

Rocky Hill Congregational Church

Profile Appendix

August 22, 2022

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Rocky Hill
Congregational
Church
Vision 2022

Three big questions...

Where are we?

Celebrating US!!!

Where are we going?

Our Vision

What's next?

(The specifics)

Where are we?

- Changing with the times to be an active and relevant church *making a difference* in our community and our world
 - Challenges we will face together
 - Exciting opportunities



Where are we??

We are a church in
~ACTION~

Engaged in a wide variety
of ministries





Actively engaged in a wide variety of ministries...

Working for racial and social justice • honoring the earth • being a “village” for our children • exploring our faith • learning and growing • partnering with organizations that support our ministries • baking cookies for group meals • tending to our Memorial Garden • supporting immigrant services and resettlements • providing technical support for all our zoom and hybrid services and events • integrating our children’s crafts with our worship themes • active and engaging worship services • preparing to celebrate our 300th anniversary as a church in 2027 • working on core ministries and ministry teams to carry out all of these ministries with others in our faith community • singing in the choir • playing in our bell choir • small vocal or instrumental groups • celebrating 73 years of hosting a preschool • starting a little free library for the community specializing in books that highlight the experiences of people of color • engaging the community with our Country Fair • working in the Community Garden to provide the Food Bank with fresh vegetables • walking against hunger for Food Share and Hands on Hartford. The list goes on and on.



nimbleCOVIDresponse
sustainability
justicework
ChurchFair
EpiphanyPageant
onlinegiving
choirback zooming
foodbank scripsales
JULIEbarrels
LGBTQsupport
justice racial Littlefree library
Lakeliason
Silver Green Team Expo
GHIAA training
blessingofthewater snackpacks cookiebakingforHOH
congregationalcare
Diaperdrive MORECHILDREN keycardentry
FaithFormation helpinghandsfund
walkagainsthunger
moremediainworship NEWMEMBERS
highspeedinternet
refugee
silentauction
Green Team
rain
focusedoutreach
Justiceleadership
sanctuaryscreens
socialmedia
VISION
support
homelessoutreach
garden
town

Great things we are doing....

Nimble response to pandemic

Forward-looking view (preparing ourselves for the future)

Working for justice/peace/stewardship of God's creation

Caring for others—here, near and far

Better integrating our children into our church/worship experience

What could we do better....

Being more welcoming

- Clutter
- Fresher “look”
- Better signage
- Building relationships through invitation to ministry
- More communication

Widening the circle

- More fellowship events
- Ministry together
- Small groups
- Greater visibility in the community and region
- More ministry partnerships
- More fully engaging our children and youth

Financial/strategic sustainability

- Monetize our building
- Seek grants
- Promote financial stewardship
- Strategize use of our facilities for the future
- Capital project fundraising

Where there
is no vision,
the people
perish.

Proverbs 29:18

If there are things we want to do
and be as a church we need to have
broad agreement on what they are.
Otherwise, how can we get there?

Our job is to discern who God calls
us to bethen try to be that!

A little visioning history....

Visioning workshop in 2002

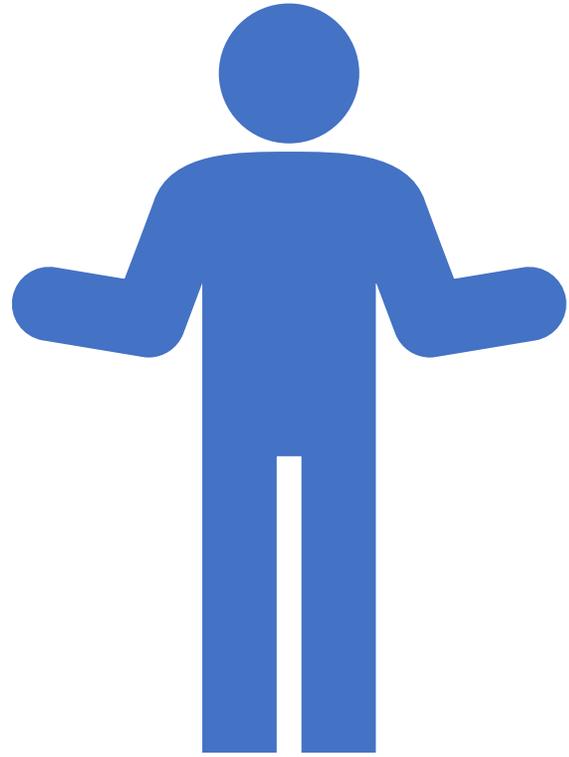
Visioning process in 2008/9
(Surprisingly durable and still
mostly relevant)

But.....a new
look at our
vision was
necessary....

It was time!

New Constitution in 2018/19
directs Council to prepare vision
and strategic plan and goals

These are changing times for
churches vis a vis relevancy (and
even survival)



PANDEMIC INTERRUPTION!!!

- Diverted our attention
- Inability to easily meet and interact

Current visioning process

What kind of church do we want to belong to or be part of?

- Takes action for racial and social justice
- Younger and more diverse—we need to be more welcoming and actively nurture the spirit of belonging (worship, serve, act, and have fellowship together)
- Vibrant, interesting and inclusive worship
- More communication so everyone knows who we are and what we stand for (both internally and externally)
- Build more connections in ministry (interfaith, community, regional, NGOs)
- Be more forward-looking

Vision 300

Serving God by:

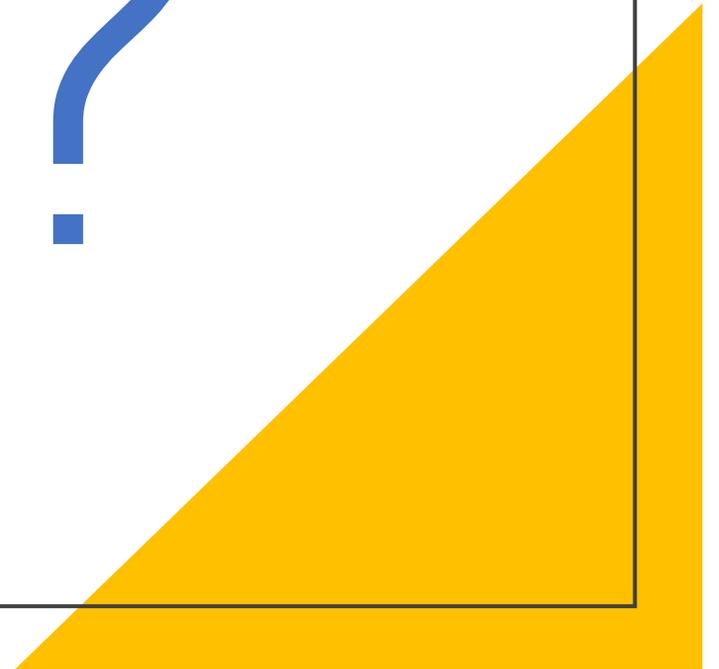
- Growing** in faith
- Working** for justice and equity
- Building** community

Pillars of our vision

(key strategies to help
make our vision
happen)

- Widen** the circle
(Invite/welcome/engage)
- Justice** and **service**
- Engage & nurture** the younger church
- Build strong partnerships** in ministry
- Increase **communication and visibility**

What's
Next?



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Moving ahead with faith and courage

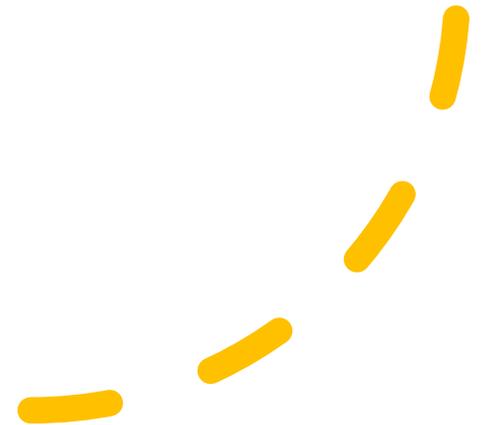
1. Feedback!
 2. Identify specific actions
 3. Identify needed resources
 - Time
 - Talent
 - Treasure
 4. There will be a few challenges.....
 5. And some great opportunities....
- 
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Every challenge is
an opportunity in
disguise

Change is heartsome.

