey, Jen (2014)
Grellier, Nancy (1959)
Hammel, Vicki (2020)
Hankey, Danielle (2007)
Hankey, John (2007)
Hannauer, Carol (1994)
Harvell, Sally (2000)
Hawkins, Abbie (2006)
Hawkins, Ed (1990)
Hawkins, Judy (1971)
Hawkins, Shelley (2008)
Hays, Pam (1993)
Hilperts, Richard (1988)
Hirsh, Lynn (1998)
Houlihan, Chris (2011)
Houlihan, Ella (2013)
Houlihan, Sam (2011)
Hubbell, Sarah (2018)
Huffman, Carol (1980)
Hunter, Mona (2019)
Jenkinson, Jeff (1984)
Jenkinson, Mary (1984)
Johnson, Bruce (2000)
Johnson, Joan (2000)
Keeney, Debbie (1986)
Keeney, Terry (1986)
Kimber White, Gerald (2016)
Kimber White, Jayne (2018)
Kimber White, Merrie (2016)
Koumjian, Courtney (2011)
Kurina, Jeff (2006)
Kurina, Susan (2006)
Larson, Dave (2016)
Lewitus, Amanda (2016)
Lievano, Carla (2016)
McLellan, Jeannette (1996)
Menge, Chris (1980)
Menge, Virginia (1980)
Migliozzi, Glenn (1995)
Migliozzi, Lynn (1995)
Morrissey, Brian (2014)
Motyka, Cindy (1995)
Motyka, Mike (1995)
Nikula, Betsy (1971)
O'Brien, Charlotte (2018)
O'Brien, Rachel (2010)
O'Brien, Tom (2010)
Pendleton, Carole (2003)
Pendleton, Dave (2003)
Pendleton, Joey (2016)
Pettengill, Daniel (2003)
Pettengill, Sue (1991)
Powers, Nancy (1991)
Pratt-Peckham, Debra (2016)
Rippy, Alexandra (2021)
Rippy, Ben (2018)
Rippy, Dan (2011)
Rippy, Laura (2011)
Rippy, Nathan (2016)
Rock, Marie (2003)
Roddy, Carl (1992)
Roddy, Jane (1987)
Rogers, Kasey (2015)
Ross, Karen (2007)
Rothwell, Shirley (2012)
Sanderson, Mary-Ellen (2001)
Sanderson, Michael (2001)
Schow, Joan (1983)
Siebert, Elise (2018)
Siebert, Timo (2018)
Siegel, Mary (2000)
Sironen, Linda (1989)
Sui, Regina (2022)
Stolper, Melissa (2011)
Unger-Dowd, Heidi (1999)
Uttaro, Frank (1989)
Vai, Alex (2004)
Vander Meulen, Allen

Weaver, Alice (2019)
Whitlock, Beth (1998)
Kristianne
Widman-Johnson, (2007)

Wiltz, Kristine (2019)
Wright, Gail (2016)
Wright, Peter (2021)

Zeis, Jen (2011)
Zimmerman, Pat (2001)

TECHNOLOGY MINISTRY

The Technology Ministry this year accomplished the following:

1. Added a second camera in the Sanctuary for use in recording and streaming of video.
2. Acquired a new laptop computer for Ann (the Church Secretary).
3. Reworked the church Wi-Fi network for better security, stability, and improved coverage within the building (including Ames Hall and the Education wing).
4. Relocated the “Zoom Video Workstation” from the choir loft to the nook in front of the sacristy. This location is less intrusive and also allows the “video producer” to manage audio during services as well.
5. Improved the quality of the audio heard in recordings and on Zoom, particularly for musical performances, through the installation of a more sophisticated sound mixer and (through the generosity of the Keeney Fund) new “Boom” microphones.
6. Adopted a “Computer Usage” policy for church-owned machines issued to church employees and volunteer help.

We are working on the following:

1. We recently began work on a better audio system solution for Ames Hall. An interim solution has been implemented. A more extensive solution will be developed in the year to come.
2. Looking for tools that will enable us to use and manage the “Chancel TV” more effectively, so that it is more capable and can be more easily controlled by the “Video Producer.”
3. Personnel has asked us to review the April 5th draft of their “Safe Church Policy.” The issues raised by the proposed policy, and related questions asked of us, are quite complex – and could prove prohibitive in terms of the administrative labor necessary to implement solutions that comply with (or support) the proposed policy. Due to lack of time to properly research and discuss these issues, further discussion has been postponed until later this summer.

