



# ANNUAL REPORT PART II (PROGRAMS) FOR THE YEAR 2014/2015



*THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF DARIEN  
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## **A CALL TO THE ANNUAL MEETING**

YOU ARE HEREBY CALLED TO THE  
“ANNUAL MEETING: PART II–PROGRAMS”  
OF  
THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF DARIEN,  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST.

This meeting is scheduled for Sunday, May 17, 2015  
immediately following our 10:00 a.m. service of worship.

The purpose of this congregational meeting is to:

- \* receive the 2015 nominating reports,
- \* receive committee program reports,
- \* amend our current By-Laws, regarding the Pastoral Relations Committee (see original and amended versions on page 23), and
- \* address any other business or concern relating to the life of our parish, which may properly be brought before the assembled congregation.

Childcare will be provided during the meeting.

*Constance Moore, Clerk*

### **FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH CLERGY AND STAFF**

The Rev. Dale B. Rosenberger, Pastor  
The Rev. Ronald T. Evans, Pastor Emeritus  
Karen Hansen, Treasurer  
Dennis Hanlon, Church Administrator  
Kate Nelson, Church School Director  
Justin Inners, Youth Minister  
Daniel Hague, Music Director  
Maxim Pakhomov, Organist  
Teri Manning, Nursery School Director  
Carlos Maya, Weekday Sexton  
Ulises Mendez, Sunday Sexton

### **OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH**

Moderator – Caroline Burke  
Clerk - Conni Moore  
Board of Deacons – Gary Holmes, Chair  
Board of Christian Education – Elizabeth Werner, Chair  
Board of Christian Outreach – Heather Raker, Chair  
Board of Stewards – Jim Gleason, Chair  
Treasurer - Karen Hansen  
Brian Lange, Assistant Treasurer

## **MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING PART II (PROGRAMS)**

**MAY 18, 2014**

Debbie Parnon, Moderator, called the meeting to order at 11:20 AM and declared a quorum. Rev. Dale Rosenberger delivered an opening prayer. There was a motion to accept the minutes of the 2013 Annual Meeting Part II, which was seconded and approved.

The Moderator commented on how wonderful the Music Sunday service today was, and how it demonstrates the strength and resources of this Congregation. She gave special recognition and thanks to Dan Hague and Max Pakhomov for their exceptional service. Rev. Dale Rosenberger spoke about the highlights of his Senior Minister's Report. He pointed out the challenges that face us, including the possibilities for the church campus, the options for the future, and our strength to address these.

The Moderator noted that we will receive reports from two special committees (11 Brookside and the Road Swap), and commended those who have stepped up to serve. She also thanked all those who have served on Boards and stated that Leila Wetmore will present the slate of candidates later in the meeting, with a special vote for a change in the By-Laws as well.

The Moderator turned to the Board Chairs, starting with Stewards, and Jeff Long spoke to our financial situation, which is good. Jeff commended the Board of Stewards for all their involvement, especially in view of the number of projects they have been handling.

The Moderator again recognized the Music Director for the highlights of his reports, and Dan Hague encouraged us all to consider joining the choir or having their children join the choir. She noted the exceptional efforts of the Board of Christian Ed who have been active in growing our Sunday School and Youth programs. Kate Nelson has taken a lead in the initiating the 2's Program and growing it, along with an effort to grow our Sunday School programs. The Nursery School has had another strong year, including a cook-out to involve families, which was very successful.

Outreach is the foundation of our Church's focus and their report reflects their many successful activities. Debbie acknowledged in particular the "In May We Help", "Feed My Starving Children", and Dove Box programs – the latter being a contribution greater than most churches our size. She also noted the special contributions of those who make possible our support of the Norwalk Emergency Shelter. She thanked Nina Miller for her special contribution in communicating needs to members. The largest contribution to our Outreach efforts comes from the Antiques Show, which we hope can continue to provide.

The Moderator acknowledged the contributions of the Communications Committee, especially their new website initiative and Twitter account, and all their efforts to update the ways we reach out to our members. She mentioned the wonderful activities of the Woman's Association, led by Michael Chiodo, including the Fall Fair, which is already in the planning stages.

There being no questions on the reports, the Moderator invited Leila Wetmore, Chair of Nominating, to present the slate of officers, Board Chairs, and members. Leila recognized those who are leaving boards, and those who are moving to other positions, and she thanked the many members who are willing to serve. In particular, she gave thanks to Debbie Parnon, who is stepping down as Moderator, for her special contributions and exceptional leadership. There was a round of applause for our retiring Moderator. Leila then recognized Caroline Burke, who has served the Church in a number of roles, and thanked her for her willingness to serve as our new Moderator.

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**MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING PART II (PROGRAMS)**

**MAY 18, 2014**

*(continued)*

There being no questions, the Moderator asked for a motion to approve the reports and the Nominating Committee slate. The motion was made by Sarah Gleason and seconded by Kathy Monro, and unanimously approved.