Nellie Wilson



Rocky Hill Congregational Church

Constitution

as of June 2022

1 **THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,**
2 **UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, ADOPTED MARCH 18, 2018**
3 **AND AMENDED JUNE 16, 2019**
4 **AND JUNE 5, 2022**
5 **(highlighted changes in Articles IX and XII are subject to a second vote after 90 days)**

6
7 **ARTICLE I**
8 **NAME AND ORIGIN**
9

10 The legal name of this Church shall be Rocky Hill Congregational Church, United Church of
11 Christ. This Church was petitioned December 19, 1720, founded June 7, 1727, and incorporated
12 March 20, 1895 according to the laws of the State of Connecticut.
13

14
15 **ARTICLE II**
16 **DEFINITIONS**
17

18 Rocky Hill Congregational Church, United Church of Christ is a collective of people dedicated to
19 worship and service, with membership defined in Article VI. Within this Constitution, generic
20 usage of the terms “the Church,” “the Congregation,” “we,” “us,” and “our” refer to this
21 collective.
22

23 “Vote of the congregation” refers to a vote taken at a meeting called in compliance with the
24 stipulations set forth in Article X.
25

26 “Sponsoring body” refers to the entity (the Council or a Core Ministry) to which a Ministry Team
27 is responsible.
28

29 **ARTICLE III**
30 **MISSION**
31

32 As a body of believers, our mission is to endeavor to walk in God’s ways. To that end we
33 welcome all on life’s journey and strive to be a church which is active and engaged in carrying
34 out God’s work wherever we see need - both locally and globally – as exemplified in the life and
35 teachings of Jesus Christ. We seek to engage in active ministry, building community, growing
36 our faith, nurturing the faith of our children and youth, and working to promote love, justice,
37 and equity in all that we do. We also seek to encourage and participate in ecumenical and
38 interfaith activities in the local community and beyond. “No matter who you are or where you
39 are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”
40
41
42
43
44

45 **ARTICLE IV**
46 **POLITY**
47

48 This Church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its head, its government being vested in its members,
49 who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject to the laws of the State of Connecticut.
50

51 We also acknowledge our fellowship with the United Church of Christ (UCC) and pledge
52 ourselves to share in its common work, especially as represented by the Hartford Association,
53 the Southern New England Conference (SNEUCC), and the UCC General Synod.
54

55
56 **ARTICLE V**
57 **COVENANT AND STATEMENT OF FAITH**
58

59
60 We covenant with the Lord and with one another and do bind ourselves in the presence of God
61 to walk in all His ways, according as He is pleased to reveal Himself unto us.
62

63 The Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ expresses the beliefs of this Church:
64

65 We believe in You, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and
66 to Your deeds we testify.
67

68 You call the worlds into being, create persons in Your own image, and set before each one
69 the ways of life and death.
70

71 You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.
72

73 You judge people and nations by Your righteous will declared through prophets and
74 apostles.
75

76 In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, You have come to us
77 and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to
78 Yourself.
79

80 You bestow upon us Your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ,
81 binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.
82

83 You call us into Your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be Your servants
84 in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of
85 evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.
86

87 You promise to all who trust You forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the
88 struggle for justice and peace, Your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in Your
89 realm which has no end.

90
91 Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto You. Amen.

92
93
94 **ARTICLE VI**
95 **MEMBERSHIP**

96
97 **SECTION 1. Qualifications**

98
99 This Church acknowledges the priesthood of all believers and welcomes to membership as full
100 or associate members all persons who desire to be followers of Jesus Christ and who covenant
101 with the Congregation to share in the life, mission and ministries of the Church.

102
103 **A. Full Members.** Full members shall be received by baptism (if not previously baptized),
104 confirmation, profession, or reaffirmation of faith, or letter of transfer in such a manner
105 as may be prescribed by the Church. Full members may participate and vote in all
106 transactions of the Church at any Congregational Meeting.

107
108 **B. Associate Members.** Associate members are those who desire to retain membership
109 in another church, but wish to share more fully in the life, work, fellowship, support, and
110 worship of this Church. Associate membership does not affect membership with their
111 home church. Associate members have all the rights and privileges of full membership,
112 except as noted in Section 2 below.

113
114 **C. Friends.** Friends of the Church are those who may not, or may not yet, choose to join
115 the church but who wish to participate in the life, fellowship and journey, and to share
116 their time, talent and treasure in that regard.

117
118 **SECTION 2. Rights and Duties of Members and Friends**

119
120 Only full members may serve as Moderator, Vice Moderator, Treasurer, or Clerk. Both full and
121 associate members may be elected or appointed to any other position and participate and vote
122 at congregational meetings.

123
124 Friends who wish to participate in the life of this Church without becoming members are
125 welcome to participate in its life, ministries, support, and fellowship. As friends of the Church,
126 they are welcome to serve on any Core Ministry, if elected, as defined in Article VIII. Friends
127 may also be appointed by the Council to any of its Standing or Ad Hoc Committees as defined in
128 Article VII Section 2. Friends may chair Core Ministries and serve on the Council and even be
129 voting participants in Congregational meetings as long as they hold one of these elected or
130 appointed positions.

131
132 All members and friends are encouraged to be stewards of the full life of the Church through
133 attendance, active participation in ministries, financial support, and fellowship.
134

135 **SECTION 3. Termination and Restoration of Membership**
136

137 Members may cease to be members of this Church by request, which may be a request to
138 transfer membership to another church. From time to time as warranted, the Council shall
139 convene an ad hoc membership committee to review the Church membership rolls and, after
140 careful review and appropriate contact, submit a proposed list of members to be placed on the
141 inactive list. Such members shall only be declared inactive upon the vote of the Council and
142 may be reactivated upon such member's request.
143

144
145 **ARTICLE VII**
146 **GOVERNANCE**
147

148 The governance of this Church is vested in its members, who exercise the right of full and final
149 control of all its affairs, subject to the laws of the state of Connecticut. The Church Council will
150 speak for the Congregation in the articulation of its mission, vision and ministries.
151

152 **SECTION 1. Church Council**
153

154 The Church Council shall oversee the active pursuit of our church's mission and ministries.
155 Toward that end, the Council shall:

- 156 • regularly develop, update, and articulate a Church vision, a strategic plan, and annual
157 goals
- 158 • develop a proposed annual budget (subject to approval by vote of the Congregation)
- 159 • authorize the collection of any special offerings and the allocation of fundraising
160 proceeds
- 161 • authorize the apportionment of any gifts or bequests which are undesignated as to
162 specific purpose (except as limited in Article X Section 2)
- 163 • be responsible for the management of the business affairs of this Church
- 164 • approve all personnel actions
- 165 • appoint eligible Members or Friends to fill open positions for Officers or Core Ministries
166 after the related Budget and Elections Meeting. Such appointees shall be ratified by
167 congregational vote at the next duly scheduled meeting of the Church
- 168 • review the work of all Ministries and Committees.
169

170 The Council shall adopt policies, procedures, and financial controls, as necessary, to support
171 these efforts.
172

173 The Church Council shall be comprised of the following:

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- Officers (Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer)
- Chairs of all Core Ministries
- Pastor(s)

The Council will meet as needed to carry out its mission and duties. A binding Council vote shall require a quorum of at least five members who are eligible to vote on such matter. All Council members are eligible to vote on all matters brought before the Council, with the following exceptions:

- The Moderator shall only be eligible to vote on a matter in order to break a tie. The Moderator shall not be counted in the determination of any quorum.
- Staff members and their immediate family members shall not be eligible to vote on any matter pertaining to the individual staff member’s own employment status, including salary actions. As such, Pastors shall not be eligible to vote on the total budget recommendation but may vote on any budget issue that does not include any element of his or her direct or indirect financial compensation.
- From time to time the Council may choose to meet without the Pastor(s) or a particular member on matters (financial or otherwise) that concern the Pastor(s) or that particular member.
- The Officers plus the (Senior or Solo) Pastor will function as the Executive Committee of the Council. The Executive Committee is authorized to act on issues requiring a quick decision when a full meeting of the Council is impractical. The Executive Committee shall also oversee issues of a routine administrative nature, and shall strategize on the overall direction of the Council. The Executive Committee shall also oversee the confidential management of the Helping Hand Fund, which is to provide financial assistance to church members, friends, and others in need. From time to time the Executive Committee may choose to meet without the Pastor(s) or a particular officer on matters (financial or otherwise) concerning the Pastor(s) or that particular officer.

Executive Committee decisions, excluding those related to grants from the Helping Hand Fund (to protect confidentiality), shall be routinely and promptly communicated by the Clerk or the Moderator to the Council.

The Council may authorize unbudgeted expenditures from reserves up to ten percent of the annual budget for any single project, including all related items, without prior approval of the Congregation. All major expenditures exceeding this amount shall require the voted approval of the Congregation unless such expenditures are (a) included in the approved church budget, or (b) provided for by committed special contributions, bequests, pledges, or fund-raising events. Notwithstanding the amount, no transaction which requires the mortgaging or selling of real property or the borrowing of money shall be made without the voted approval of the Congregation.

217 **SECTION 2. Committees Reporting to the Council**

218

219 From time to time the Council or the Congregation, at a regular or special meeting of the
220 Council or Congregation, may appoint a Standing or Ad Hoc Committee.

221

222 The responsibilities of each Standing or Ad Hoc Committee shall be established by the Council.
223 Each such committee shall report to the Council on a regular basis.

224

225 **Council Committees and Positions**

226

227 Appointments to Committees and positions that report to the Council will be made by the
228 Council. A full list of these appointments (including term dates) will be published for review at
229 the annual Budget and Elections Meeting, along with the proposed nominations for elected
230 positions by the Nominating Committee (see Article X, Section 2).