Respectfully submitted,
Allen Vander Meulen, Technology Ministry member.

PERSONNEL MINISTRY

The Personnel Ministry is comprised of two active members, Bruce Johnson and David Pendleton. Bruce Johnson currently acts as chairperson of the Ministry.

The Ministry meets regularly to review and maintain overall personnel policies, procedures and records for MCC staff members and contractors, including: Pastor, Minister of Youth and Families, Minister of Music, Senior Choir Director, Minister of Youth Music, Nursery Attendant, Church Administrator, Director of Sudbury Bell Ringers, and Organist in Residence.

The Ministry's duties and projects during the 2022/2023 fiscal year included the following:

- **Employment files**

The Ministry maintains documents, structures and archives personnel files for each position including: job descriptions, applicable contracts and forms, and annual staff evaluations.

- **Job descriptions**

The Ministry reviews job descriptions for existing positions revising as appropriate, develops new job descriptions for new positions, and coordinates the job descriptions with applicable contracts.

This year the Ministry drafted job descriptions for the Senior Choir Director/Accompanist and revised the job description for the Minister of Music.

- **Contracts**

The Ministry reviews the contracts for existing positions annually, drafts new contracts for new positions, and drafts annual staff contract renewal letters.

This year the Ministry drafted contract renewal letters for all staff and contractors, as well as new contracts for the Senior Choir Director/Accompanist and Pastor of Youth and Families and a revised contract for the Minister of Music/Minister of Youth Music.

- **Compensation and Benefits**

The Ministry reviews staff salary, other compensation, and benefit changes that may have been proposed as part of the annual staff evaluation and review process and makes recommendations with regard to any changes to the Stewardship Ministry. The Ministry also reviews proposed salary and benefits for new staff. Salary, other compensation, and benefit reviews are done in the context of the Ministry's compensation guidelines and compensation benchmarking process.

- **Staff Review and Evaluation Process**

The Ministry is responsible for coordinating the annual staff performance review and evaluation process. The Ministry also reviews the staff evaluation process and forms, making modifications when the Ministry feels that such changes would improve the process and/or outcomes. This year the Ministry continued to offer the virtual evaluation process, if preferred by the reviewers.

In January and February of 2023, the Personnel Ministry worked in collaboration with each Ministry Chairperson/Supervisor who is responsible for writing the annual reviews of MCC

staff and, where appropriate, MCC contractors. The time, effort and thoughtful feedback that went into each evaluation is very helpful and greatly appreciated.

- **Advocacy**

Each member of the Ministry is assigned to one or more MCC staff members and is responsible to help ensure that those staff members are adequately represented in the event of a concern or dispute related to their employment.

- **Counsel**

The Ministry provides advice and counsel to Church Ministries for the hiring of new employees and contractors or when the Ministry is addressing a specific personnel issue.

This year the Ministry worked with the Ministry of Faith Exploration as they searched for a new Minister of Youth and Families and with the Music Ministry in the search for a new Senior Choir Director/Accompanist.

- **Fair Rental Value of the New Parsonage**

Because the fair rental value of the new parsonage is considered part of the pastor's compensation, in coordination with the Properties and Stewardship Ministries, the Personnel Ministry conducted a review of that value in the context of the current rental market. The results of the review were presented with a recommendation to Church Council. The Council then set the fair rental value for the coming fiscal year by majority vote.

- **Safe Church Policy**

As part of the Church restructuring recommendations, the Personnel Ministry was asked to take on responsibility for the Safe Church Policy. This year the Ministry continued its review of the current Policy in the context of current MCC practices, policies in use by other churches, guidelines and practices recommended by the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ and State laws and regulations relevant to the Policy.

At the Ministry's request, Church Council authorized the creation of a Task Team to join with the Personnel Ministry in the revision process. The Task Team is made up of representatives from each Ministry whose responsibilities can have a direct impact on safe church practices. The Ministries are: Deacons, Faith Exploration, Welcoming/Connections, Properties, Music and Personnel. The Senior Pastor and the Pastor of Youth and Families also are part of the Task Team.

The initial draft of the revised Policy was circulated to the Team for review and comment in mid-April.