The Moderator then moved on to the special amendment to the By-Laws regarding the changes to the Personnel Committee. There being no questions or discussion, there was a motion to pass the amendment, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

There being no further business, the Moderator made a final comment of appreciation for our Senior Minister, whose contributions benefit us so much but whom we often take for granted. Rev. Rosenberger expressed appreciation to Debbie for her leadership.

Rev. Rosenberger offered a closing prayer, after which the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Conni Moore, Clerk

## MODERATOR'S REPORT

First Congregational Church of Darien continues to be a vibrant and authentic community of faith and, as I reflect on this past year, we have much to be proud of and thankful for. Several have made mention of us “getting our mojo back” there is a tangible sense of positivity, optimism, energy and enthusiasm for all the opportunities that our ministry is being afforded. As I read last year’s annual report, I am reminded of that old saying “problems are opportunities in disguise”. In the past year, we have seized “problems” and converted them to opportunities that will enable us to extend our ministry and continue to grow on our faith journey together.

- Concern over the need to sell our condo, became the means by which we have the funds to re-purpose 11 Brookside.
- The departure of the ABC Darien program from 11 Brookside is now an exciting opportunity to repurpose this property to provide a 3 bedroomed townhouse (possible for associate minister occupancy), a community meeting room and new youth center for our church.
- Doubt over whether we could afford a much anticipated and longed for Associate Minister became a thoughtful and collaborative discussion through church council, resulting in approval from the church members to use monies from endowment interest to ensure the viability of this appointment. A search committee is in place and working to identify an associate minister
- Concerns over how funds for outreach could be maintained without our much-loved annual Antique Show have been put aside as we see the opportunities that our new House Tours Event scheduled for June provides.

A word that seems to be part of our many conversations is “spark”, engendering a sense of liveliness and excitement; life and vitality – so clearly evident in the many gatherings we share with each other. We are delighted to have a number of new families join our church this past year, we welcomed 14 new members through confirmation, and pledges for 2015 show a 6% increase on the previous year - I believe that with sparks like these flying- truly our best days are ahead of us.

With thanks to you all for your support and encouragement during this past year.

In faith together  
Caroline Burke

**Annual reports can be rambling and shapelessly wander. Lest I fall victim, I let myself be guided by what is known as *The Eight Qualities of Healthy Churches*.**

*One: Empowering Leadership*—Caroline Burke has paid great attention to detail as our chief lay leader, whether listening to our staff, checking in with boards, or sparking new initiatives. Please thank her. Her caring faithfulness rubs off on others. The staff works well as a team, which is the right model. We've lost Justin but have wind in our sails as a Search Committee after a new Associate Pastor. As we go, let us acknowledge, churches become strong as the staff continues to do its part—*but not everything*—and as we empower our lay leaders in their roles also as ministers of FCC, D.

*Two: Gift-Oriented Ministry*—Leila Wetmore has aced finding fresh, new energy to serve on our boards and committees. Also important is how we conceive of this. As needs emerge, we identify gifts and we recruit within our congregation to meet those needs. In this, we find our calling, our unique role in God's reign, the thing God wants us all to do and contribute. It's not about holding down an office, it is about performing key ministries. The more we hear this, and the less we hear the word the word "volunteer", the more we move toward gift-oriented ministry. What is wrong with the word volunteer? We all want to expect more of ourselves in this threshold moment of becoming the church God would have us be. A friend said, "The only two words you can utter to a volunteer are the words 'thank you.'" We need greater honesty and accountability than that, not just staff, but all of us.

*Three: Passionate Spirituality*—I mention this a lot. Our opening sermon series 3 years ago was about faith as life's highest passion. I still hold fast to it. I charge our confirmands that finally our relationship with God must be *personal*. This isn't easy for us cerebral Congregationalists. Believe me, as a cerebral person myself, I get it. But what transforms me on this is how much more fun and adventurous ministry becomes as we fully engage both our head and our heart. When asked which command is the greatest, Jesus said love God and neighbor with all of your heart and mind and soul and strength—with our whole being. Could we be creeping toward greater enthusiasm toward our beloved church, the ministry we share, and our relationship with God? Could we learn to not care if some want to perceive that as forms of Christianity we have regarded as lowbrow? Stay tuned.

*Four: Functional Structures*—This year at our Annual Meeting, Part 2 we vote on structuring our Pastoral Relations Committee to keep it thriving and continuous. Last year in this report I described how the most effective boards and committees behave more like team ministries—everybody hands-on and contributing—rather than administrative bodies—deciding policy for ministry some vague 'other' does. As it says in our order of worship, we are all ministers here. We're all on the line. In the modern era boards and committees were enough. No longer in this post-modern time in which we live. The rules for ministry have changed. But have we?