231

232 At the writing of this constitution, the following **Standing Committees** and **Appointed Positions**
233 report to the Council

234

235 **Advocacy Panel:** The role of the Advocacy Panel is to address complaints or allegations
236 of sexual misconduct, harassment, and/or abuse. Specific guidelines for Advocacy Panel
237 membership, responsibilities and procedures are defined in the Safe Church Policy,
238 dated May 17, 2002 or as subsequently amended.

239

240 **Personnel Committee:** The Council shall appoint at least two members to the
241 Personnel Committee. Each appointed member shall serve a term of two years.
242 Members may be reappointed to fill successive terms without limit at the discretion of
243 the Council. Terms shall be staggered to facilitate continuity from year to year. In
244 addition, the Moderator or Vice Moderator or their Council designee shall serve as an Ex
245 Officio member of the Personnel Committee.

246

247 The Personnel Committee shall be responsible for establishing and administering a
248 consistent personnel policy for all church employees. The Personnel Committee shall
249 recommend adjustments to staff compensation, ensure that comprehensive personnel
250 policies and procedures are documented and administered, and ensure that each
251 employee is advised at least annually of his or her position description, compensation
252 package, job performance, and performance goals and objectives. All recommendations
253 of the Personnel Committee regarding policy matters and compensation actions shall be
254 subject to review and approval by the Council.

255

256 **Pastoral Relations Committee:** The purpose of a Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) is
257 to support a healthy relationship between pastor and congregation. The PRC has two
258 roles: as an advisory group to the pastor--sharing ideas, dreams, expectations, and
259 concerns of the congregation; and as a support for the pastor--interpreting the roles,
260 functions, boundaries, opportunities, and needs of the pastor, and communicating them

261 to lay leadership and to the congregation. The PRC will be comprised of four members
262 who will be appointed by the Council in collaboration with the Pastor. Each member's
263 term will be two years, and these terms are renewable. Terms shall be staggered to
264 facilitate continuity from year to year. The PRC will meet as needed to carry out their
265 duties, but with a minimum of 3-4 meetings per year.

266
267 **Investment Committee:** The Council shall appoint at least three members to the
268 Investment Committee. Each appointed member shall serve a term of two years.
269 Members may be reappointed to fill successive terms without limit at the discretion of
270 the Council. Terms shall be staggered to facilitate continuity from year to year. The
271 Treasurer shall also serve as an ex-officio member of the Investment Committee.

272
273 The Investment Committee shall develop and maintain an Investment Policy for all
274 financial assets of the church, subject to approval by the Council. The Investment
275 Committee shall also oversee and ensure the appropriate implementation of such
276 policy.

277
278 **Scholarship Committee:** The Council shall appoint at least three members to the
279 Scholarship Committee. Each appointed member shall serve a term of two years.
280 Members may be reappointed to fill successive terms without limit at the discretion of
281 the Council. Terms shall be staggered to facilitate continuity from year to year.

282
283 The Scholarship Committee shall oversee and document policies related to the awarding
284 of scholarships from the Scholarship Fund of the Church, manage the application
285 process, and communicate with and distribute awards to the selected recipients each
286 year. With input from Council, the Scholarship Committee may also authorize
287 Scholarship Fund distributions for other educational or training grants or stipends in
288 keeping with the overall goals and mission of the church.

289
290 The following **Appointed Positions** will be appointed by and report to the Council:

291
292 **Church Historian:** The Council shall annually appoint a Church Historian, who shall be
293 responsible for keeping a record of notable activities within the life of the Church and its
294 participation in community and denominational affairs (by way of photographs,
295 documents, and other relevant materials). From time to time, the Historian shall provide
296 displays or written information to the congregation that will illustrate the Church's rich
297 history. The historian may, at his or her discretion, recruit volunteers to form a
298 committee or Ministry Team to assist the Historian in carrying out these duties and/or
299 any special projects the Historian wishes to pursue.

300
301 **Auditor:** The Council shall annually appoint a church Auditor to audit all financial
302 records of the church with the objective to ensure that financial controls are properly
303 administered and that financial reports are accurate, timely, and complete. The Auditor
304 shall prepare and submit a written report at the end of each fiscal year attesting to the

305 appropriateness of all financial reports and processes, employing such tests and reviews
306 as are necessary and proper to carry out these duties. In the event that the Auditor has
307 concerns about any specific or general financial irregularities and/or potential
308 improprieties, the Auditor shall notify the Council as soon as is practical. If the Auditor
309 believes that additional resources are necessary to properly carry out any auditing
310 responsibilities (including the possibility of retaining outside auditing support), he or she
311 may request such support from the Council.

312
313 **Ad Hoc Committees**

314
315 An Ad Hoc Committee, by definition, is convened for a specific purpose. Examples of Ad
316 Hoc Committees might include a Search Committee, a Social Action Committee (for a
317 particular purpose), a Governance Review Committee, a Major Capital Improvement
318 Committee, etc.

319
320 When a Pastoral Search Committee is to be convened, a slate of members shall be
321 nominated by the Council, subject to voted ratification by the Congregation at a duly
322 called meeting. For other Ad Hoc committees, members will be appointed by vote of the
323 Council.

324
325 The existence of each such Ad Hoc committee shall terminate upon the acceptance of its
326 final report, and said committee shall be formally dissolved by vote of the Council.

327
328 **SECTION 3. Church Officers**

329
330 The Moderator, Vice Moderator, and Clerk shall each be elected for a term of two years with
331 the possibility of a second consecutive term. The terms of the Moderator and Vice Moderator
332 shall coincide. The term of the Clerk shall be offset from the Moderator's term by one year to
333 facilitate continuity. A Moderator, Vice Moderator, or Clerk who has served two consecutive
334 two-year terms shall be ineligible for reelection to the same position until two years have
335 elapsed.

336
337 The Treasurer shall be elected for a term of two years. A Treasurer may be reelected to serve
338 successive terms without limitation.

339
340 No person shall concurrently hold more than one officer position.

341
342 **A. MODERATOR**

343
344 The Moderator is the lay leader of the Church, and shall work closely with the Pastor(s)
345 and the Council in promoting the mission and ministries of the Church, including the
346 development of a vision statement, a strategic plan, and annual goals. The Moderator
347 shall preside at all business meetings of the Church and the Council held during his or
348 her term of office, except that any member of the Church whose term as Moderator

349 expired at the end of the previous fiscal year shall preside at the subsequent Annual
350 Meeting. If the Moderator is unable to preside at any meeting, the Vice Moderator shall
351 do so. If neither are able to preside, then the Moderator shall choose someone from
352 Council to preside in his or her absence. The Moderator shall have authority to execute
353 and/or endorse legal documents on behalf of the Church. The Moderator shall also
354 make appointments to the Advocacy Panel in accordance with the requirements of the
355 Safe Church Policy of the Church.

356
357 **B. VICE MODERATOR**

358
359 The Vice Moderator shall assist the Moderator as requested by the Moderator, and shall
360 preside at any business meeting of the Church or the Council if the Moderator is
361 unavailable to do so. The Vice Moderator shall have the authority to act in the capacity
362 of the Moderator in any duty for which the Moderator is unavailable or unable to fulfill.
363 In the event that the Moderator resigns prior to the expiration of his or her term, the
364 Vice Moderator shall assume the full duties of the Moderator for the remainder of that
365 term.

366
367 **C. CLERK**

368
369 The Clerk shall issue calls for Church meetings, keep faithful records of all meetings of
370 the Church and the Council, ensure that a record is kept of the membership of the
371 Church (including dates of admission, transfer, status-change, and death), shall write
372 letters of dismissal, and record baptisms. The Clerk shall collaborate with the Church's
373 Office Manager to ensure that membership records of the Church are safely maintained
374 and updated. The Clerk shall report to the Church Council, which shall establish and
375 maintain policies for the implementation and execution of these duties.

376
377 **D. TREASURER**

378
379 The Treasurer shall be responsible for overseeing the proper receipt, aggregation,
380 disbursement, investment, and financial reporting of all church funds. The Treasurer
381 shall report to the Church Council, which shall establish and maintain policies and
382 financial controls for the implementation and execution of these duties.

383
384 Any group or Ministry Team that sponsors a fundraising activity shall advise the
385 Treasurer as to the recommended uses of the funds to be generated. If the Treasurer
386 believes that the recommended uses of funds are unusual, the Treasurer shall notify the
387 Council for their advice and consent.

388
389 The Council may establish appointed or staff positions to assist the Treasurer in the
390 execution of his or her duties.

391

392 The Treasurer shall have the authority to execute and/or endorse any financial legal
393 documents related to investments, investment accounts, or banking arrangements of
394 the Church, provided that such documents are compliant with the policies of the Church
395 or the stated directions of the Council.

396
397

398 **ARTICLE VIII – MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH**

399

400 The Church’s mission shall be carried out through established Core Ministries that are central to
401 the mission and ministry of the church (as defined earlier in this Constitution) consistent with
402 the vision and strategic plan (as articulated by the Council).