Once the final version of the Policy has been developed, it will be presented to Church Council for approval and to the congregation for its general understanding of the revised Policy. Although the Policy assigns responsibilities for its implementation to various individuals and Ministries, everyone, all members and friends of MCC, are the foundation for the Policy's success. Watchfulness and awareness of what is going on around us is at the center of keeping the Church welcoming and safe for everyone.

Respectfully submitted,
Bruce Johnson and David Pendleton

DIACONATE MINISTRY

The Diaconate oversees the spiritual welfare of the congregation in collaboration with Pastor Tom.

- *Assist the Pastor in caring for the poor, calling on the sick and bereaved, and in such other ways as the Pastor and Ministry shall mutually determine.*
The Deacons have been vigilant about sending cards to those members and friends of MCC who are hospitalized, in nursing homes, confined to their homes due to physical or medical limitations, or who have lost a loved one. In addition, the Deacons send cards to acknowledge celebrations of birth, marriage, or special occasions. In addition, gift cards were sent to our undergraduate college students. Bobbi Fisher has been especially caring during her many visits and calls to MCC members and friends who are ill.
- *Prepare the table for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and assist in its administration.*
The Deacons prepare and serve communion in support of Reverend Tom on communion Sundays.
- *Provide for the pulpit in the Pastor's temporary absence.*
The Diaconate ensures that both the pulpit and pastoral services are covered when Pastor Tom is on vacation. We are blessed to have many people willing to lead a Sunday service or step into Tom's shoes should an emergency arise in his absence.
- *Act with the Pastor in welcoming new Members and help to include them in the life and fellowship of the Church.*
Deacons assist Reverend Tom in welcoming new members when they join MCC. Most recently, Bobbi Fisher and Rick Hilperts assisted Tom on April 16 in welcoming eight new members.
- *Administer the Church Membership Roll.*
The Church membership is carefully tracked so that both MCC and the UCC have an annual accurate report of members who are active or inactive. Those people who have been inactive in the life of MCC in the past several years are contacted to determine how they prefer having their membership status listed.
- *Be solely responsible for receiving, disbursing, administering, and auditing the money known as the Deacons' Fund.*
Money for the Deacons' Fund comes from donations and is held in a special bank account managed by the Diaconate. Any request for financial assistance is confidential and is brought to Pastor Tom or the Diaconate chair. Members of the Diaconate vote on any requests and such requests are held in the strictest confidence.

Additional responsibilities include securing individuals of all ages to be covenant leaders and ushers, overseeing that flowers or arrangements are on the alter year-round, conducting the annual pastor evaluation, and acting as a consulting body for the pastor for planning worship services. Seasonal responsibilities include hosting the Maundy Thursday Service of Tenebrae.

In 2022-2023, the Diaconate included Bobbi Fisher, Sally Harvell, Rick Hilperts, Nancy Powers, Dan Rippy, and Pat Zimmerman.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Diaconate,
Rick Hilperts, Chair

PASTOR OF YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." -Matthew 19:14 (NIV)

The Youth and Families Ministry enjoyed a fruitful year of connecting, building, reflecting, and relaunching our programs. As the new Pastor of Youth & Families, with the help of faithful members & volunteers, we achieved several goals this past year, including increasing participation in weekly programs, creating a new curriculum for Faith Workshop, and expanding outreach to new and returning families. We also held a parent meeting to engage new and returning families post the pandemic.

We are proud to have accomplished the first Intergenerational Worship service. Our ministry remains committed to promoting faith and building solid relationships among youth and families. Our hopes for 2023-2024 include:

- Continuing to develop a comprehensive youth group program.
- Exploring a potential youth mission trip.
- Creating more opportunities for youth to participate in worship.
- Monthly Intergenerational Service.

We continually look forward to how God is moving and working in the lives of our youth and sustaining and growing our connections with our youth members and families. We look forward to continuing to adapt and meet the needs of the youth and families in our congregation for the coming year!

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Dr. Marcus A. Hill
Pastor of Youth & Families

FAITH EXPLORATION MINISTRY (FEM)

Faith Workshop:

Faith Workshop (previously known as Faith Exploration or Sunday School) has evolved over the years. Themes and topics have included lessons on the Fruit of the Spirit, forgiveness, prayer, justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Attendance has fluctuated, and the wide age and developmental range can make it challenging to scale activities appropriately “at the moment.” As such, two new formats have been introduced. One is a new format for “Faith Workshop,” in which the kids start in the blue room and not in worship—the second, Intergenerational services. The Intergenerational service on Palm Sunday was very successful. It seemed universally enjoyed and appreciated, engaging the children meaningfully as leaders in the service and building new connections with other members of the congregation/attendees. A new script for the Christmas Musical Story was introduced instead of the New Star pageant and was also very successful.

