



Church Annual Report

2025

**First
Congregational
Church of
Shelburne**



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*Leadership Ministry

Composed of the Chairs of each of Ministries listed above, as well as the Pastor, Clerk, Moderator and Treasurer.

Moderator's Report

We continued to struggle this year with how to reach the goal of a thriving Church, filled with energy, excitement, passion and a spiritually connected worship community. We all love this Church, and want to see it thrive. Unfortunately, unresolved conflict has seen the year end with the resignation of the pastor, and in conversation with a consultant attempting to encourage more honest and open conversation within the congregation.

There seems to be two primary issues creating conflict within the congregation, the fact that we were operating outside the bylaws by piloting the Ministries organizational structure for a second year without amending the bylaws, and a lack of support for the pastor by some members of the congregation.

In early June, I reached out to our Area Conference Minister (ACM), Rev. Terry Yasuka Ogawa, and the Center for Transformational Leadership (CTL) of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ (SNEUCC) for advice and assistance regarding these issues. The CTL recommended I contact Rev. Doug Bixby, who specializes in both church governance and communication issues within congregation.

At a Special Congregational Meeting in June, we voted to continue the shared pastor agreement with Conway, and to call Pastor Marianne MacCullagh to a Designated Term Covenant for two additional years. At the same meeting, we voted to engage a mediator/consultant to work with the congregation to try to resolve issues over communication, conflict resolution and the governance structure.

In September, Rev. Doug Bixby led the first of 2 congregational conversations with us. At this first conversation, we discussed the current governance structure, and heard Rev. Bixby's recommendation for churches of our size to move to a one-board structure.

We worked on goals for the new Designated Term over the summer. At the September All-Congregation Conversation to develop the designated term goals, a heated discussion led to the resignation of Pastor Marianne.

Since Pastor Marianne's resignation, the Leadership Ministry has been meeting twice a month to determine next steps. The Spiritual Life Ministry assumed responsibility for pulpit supply through the first Sunday in January, as well as providing support for Advent. The Leadership Ministry developed a proposed budget and has been exploring the various ministerial roles as defined by the SNEUCC to determine our next steps. We also appointed an Organizational Structure Task Force who brought conceptual revisions to the organizational structure to a Special Congregational Meeting in October. The concept was approved in at that meeting and we appointed the members of the task force to become the Bylaw Revision Committee to revise the bylaws to support the proposed structure.

The bylaw revisions will be presented in a Special Congregational Meeting scheduled for immediately before the Annual Meeting on Dec. 7, 2025.

At the October Special Meeting, we also voted to extend the term of the current slate of officers into January 2026 and to postpone hearing the report of nominations and election of officers until January. This will allow the Stewardship Ministry to nominate to fill the new slate of officers for the new governance structure, based on the bylaw revisions.

In November, Rev. Bixby returned to help us process Pastor Marianne's resignation and to take the first steps in healing. We plan to have him return for 2 more conversations in 2026.

As I look forward to 2026, challenges we face will include hiring a bridge pastor for the short term, determining the type of ministerial role best suited to our current situation, and filling the role of pastor for the longer term. We will also be operating under a revised governance structure and bylaws, assuming the revisions are accepted. I anticipate several special congregational meetings over the course of the next year, as we make these decisions together as a congregation.

It has been a year of concern, conflict and upheaval in our world, our country and in our church. I pray that the new year will bring healing and improved communication for all of us. I continue to be thankful for the support of all those serving the church this past year, in myriad ways. I am thankful for the way we respond so quickly and generously to help those in need. I am thankful for the role our church plays in our community.

In Faith and Hope,

Debra M. Washer

Moderator

Clerk's Report

December 7, 2025

Membership – November 24, 2024 70

Additions during the year:

New Members 0
Transfer of Members

Reactivation of Members 0

Losses during the year:

Death of Members 1
Nancy Nichols

Transfer of Membership 0

Membership – November 23, 2025 69

Funerals, Memorial Services, and Receptions 5
Fleurette Patterson
Nancy Nichols
Janie Churchill
James Richardson
Eric Goodchild

Marriages 0

Baptisms 1
Stanley Joseph Cialek

Dedications 0

Respectfully submitted,

Debra M Washer

Clerk Pro Tem

Minutes of Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Shelburne

December 8, 2024 following a potluck lunch

Meeting opened at 1:15 by moderator Debra Washer

A moment of silence was held for the 4 members who died in the previous year:

Laurene York Risse

Pearl Churchill

Theodore Cromack

Fleurette Patterson

Marianne MacCullagh led an opening prayer

Roll Call of Members showed 22 members and 4 non-members present.

Article 1

To receive and act on the reports of the officers and committees and any other reports pertaining to church business, except the reports that are covered in subsequent articles.

Roland Giguere moved to accept the annual meeting minutes as printed in the Church Annual Report 2024 and John Taylor seconded it. It was voted in the affirmative.

John moved to accept the reports of all committees, except nominating and treasurer as written in the Church Annual Report 2024. Roland seconded it. It was voted in the affirmative.

Article 2

To receive the recommended budget of the Church Council and take action thereon.

Joe Judd made a motion to accept the recommended budget as printed in the annual report and Sylvia Smith seconded the motion.

Treasurer, Lewis Goodnow reviewed the information on the level funded budget. Page 21 was changed from Proposed Budget 2024 to say Proposed Budget 2025, due to a typographical error.

Pledges of \$58,930 have been received, with a couple regular contributors still outstanding.

Mentioned that Dole Music Fund is currently not earning interest, since moving out of a CD. Lewis will get with Finance Committee to get it back into a money making vehicle. \$640 from the fund was used for new hymnals.

John mentioned our gratefulness for in kind donations that “just show up”

A friendly amendment was made first for an additional \$300, then upped to \$600 for the custodial supplies line item on page 23.