403

404 **SECTION 1. Core Ministries**

405

406 Seven Core Ministries are defined in this Constitution. If the Council feels that other Core
407 Ministries should be created, the Council may do so. Each Core Ministry will be led by and
408 managed by a small group who have each been nominated and elected for a term of 3 years.
409 The ending dates of terms of office shall be staggered in a manner to ensure continuity of
410 membership from year to year. Since members and friends are encouraged to pursue their
411 ministry passions, there are no term limits for serving on Core Ministries. However, it is
412 strongly encouraged that chairs of Core Ministries serve no more than five consecutive years as
413 chair. They are encouraged to pass the baton of leadership (though they may remain on the
414 Ministry and may also resume leadership at a later time). To that end, chairs of Core Ministries
415 should develop leaders and groom successors for leadership roles. Each Core Ministry will
416 oversee the activity of various sponsored Ministry Teams and/or Committees under its
417 jurisdiction.

418

419 The (Senior or Solo) Pastor will be an ex officio member of each Core Ministry. Our Core
420 Ministries are:

421

422 **Worship:** The Worship Ministry shall advise the planning and conduct of worship in this
423 Church. This Ministry shall coordinate with the Pastor(s), staff, and other Core Ministries to
424 plan enriching worship opportunities. Areas of focus may include liturgical practices, rituals
425 and sacraments, music and liturgical arts, nurturing worship leaders and other participants
426 (liturgists, communion servers, ushers), seasonal observances, and other special worship
427 opportunities. The Ministry members include a Chair (lay leader) and at least two (2)
428 additional lay leaders.

429

430 **Faith Formation:** The Faith Formation Ministry shall oversee the development of
431 opportunities to foster the growth of our faith. This Ministry shall promote and manage
432 programming for church school, adult education, youth groups, confirmation, and
433 intergenerational experiences. The Ministry members include a Chair (lay leader), Faith
434 Formation staff, and at least two (2) additional lay leaders.

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Outreach and Witness: The Outreach and Witness Ministry shall lead and direct our relationship with local, regional, and global concerns. This Ministry shall evaluate and implement programs involving social justice and advocacy, local & global missions/support, ecumenical and interfaith activities/relationships, and the appointment of delegates to wider-church settings and organizations, including the relevant UCC Conference and Association. Delegates or representatives to other sponsored agencies, including independent religious, social service, or social action organizations, may also be appointed by the Ministry at its discretion. This Ministry shall also recommend and administer the collection and disbursement of related special offerings, subject to approval by the Council. The Ministry members include a Chair (lay leader) and at least two (2) additional lay leaders.

Congregational Care: The Congregational Care Ministry shall oversee our response to the needs of members and friends. This Ministry shall focus on pastoral care, visitation and care for homebound members and friends, fellowship and social interaction, member-to-member care, welcoming ministries, and caring ministries. The Ministry members include a Chair (lay leader), and at least two (2) additional lay leaders.

Facilities: This Ministry shall oversee the physical plant and equipment of the Church, including the maintenance of the church building, grounds, and telecommunications systems, the securing of property and liability insurance, and oversight of the use of the building by outside groups. Ministry members include a Chair (lay leader) and at least four additional lay leaders.

Because the Church relies on the good faith efforts of its members in carrying out the various ministries of the Church, the Facilities Ministry shall maintain adequate liability insurance coverage to indemnify each Church member for judgments, reasonable expenses, amounts paid, etc. for their personal liability due to acts or omissions within the scope of their duties as Church Officers, elected officials, or volunteers.

The Facilities Ministry may authorize unbudgeted expenditures from reserves up to ten percent of the annual budget for any single project, including all related items, without prior approval of the Congregation. All other major expenditures shall require the voted approval of the Congregation unless such expenditures are (a) included in the approved church budget, or (b) provided for by committed special contributions, bequests, pledges, or fund-raising events. Notwithstanding the amount, no transaction which requires the mortgaging or selling of real property or the borrowing of money shall be made without the voted approval of the Congregation.

475 **Time, Talent, and Treasure:** This Ministry is responsible for the development and nurturing
476 of the resources necessary to carry out the mission and ministries of the Church. This
477 ministry shall be responsible for the following:

- 478 • Developing a Stewardship strategy and plan in collaboration with the Pastor which
479 incorporates Stewardship messages, programming and campaigns throughout each
480 year.
- 481 • Carrying out the nominating process for elected positions, and making suggestions
482 for other positions on Committees, Core Ministries, and Ministry Teams. Further,
483 this Core Ministry will promote efforts to invite and incorporate other members and
484 friends into the work and ministries of the Church.
- 485 • Coordination of regular on-going fundraising activities, and the development of
486 other avenues for harvesting the time, talent, and treasure necessary to support
487 the ministries of the church.

488
489 Ministry members include a Chair (lay leader) and at least four additional lay leaders.
490

491 **Music:** The Music Ministry shall coordinate the overall music program of the church,
492 including worship, music events in the church, and music outreach, and shall advise and
493 support the Minister or Director of Music in all facets of the music programming in the
494 church. This Ministry shall also be responsible for the care and oversight of the church's
495 music equipment, including organs, pianos and other instruments. The Ministry members
496 include a Chair (lay leader), the Minister or Director of Music, and at least two (2)
497 additional lay leaders.

498
499 **SECTION 3. Ministry Teams**

500
501 Ministry Teams may be formed under the Council or any of the Core Ministries to address
502 specific ministry tasks, projects, or limited areas of responsibility consistent with the mission
503 and vision of the church. A Ministry Team may be comprised of one or more members or
504 friends. Each Ministry Team shall be sponsored by and accountable to either the Council or a
505 Core Ministry. A Ministry Team may be proposed by a sponsoring body or by any person(s) in
506 the church community, according to how they are moved to carry out the work of the church,
507 as long as the proposal is endorsed by a sponsoring body. Ministry Team members are not
508 elected and do not have fixed membership. They are formed by members and friends who are
509 passionate about a particular ministry.

510
511 Any member or friend who is interested in forming a Ministry Team should propose their ideas
512 to a Core Ministry chair or to any member of Council or the Pastor. The Core Ministry chair,
513 Council member or Pastor will then work with the member or friend to determine a brief
514 statement of the objectives and activities of the new Ministry Team, as well as any financial or
515 other resources needed from the church. The Core Ministry, Council member or Pastor will
516 coordinate with each Ministry Team on its activities and progress. Formation of new Ministry

517 Teams will be shared with the Council at its next regular meeting or as requested, and Core
518 Ministries or the Council should report on the work of its Ministry Teams in their Annual
519 Report.

520
521 A Ministry Team can be dissolved at any time by the lead and/or members of that team and this
522 dissolution should be reported to the sponsoring Core Ministry and/or Council. If a Ministry
523 Team has been inactive it can also be dissolved by the Council or the sponsoring Core Ministry.

524
525
526 **ARTICLE IX**
527 **PASTOR(S) AND STAFF**

528
529 **SECTION 1. Pastors**

530
531 The Church shall call and employ ordained pastor(s) to order its worship and administer the
532 sacraments, provide for the spiritual needs of its members, and provide leadership for the
533 vision and the mission of the Church. The ministerial staff shall consist of one or more pastors
534 who have been ordained in the United Church of Christ, or have ordained ministerial standing
535 from another denomination and have been approved for serving a United Church of Christ
536 congregation through Privilege of Call.

537
538 **SECTION 2. Calling a Pastor**

539
540 **A.** When there is pastoral vacancy, a Pastoral Search Committee shall be formed. The
541 Council shall nominate a slate of Pastoral Search Committee candidates who provide broad
542 representation from within the Church. The slate of nominated members shall be ratified
543 by a majority vote at a congregational meeting. The Pastoral Search Committee will
544 consult with the [Connecticut Southern New England](#) Conference ~~office (or its successor) of~~
545 [the United Church of Christ](#). The Pastoral Search Committee shall stand until it is
546 disbanded at a congregational meeting.

547
548 **B.** When calling an Associate or Assistant Pastor, the Senior Pastor will serve as a member
549 of the Pastoral Search Committee.

550
551 **C.** A Pastor (Solo, Senior, Associate, or Assistant) shall be called by the Congregation by a
552 two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a congregational meeting. The
553 Church Council must approve the terms of the proposed contract with the nominee prior
554 to the meeting of the Congregation.

555
556 **D.** A called Pastor shall become a full member of the Church when their standing has been
557 transferred from their previous association and shall be installed as soon as practicable
558 after being called and accepting the position.

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SECTION 3. Termination of a Pastor

The relationship between a Pastor and Congregation may be dissolved by either party upon 60 days written notice.

In order for the Congregation to ~~initiate the termination of~~ terminate the relationship between the Congregation and a Pastor, the Congregation must hold a vote at a meeting assembled according to Article X. Such vote shall be by secret, written ballot, and shall require approval by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.