Youth Group:

The Youth Group has enjoyed increased consistency and participation as the year unfolded. Although the timing with youth music can be challenging, the Youth Group has great routines and a consistent format that has helped the kids grow more comfortable with each other and feel a meaningful part of the group, including having “jobs” and so on. Mission projects have included donating cans for the local food pantry and making bags for the Ronald McDonald House for families. The youth group spirituality component included learning about prayer, stewardship, and loving people different from us. Food at Youth Group has been an excellent addition and enjoyed immensely by the kids (and parents!), and the switch to the weekly format has been helpful for parents. It provides more opportunities for bonding and relationship building among the children and between the children and Pastor Marcus. With more support from congregation volunteers in cooking a meal or serving as a second adult, we’ll be able to build upon the strong foundation established by Pastor Marcus this year.

Events:

Sundae Sunday and the Advent Spiral were some of the primary events held by FE this year. Due to the timing of the February vacation, we did not have a Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner. Still, we encouraged families to contribute to the pancake and syrup collection held by Faith In Action.

Next steps:

Like churches everywhere, attendance and volunteer participation has proven an ongoing challenge. MCC is one part of our children’s and families’ rich tapestry of activities and volunteer commitments. We continue to provide meaningful experiences, a source of connection, service opportunities, and more, but we are constantly at odds with everyone’s calendars. We have begun envisioning and reimagining our youth offerings because it is clear that the “way we’ve always done things” may not resonate with this new landscape of church participation.

We would like to thank all those who supported our youth programs this year and look forward to building upon this year’s successes by trying new things to keep our dynamic programs vibrant and thriving.

Respectfully submitted,

Jen Greer-Morrissey, Betsy Nikula, Regina Siu, Rev. Marcus Hill, and Rev. Tom O’Brien

MINISTER OF MUSIC

The 2022-2023 Church year has been one filled with a mixture of traditions and evolution as we continue to look to the future of our church.

For the first September since Fall of 2019, Memorial Congregational Church began the church year with the ability to safely sing with our full capacity, welcoming back a full four-part choir once again to our sanctuary on Sunday mornings! Our praise band, Covenant, has returned multiple times with a full band and provided both their own music and inspiring Senior and Youth Choir collaborations. Youth Choirs have been sharing their talents and music in worship, Bells have moved us with their inspiring energy!

But, as always, the work of the music ministry has not been limited to our Sunday Morning Worship. Connection, meaning, and purpose have been found through the intentional work our ministry carries out. Collaborations with the One Spirit Foundation have brought our members to Cambridge. MCC hosted a newly formed Sudbury Community Choir that brought many local community members to our Wednesday night rehearsals, and a collaboration with Boston-based Una Voce choir helped fuel an incredible concert celebrating the light we can provide each other through connection, meaning, and shared purpose. Our Wednesday evening youth choirs have grown even more energetic as we welcome new members and collaborate with our new Youth Ministry led by Pastor Marcus.

As part of a 50-musician concert in January, the music ministry was awarded a Sudbury Cultural Council grant, raised money for the Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness. We are all very much looking forward to the performance that our Youth Choirs will be presenting of Godspell Junior in May! We have seen new and growing members in youth choirs, and returning members in Senior Choir that we have not seen since the pandemic. There is much to celebrate!

Speaking of celebration, in keeping with the Music Ministry discernment committees goal of continuing to diversify the music ministry offerings, we are blessed that Sam Long answered the call to be our new worship accompanist and Senior Choir Director this Winter, joining me as Music Minister and Youth Choir Director, Diane Burke as Bells Director, and Rob Humphreville as Organist in Residence to round out an incredible offering of faithful and hard working musicians.

Thank you, MCC Community, for the blessing of being able to continue to grow and evolve this ministry to suit the needs of our faith, community, and spirit. I look forward to another year and new opportunities in 2023-2024.