Asked that Total Building Maintenance line item on page 23 be removed for next year and go back to tracking the information by building.

Refuse removal budget included coverage for a new dumpster due to bear issues. Thank you to the people who picked up after the bear strewed trash around the parking lot.

Dole Music Fund was clarified that it is not for salaries, but for special music and such. A suggestion was made to get the organ tuned and looked at as part of regular maintenance, even it is not currently being used by our pianist.

On page 24 remove the word Interim from in front of Pastors Package.

Motion passed as amended.

Article 3

To receive nominations and elect officers for the coming year.

John motioned to accept the slate of officers as presented in the Annual Report. Alan Coutinho seconded it.

Filling the vacancies was discussed. Nancy Dole was asked and declined a position on the Stewardship Committee. It was suggested the openings be published in the bulletin and newsletters.

Thank you to Lewis as Treasurer and to Diantha Wholey as clerk, citing that their hard work sometimes goes unappreciated.

Voted to accept the nominations as printed.

Article 4

To act on the recommendation of the Leadership Ministry to adopt the ministries concept and work to clarify the tasks assigned to each ministry, with the goal to change the bylaws to reflect the Ministries next year.

Sylvia moved to accept the article and Robin Howe seconded it.

Discussion included that the goals of this are to make ministries God centered and to deal with the reality that we have fewer people to fill committees / ministries.

Asked that all meetings be put in the bulletin to get people more involved.

By law committee will need the tasks of each ministry clarified to go forward. In the future, the nominating committee will put people into the ministries, not committees.

It was suggested that the topics for a quarterly congregational discussion include how to make the ministries more God centered.

The timeline was discussed for bylaws to be changed, and mid-year was suggested to give nominating committee time to work in new structure.

Motion was passed to adopt the new structure unanimously.

Article 5

To hear the report of the Parsonage Subcommittee

It was stated that the committee is making its report, but that it is not currently making a recommendation as to whether we should sell it or not.

A report was presented as a question and answer with the things we need to think about, as well as a decision tree to guide our future decision making. The report follows these minutes.

One church member expressed a strong opinion that the parsonage should not be sold.

Affordable housing, within our community, was discussed as a reason to keep the parsonage, as well as rent being charged.

It was suggested that one of our quarterly discussion meetings be used in more detail and begin to move forward towards a decision.

No motions or votes taken as the article was only to hear a report.

Article 6

To transact any other business that may properly come before this meeting.

Lewis reported that the church received a check from the Laurie York-Risse trust for \$53,036.59. Her husband, Tom Risse, had two requests for this money. 1) a scholarship in Laurie's name with the Mary Lyon Foundation and 2) to fully fund the music scholarship fund in honor of Sarah Jean Graves long time work as our organist. Approximately \$38,000 will be left after those are done. Harvey Peck, Ginny Peck-Merriott and Alan Coutinho are the members of the Finance Committee who will discuss the uses for this money with the treasurer.

John asked us to consider whether we should be investing in fossil fuels, as our current portfolio contains an investment in Exxon. He recommends against it. No action taken.

The Sunday after Christmas will be our next time with Conway and we need to decide what will happen next in our relationship with Conway and with Marianne. Marianne hopes to know by the end of summer whether we will be calling her and in what capacity (designated term, etc).

It was briefly suggested that the conference has videos about the church life cycle and the conference can also provide consultants.

Joe made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Alan seconded it.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM and we closed in prayer.

Barbara Giguere

Assistant Clerk

Report of the 2024 Parsonage Study Committee

A special committee was formed to investigate whether the Church should sell the Parsonage at 22 Church Common Road. We took input from the all-church meeting discussion and contacted others for additional information. Here are our findings:

Q: Should we sell the parsonage?

A: The committee is not making a recommendation but instead providing what we determined are the key questions that the church needs to answer to make that choice. We created a “decision tree” to guide the discussion at the Annual Meeting..

Q: Are full-time or part-time Pastors more likely to want to live in a parsonage?

A: Our initial impression was full-time but some of the feedback we received was that it is part-time pastors who are seeking housing in a parsonage today.

Q: Do any pastors actually want to live in a parsonage today?

A: The answers we received lead us to say that “God only knows”. Twenty years ago there was a movement among pastors to purchase their own real estate rather than live in church parsonages, in order for them to “build equity” for retirement. While that continues to be the preferred choice with some Pastors we found that due to the cost of housing, the unpredictability of the housing market, and the shorter timeframe that clergy are staying at each call, there is more interest in parsonages. One local congregation reported that a number of candidates for their part-time position were seeking a parsonage rather than paying “high” monthly rent (they found in Massachusetts).

Q: Is it a good thing to have our pastor live here in Shelburne Center?

A: That is an excellent question and the Church needs to discern how important that really is. We determined it was outside our scope.

Q: If we keep the Parsonage can we require a future pastor to live there?

A: Presumably we could. The committee felt that was outside our scope. We’re not sure if it would be a good or bad thing to do.

Q: If we sold the Parsonage how much money would we get for it?

A: We contacted a local Realtor who provided a market analysis for the property. Their finding was that the market value is \$270,000-290,000. That is based on the size of the building, size of lot, age, condition, location, and other factors.

Q: If the Church elects to put the Parsonage up for sale when is the best time?

A: The feeling among realtors is that there is still a demand for, and limited inventory of, homes under \$400,000. It is unknown if real estate prices will continue to increase, level off, or drop. Needs to be studied more if that is the decision of the Church.

Q: Can the Parsonage lot legally be divided from the Church lot?

A: The Parsonage lot existed separately before ownership was transferred to the Church. So, yes, it is a “grandfathered” lot and can be sold without an impact on the church lot.