SECTION 4. Professional, Administrative, and Support Staff

The Council shall be responsible for the proper staffing of the Church to carry out its mission. In the event the Council desires to hire a staff member (either to replace a departing employee or to fill a new position), the Council shall determine the most effective means of accomplishing the new hiring.

The Church Council shall have the responsibility to ascertain the need for additional staff and to hire staff for positions other than those already in place, with search and hire processes determined by the Council, according to appropriate practices and procedures.

**ARTICLE X
FISCAL YEAR AND CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

The fiscal year of the Church shall begin on May 1 and end on April 30 of the following year. The books shall be closed and reports rendered as of the end of each fiscal year. All references to a year in this Constitution shall refer to a fiscal year.

The Church shall have two regular meetings each year, an Annual Meeting and a Budget and Elections Meeting. In addition, other special meetings may be called by the Council or by the Officers or members of the Church, as provided herein.

The Council shall determine the most appropriate format for each meeting. Following are acceptable formats:

- A. Physical only:** A meeting may be held in a single location with meeting participants required to be present in person.
- B. Virtual only:** In circumstances when a physical meeting is impractical or inappropriate, a virtual-only meeting may be held, using a digital platform which is widely available to most members.
- C. Hybrid meeting:** A meeting may be held which combines the characteristics and capabilities of both physical and virtual meetings.

604 When members attend a meeting using a virtual platform, the clerk shall use reasonable means
605 to establish whether a quorum is present, and also to determine voting results.

606 **SECTION 1. Annual Meeting**

607
608 The Annual Meeting of the Church shall be held after the close of each fiscal year, on a date and
609 time as the Council shall determine. At the Annual Meeting, the Church shall receive reports of
610 the various Ministries, activities, plans, and financial expenditures of the Council and each of
611 the Officers, Core Ministries, and Committees. The call for the Annual Meeting shall be issued
612 by the Clerk by notice announced in church and published in the bulletin on the two Sundays
613 preceding the meeting and on the day of the meeting. It should also be announced
614 electronically through various means such as newsletter or weekly news updates. Written
615 annual reports may be distributed electronically with additional copies published in hard copy
616 to those who request it. They should be made available at least one week prior to the date of
617 the Annual Meeting.

618

619 **SECTION 2. Budget and Elections Meeting**

620

621 The Budget and Elections Meeting shall be held during the first two weeks of March, or on such
622 other reasonable date and at such other time as the Council shall determine. The church
623 budget for the next fiscal year shall be adopted at such meeting. Also, if the Church has
624 received a bequest (or has been notified of a pending bequest) that exceeds \$50,000 and is not
625 designated for any specific purpose, the apportionment of such bequest (i.e., toward specific
626 funds and/or projects) shall be recommended by the Council and approved by vote of the
627 Congregation.

628

629 In addition to the financial agenda previously articulated, the Church shall elect candidates for
630 Officers, Core Ministries, and any Standing Committees designated to be filled by election, as
631 presented on a slate of nominees recommended by the Time, Talent and Treasure Core
632 Ministry or as amended. Council appointments to committees shall also be presented, but are
633 not subject to congregational vote.

634

635 Notice of the Budget and Elections Meeting shall be given in the same manner as that for the
636 Annual Meeting. All budgets and nominations shall be published and made available at least
637 one week prior to the date of the Budget and Elections Meeting.

638

639 **SECTION 3. Special Meetings**

640

641 Special meetings of the Church shall be called by the Council or upon the request in writing of
642 three Officers or five members of the Church. Notice of any such meeting shall be given in the
643 same manner as that for the Annual Meeting. No matter not included in the call to a special
644 meeting shall be brought before such meeting.

645

646

647 **SECTION 4. Cancellation of a Meeting**

648

649 Any meeting that has been duly called may be canceled or postponed in advance if the persons
650 calling the meeting agree with the cancellation or postponement, subject to the following
651 requirements:

652

653 A. If the meeting was called by a vote of the Council, then a majority vote of the
654 Council shall be required to cancel or postpone the meeting.

655

656 B. If the meeting was called by a request from three Officers, then at least two of those
657 three Officers must agree to the cancellation or postponement.

658

659 C. If the meeting was called by a group of five or more members of the Church, then a
660 majority of the calling group must agree to the cancellation or postponement, with
661 the additional stipulation that there must no longer be five or more members of the
662 calling group who wish to hold the meeting at the originally scheduled time.

663

664 In the event that any meeting is canceled or postponed subject to the foregoing provisions,
665 advance notification of such cancellation or postponement shall be made in a manner most
666 appropriate to the situation, as determined by the Moderator, Pastor, and Clerk.

667

668 Thirty members of the Church shall constitute a quorum at all regular and special meetings. No
669 person, other than a Full or Associate member of the Church or a Friend who is duly elected to
670 a Core Ministry or appointed by Council to a Committee, shall be entitled to vote on any matter
671 brought before the Church at any such meeting. Voters must be in either actual or virtual (on
672 camera) attendance. "Roberts Rules of Order" shall be observed in the conduct of the regular
673 and special meetings of the Church.

674

675

676 **ARTICLE XI**

677 **DISPOSITION OF REAL ESTATE PROPERTY**

678

DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH

679

680 The Church shall not sell, transfer or dispose of its real estate property used for worship or
681 ministerial residences nor withdraw from the United Church of Christ except following open
682 discussion at two special meetings of this Church at least three months apart with a two-thirds
683 affirmative vote at each such meeting, further provided that the meetings have been called and
684 a quorum is present in accordance with the requirements of this Constitution. Upon dissolution
685 of the Church, its assets and all property and interests of which it shall then be possessed,
686 including any devise, bequest, gift or grant contained in any will or other instrument, in trust or
687 otherwise, made before or after such dissolution, shall be transferred and conveyed to the
688 Connecticut Conference (or its successor organization) of the United Church of Christ. No
689 member of the Church shall receive or be entitled to receive any of the assets of the Church in
690 the event of its dissolution.

691 **ARTICLE XII**
692 **AMENDMENTS**

693
694 Amendments to, or revisions of, this Constitution (except amendments to Article IX Sections 1-
695 3, or Article XI, or this Article XII), may be adopted by two-thirds vote of the members of the
696 Church present and voting at a regular or special meeting of the Church. The intent of the
697 amendment(s) or revisions shall be made known with the call to the meeting and copies of the
698 proposed text of the amendment(s) or revision(s) shall be ~~posted on the Church's bulletin~~
699 ~~boards~~electronically distributed to members and also made available in printed form in the
700 Church offices at least ~~90~~60 days in advance of the meeting. Revision of the sections excepted
701 in the first sentence of this paragraph shall require affirmative two-thirds votes at two separate
702 meetings duly called and separated by at least ~~90~~60 days.

703
704
705 **ARTICLE XIII**
706 **EFFECTIVE DATE**

707
708 This Constitution shall be effective on June 5, 2022 and as subsequently amended by vote of
709 the Congregation.
710

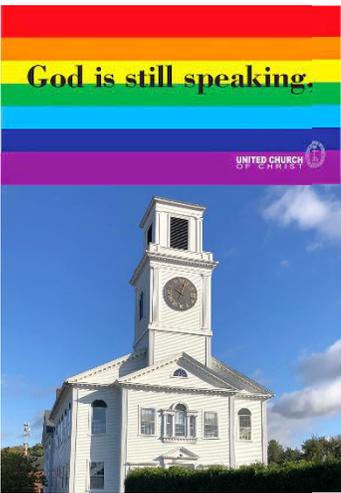
Rocky Hill Congregational Church

Annual Report

2021 - 2022

ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

An Open and Affirming Community of Faith -1727-2022



ANNUAL REPORT
For the Fiscal year: May 1, 2021 to April 30, 2022
Annual Meeting
Sunday, June 5, 2022 at 11:00 a.m.

805 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, CT 06067
860.529.4167 office@rhccucc.org
www.RockyHillUCC.org



ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC

Members and Friends of Our Church
Who Have Entered The Church Eternal
From May 1, 2021 to April 30, 2022

<i>Name</i>	<i>Date of Death</i>
Eleanor Mahar	6/2/21
Todd Doten	7/13/21
Ray Libera*	7/13/21
Frank Vann	11/2/21
Linda Grillo	11/26/21
Eleanor Lee Shippy	12/14/21

*“For this God is our God for ever and ever:
He will be our guide even unto death.”*

Psalm 48:14



*Friend of RHCC

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Annual Report of the Moderator—2021-2022

Wow. What a year! I started last year's Annual Report with exactly the same words, but for a very different reason. Though we are still dealing with COVID, we are pretty much back in full swing for worship in the sanctuary (moving to Chapin Hall in the summer) as well as hybrid services every week for those unable to attend. This transition into a different way of doing things is both more inclusive and also gives us access to many other tools, music and videos to use during worship to enrich our services, making better use of the technology and resources available to us.

But the really good news is that our church is actively engaged in doing much-needed ministry in a wide variety of ways and in building community as we do so. Our church family has been engaged, energetic and committed to making the world a better place—one ministry at a time.