Peace and blessings,
Rachel Williams, Minister of Music

MUSIC MINISTRY

As part of the restructuring committee's efforts, MCC's bylaws have been suspended to focus on our four core gifts of acceptance, connection, meaning and purpose. In light of that, This report focuses on our music ministry as a whole. Minister of Music Rachel Williams has supplied the details of the events, activities, and purposes in her report for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Several years ago, the Music Ministry Discernment Committee did a comprehensive review of the music ministry. Their 2019 report states that the MCC music program should provide a variety of different types of music in worship that support the mission and vision of MCC. Additionally, the program should offer a variety of music opportunities inviting participation from all ages both within and outside of the MCC community. Through building community, that will foster a spirit of acceptance, connection, meaning and purpose. Rachel's work continues with youth choirs, the Covenant praise band, and coordination with Bell Choir director Diane Burke, and engagement with the broader community through the One Spirit Foundation and the Sudbury Community Choir. Since Sam Long is now the new senior choir director, that has allowed Rachel to step back from daily directing the senior choir. Sam brings skills and experience with the organ and directing various church choirs. Sam's focus on organ and a variety of traditional church choir music from different eras blends well with MCC's desire to provide variety in worship music as does Rob Humphreville's exceptional organ talents. The lessening of the COVID pandemic health threat has also encouraged people to re-engage with in-person musical activities.

In many of the Psalms, people offer faithful and joyful praise to God through singing, movement, and different musical instruments (trumpet, harp, and lyre being just a few of those names). It is a privilege to be able to continue in the footsteps of those who went before us, praising God and providing acceptance, connection, meaning, and purpose to all ages through our music ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Hubbell

FAITH IN ACTION MINISTRY

Faith in Action had a busy second year in our newly formed. Because our budget was quite limited this year, we tried to use some of our budget as seed money to encourage and involve the whole congregation in outreach projects.

In October, with many thanks to Deb and Terry Keeney who participated in the Crop Walk, we helped to raise funds to support local food pantries helping those with food insecurity.

In November we again invited our congregation to say a prayer on Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20.

Heading into Advent we once again participated in the Family to Family Twelve Days of Christmas bag project sponsored by Open Table food pantry. Individuals from our congregation signed up to provide 12 items for either a senior citizen or a family. We were able to provide more than 15 bags this year. Those who participated found collecting the items knowing that they would all go to one family or senior citizen to be very rewarding...a good project for the whole family!

On the last Sunday in January, we held our first “coffee hour project”. Each year in the fall Cradles to Crayons distributes backpacks filled with school supplies to students in the Boston area who need them. Coming out of the pandemic the need was greater than ever and 70,000 backpacks were distributed. An index card with an upbeat message or drawing included in each pack. Thanks to Sally Harvell’s involvement with Cradles to Crayons and her donation of lots of index cards and stickers, we were able to complete a couple hundred cards. Our youngest participants added stickers to the cards while older youth and adults either drew happy pictures or wrote positive messages.

In February we revived the pancake mix/syrup collection that was begun during the pandemic in lieu of our Shrove Tuesday pancake supper. Thanks to your generosity we collected 6 large bags of these breakfast supplies which were delivered to and gratefully accepted by Open Table in Maynard. The last Sunday in February we repeated our index card coffee hour project.

Our project for March was a much larger undertaking. Open Table distributes Kids Bags every week to all the children whose families they serve. Each Kids Bag is decorated and then filled with specific items such as a box of mac ‘n cheese, cans of spaghettios, single serve oatmeal, nutritious snacks, single serve beverages for a total of 18 items. These are items that the kids can easily fix for themselves on weekends when they don’t receive meals at school and to supplement the foods that their families receive. Our goal was to prepare 100 bags which meant we needed to collect 1800 specific food items! With some help from our budget to purchase items and with the overwhelming generosity of our congregation, we ended up with all 1800 items as well as some extras! As part of the project, we talked to the youth group about food pantries and food insecurity. We also did a Childrens Moment during worship on the food pantries and then spent the Faith Exploration workshop decorating the bags. The last Sunday of March our coffee hour project was to finish decorating bags and then fill them. With help from the Monday Chat Group, we completed all 100 bags!

With the blessing of Judy Hawkins and Danielle Hankey who run the Rummage Sale, we continue to provide town social workers with vouchers allowing those in need to shop without payment.

During April we have encouraged participation in the MCC Walking team set up by Kristianne Widman-Johnson which will walk in the MetroWest Family Promise Walkathon to end homelessness. That walk as well as our April coffee hour project to write notes of gratitude to service people, first responders, neighbors, teachers...to anyone for whom you are grateful are coming up soon.