Q: Should the Parsonage lot be formally surveyed?

A: The committee’s consensus was yes, there are benefits to having a survey. We have requested that the Church leadership proceed with a survey of the lot in any case.

Q: What could/would/should the Church do with the proceeds if the Parsonage is sold?

A: There are a number of options: invest the money to use for future operating costs; invest the money for future capital projects; use the money now to fund more programs and outreach; make improvements to the church and hall; buy a newer parsonage elsewhere; share the money with other organizations; or any combination of these or something else. The Church needs to think about this.

Q: Is the Parsonage even saleable in its current condition?

A: The Parsonage has been well maintained. We found that over the last 30 years there have been updates to the heating, electrical, water, septic, paint, basement, windows and more. The kitchen is outdated and there is some work needed to better insulate walls and repair waste pipes, however. It will need to be repainted in the coming years.

Q: Is it permissible to continue to rent the Parsonage?

A: Yes, the building is currently rented as a one-family residence and is properly classified in that manner for taxes, zoning, and insurance.

Q: How much does the church pay to maintain the Parsonage as a rental?

A: Based on the last four years of data, the Church has netted about \$8,000 over that time frame. That is, on average, the Church *gains* \$2,000/year. However, we have not put any of the proceeds in reserve for future “capital” costs which is something that should be considered by the Church.

Q: Are we charging too much or too little for the monthly rent?

A: The Parsonage is currently rented for \$1,050/month and heat is included. We found that similar properties in Franklin and Hampshire Counties rent for \$1,800-2,200 per month (and utilities are excluded). So, our rental charge is very inexpensive.

Q: Can we raise the rent?

A: Yes, we can. Of course it is always unpredictable as to what people would actually pay in rent so it is unclear what the *right* monthly rental charge is.

Q: Could the Church consider the Parsonage as “affordable housing”?

A: The committee considers it affordable housing now. Questions for the Church: Is affordable housing a mission of the Church? Could we raise the rent and still be affordable?

Q: Is the task of maintaining and renting the Parsonage too big a chore for Church members to do?

A: It really depends who you talk to. It does take time. The current tenants are easy to work with. The Church could hire a management company but, in our consensus opinion, only if the Church increases the rent to cover that cost.

We look forward to our discussion at the Annual Meeting and will try to answer further questions.

John Taylor

Nancy Dole

Alan Coutinho

James Merriott

Roland Giguere

Spiritual Life Ministry Report

This year the Spiritual Life Ministry continued to serve in the celebration of communion, in regular and special worship services, to coordinate the inclusion of music and to attend to strengthening Spiritual Education opportunities. We welcome the return of Tim Graves, with his extra attention to Music Ministry and Linda Judd and Martha Wholey, who also provided focus on Christian Education. We selected Robin Howe to be chairperson.

Kasey Giguere continued in greeting, distributing bulletins and collecting the offering. Many congregants took part in opening the Sunday services by leading the announcements, call to worship, and opening prayer. Pre-service coffee half-hour was provided by five rotating teams.

Members serving this year in shared ministry were Robin Howe, Alan Coutinho, Christine Kovalchick, Roland Giguere, Joe Judd, Tim Graves, Makenzie Girard, Linda Judd and Martha Wholey.

For winter worship services in the Hall, Pastor Marianne used her dancing flame lamp. Winter worship services were held in Fellowship Hall from January through Sunday, April 13, when we would also begin using wax candles with glass hurricane chimney instead of battery-operated flames.

The New Century Hymnals were used on a rotating basis as we became more familiar and comfortable with them. An interested member visited our January meeting offering many ideas for enriching services with special music. The tuning of the piano and organ were planned and done. Laura Siersema continued as our weekly piano musician. Hymn sings were occasionally planned in place of an anthem.

In February a Bible Study Series on the "Old Stories" (from Genesis and Exodus) was begun for weekly meetings in Shelburne on Thursdays at 11:00 and Conway at 7PM, led by Pastor Marianne. Linda Judd organized a weekly prayer and devotional gathering at 10:30 AM on Mondays at her home.

On March 5th an Ash Wednesday service at Trinity Church was provided by Rev. Ben and Rev. Marianne, who in April together led the joint Conway, Trinity and Shelburne Sunrise Service. We were also welcomed to join the Lenten book study of Turning Over Tables at Trinity Church led by Rev. Ben.

The baptism rite for Stanley Joseph Cialek, born October 30, 2024, was celebrated March 9th. A Prayer Chain group was reactivated and printed guidelines to be observed having been distributed. On March 30th a joint 5th Sunday service with Conway was celebrated here followed by a Soup and Bread luncheon and discussion regarding our understandings and expectations of the "Shared Pastor" arrangement.

With our return to the sanctuary, we choose a "Point Person" for each week's preparations for worship, with aid of a necessary duties, posted, list. Holy Week started with Palm Sunday, April 13th. Our Maundy Thursday observance at Fellowship Hall was incorporated with a Sedar meal provided on April

17th. Pastor Marianne set up meditation stations at Conway Church, available to both congregations from noon to 6PM on Good Friday. Easter Morning's sunrise service, led by Reverends Marianne and Ben, with instrument music by Tim and Makenzie at Apex Orchard, was attended by worshippers from Trinity and Conway churches. A breakfast at Fellowship Hall, provided by Lewis and Sophia Goodnow and folks from Conway bore also warmth and rapport. Our Easter Service was enhanced with potted flowers, a pick-up choir, and trumpet on April 20. Easter themed coloring books and crayons were available for kids.

For the April 27th service lay preacher Kurt Pearson came as our pastor had the week after Easter as vacation. She also was away for Continuing Education ay 5-7, and Allison Cornish covered any pastoral needs arising. On May 11th Mother's Day carnations were distributed during worship by the children in attendance.