*Five: Inspiring Worship Service*—We aim for worship to transform us--from the singing of hymns, to the presence of our children, to God's mysterious and real presence in the sacraments, to preaching of the Word right into where we live. All right, we can't attain this standard every Sunday, but even then worship should feed us at a deep level, equip us to face the world, remind us who we finally are. Music is a strong suit in our worship, and we can do much more. Instruments and descants on high holy days. More themed Sundays like our two jazz Sundays. Actually, we can also hear more from one another, like we do from our youth on Confirmation Sunday or from one another on what is now our annual Hymnfest.

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## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SENIOR PASTOR (continued)

*Six: Holistic Small Groups*—We have not given up on advancing the cause of our small groups, which have taken a leap forward through groups such as gather on literary classics, gardening, and men having the chance just to be men together. Most of the belonging we experience here doesn't happen in the large gatherings but in groups where we can know and be known in the struggles and joys of real life. We need more leaders of these groups, whether they are Bible Studies or cooking groups, mission trips or car buffs. How can we enhance these trends? Who'll step forward and help lead? It requires time, of course. We're poor in time.

*Seven: Need-Oriented Evangelism*—What does that phrase mean? It means the more we reach out into the places of hurt, longing, hopefulness, and frustration in the lives of people we don't know, the more they will want to share our journey. Last Sunday I heard a passionate and resolute homily from a church member at the door about our getting out into the world; how we need to show up outside of the church in places where people live. Do we want to become a living invitation? That means a willingness to find people where they are, literally and figuratively.

*Eight: Loving Relationships*—We can be keen on various insights and techniques as we live in this moment of history, but if we have not love, we're really nothing. In our troubles half a decade ago, we learned this the hard way. How we treat one another matters. How we go out of our way for each other is deeply trans-formative. How we forgive one another is the only way forward for lasting, healthy relationships. In the book of Acts, a hostile and indifferent world beheld a budding church and was impressed. What impressed the world so much that the church conquered the Roman Empire? "See how much they love one another," is the answer. To stay loving, as we much speak the truth to one another, we speak it in love, in support, in encouragement, in ways that build up rather than tear down.

Each of these eight indices is helpful to measure where we've been and where we are headed. I remain deeply encouraged and hopeful, glad to be your pastor. Can you believe it? We are in our fourth year together, working hard, having fun.

God bless you all, loving God with open hearts, loving each other as Christ loves you, more receptive to my own gifts, despite my flaws, than I could ever hope for.

Grace and peace.

The Rev. Dale Rosenberger

## **BOARD OF DEACONS**

The Board of Deacons is responsible for the spiritual health of the congregation, and to that end handles the Sunday services, maintains the membership rolls, and works to enhance the vitality of the congregation. With 18 members and several internal committees we also coordinate with related subcommittees, including the Music Committee, the Pastoral Relations Committee and the Flower Committee.

This year we attempted to experiment with several new ways of worshiping to make sure there were many ways for members to find a way to faith through our church. The most significant of these attempts was the creation of an “Alternative” or “Come-As-You-Are Service” on Sunday afternoons. Through the leadership of Karen Brennan and others, we worked with our youth minister to create a separate service that offered a more casual “come as you are” approach to worship. We experimented with seven such services this winter and spring. They were well-received and we hope to reinstitute them next year when a new Associate Pastor is called to our church.

We also experimented with several special services, including an outside “Blessings of the Animals” service, in which dozens of pets were blessed during worship on the church lawn. We also held a special service on the church’s approach to Care and recommissioned the Care Circle; held another “Hymn Fest,” at which several parishioners talked about what their favorite hymns mean to them; and had a joyous Fat Sunday with a Dixieland theme.

Realizing that fellowship is critical to the health of a church community, the Deacons sponsored several fellowship opportunities throughout the year, including a Jazz Brunch after Fat Sunday, a reception after Max Pakhomov’s piano recital on May 2, and had a special Easter coffee between the two Easter Services.

Welcoming new members is the lifeblood of any church and this year we were happy to welcome 27 new members in addition to another 14 confirmands. We continue to work with the Care Connect and Communicate Committee to identify and implement ways to make the church more welcoming and inclusive to potential new members and recently joined members.

All in all, we believe that 2014-15 was a period of growth, renewal and innovation and we look forward to next year with a sense of momentum.

Respectfully submitted

Gary Holmes  
Chair, Board of Deacons



## **BOARD OF STEWARDS**

The Board of Stewards continued to watch over the financial and physical assets of the Church.

Our congregation has launched two major initiatives for 2015, which have significant financial and strategic implications. The funds received from the Rowayton Woods Condo will be used to renovate and repurpose the ABC house, providing our Church campus with a dedicated youth room (basement), a dedicated large meeting room with a separate street entrance (part of 1<sup>st</sup> floor), and a residential apartment for an associate minister (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> floor). This “repatriation” of capital to our immediate campus will yield many long term benefits to our community. Our second initiative, to search for an associate minister should benefit our Church life in many ways (revitalized youth group, enhanced membership, etc.) and has significant financial implications. We will temporarily fund the position out of our CLEF (Church Life Endowment Fund) asset. The congregation will be kept informed of these and other initiatives/issues.