The portion of our budget that we donate to other organizations that we want to support has been spent as follows. We have continued to support our orphan in the home for those orphaned because of AIDS. The rest of our budget was split into thirds to support the World Central Kitchen which addresses food insecurity around the world and The Trevor Project and Out MetroWest which support the LGBTQ+ community and mental health.

With gratitude for all the ways in which our congregation puts our Faith into Action

Your Faith in Action Ministry: Kristen Fox, Vicki Hammel, Betsy Nikula, Carl Roddy, Kasey Rogers

STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY

Stewardship is very glad that the “official” covid pandemic is over but is still dealing with its results. We lead the annual Pledge Drive, but our mission is much larger. Our actual mission is to seek to make effective use of the funds available to MCC to further the overall Mission and Vision of MCC. The funds available generally come from annual giving (predicted by pledges), rentals, event fundraising, and Balance Sheet Restricted Funds.

Here’s what we did/accomplished this past year with plans for the future.

- Our Treasurer once again provided timely (in August) official close of year (June 30th) reports. We ended the 2021-2022 year with a budget surplus and communicated that news to the congregation.
- During the summer we sent out our first (in our memory) thank you letters to those who pledged for 2022-2023. We will do that again this year better and clearer.
- We continue to move towards using the Breeze System to monitor pledging and communicate with potential pledgers. More work is necessary, since some people who are involved in our programs are not in that system.
- We continued our periodic reminders about paying pledges.
- We documented static Restricted Funds on our Balance Sheet - funds which haven’t been added to or withdrawn from and are for projects or programs which ended or appear to be “on hold.” Guided by our efforts Council moved and closed funds and assigned decision making responsibilities for others.
- We monitored the budget during this year of high inflation.
- The tradition of a Mid-Year Budget review and forecast meeting continued.
- Our Assistant Treasurer spent many hours responding to a theft of auto-pay checks.
- We appealed to Council for guidance on our concerns about only having one MCC person (Assistant Treasurer) who has access to giving information.
- Our pledge drive for fiscal 2024 was based on Psalm 13: “like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.”
 - We focused on MCC’s “good fruit” and the importance of pledging as a promise of giving for the next year on which we make budget decisions and shortened the Pledge Drive time.
 - We continue evolving ways to encourage everyone involved in MCC to pledge.
 - We have received 81 pledges (7 more than last year) including 16 new pledges.
 - 54% of our pledges are either increases or new.
 - 8 households who pledged in ’23 didn’t pledge. The reasons were life issues and moving away (physically or spiritually) from MCC.
 - We also had 16 decreased pledges.
 - We are noticing that our average pledge is lower this year than last year.

- We created a proposed Fiscal 2024 Budget that is balanced and seeks to honor our mission and our staff. A smaller total pledging amount than hoped for meant our compensation increases were less than we hoped for.

Our work was furthered this year by Patty Houpt, Ann Boland, Millie Gaston, and Pastor Marcus and the Youth Group (who created our Pledge Drive Tree) and by Pastor Tom.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Wright, Chair; Brian Morrissey, and ex officio: George Connor, Assistant Treasurer and Lorraine Davis, Treasurer.

Memorial Congregational Church
Fiscal Year 2024 Proposed Budget

	2023 Fiscal <u>Budget (Revised)</u>	2024 Fiscal Proposed Budget
 REVENUE		
101 Pledges	267,000	273,000
102 Late Pledges	-	-
103 Plate	1,500	2,500
104 Other Gifts	-	-
GIVING TOTAL	268,500	275,500
122 Rummage Sale	2,500	4,200
123 Music Concerts	1,250	1,250
124 Service Auction	6,500	6,500
125 Bells	500	500
128 Recycling/Shredding Fundraisers	15,000	11,000
129 Fall Fair	8,000	8,500
132 Trivia Night	750	750
FUNDRAISING TOTAL	34,500	32,700
143 Old Parsonage	35,145	37,500
144 Co-op Preschool	21,000	27,080
146 Summer Program	-	-
147 Other Rental	7,500	7,500
Rental Deposits Returned	-	-
RENTAL TOTAL	63,645	72,080
151 Interest	100	100
152 Other Fundraisers/Misc	1,000	1,500
OTHER TOTAL	1,100	1,600
REVENUE TOTAL	367,745	381,880