In response to the request from the Leadership Ministry to begin a Bylaws Review Team to work on aligning bylaws with what the spiritually focused ministry does, Joe volunteered to be the SLM representative. He wrote a detailed description and questions of functions of our newly combined three areas of spiritual life. At our May 13th meeting, we found consensus on wording of our "Purpose and Mission". We were conflicted on further definitions.

In July from the 7th through the 20th Pastor Marianne vacationed, so supply, substitute pastors covered July 13th and 20th. We shared a "Church Camp" Sunday outdoor service and activity followed by potluck picnic with Conway Church and on Aug 31st, a fifth Sunday, at Camp Apex.

On Aug. 24th after worship we held our meeting, since finding an evening night when all members could meet had become impossible. Our consensus was to accept Chris Kovalchick as co-chair to support Robin with the workload. Many members read Rev. Doug Bixby's books, Challenging the Church Monster and Navigating the Nonsense in preparation for participation in an all-church conversation with him Sat., Sept 13th. We had continued during our Sept. 10th monthly meeting to share our ideas about "How our Spiritual Life Ministry is Represented". After the Sept. 22 Leadership Meeting when Rev. Marianne's resignation letter was received, chairperson Robin began to search for available pastors from pulpit supply in November and December. Rev. Terry Yasuko Ogawa, our UCC Area Minister, facilitated the ritual of release of Rev. Marianne at our Oct 26th Sunday service, which was also a shared service with Conway. Mutual thanks for the gifts of our shared experiences in ministry were exchanged, and a joint coffee hour followed. Worship Leadership was selected for the remainder of the year.

Rev. William Ault for Nov. 2nd and Dec 7th to also do communion.

Rev. Julie Olmsted for Nov. 9th, 23rd, Dec. 14, 21, 24, 28th

Lay service on stewardship Sunday, Nov 16th

Kurt Pearson for Nov. 30th, the first Sunday of Advent

We accepted with regret the lengthy texted resignation of Robin Howe.

Advent and Christmas Activities include:

Nov 23 – work bee to decorate the church

Dec.19 – Annual Christmas Pageant

Dec. 21 – Christmas Caroling

The Advent Wreath will have it's candles lit and have fitting readings shared.

With gratitude and hope to all who have served,

Christine E. Kovalchick

co-chair, acting chairperson

AUDITOR'S REPORT

We have audited the Treasurer's books including the Sunday School accounts and all invested funds for the (2024) calendar year and found them to be in order.

The few discrepancies found were corrected immediately by the Treasurer.

Thank you, Lewis, for your help with the audit.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Coutinho

Virginia Peck Merriott

Stewardship Committee Report

Dreaming God's Dream NO GIFT TOO SMALL, NO DREAM TOO BIG!

This was the theme for Stewardship 2025. Stewardship letters and commitment cards were mailed to 80 people.

Stewardship Sunday was held on November 16, 2025. The Stewardship/Nominating Ministry prepared and led the service. Commitment cards were collected and blessed during the church service. At the time of this report (November 23rd so it can be included in the annual report) the total amount for commitments for 2025 is \$51,230. An update will be given at the annual meeting.

THANK YOU for all you do for the church and in our community through your time, your talent and your treasure!

In Faith,

James Merriott

Sherry Taylor

Lewis Goodnow

Report of the Properties Ministry

Caring for the church properties includes the day-to-day quick fixes and the bigger and longer-term projects.

In 2025 the Church undertook improving insulation at all our buildings. This not only hopes to reduce our heating bills but reduce our use of fossil fuel and its impact on God's planet Earth. There is a separate report summarizing that project.

We addressed the usual light bulbs, mouse traps, leaky faucets and heating emergencies hopefully to everyone's satisfaction. Let us know if you see things in need of repair. While the budget will not allow for the Church to fix/update/repair everything all at once we are keeping a list!

Thank you to Alan Coutinho who schedules the use of the church and hall and to Laura Manners who does our custodial work. We are fortunate to have Jake Richardson to care for the lawns and also continue doing our snow plowing. The Church has been fortunate to have neighbors like George & Bucky Dole, and Jim Richardson, who have kept us plowed and sanded for decades. Rick Grant shoveled the walks last winter and we have Seth Healy in line to take that over for the coming winter.

We continue to find out all the workings of property maintenance, and the permitting, contracts and connections to make it work. We are grateful to Joe Judd for his work to put together a "manual" for our reference. And thanks also to those elves who work quietly in the background including Jim Burnham, Nancy Dole, Roland Giguere, all the Spiritual Life members, and if we forgot someone - our apologies. On to 2026.

For the Properties Ministry,

Elizabeth Burnham, Chair

John Taylor



Insulation workers at the Fellowship Hall

Report on Insulation Project

Thanks to the Shelburne Energy Committee, the Church was notified that there might be grants available to weatherize religious properties in Massachusetts.

We reached out to the Massachusetts Interfaith Power & Light (MIPL) program in September 2024.

MIPL connected us with Eversource, and one of their contractors, Advanced Green Insulation based in Rockland MA. We met with their consultant in October 2024 to walk (and crawl) through the church's three buildings. Subsequently the contractor prepared descriptive proposals for our approval and to submit to Eversource to determine the level of funding available to us. The Leadership Team approved moving forward with the application on 11/11/2024 and the proposals were submitted to Eversource by the contractor.

On January 8th we received notice that the Parsonage proposal/application was approved with 100% paid by the program, and the work could move forward. We arranged for a convenient date not to disrupt our tenants there. Subsequently, we received similar approval for Fellowship Hall on February 19th. The Fellowship Hall project was completed on February 24-26, and the Parsonage followed on March 3-4.