Despite the lingering pandemic and all the ministries, we are currently engaged in, we are also thinking ahead to discern God's vision for us and to plan for the steps we need to take to live into that vision. Here are a few highlights:

Vision and key strategies: Our vision is: Serving God by 1) Growing in faith, 2) Working for justice and equity, and 3) Building community. Key things we need to do to live into that vision include: a) forming key ministry partnerships; b) being active participants in the struggle for justice and peace; c) serving others; d) being more active and visible in our community and region; and, perhaps most importantly, "widening our circle" of community and engagement.

Resources: We recognize that we live in a greatly changed and changing world and we strive to adapt and thrive well into the future. To do so, we need to think creatively and set an ambitious plan for the future. Many resources of time, talent and treasure will continue be necessary to move us forward. We will need champions for the additional ministry needs we want to pursue. With regard to treasure, we are also thinking creatively about how to underwrite our ministries, in the following ways:

1. Stewardship: Our Time Talent and Treasure Ministry mailed a package of information in April challenging all of us to prayerfully consider increasing our on-going sustaining support. We pray that that challenge will be fruitful.
2. We are planning to look for tenants for a small portion of our building to increase our income stream.

Annual Report of the Moderator—2021-2022

3. We are planning to research and seek grant opportunities that will help to underwrite both our ministries and some necessary repairs to our historic meeting house and facilities—which serves as both the symbol and the base for all our activities.
4. We are planning to start a capital campaign in 2023 to seek financial support specifically for our capital improvement needs, so that our historic and beautiful building remains in excellent repair and that we are able to make changes that better prepare us to be the church of the future.

Speaking of the future, we have a great opportunity coming up that will allow us to shine a bright light on both our rich past as the oldest church in Rocky Hill and on our future as a Christian community of faith and action. June 27th is our 295th birthday! Happy birthday to us!! At that time, we will be kicking off our “Vision 300” process. Over the next five years we will prepare ourselves for our 300th birthday and a year of events and activities in 2027, which will also include more exploration into our history, as well as undertaking some building repairs, and launching a capital campaign to help sustain us as we begin our next 300 years!

I am grateful to all members of the Council for their leadership in guiding us to “be the church” with energy and commitment. Huge thanks also, to our church staff—Nada, Julie, and Theresa—and we look forward to Elisha’s energetic contribution to our faith formation programs. Our staff leads and supports us all along the way. Special shoutout to Theresa for helping us keep all the balls in the air. Most of all, we are grateful to all of YOU, our church family, as your generosity of time, talent and treasure energizes us all in the ministries we are called to do.

Ruth Fitzgerald, Moderator

Annual Report – Pastor’s Report for 2021-2022

Siblings in Christ, what a difference a year makes! For even though the global challenge of COVID-19 is still with us, and vaccinations and variants are a part of our daily lives, many of us are adjusting to these realities with much greater ease than the ways we previously tried to keep up with the unknowns of this terrible virus. I would be remiss if I did not place into our church’s record some moments of recognition for just how much we have all been affected. We have lost beloved members, as well as family members and friends and neighbors and co-workers and acquaintances; we have lived with changing instructions and restrictions that have forever modified our personal schedules. We have been forced to evaluate and adjust our life together to such a degree that sometimes it feels like we are living from week to week!

With the new protections of vaccines and boosters, we have come through to a changed world; let’s call it “emerging” from a whole range of related issues that have been met with great energy and insight by the leadership of RHCC. In every area of our shared life together – from worship to stewardship to service and learning and fellowshiping – we have entered into new sorts of engagement. We have needed to embrace these as opportunities for experimentation and growth, and we have certainly benefited from your willingness to be creative, flexible and patient. There are so many of you who have been a part of offering ideas and energies for this shared work. Thank you! It is fitting to acknowledge where we have been and what it has meant to so many of us and our communities, as well as the world at large.

We have also welcomed new members through affirmation and baptism; we are forming new relationships and partnership for mission and ministry, particularly in Rocky Hill and the Hartford regions; and we are blessed with two new staff members, as Julie Hagen, our Music Director, and Elisha Brady, our new Faith Formation Coordinator, have become part of our team. As you, gentle reader, will notice throughout this Annual Report, there are wonderful clues about the ways we looking to strengthen our congregation with God’s help. The visioning process continues as we’ve reached the third year of my Designated Term pastorate. We are determined to continue looking outward and to the future God asks us to live into. We seek the Spirit’s energy and insight to be a vibrant, faithful, justice-seeking and healing community. We will continue to learn more about confronting racism and other forms of hatred and division that are perpetuated in the name of “power over” rather than mutual sharing for fruitful living. And we will pursue ways to engage and support our youngsters in their development as leaders of the church of today and tomorrow. There will certainly be more transitions as you and I embrace new patterns of growth and possibility. Your participation in the conversation and in forming these directions is always welcome. I hope you will be on the look-out for the meetings and gatherings help us reach these decisions.

Annual Report – Pastor’s Report for 2021-2022

My role as your transitional pastor, has continued to inform our ministry together. I have recently offered the Council some reading from the prescient work of consultant and researcher Rev. Susan Beaumont*, writing about strategic thinking and learning:

“Thinking strategically is not the same thing as planning systematically. Strategic planning is just one way that strategy emerges in an organization. In liminal seasons like this one, it is important... to appreciate the nonlinear nature of most real strategy... 90% of what organizations really do...is the accumulation of day-to-day decision making, disjointed initiatives and actions taken in response to everyday demands – without a grand master plan...[O]ur aim should be to better shape [a] strategy, to increase the odds of meaningful, mission-driven action...

We are looking to build momentum for what Rev. Beaumont calls “expanded strategic thinking that relies on intuition, reflection, and authentic dialogue and the confrontation of unstated assumptions.” (Found at: www.congregationalconsulting.org/are-you-thinking-strategically/) I am grateful for the support so many of you have offered me as we continue this blessed work together. I celebrate our Council leaders, our staff, and each one of you who make up the Rocky Hill congregation, and I continue to pray toward what is to come.

In Christian service,

Rev. Nada B. Sellers, M.Div.

*For more information about the work of Susan Beaumont: <https://susanbeaumont.com/2019/10/29/how-to-lead-when-you-dont-know-where-youre-going/>

Outreach and Witness Annual Report 2021-2022

Outreach and Witness continues to assist those in need, and, in the past year, has expanded and broadened outreach in support of the church's broader mission. Our Virtual Offering plate, created during the isolation of COVID, was re-labeled Monthly Abundance Gifts or MAG and continues to support our key Outreach programs with very generous gifts time, talent, and treasure from all of you. Our focus continues to be the development of strategic community partners for ongoing support, support of UCC wider mission special offerings, and integration of teams furthering the vision of the church. In addition, we recognize the need for additional support of domestic or global humanitarian efforts on an as needed basis.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Covenant to Care

Covenant to Care provides a safety net for abused, neglected, or impoverished children in Connecticut by providing essential support in moments that are critical for a child's ability to thrive and a family's ability to stay together. This mission is fulfilled by partnering with state agencies, faith-based communities, and other organizations to provide direct assistance and critical goods to families struggling to meet the basic needs of their children. Our congregation continues to support our commitment to Covenant to Care through the Adopt a Social Worker program:

- We provided 17 backpacks full of school supplies to the children on our social worker's caseload in August.
- We provided \$1,000 (20 \$50) in gift cards for holiday gifts for the children.

Hands On Hartford

Hands on Hartford serves Hartford's most challenged residents in the areas of food, housing, and health. We continued our partnership during the past year in many ways.

- We, with 16 members of the congregation, continued baking cookies and bars for the Monday night community meals program on a bi-monthly basis. We were able to provide about 80 packaged deserts for each dinner
- We assembled 100 snack packs for HOH members to deliver in their neighborhood homeless outreach visits. The assembly was done during worship with the congregation participating. We plan to do this periodically going forward.
- We participated in the Annual Foodshare Walk in September. Our RHCC walking team, with additional donations for the Monthly Abundance Gift, raised \$1,880 for Hands on Hartford.

Rocky Hill Social Services

Rocky Hill Social Services provides assistance to town residents for emergency basic needs, energy, tax relief for elderly or disabled individuals, and food.

- We provided funding and resources for the community garden in May and June. This included funding an Eagle Scout project and providing support for planting and maintaining the garden. The hands-on effort involved many volunteers from the church as well as outreach and witness. We raised \$2073 for these initiatives
- Our Abundance Gifts for November were split between Covenant to Care and Rocky Hill Social Services. We were able to give \$1000 to RHSS in the form of gift cards for holiday giving.

Outreach and Witness Annual Report 2021-2022

Church World Services

We generally do a hands-on project to support Church World Services. In the past we have done disaster relief buckets, hygiene kits and other much needed supplies. We will be continuing to support this organization with assembly of hygiene kits and other projects in the next church year.