The Capital Items completed in 2014 were:

1. Preparation and sale of the Rowayton Woods Condominium. A great deal of time and effort went into cleaning, repairing, marketing and otherwise selling this church owned property, yielding a better than expected result. Special thanks should go to Tom Hager, Bob Sinche, Jeff Long, and many other church members that donated time and effort to achieve this favorable outcome.
2. Parsonage: new dishwasher & refrigerator, and porch renovation
3. New projector & vacuum for the meetinghouse.

I would like to thank the stewards for the hard work and willingness to resolve difficult issues in thoughtful and creative ways. I would also like to thank the congregation for its ongoing financial support. Your financial help, along with the many others ways you contribute have enlivened our church community and enhanced our ability to achieve our mission. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

If there are areas in our facility that you believe need attention, please contact Dennis Hanlon, myself, or any member of the Board of Stewards.

Jim Gleason, Chair

## MUSIC DIRECTORS REPORT

As in every previous report, my goals remain the same:

- 1- To encourage greater involvement in the Music Program here at First Church.
- 2-To present music that supports, enhances and underscores the preaching and Bible readings of the day. (To me, this is the obvious function of Church Music) Hopefully both the Choir and Congregation will find this music exciting, challenging and possibly inspiring.
- 3- Combine numbers 1 and 2 to make the Music Program at First Church the best it can be.

Frankly, number 1 has been very difficult this year. New members of the Senior and Junior Choirs have not come on board. I continue to search for new ways to remedy this.

The concert series "Music at First" continues to enjoy a good attendance, bringing in a great deal of money which goes out to our various Outreach programs. Several outside groups also make use of our space (for a rental fee) for several dozen additional programs.

These outside groups have also brought many young, gifted musicians to my attention, some of whom have performed at our worship services.

I hope to expand the Concert Series next year, both through outside groups (which brings in the greater community and possible new church members) and the Music at First series which we produce. It will remain at a very high level of quality.

Our Cabaret Night will be presented in the fall this year.

Maxim Pakhomov has again been invaluable to me this year. His paradigm musical abilities must be obvious to all by now. We will never be limited in what we are able to present by any limitations on his end.

I must thank my Music Committee headed by John Stuart and Karen Birsky. They have been a great help to me with so many projects this year. They keep me "On Course".

My section leader/ soloists Amy Saleeby, Beth Grace and Victor Khodadad also merit applause. All together, they help to raise the level of music we are able to present.

New this year is the Bell Choir. They are very enthusiastic; and have performed twice this year.

Lastly, I must thank every member of my Junior, Senior and Bell Choirs as well as the entire Church Family. I am grateful for their unwavering support and friendship which anchors me.

Daniel Hague

## **BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

Over the past year, the Board of Christian Education continued to coordinate its annual events, liason with FCC's Church School Director and Director of Youth, and meet monthly throughout the year. The Board's annual events kicks off with the ice cream social in September, is followed by the December Advent Celebration (formerly Advent Workshop), and concludes with Church School Sunday on June 7.

Kate Nelson, our Church School Director and Justin Inners, our Youth Minister and Director of Youth Group, attended our monthly Board meetings and kept us apprised of their activities. We support their efforts as well as supply funds to them when needed. Last year, we changed the Church School format to better serve a smaller group. Church School began with all the children meeting for group music and discussion, followed by break outs into smaller groups for lessons. Kate also passed along the responsibility of the successful two's program at FCC's nursery to Teri Manning. The success of her work has been a great contribution and we look forward to continuing the program she created.

Justin Inners who joined us last October led many youth events and co-led our confirmand class. Justin also led our alternative "Comes As You Are" Sunday evening service, a new addition to our Church services. This more casual and contemporary worship service was well received and we continue to offer it as an alternative for congregants of all ages, from teens and young adults to families with young children and empty-nesters. The service combined a short message and contemporary music and prayerful songs for all. In May, Justin and his wife returned to their home in Pennsylvania.

This year's confirmand program included fifteen 8th graders, many of whom had been attending Sunday School at FCC for years. The great contribution of parent coordinators Gayle Applebee, Kathy Cramer, and Sarah Gleason provided the guidance and facilitated the opportunities for confirmands to meet their requirements for church membership.

And we must not forget the countless volunteers who teach Church School every Sunday. We are also grateful to the office staff for their assistance and to the congregation for their generous support to all our initiatives.

Respectfully submitted,  
Liz Werner

## NURSERY SCHOOL

The First Congregational Church Nursery School is a happy, bustling place, with 110 children, 23 teachers, a part time nurse, and an office assistant.