Approval for the church building came on March 11th also with full program funding. However, as we expected we needed to get an assessment of any old knob-and-tube wiring in the church walls. We connected with Palmeri Electric, toured through the church with them, and they provided an estimate of \$5,000 for the electrical work to locate and replace four (4) circuits, fixtures, and feeds. The Leadership Team gave the OK on 3/18/2025 to move ahead with the work. Palmeri completed their work on April 3-8, and the insulators on April 7-16.

What was completed:

- All three buildings have been provided with sprayed foam insulation on the underside of the roof structure, and it was finished with a protective paint.
- The walls of the Parsonage "shed" were covered with spray foam insulation and protective paint as well.
- The exterior walls of the Church have been filled with cellulose insulation.
- Any knob-and-tube wiring at the Church was replaced to meet current commercial standards.

The cost to the church for electrical work was \$2,818.76. Work was required to access under the floor of the balcony and that work was completed by church volunteers.

What still needs to be completed:

- Repair the small round insulation access holes which needed to be drilled to access the exterior walls of the Church. Repair cost is estimated at about \$1,000 and is being scheduled.
- Test vermiculite insulation above the original section of the Fellowship Hall. If recommended that insulation should/could be removed. (The insulation contractor declined to remove that insulation due to concerns about its composition; some vermiculite are believed to have asbestos and cause cancer).
- Remove the rock wool insulation and plastic sheeting in the attic floor of the Church. (The insulation contractor does recommend the removal but was not able to do it easily/quickly with the equipment available under the contract.)
- Complete attic at the Church by improving the door to the steeple, and weatherization of the rear window.

The insulation contract was funded by grants from Eversource totaling \$117,598.06. (\$49,125.18 Church; \$25,442.00 Parsonage; and \$43,030.88 Fellowship Hall.)

On May 8th a third-party inspection was completed and they will make a report to MassSave/Eversource.

Submitted by the Property Maintenance Ministry,

John Taylor

Elizabeth Burnham



An area of the church attic before project



Portion of the church attic with insulation

Outreach Ministries Report

We committed to serving the Friday night Community Meal at Trinity church the last Friday of each month. Members of the United Church of Conway have helped with baking, meal preparation and serving. Each meal served 35 to 70 people throughout the year. We are grateful to all the people who volunteered to help.

We sent \$1240 to the Hilltown Churches Food pantry with many Personal Hygiene items which coincided with the Super Bowl.

We collected wipes and tissues for the Buckland Shelburne Elementary School.

We had our annual Sock, Hat and Mitten collection after Thanksgiving last year in remembrance of Dick Bole who always looked for ways to help the community. This year we will be adopting a family for Christmas to help with a holiday meal and gifts.

Alan and Deborah Coutinho accepted donations for the Meals on Wheels Walk-a-thon held in October.

It came to our attention that the Senior Center had fallen short in donations for helping seniors with fuel costs. We sent our \$500 discretionary amount to them.

Nuova Practica is an ensemble of composer-performers from the Julliard Historical Performance program. They specialize in European baroque music as well as its composition and improvisation. They held a concert at Fellowship Hall that raised \$500 for the Buckland Shelburne school music program.

Members and volunteers of the Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum as well as several talented local musicians presented an organ and choral benefit concert at the First Congregational Church of Shelburne. Donations were accepted to benefit the Museum's ongoing projects, including the restoration of the "Berkshire Hills Parlor Car", and the MBTA line car #3283.

It was announced that Mary Lyon is doing a backpack food collection. They are filling backpacks with food to be sent home with children. Rev. Julie Olmstead also made a request to our congregation to consider donating to local food pantries that are in great need.

It was decided that we would start a BSE camp scholarship to honor Pastor Marianne. The plan is to help send students to camp who may not be able to attend.

Many thanks to Diantha Wholey and her helpers throughout the year for their help with meal preparations.

The Outreach Ministry is grateful to all volunteers and contributors who have assisted us throughout the year and donated their time and talent toward these charitable causes. We believe everyone in our congregation is called to outreach in one way or another in fulfilling our obligation as members of the Body of Christ.

The Mission Committee,

Laura Manners

Lewis Goodnow

Lora Graves

Sylvia Smith

Women's Fellowship

The Women's Fellowship met for the first time in 2025 on October 18, 2025. Our goals going forward are to breathe fresh air into the group, to engage in new activities to benefit the community, and to change the name of the group to the Shelburne Community Fellowship, to be more inclusive.

Linda Judd and Libby Burnham will serve as co-leaders, Debra Washer will be the scribe, and Diantha Wholey will continue as treasurer.

Main activities this year included the ice cream social at the July 4th Military Band Concert; selling baked goods, chili and corn chowder at the Autumn Harvest Market in November; and facilitating various funeral receptions at the Hall.

New activities are in the planning stages. One of those group activities will be to make and freeze meals to have on hand for families in need. We also hope to plan a Spiritual Day Apart, to which other churches will be invited; arrange for musical performances about four times a year; hold a Mother's and Father's Day Tea; and showcase quilts other crafts and interests that showcase the talents in our community. We hope to revive what used to be an annual spring tag sale to benefit the Friday Community Meals program.

The Fellowship has made donations to the Hilltown Churches Food Pantry, and to Hope Force International for disaster relief.

Respectfully submitted,

Libby Burnham

Linda Judd

REPORT OF THE CORI OFFICERS

As the Church move's forward towards a New Year, the CORI process continues to provide an opportunity to continually meet our goal of worshipping in a "Safe Church Environment".