Memorial Congregational Church
Fiscal Year 2024 Proposed Budget

EXPENSES - Salaries

201 Base Salary	62,913	71,208
202 Housing Allowance	-	-
203 SECA allowance	7,365	8,168
204 Travel	-	-
205 Benefits	24,457	27,095
206 Professional Expense	3,785	1,406
207 Furnishings	-	-
208 Professional Development	2,590	700
209 Flexible Spending Account	2,700	3,050
211 Home Equity	5,460	1,200
SENIOR PASTOR TOTAL (TO'B)	109,270	112,827
231 Base Salary	35,448	36,511
232 Housing Allowance	-	-
238 Professional Development	-	-
233 FICA Contribution	-	-
YOUTH PASTOR TOTAL (MH)	35,448	36,511
241 Base Salary	6,758	6,961
242 FICA	517	533
248 Professional Development	-	-
MINISTER OF MUSIC TOTAL (RW)	7,275	7,494
251 Base Salary	27,150	27,150
252 FICA	2,077	2,077
258 Professional Development	1,000	1,000
DIRECTOR OF SENIOR CHOIR TOTAL (SL)	30,227	30,227
262 Secretary (AB)	17,755	18,285
263 Custodian	-	-
264 Seminarian	-	-
265 Crib Room Attendant (EB)	2,381	2,481
266 Staff FICA Contrib.	1,358	1,399
267 Ass't Crib Rm Attendant	-	-
269 PF Assistant	-	-
OTHER STAFF TOTAL	21,494	22,165
272 Music Concert Directors	-	1,000
274 Organist and Other Musicians	5,000	5,000
275 Senior Choir Section Leader	-	-
276 Bell Choir Director (DB)	4,570	4,670
277 Child/Youth Choir Admin	-	-
278 Other Music - FICA	-	-
OTHER MUSIC STAFF	9,570	10,670

Memorial Congregational Church

Fiscal Year 2024 Proposed Budget

EXPENSES - Salaries

281 Child/Youth Choir Director	18,115	18,658
282 Professional Development	1,000	1,000
283 FICA	1,386	1,428
YOUTH CHOIR DIRECTOR (RW)	<u>20,501</u>	<u>21,086</u>

EXPENSES - Utilities

301 Gas	16,000	17,000
302 Electricity	6,500	6,500
303 Water	600	600
304 Plowing	5,500	5,500
305 Trash Removal	2,100	2,300
306 Custodial Expenses	300	300
307 Contract Cleaning	14,000	14,000
308 Fire Safety	500	500
CHURCH TOTAL	<u>45,500</u>	<u>46,700</u>

321 R.E. Taxes	-	-
322 Utilities	5,905	5,905
323 Legal Expenses	-	-
324 Repairs & Maintenance	4,000	4,000
325 Interim Rent	-	-
326 Storage Rent	-	-
NEW PARS. TOTAL	<u>9,905</u>	<u>9,905</u>

341 Utilities	250	250
342 Repairs Fund OP	1,000	1,000
OLD PARS. TOTAL	<u>1,250</u>	<u>1,250</u>

350 REPAIRS FUND 18,000 20,000

355 SABBATICAL FUND - 1,000

372 PASTOR LED PROGRAMS 500 500

Memorial Congregational Church
Fiscal Year 2024 Proposed Budget

401 FAITH EXPLORATION EXPENSES	3,350	4,000
510 MUSIC MINISTRY EXPENSES	5,450	6,000
605 Stewardship	200	200
607 Library	-	-
608 Publicity - Growing # of Households	750	750
610 Diaconate	750	650
611 Welcoming	200	200
612 Connections	200	200
613 Technology	-	-
614 Faith In Action	4,000	4,500
MINISTRIES TOTAL	6,100	6,500

General Operating Expenses

701 Prop/Liability Ins	20,000	22,000
702 Fellowship Dues	600	400
703 Worker's Comp Ins	2,500	2,500
704 Telephone	2,000	2,000
705 Conference Expenses	500	500
706 Visiting Speakers	350	350
707 Bank Fees/Miscell	100	100
708 Replenish Reserve Fund	-	-
709 UCC Proportional Giving	7,000	6,250
GENERAL EXP. TOTAL	33,050	34,100

801 Office Expenses	4,000	4,000
802 Copier Lease	4,600	4,600
803 Payroll Service	1,000	1,000
807 Computer/Tech Licenses	1,200	1,260
OFFICE TOTAL	10,800	10,860

Total Expenses	367,690	381,795
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Total Revenue	367,745	381,880
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Surplus (deficit)	55	85
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