We offer morning classes for 3, 4, and 5 year olds, and optional afternoon enrichment programs Monday through Friday. We typically have 60 children who stay for the afternoons, participating in Kitchen Science, Fingerplays, Letters & Literature, Craft Happy, and Numbers & Science. We end the week with Pizza Friday!

At the Church's request, I have been working towards licensing the 2's program and moving it to a classroom 'up the ramp'. We have full enrollment in this program (thanks in large part to Kate Nelson!) and should have the necessary inspections and paperwork in place by the time school resumes in September. Having a licensed 2's program helps us be competitive with the other schools in town offering this.

For many parents, nursery school offers an opportunity to get to know other parents and, for that reason, we have expanded our social events to include the back to school ice cream social and a couples' night. The annual Scholarship Party brings in enough money for us to continue to offer approximately \$12,000 in scholarship funds every year, or a total of more than \$150,000 since the fund was started in 1994.

The Messy Art Show deserves special acknowledgment. Kathy Cramer organizes an evening event to show off the children's work, both individual pieces and a whole-school project, which is attended by parents, siblings, grandparents and, of course, the children themselves.

Thank you to Deacons Gary Holmes and Kristin Desautelle for working to strengthen connections between the school and the church through welcome coffees and informational flyers. And thank you, Dale, for the Christmas message, the Easter message, and your casual visits. We appreciate your presence and counsel.

Teri Manning  
Director

## **BOARD OF CHRISTIAN OUTREACH**

Outreach Submission for the Annual Report of 2015 Fiscal Year:

The Board of Christian Outreach is charged with helping our congregation put faith into action through financial support and hands-on mission work for our neighbors in need. The Outreach board focuses first on those who lack the most immediate and basic needs, but also concentrates on promoting permanent and systematic improvements in peoples' lives. We do this by working with agencies and organizations whose mission fits with that of our congregation.

In 2014 the annual Outreach budget has been comprised of 10% of pledged contributions to the church, 4% of the Mission Endowment fund, and net proceeds from the annual Antiques Show. In 2014, the general Outreach budget was \$84,680. In addition, all special offerings (a portion of the Easter and Christmas collections, musical concert goodwill offerings, and a portion of the Antiques Show Preview Party proceeds) are also collected and allocated by the Board of Outreach as well. In 2014, that amount was \$45,498.

The biggest change in Outreach this past year is in respect to our budget. In June of 2015 First Congregational Church will be holding our first annual Darien House Tour as our biggest fundraiser. The House Tour and After Party will replace the Antiques Show and Preview Party in this role. However, this change in budget will not begin until Fiscal Year 2015.

Charitable gifts are made in support of a variety of local social service agencies and the mission work of the United Church of Christ and Church World Service, an international service provider. The following is a list of agencies and organizations that were supported by our congregation through Outreach in 2014:

A Better Chance Darien (ABC)  
Center for Hope (part of Family Centers)  
Child Guidance Center  
Church World Service  
Domestic Violence Crisis Center  
Elderhouse  
Feed My Starving Children  
George Washington Carver Center  
Habitat for Humanity (Fairfield County)  
Inspirica (formerly St. Luke's Lifeworks)  
Liberation Programs  
New Covenant House  
Norwalk Emergency Shelter (Open Door Shelter)  
Our Church's Wider Mission  
Person to Person  
Sexual Assault Crisis and Education Center  
Shelter for the Homeless  
STAR  
YWCA: Job Search Support Program

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## **BOARD OF CHRISTIAN OUTREACH (continued)**

Our Church's Wider Mission was our largest dollar recipient of funding, receiving \$19,680. It has been a tradition in the Church that the Antiques Show Preview Party donates a portion of its proceeds to a local agency. In 2014, the recipient was Liberation Programs, which received \$12,000 from the Preview Party. A Better Chance in Darien (ABC) received our largest in-kind donation, as FCC rented a house to ABC for \$1.00 a year. However, because ABC has recently purchased a new house for its program, as of Fiscal Year 2015 we will no longer be providing this "in-kind" donation.

Other in-kind contributions include our monthly Food First Program, where church members donate food on the first Sunday of each month for the benefit of the food pantries at Person-to-Person and Norwalk Emergency Shelter. This effort has been supported and highlighted as part of the monthly communion church service.

The Board of Christian Outreach also coordinates "hands on" outreach projects, including the provision of meals to the Norwalk Emergency Shelter and taking up collections of special needs for local agencies. Polly Morehouse and Heather Raker have continued the leadership behind the once-a-month meals served at the Norwalk Emergency Shelter. Bob McGee helps as well, by organizing FCC volunteers to hand out hams, turkeys, and fixings to the shelter at Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The Board of Outreach also supports local agencies depending on FCC's ability to help with various needs and requests. For example, this year Elderhouse requested a Christmas Tree that its residents with Alzheimer's and Dementia could decorate and enjoy. So, the Board of Outreach collected funds from FCC members to provide this tree before the holiday season.