The First Congregational Church of Shelburne, Massachusetts (U C C) has always been committed to being a community of Christian Fellowship where everyone is welcomed. The Church's goal is to ensure that all who come here to participate in our Church life, including children, adults, and Church workers, whether paid or volunteer, will have a safe, secure, and nurturing environment in which to work and explore their relationship with God and each other. To that end, each person responsible for the care of children and youth will be required to follow our Safe Church policies and procedures as they apply to them, along with all other activities which take place within the building, properties of the FCCS. This includes, but is not limited to, all outside programs, activities, visitations on behalf of the Church, and other scheduled events that are part of the Ministry of our Church.

The Safe Church Policies and Procedures apply to all members, associate members, friends, volunteers, and employees of the Church. Yet, nothing in our Safe Church Policies and Procedures supersedes the responsibilities of the employees, volunteers, and administration of the FCCS under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 6, section 167-78B and Chapter 19, Section 51A. Over the years we have attempted to fulfil this requirement in a setting that allows for sensitivity and privacy, while understanding the importance of completing the job with thoroughness and efficiency. Hopefully we've succeeded in properly conducting this business in a comfortable climate for those in our Church subject to the CORI process.

2026 has the potential to once again be a busy year for us! So, we would like to remind everyone that if you are asked to submit to a CORI check, based on a position you hold within our Church, please return the CORI forms to either Diantha Wholey or Joseph Judd within the time frame requested. This helps make the submission work much easier and ensures that we 're following the guidelines set forth on what it means to be a Safe Church.

Sincerely,

Joseph Judd, administrator

Diantha Wholey, submitter

Pastor Parish Relations Annual Report

Pastor Parish Relations met with the three members of Conway Pastor Parish Relations and Pastor Marianne MacCullagh periodically throughout the year to discuss items of interest and concern to the Pastor and both parishes. Conversations were confidential and provided an environment for sharing among all parties.

In addition to the general PPR meetings, there were two other significant discussions.

- Pastor Parish Relations was contacted by some members of the First Congregational Church of Shelburne to meet to discuss areas of concern with the new ministry implementation and relations with the pastor. The initial meeting, held jointly with Conway PPR, did not include the pastor at the request of the members. A subsequent discussion was held with the pastor to share thoughts and feelings.
- In March there was a joint luncheon meeting of both churches in Fellowship Hall following a joint worship service in the Shelburne church. The topic was the Shared Pastor Agreement in preparation for decisions relating to the end of the 3-year Agreement and the designated pastor agreement with Pastor Marianne at the end of October. Ideas were brought forth for preparing a proposal to consider continuing the Shared Pastor Agreement between the two churches. In September a draft Shared Pastor Agreement to extend the Agreement for an additional 2 years was prepared by the joint PPR and Pastor Marianne. In Shelburne it was presented and discussed at a luncheon conversation following church on September 21st and was well received with minor edits. Subsequently Pastor Marianne submitted her resignation.

We have enjoyed our time with the PPR members of the Conway United Church of Christ and Pastor Marianne MacCullagh and pray that the will of God shine light upon us.

With faith and love,

Tim Graves

Jim Merriott

Sylvia Smith

CHURCH ASSETS				As of Sept. 30, 2025	
Greenfield Savings Bank					
	GSB Checking			\$1,114.37	
	Sunday School Account			\$915.00	
	Bardwell Cheer/Long - CD			\$1,878.09	
	Laurie York Fund			\$26,345.18	
	CC Missions Fund			\$6,011.24	
	Pastor's Discretionary			\$594.50	
	Community Meal Fund			\$658.72	
	Music Ministry			\$275.00	
	Dole Music Fund			\$8,059.57	
Total GSB				\$45,851.67	
Wells Fargo					
	Cash Fund			\$3,057.96	
	Federal Home Loan Bank			\$15,787.35	
	Exxon			\$1,691.25	
	JP Morgan			\$47,314.50	
Total Wells Fargo				\$67,851.06	
Fidelity					
	Fidelity Balanced Fund			\$34,658.74	
Total Fidelity				\$34,658.74	
Cornerstone					
	Endowment			\$17,692.61	
	Sunday School			\$10,029.79	
Total Cornerstone				\$27,722.40	
TOTAL ASSETS				\$203,806.27	

				2025 Budget	2025 YTD	2025 YE	2026 Budget
					10/31/2025	Projected	
Income							
	Hall and Church Fees			5500	4103	5000	5000
	In-kind donations						
		Bulletins		900	900	900	900
		Snow Plowing		600	600	600	600
	Total In-kind donations			1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
	Interest & Dividends			2000	3461	3800	3800
	Loose Collections			4000	5519	6500	5000
	Music Committee Receipts						
		Dole Music Invested Fund		0	0	0	0
	Total Music Committee Receipts			0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Parsonage rent			12600	12000	14400	15600
	Pledges			60000	46300	60000	58000
	Shelburne Grange			1600	1600	1600	1600
	Water Usage			100	0	100	100
	Ways and Means Income						
		Special Events		500	0	0	0
		Supper - Drawings					
		Suppers		0	0	0	0
	Total Ways and Means Income			500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Wells Fund Monies			1300	1300	1300	1400
	Women's Fellowship			1000	1000	1000	1000
Total Income				90,100.00	76,783.00	95,200.00	93,000.00

				2025 Budget	2025 YTD	2025 YE	2026 Budget
					10/31/2025	Projected	
Income							
	Hall and Church Fees			5500	4103	5000	5000
	In-kind donations						
		Bulletins		900	900	900	900
		Snow Plowing		600	600	600	600
	Total In-kind donations			1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
	Interest & Dividends			2000	3461	3800	3800
	Loose Collections			4000	5519	6500	5000
	Music Committee Receipts						
		Dole Music Invested Fund		0	0	0	0
	Total Music Committee Receipts			0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Parsonage rent			12600	12000	14400	15600
	Pledges			60000	46300	60000	58000
	Shelburne Grange			1600	1600	1600	1600
	Water Usage			100	0	100	100
	Ways and Means Income						
		Special Events		500	0	0	0
		Supper - Drawings					
		Suppers		0	0	0	0
	Total Ways and Means Income			500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Wells Fund Monies			1300	1300	1300	1400
	Women's Fellowship			1000	1000	1000	1000
Total Income				90,100.00	76,783.00	95,200.00	93,000.00