CT Diaper Bank

In January the congregation continued our annual diaper drive to support the CT Diaper Bank. The bank distributes diapers to families in need, food pantries, soup kitchens, day care centers and shelters throughout CT. This year we were still in COVID virtual meetings, so we did a drive by collection. Between infant and toddler diapers (2781) pull-ups (316) and wipes (364) we delivered 3,461 items.

UCC Special Mission Offerings

We continued our support to three Special Missions Offerings that support vital ministries near and far and the ability of the UCC to sustain and grow their programs and individual church support.

- Strengthen the Church \$1000
- Neighbors in Need \$1685
- One Great Hour of Sharing \$1090

In addition to special offerings, we receive 10% of ongoing sustaining gifts which totaled \$22,473. Of that, \$15,450 was passed along to UCC/SNEUCC via our proportionate giving. This leaves us with Funds for additional funding of Outreach events and projects in the future,

SPECIAL HOLIDAY OFFERINGS – HUMANITARIAN AID

Afghanistan Refugee Relocation Assistance

Our Christmas holiday offering and Monthly Abundance Gift for December 2021 focused on the plight of refugees from Afghanistan and local relocation initiatives. We contributed \$500 to the West End Civic Association (West Hartford) for the relocation of two families into the neighborhood. Our congregation also raised \$4400 for IRIS, the Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services non-profit agency whose mission is to help refugees and other displaced people establish new lives, strengthen hope, and contribute to the vitality of Connecticut's communities. This was an amazing outpouring of heartfelt support from our church family. We were also able to send an additional \$2000 to IRIS from funds set aside and not used for an unspecified mission trip.

Ukrainian Refugee Crisis

Our Easter holiday offering and Monthly Abundance Gift for April 2022 was directed to the current Ukrainian refugee crisis in Ukraine and Eastern Europe. We chose ShelterBox USA as the recipient based on their active involvement providing basic supplies for food and shelter in the refugee settlement areas. Thanks again to the generous donations from our congregation, we were able to provide \$4045 to this timely and important initiative.

Outreach and Witness Annual Report 2021-2022

NEW OPPORTUNITY

Silver Lake Conference Center

We have recently started a collaboration with Silver Lake Conference Center to help fund programs for LGBTQIA+ youth. The first phase of this initiative was providing funds so that Silver Lake can offer non-gendered housing options to campers. We provided \$1500 from our Special Missions Fund to equip camp with private changing tents.

We have agreed in principle to a three-year partnership to fund an annual Family Pride Day and/or High School Pride retreat in the fall. This funding will be at least \$1500 per year from our Missions fund.

OTHER SPOKES IN OUR WHEEL

Outreach & Witness has, as part of the team, other satellite ministries that are vital to promoting the mission of the church and furthering our community and social outreach. While these groups are under our ministry for support, they have their own steering committees and oversight.

Racial Justice Steering Committee

RHCC established the Racial Justice Steering Committee in June 2020. The committee meets frequently to begin the work of furthering efforts to eliminate racial injustice. The committee invites us to embark on a journey to examine the sin of racism in ourselves, our church, our community, and our country, while working toward ending systemic racism. The committee

- Created and Maintains the Anti-Racism themed Little Free Library
- Provides and liaisons with GHIAA for training and justice activation
- Provides resources on their Web Page on church website in the form of books, videos, and podcasts
- Provides opportunities for education and political action
- Shared their Presentation of Learning from their activation team training with the congregation

The Racial Justice Steering committee used funds raised in the February 2021 virtual offering plate to purchase, install, and stock books in our Little Free Library. We also provided books with racially diverse subjects and characters to the children in the Little Scholars Preschool. Each student received 2 books in September during a reception for the preschool.

Four members attended GHIAA's 6-month training on Planting Racial Justice Activation Teams and presented a plan of action to the congregation. Seven additional church members attended a second GHIAA training session in February-March 2022 focused on leadership training.

The February 2022 MAG collected \$1350 which was divided between purchasing more books for the Little Free Library and a donation to the Blue Hills Civic Association to further their work with Racial Justice and Youth Incarceration.

Our racial justice steering committee continues to find ways to engage the congregation through events, books, pod-casts, movies and collaboration with other churches, synagogues and mosques in our area.

Outreach and Witness Annual Report 2021-2022

Green Team

The Green team is a group of members whose mission is to seek further environmental awareness and to encourage others' efforts to enhance, conserve, and protect God's creation.

During the past year, the team was very busy. A Green Team Web Page was developed on the RHCC site to give information about the team members and mission, what the team is doing, and inspirational and actionable resources.

Activities during the year have included:

- Monthly Green Tips published in the Church Mouse.
- Hike and blessing of the water in May 2021.
- Sale of 13 rain barrels to homes in the area including coordination of the installation.
- Planning for the 2022 Green Expo to be held in May 2022, expanding on the first Expo which was held in April 2021.
- Litter pickup at Rocky Hill parks and public spaces in April 2022. Many bags of litter were collected.
- Attendance of members at an environmental protest held at the State Capital.

Summary of the 2021-2022 year

Thank you all for your support and commitment to our outreach programs and recipients during the year! In addition, thanks to Treasurer Dave Hall for keeping us on top of the numbers and assisting with payment to our recipients.

We have accomplished much in the last year and are excited about the possibilities in front of us going forward. Please feel free to come find out more about us and join our various ministries if your time and curiosity permit! Our meetings are published on the church calendar in advance. Our members are Sue Chatfield, Heather Collins, Elaine Sellenberg, Val Triblets, Chris Kainamura, and Deb Copes (incoming member).

Respectfully Submitted,
Sue Chatfield, Chair

Time Talent and Treasure Ministry Annual Report 2021-2022

COVID-19 challenged us to find new ways to “do church.” In the past two years, we’ve honed our Zoom meeting skills, become very adept at hybrid (simultaneous in-person and online services, and even more of us have converted to giving online (which helps to stabilize our cash flow). Through it all, our church family remained generous with our time, talent, and treasure, allowing us to do the work of the church.

Here are a few highlights of the work undertaken by the Time, Talent and Treasure ministry in the past year.

1. **Automatic recurring giving** is becoming more common among our church family, and we still have room to improve. (If you would like help setting up online donations, please let any of us know.) This helps to stabilize our church’s cash flow, undergirding our ability to support the needs of our church family and our community at large. Others chose to give online through PayPal and credit cards (thanks to the support of our webmaster, Steve Smith) and mailed contributions to our church office. We are now including a QR code in our weekly bulletin to simplify giving by mobile device. We are grateful to everyone who supports RHCC with your faithful financial gifts. **Please remember that it is your on-going sustaining support—your regular monthly giving—that supports ALL of the work and ministries we do as an active church community.**
2. In partnership with Outreach and Witness and Worship ministries, our church has continued to support **Monthly Abundance Gifts** as the Outreach and Witness team has reported, this gives us the opportunity to spotlight a specific organization, ministry, or project each month as a recipient of “extra” giving out of our abundance.
3. Our TTT Ministry believes that **communication** is key to connecting individuals to the ministries of our church. Showing our congregation how their gifts were used is not only a duty of the TTT Ministry; it also inspires individuals to continue to give and expand ministries.

On May 1, we revived the tradition of our annual **Chili Supper** by combining it with a “State of the Union” presentation. (A repeat performance was held on May 14 via Zoom.) The Chili Supper was well-attended. We were provided an overview of **an updated vision statement** along with key strategies to live into that vision—including some possible new financial strategies. As was presented at the meeting, our job is to figure out what God is calling us to do.....and then DO it.

Through our **Generosity Team**, we reached out by mail to current members and friends, asking for increased ongoing sustaining giving, helping ensure ongoing support of our church’s many ministries, as well as the possibility of ambitious new ministries.

4. Through our **Nominating Team**, we presented a roster of candidates for election to Core Ministries and Committees, as designated in the Constitution.

Time Talent and Treasure Ministry Annual Report 2021-2022

5. We continued to promote and sell **SCRIP**, which remains an important part of financially supporting our ministries. Please continue to THINK SCRIP!!!
6. Our **Church Fair and Events Ministry Team** was able to return in 2021, bringing back the church fair and silent auction in October. In May, our Plant and Bake Sale raised additional funds, donating remaining plants to the town food pantry garden.
7. Our **Welcoming Ministry Team**, which falls jointly under TTT and Congregational Care, has worked to help guests feel welcome, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you have not received a new name tag to wear on Sunday morning, please let us know.
8. The proposed changes to the church's constitution will simplify how the TTT Ministry is able to function, making us more of a year-round team, committed to stewardship awareness.

We are sincerely grateful for the many people in our church who generously give of their own Time, Talent and Treasure to support our church's vision and ministries.

- Special thanks to those who so successfully served on the TTT Generosity Team, Talent Team, and all our wonderful Ministry Teams.
- We are especially grateful to Sue Chatfield, who completed her term on the Pledging Committee.
- Thanks also go out to Theresa Cleary for her support of our mailings, and Deb Copes and Dave Hall for their financial reporting help.