Outreach Board Member Wendy Mulligan provided a creative way to help FCC support the Person-to-Person Fuel Bank this past winter. Wendy generously donated her time teaching yoga classes at FCC. Rather than collecting pay for the class, Wendy collected a good will offering, which was sent directly to the Fuel Bank.

Every spring Outreach holds an "In May We Help" (IMWH) service project. The goal of IMWH is to provide a "hands on" service opportunity for FCC members of all ages – from adults to young children. Our 2014 IMWH service project was hosting a Family Night at Neighbors Link in Stamford. Neighbor's Link is an agency whose mission is "To strengthen the whole community by actively enhancing the healthy integration of immigrants". This is achieved through ESL classes, job training, citizenship classes, etc. As a sponsor of Neighbor's Link Family Night, FCC members cooked, served and ate dinner with clients, and provided musical entertainment. The evening was enjoyed by Neighbors Link clients and FCC members of all ages!

Again in 2014 FCC Darien volunteers participated in the Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) effort in October. Tracey Berry and Nina Miller continue to represent our church in support of this community-wide event. A great family outreach activity, church volunteers helped to pack over 202,000 meals for children in need around the world. Funding for FMSC was again provided in part by a church-wide breakfast, skillfully cooked and served by our youth, and spearheaded by Dave and Nina Miller.

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**BOARD OF CHRISTIAN OUTREACH (continued)**

Our participation in the local Christmas Dove Box effort resulted in more than 70 boxes prepared by members of our congregation. These Dove Boxes provided Christmas Day meals to individuals and families who otherwise would have been without. A collection of cash and gift cards provided additional support. Outreach organized Dove Box collection and worked the Confirmation Class to distribute the boxes to local agencies. It's important to note that FCC prepares a comparable number of Dove Boxes to other local churches, which are much larger.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Raker  
Chair  
Board of Christian Outreach

## **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE – 2014/15 Report**

This was the year of “digital” for First Congregational Church of Darien.

### **Website**

In September 2014 our communications efforts made a major shift to the online world with the launch of our new church website (<http://uccdarien.org/>). The goal was to have a centralized communications outlet for both our members and the community at large. Significant changes with our website include:

- a blog for our up-to-the minute news and Dales’ messages
- a centralized calendar for all church events
- an integrated PayPal system for online donations and pledge payments

We are currently averaging over 1,200 sessions a month to the site, with a near 50/50 split between new and returning visitors.

### **Video**

We have begun regularly filming church services and posting them on our Vimeo channel (<https://vimeo.com/fccdarien>) and linking them to the church website.

### **Social Media**

Our presence continues to grow with our **Facebook** group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FirstCongregationalChurchDarien/>) of 90+ members where we share happenings, news and reminders within our congregation.

We are also more active on **Twitter** (<https://twitter.com/uccdarien>) sharing community news on a local, regional and national level.

### **Email**

Using email, we send highlights of church news, events and Dale’s regular messages to approximately 400 people with an impressive open rate of just below 50% (average email open rates are 20%). Our regular email communications are:

**Flash** – weekly

**Mini-Flash** – special, email blasts, when needed

**Parish Columns** – monthly but shifting to bi-monthly possibly quarterly frequency

### **Media Relations**

We work with the local newspapers in both print and online versions, submitting press releases, event news and pictures when appropriate. This year the church garnered quite a bit of coverage for the Good Friday walk.

### **Bulletin**

Thanks to Dennis Hanlon our unofficial Communications member who pulls together and publishes the church bulletin each and every Sunday.

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## **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE – 2014/15 Report**

*(continued)*

### **Committee**

Many thanks to the tireless Communications Committee who work diligently behind the scenes to keep our messaging thoughtful, tight, and timely:

Gary Holmes - general member  
Mandy Teare - webmaster  
Kathy Cramer – Parish Columns  
Bill Latimer - Flash  
Julia Arstorp - Flash  
Katherine MacLane – media relations

### **Contact**

Ideally, every church board or committee should have a representative submitting information to the communications group for publication in all of the various outlets.

To share news with the Communications Committee, please email [info@uccdarien.org](mailto:info@uccdarien.org).

For the upcoming year, we look forward to growing our social media presence both with Facebook and a new LinkedIn profile or group. We will keep fine-tuning the website. We also plan to start reviewing the options for live streaming church services and events.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Sheed  
Communications Chair - 2015

## WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

The Women's Association made up of the women in our congregation has had a busy and successful year.

Our annual Fall Fair, our fund raiser, was once again a big success thanks to all the work done by our ladies. There were many craft and baking sessions, which allowed us to make and sell more than ever! Taking advance orders for pies and quiches for the first time allowed us to better meet the demand for these popular items.