			2025 Budget	2025 YTD	2025 YE	2026 Budget
Property						
	Total Building Maintenance		5000	3709.47	5000	6000
	Church					
	Electricity		2000	2209.27	2500	2600
	Oil		4420	4076.19	4800	4400
	Pest control		1300	1080	1296	1360
	Fire alarm system		300	284	284	300
	Total Church		8,020.00	7,649.46	8,880.00	8,660.00
	Custodial Supplies					
	Hall					
	Electricity		4000	3654.97	4100	4200
	Oil		3900	3819.44	3600	3880
	Pest control		1000	830	996	1060
	Fire alarm system		275	268	268	280
	Total Hall		9,175.00	8,572.41	8,964.00	9,420.00
	Insurance		10500	8865.6	12327	12500
	Lawn mowing		1000	0	1000	1500
	Parsonage					
	Electricity		0	0	0	0
	Heat #03082		2027	1945.37	1941.26	2015
	Real Estate Tax		4500	4365	4365	4500
	Total Parsonage		6,527.00	6,310.37	6,306.26	6,515.00
	Refuse Removal		1500	1267.8	1526.4	1600
	Snow Plowing - IKD		600	600	600	0
	Snow removal		500	510	510	1200
	Total Property		37,822.00	33,775.64	40,113.66	41,395.00

The First Congregational Church of Shelburne

The following is a history that came into the possession of Nancy Dole, labeled Heritage Sunday, 6/30/ (14.9)68. Parenthetical remarks in this font provide a few updates or clarifications as of 2025.

The precise date of the organization of the First Congregational Church cannot be ascertained, but a Congregational Society was formed about 1770, with twelve members, increasing in four years to fifty-seven members. The first religious meetings were held in the dwelling house of Mr. Daniel Nims, located near the present Leonard Wheeler home (as of 2025, the property of Josh Simpson). The town voted "to repair the log meeting-house, to plaster up the cracks with mortar, to make a door, to obtain three windows and to make a pulpit."

The second meetinghouse, a frame structure, was built in 1773, a few rods north of the first one and very near the cemetery gate. It was not finished until 1785. It had entrances on three sides, south, east and west. The pews were the old-style square or box pews (a board seat on three sides and a door on the fourth). Over the pulpit hung a sounding board, and the Negro departments were in the gallery corners. (Prior to 1850 a number of Negro families, some of them former slaves, lived in town and were members of the church.) Pews were assigned yearly according to a person's property and standing. In 1786 the town voted "to provide a conch shell to notify the people of the time of public worship." A bell was provided in 1805, which indicates that the belfry and steeple were built at this time. The town clock, with its enormous face was on the steeple. A copper vane, representing an angel with wings extended, and blowing a trumpet, was at the peak. (The vane was seven feet in extent.) Before 1818, the church was heated only by foot-stoves. In those days of two long sermons with an intermission and lunchtime, the women would go to a neighboring house to get hot coals for the stoves, while the men warmed up at the nearby tavern. After church, the long procession of teams and people would went their way homeward, extending across the level north of the church.

In 1832, after sixty years in use, this public meetinghouse was torn down. (Some of the timbers of the old church are still doing service today in the ell of the dwelling house and in the barn, owned by the Herron's in Shelburne Center.) After much controversy, it was decided that for the best interests of all, the new church should be located at the site of the present church. This meetinghouse was built on a plan similar to the present Colrain Congregational Church, with one large room and two smaller ones on the ground floor, and two flights of stairs, that came out on either side of the church. Later a gallery was built for them on the north end. The steeple was on the south end with a belfry on the north. The same bell used in the church on hill was drawn downhill on a stone boat and was rung all the way. In some way it became cracked on its journey. In 1845, while people gathered for worship, the church accidentally caught fire from overheated stove pipes and burned to the ground. (Since the bell was cracked, no attempt was made to save it.)

The present church was built immediately and dedicated in December 1845. Through the years, various changes have been made. The oil lamps were replaced by electricity about 1915. Previously, a beautiful chandelier, given by Mrs. Hattie Barnard, brightened the church for many years. The long stone steps in front of the church were replaced by the stone platform and two short flights of steps. The walls, originally papered, are now steel ceiled, and the plain glass windows were replaced by memorial stained-glass windows in 1893. A furnace replaced older heating methods (two wood stoves at the back with pipes extending the length of the building), and the present furnace was installed in 1959. A large, round clock formerly occupied the center front of the balcony. A silver communion set was given by Mr. and Mrs. Ira Arms, and was used until replaced by individual cups in 1902. The original slips or pews were set in straight lines, with four or five short ones on either side of the pulpit.

The beautiful pipe organ was presented by George E. Taylor in 1915. For many years, the choir sat in the gallery; then to the left of the pulpit. They were given a place in back of the pulpit when the organ was installed. As we think of our present organ and choir, we also think back on music in the early church. At first it was customary to "line" or "deacon" the hymns. The deacon would either sing or read a line, which would then be repeated by the congregation. After this practice was discontinued, instruments were introduced, and as with any other new idea, there was dissension among some of the people. The first settled minister, Robert Hubbard, wrote in his diary in 1773: "Meet with something exceedingly discouraging and disagreeable – a sad rumpus about ye mode of singing... This difficulty have me great uneasiness."