The Ladies' Christmas Luncheon was enjoyed by a large number of attendees. We have so much fun. The Acabellas, a group of incredibly talented women, were back spreading lots of joy through their music.

Our annual Mystery Dinner was another success. The popular event was well attended, starting with a cocktail party in Parish Hall before leaving for our various destinations for dinner. We really do need to compose a cookbook- there are many wonderful cooks in our church!

There have been plant exchanges, special trips into NYC to tour the Botanical Gardens with a side trip to Arthur Avenue for a fine meal and to walk the HighLine after lunch at the Frying Pan, a boat docked on the Hudson River. A future trip to PepsiCo's gardens has been mentioned.

Ruth Anne Ramsey retired as leader of the Nite Owls. Thanks for your many years of leading us!

Debbie Nelson has taken the reins and organized several fun evenings with great attendance of women of all ages. More recipes for our cookbook!

The Knitting Ministry has been very busy making their beautiful shawls to be presented to those in need and newly christened babies.

The Green Goddesses continue to work hard keeping our grounds looking good. A special thanks to Marnie Hodil for her creative container plantings!

The WA has pledged to buy new chairs for the library and is actively searching to find the best ones to suit our needs.

Many thanks to all for your help and support of the WA.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Michael Chiodo  
President of Women's Association

## **REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE, MAY 6, 2015**

The Nominating Committee submits the following slate of Church Officers, Board Chairs and Committee Members for terms ending 2016, 2017 and 2018. Thanks to all who have served, to all who continue to serve, and to those who have renewed their commitment to lead our church and its mission in the coming years.

To form this slate, the Nominating Committee reached out to the full congregation starting in February with requests for volunteers and nominations in the weekly bulletins, Flash, Parish Columns and announcements at the 8:30 and 10:00 service. We spoke to current Board leadership and as many members of the congregation as possible. If you were not canvassed and are interested in volunteering, you are welcome! Many of the volunteers on this list were self-identified and we encourage you to reach out to a member of the Nominating Committee with your interest.

22 volunteers rolled off Boards, reached term limits, or left the position for other reasons. These positions have been filled by new and returning volunteers who are willing to serve, and for that we are truly grateful. In addition to the 73 volunteers listed here on the slate, our church is served by over 100 additional volunteers who actively participate in the Communications Committee, the House Tour, Confirmation, Church School, Care Circle, Woman's Association, Youth Group, Church Grounds Beautification, Pledge, the Flower Committee, Music, Ad-Hoc committees like Search and 11 Brookside among others, and of course, our Choir.

A bylaw change this year included the Nominating Committee in the process of forming the Pastoral Relations Committee. Pastoral Relations plays an important role in the support of both our clergy and the congregation as a conduit of information, guidance and feedback between the pastor(s) and the congregation. Although the bylaws do not require this committee be included on the slate for congregation approval, it is important that they be identified so that anyone can reach out to them at any time. For the coming year, the Pastoral Relations Committee is: Gary Holmes, Kathy Monro, Nancy Sheed and Marc Thorne.

Our church is a vibrant community of love and faith and it is witnessed in the generous volunteerism of our membership.

Respectfully submitted,  
Leila Wetmore, Nominating Committee Chair, Tom Hager, Bob McGee, Seth Morton, Leo Schlinkert, Liz Werner.

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF DARIEN**  
**VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP SLATE 2015-2016**

**2015 – 2016 CHURCH COUNCIL-Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of month**

Caroline Burke (2014)	Chair and Moderator	Church Officer
Rev. Dale Rosenberger (2012)	Senior Minister	
Connie Moore (1994)	Church Clerk	Church Officer
Gary Holmes (2014)	Chair of Deacons	Church Officer
Jim Gleason (2014)	Chair of Stewards	Church Officer
Heather Raker (2014)	Chair of Outreach	Church Officer
Karen Brennan (2015)	Chair of Christian Ed	Church Officer
Nancy Sheed (2014)	Chair of Communications	
Leila Wetmore (2013)	Chair of Nominating	
Michael Chiodo (2013)	Women's Association Representative	
<b>At Large Members</b>		
<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
John Bassler (2010)	Terry Brewer (2014)	Ray Hodil (2012)
Jon Bigelow (2013)	Eric Voight (2013)	Jeff Long (2015)
Carol McGee (2010)	Susan Wilson (2013)	Molly Watkins (2011)

**CHURCH OFFICERS, OTHER THAN THOSE SERVING ON COUNCIL**

Karen Hansen (2005)	Church Treasurer
Brian Lange (2005)	Assistant Treasurer

**BOARD OF DEACONS-Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of month**

<b>2015-2016 Chair: Gary Holmes</b> <b>2015 – 2016 Vice Chair: Lou Converse</b>		
<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
April Barker (2013)	Lou Converse (2011)	Frank Burke (2015)
Ann MacInnes (2012)	Karalesa DiFabio (2014)	Kristin Desautelle (2012)
Dave Miller (2014)	Gary Holmes (2011)	Mary Ann Freeman (2012)
Theo Osgood (2010)	Bill Latimer (2012)	Al Nickerson (2014)
Leo Schlinkert (2011)	Jay Robbins (2013)	Mandy Teare (2015)
Brad Westbrook (2010)	Lauren Ryder (2014)	Steve Weeden (2015)

**BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION-Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of month**

<b>2015-2016 Chair: Karen Brennan</b> <b>2014-2015 Vice Chair: Heather Walsh</b>		
<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Sharon Hager (2011)	Kim Adams (2015)	Danielle Craig (2015)
Rich Terhune (2013)	Karen Brennan (2015)	Jasmine Hodgson (2015)
Liz Werner (2012)	Kelsey Cochran (2011)	Andy Huntington (2015)
John Wygal (2013)	Lindsey Westbrook (2012)	Heather Walsh (2015)

**BOARD OF CHRISTIAN OUTREACH-Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month**

<b>2015-2016 Chair: Heather Raker</b> <b>2015-2016 Vice Chair: Anna Denoyer</b>		
<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Gayle Appleby (2013)	Tracey Berry (2011)	Lindsey Atha (2015)
Yvette Borecki (2014)	Anna Denoyer (2014)	Joanne Gabriel (2015)
Wendy Mulligan (2012)	Vince Hough (2014)	Lora Grassilli (2015)
Charlie Wetmore (2015)	Annette Madden-Kline (2011)	Heather Raker (2014)

### BOARD OF STEWARDS-Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of month

<b>2015-2016 Chair: Jim Gleason</b> <b>2015-2016 Vice-Chair:</b> <b>Andrew Barnard</b>		
<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Jim Gleason (2013)	Richard Almy (2014)	Nancy Hamson (2015)
Ellen Kirby (2011)	Andrew Barnard (2014)	Katherine MacLane (2015)
Wyn Lydecker (2013)	Doug Kline (2014)	James Sheed (2015)
Harry McLachlin (2013)	Tom Parnon (2015)	John Wilson (2015)

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE- Meets as needed

Consists of a representative from each board (elected by a vote of the representative board) and three at-large members.

<b>2015-2016 Chair: Leila Wetmore</b>		
<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Leila Wetmore - At Large (2012)	Audrey Esmond - At Large (2015)	Tom Hager - At Large (2015)
Harry McLachlin- Stewards Rep (2015)	Outreach Rep (2015) TBD	Christian Education Rep (2015) TBD
Leo Schlinkert -Deacons Rep (2013)	Dave Miller - Deacons Rep (2015)	

Key:

The year listed at the top of each column indicates when the 3-year term expires. Members are eligible to serve for two consecutive 3-year terms.

The year in parenthesis after each name indicates the year that the member joined the board.

The year someone becomes a board chair is listed beside his or her name under Church Council. The year they joined the board will be listed under their specific board.

## **Article VI AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution and Bylaws may be altered or amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Members present at a Church Meeting duly called in accordance with the provisions of Article IX CHURCH MEETINGS, copies of the text of the proposed amendment(s) having been made available to all Members in writing at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting.

### **ORIGINAL VERSION**

#### **3. Pastoral Relations Committee**

The Pastoral Relations Committee shall be a sub-committee of the Board of Deacons which shall consist of not less than four (4) and not more than six (6) members. The Pastoral Relations Committee shall be composed of the following members:

- Chairperson of the Board of Deacons
- A member of the Church selected by each Minister, and
- One or more members selected by the Board of Deacons

The Chairperson of the Board of Deacons shall be the Chairperson of the Pastoral Relations Committee. The purpose of the Pastoral Relations Committee shall be to provide for confidential communication between the Minister(s) and the Church. The Chairperson may invite any other person to attend and participate in, ex-officio, any meeting of the Pastoral Relations Committee.

### **AMENDED VERSION**

#### **3. Pastoral Relations Committee**

The Pastoral Relations Committee shall be a sub-committee of the Board of Deacons which shall consist of not less than four (4) and not more than six (6) members. Each member shall serve for one three-year term. The Pastoral Relations committee shall be composed of the following members:

- Chairperson of the Board of Deacons
- A member of the Church selected by each Minister, and
- Up to three members selected by the Nominating Committee in consultation with the Senior Pastor and the Chairperson of the Board of Deacons.

The Chairperson of the Board of Deacons shall be the Chairperson of the Pastoral Relations Committee. The purposes of the Pastoral Relations Committee shall be to foster a healthy relationship between the Minister(s) and the Church by providing a forum for confidential two-way communication. The Chairperson may invite any other person to attend and participate in, ex-officio, any meeting of the Pastoral Relations committee.



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