In 1916, a high wind blew the church spire off, but it was soon replaced. Changes in the church in more recent years include the redecoration of the interior in 1949. New Pilgrim hymnals were purchased in 1966. On Dec. 10, 1960, the church approved the United Church of Christ constitution (thus affiliating with UCC.) Since the early 1950's the church spire has been lighted in cooperation with the Grange. This new custom provides inspiration to travelers on the Mohawk Trail. In 1967 a new sign was placed by the highway, telling of Church and Sunday School hours.

In earlier days there was a fine array of horse sheds on the west and east sides of the church, with every one filled each Sunday. After the automobile came in, these sheds were taken down. The early treasurer's reports show entries of expenses for "feed bags and oats", along with coffee and sugar for church meeting dinner.

A vestry was built near the church in 1847, and it served as a meeting place for many public functions, including town meetings (until about 1900). In 1904, the vestry was raised up to make a kitchen and dining room on the lower floor. Before this time, town meeting dinner was served at tables set up in the vestibule and in the gallery of the church.

In Jan. 1959, when the old vestry was declared unsafe for public gatherings, it was voted to lease the then unused Center schoolhouse for vestry purposes, and in June 1959, it was voted to buy the schoolhouse from the town. In 1961, the town was surveyed for a building fund; plans were drawn up for improvements to the hall; and the name of First Congregational Fellowship Hall was adopted. By 1962, attractive redecoration was about completed, and in 1968, the room adjacent to the kitchen has been redecorated to provide an all-purpose meeting room. Today Fellowship Hall serves the whole

community as a meeting place and is used almost daily, as well as for Sunday School. The old vestry, no longer needed, was torn down in 1964.

Through the years, the church has carried on its missions and increased the membership. In the 1890's and early 1900's, some of the entries in the treasurer's books show missions for the "Suffering Armenians", "Russian famine relief", "India Relief", and "Tend Work in Franklin County". Today we have increased our missions substantially, as we give to projects all over the world through our Christian World Mission of the United Church of Christ and extend a helping hand in time of need, either locally or on the world scene.

There were many revivals to increase membership in the early church, the largest in 1831 when 80 people were added to the church. Rev. Theophilus Packard, Jr. writes of these revivals in a letter sent from Illinois to the Shelburne church in 1878, the occasion of his fiftieth year in the ministry: "Those memorable scenes of 1831 – the protracted meetings of four days, the full solemn assemblies, the anxious inquirers, the joyful converts, and the addition of 80 to the church that year are worthy of grateful recognition and everlasting remembrance." In 1858, (possibly 37 or 87 – number too faint to reliably read) united with the church, and during the half century from 1828-1878, from a community of less than a thousand 440 united with the church.

The history of the First Congregational Church of Shelburne does not stop somewhere in the past. The church is a living force in the life of our community today. Each year we have added new members. Today 155 people hold membership. As we strive to have the church a vital leader in today's ever-changing world, we are following the able guidance of our present minister, Rev. David Christianson, who was ordained in this church on June 2, 1968. Just as Rev. Theophilus Packard trained missionaries and ministers to serve, we are endeavoring to find meaningful service today. The work of Christ continues. The past I but a prologue to the future.

The above is followed by two separate pages that may have been considered separate documents about our history. The copy is very light, and at times words are difficult to impossible to read, so I have made my best effort to retain context, if not precise wording. Some words are just plain not readable.

(1) Apparently, Sunday School started about 1815 when Rev. Theophilus Packard _____ attending a meeting of the State _____ Association, proposed that a Sunday School might be started with the purpose of committing to memory scripture texts and then meeting somewhere to recite what had been learned. The meetings were held in the district schoolhouses around town and all the first teachers were men. Class was held at _____ PM with time devoted to reciting scripture and to the study of an occasional critical essay. Later, by 1826, the Sunday School was held in the meeting house with Deacon Elon Kellogg, superintendent, and 200 students enrolled. Adult study continued strongly through the 1800's with hosting in the vestry and later classes met in the church with adult classes taught on the main floor and junior classes taught in the balcony. In 1913 a Primary and Junior Sunday School was formed by Mrs. D.P. Bardwell, as superintendent. Following worship, the adults continued to meet in the church and the children had their classes in the vestry. In the early _____ (date)

-----was held in the Bardwell's Ferry Railroad Station for families in the towns of both Shelburne and Conway. Later these meetings were moved to the Foxtown Schoolhouse. Still later, a Thursday night prayer meeting was held there for local families. In the more recent years, the Sunday School has continued active with an enrollment of about __ (number) children and a staff of ___ (number) teachers. Taught for many years in the vestry, in 1960 departed small classrooms were incorporated into the ----- and the church school is now taught there. The ----- of the church school has been to provide an awareness of the church, its meaning and mission to children of various ages. While children study the Bible and to ----- they also have the opportunity for creative development and discussion. Many men and women in the community have given devoted service to the Church School. Presently a High School Seminar meets with the pastor on Sunday evenings. Youth Groups and adult study groups as well as the newly formed Couples Club are considered extensions of the Christian Education in the church mission.

(2) The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor was organized in the latter part of June 1882 with the Reverend George L. Clark as president. Early Meetings, held at the parsonage, were largely for prayer, consecration and discussion, with occasional "sociable" meetings. Seventy was the average attendance during the last six months of 1890. The largest number gathered for a "social" was one hundred and fifty on July 4, 1895. For a time during the 1890's there was both a junior and senior society. 1895 was the year of the largest active membership, with sixty-two names on the list. The records show that, except for a lapse from September 1887 to August 1889, members of this society met regularly until 1924. IN 1941 a Society was again formed, continuing in active service into the early fifties. During the fifties it evolved into a youth group of the church and was no longer a branch of the Christian Endeavor Society. Two youth groups, one for the junior high and one for senior high, were formed in 1960 and are at the present time in 1968, an active, learning and serving part of the church and parish in Shelburne.