In gratitude,

Your Time Talent and Treasure Core Ministry

Doretta Andonucci, Ruth Fitzgerald, Judy Graham, Gail Hall, Liz Reed-Swale and Jarod Taylor

Generosity Team

Ruth Fitzgerald, Judy Graham, Gail Hall, Bill Hoffman, Candy Smith

Talent Team

Doretta Andonucci, Ruth Fitzgerald, Liz Reed-Swale, Jarod Taylor

Annual Report of the Faith Formation Ministry 2021-2022

The Faith Formation Ministry Team continued to maintain meaningful connections with our youth in a year of much transition as changes in worship experiences occurred due to Covid concerns and the search for a new Faith Formation director continued.

In June we celebrated our youth on Children's Sunday where we recognized our graduates, presented bibles to our third graders, enjoyed an intergenerational worship service and also recognized and celebrated our Minister of Children and Youth, retirement. Also in June, we hosted a class reunion of the 2020 Confirmation class, as we weren't able to hold the traditional confirmation class dinner in 2020 due to Covid restrictions.

In July and August, we were able to hold several in-person church school sessions and had several volunteers that presented the Message for All Ages in our summer worship services.

We kicked off the church school program year with an intergenerational Rally Day service in September that concluded with all enjoying a treat from the ice cream truck. We began to use the Follow Me curriculum in the fall, the Welcome All series, where we enjoyed both intergenerational worship experiences and some classroom learning time. In October we began to explore the Confess series within the Follow Me curriculum. We also were able to enjoy a fun filled Halloween worship experience where all were encouraged to wear a costume and the youth present handed out candy as exit greeters.

We had an active December where we learned about and shared the joys of Advent using the Hope series in the Follow Me curriculum. The children made handmade Christmas cards that the Congregational Care Ministry Team sent to church members that haven't been able to join us in worship. Also in December, we had the joy of hanging handmade star ornaments in and around the church.

In January, we had the great joy of experiencing a fun intergenerational virtual Epiphany worship service where we had many volunteers of all ages playing angels, shepherds, townspeople, the wise people, the Holy family and creatures great and small. We also began exploring the next series in our Follow Me curriculum, Baptism.

Annual Report of the Faith Formation Ministry 2021-2022

In February, we hosted, with the in-reach Ministry Team's invaluable help, the annual Mardi Gras/Fat Tuesday Pancake supper with live music and games for all ages. A great way to prepare for the season of Lent. During Lent the youth participated in intergenerational worship services and classroom learning experiences and an Easter Egg hunt.

We would like to express our thanks to Pastor Nada for her engagement, encouragement and suggestions for creative ways to engage our youth in worship and in the life of the church. Also, many thanks to all that volunteered to assist with the work of this important ministry by presenting the Message for All Ages, assisting with a craft project, assisting in church school as the second adult and for your love and support of our youth.

In June of 2021, the search committee for our new Director of Children and Youth position was formally started. The committee was made up of Liz Pulling, Nancy Rolfe, Julie Burns and Barry Wilcock. The committee performed the hard work of determining the next steps which included coordinating with Conference staff, finalizing the job description, determining where and how to advertise, reviewing applications and interviewing candidates. Early in 2022 the committee, with help and input from Pastor Nada and Deb Copes, refined the job description attributes and job title and worked to identify other advertising avenues and this additional work reaped the reward of finding a fabulous candidate for the position. In late April the committee announced the hiring of Elisha Brady as the new Faith Formation Coordinator. Our team is very excited and looking forward to working with Elisha as we move forward with our Faith Formation program.

Respectfully,

Your Faith Formation Ministry Team: Candy Smith, Liz Pulling, Nancy Rolfe and Sue VanNess

Worship Ministry Annual Report 2021 - 2022

In another challenging year, the Worship Ministry team has worked diligently with other ministries and with our congregation to have a successful (if unconventional) year. To return to the Sanctuary, we worked with Pastor Nada and the reopening committee to ensure we could bring back in-person services safely while continuing to use Zoom to reach our friends and neighbors remotely. As it is not a job that we do alone, we are grateful to the many boards, committees and staff who helped us make this year a success.

While we had to make changes to Offerings and Communion, we worked to offer as “normal” a service as we could, while trying to keep everyone’s health and safety in mind. We appreciate your patience as we worked through a few variations as the service evolved. Additionally, as we moved back into the Sanctuary, we revised the guidelines for Liturgist and Greeter to ensure both were in line with the needs of our current services.

We offer our thanks to those who have helped with our hybrid worship services this past year. This is no small undertaking and includes the work of a variety of our parishioners and staff. On a personal note, I simply could not have done this without the help of Bob Carberry and Sarah DeGiovanni. Both Bob and Sarah were instrumental in ensuring we continued to have a relevant, vibrant service that allowed our parishioners to stay connected to one another and our church. I have relied on their years of knowledge in the Worship Ministry and on their abilities and experience. Both have now moved off the Worship Ministry to other roles within the church and will be sorely missed.

I am also grateful to our new members: Jake D’Addario, Bill Hoffman, and George Peterson. I look forward to working with this new group to spend the upcoming year supporting the worship life of Rocky Hill Congregational Church.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Andonucci, chair

Worship Core Ministry: Michael Andonucci, Jake D’Addario, Bill Hoffman, and George Peterson

Congregational Care Ministry Annual Report 2021-2022

Caring Ministry Team: With covid restrictions lifting our membership was able to get back into the sanctuary and, masked or not, it was a delight; music, smiles, and sermons in-person and children interacting.

“Snail Mail” Cards: Christine Kainamura continues to send a birthday card to members 70+ years young. Hilaire continued on her one-woman campaign to stay connected by sending her chatty notes to all members. This year’s total 1,540!

Heritage Sunday Ministry: A festive celebration was held with fall-colored balloons and the congregation was entertained as 3 of us attempted to untangle them to be given out!

Caroling Ministry: Covid Cancelled

Flower Delivery Ministry: For Christmas, Doretta crocheted gold stars that were included in cards that the youth assembled and signed during one of our Advent services.

At Easter, 4 of us delivered mini daffodils to 14 members some were accompanied with a visit, some left as a surprise.

Great Grandparents: Gratefully, we were back in the sanctuary to honor great grandmothers. All 12 names were read and those in person and on Zoom were acknowledged. Two ladies were with us in the sanctuary and each was given a flower. New to our church Jean Brown has been added to this list with 6 great grandchildren. A personal note was sent to those whom we knew would not be attending the service. The cards included a note that \$100.00 donation to the food pantry was being donated in their name.

Great Grandfathers will be honored in much the same way.

Heavenly Helpers Ministry: No receptions were requested this year.

Prayer Shawl Ministry: Marsha Hoffman has joined this Care core group and will be tracking the donations and distributing them where she knows there is a need. This year she brought some to RH Human Services to be given to the residents dislocated by a fire in their apartments. Please, keep this important outreach in mind whenever you are aware of a person or family who could use a kind gift and prayer.

Inreach: For coffee hours to resume and to be back downstairs for snacks and fellowship was a joy! We started more slowly than the sanctuary services because masks were still recommended so eating together was risky but by the beginning of Lent we were up to speed. The need for folks to host the fellowship time is starting to take shape. A guide for “getting around in the kitchen” has been posted and there have been many who have signed up so let’s keep it going.

Congregational Care

Steph Heneghan, Wendy Ware, Kim Burghoff and Marsha Hoffman.

Music Ministry Annual Report 2021-2022

Music Ministry activity has been limited this year secondary to continued concerns related to Covid. Bell choir returned to rehearsing first with Julie Hagen beginning her directing. Their numbers are limited but have been able to add to worship service and Lessons and Carols service joyously. Vocal choir returned to rehearsals in September with a smaller but enthusiastic group willing to sing with masks as needed. Vocal choir has chosen to sing consistently from the front of the sanctuary to assist in learning new hymns and responses and allow for the zoom attendees to be able to see also. Vocal choir lost a long time and treasured member in November with the passing of Frank Vann. He will be greatly missed. Members of the choir that were able added to his memorial service. Although an attempt was made to resume Lessons and Carols in person in December ultimately it was determined that repeating zoom program and taping new choral pieces and inserting others would be the best decision. Hopefully by next year that will change. The celebration of Easter was closer to normal with vocal and bell choirs and the addition of instrumentalists from Hartt School of Music thanks to Julie. We are hoping for continued ability to participate live and to add to music offerings in the upcoming year. The music program is grateful for the new leadership of Julie Hagen and the addition of her family to the church and hope to expand upon her knowledge and enthusiasm going forward.

Marsha Hoffman

Chair, Music Core Ministry

Report of the Facilities Ministry 2021-2022

This report focuses on a summary of the major items addressed by the Facilities Ministry this past year. More details on the items discussed here and other smaller repair and maintenance projects completed during the year are noted in our monthly meeting minutes and are not repeated in this report.

We have made several technology additions and upgrades during the past year; some of these were started in the previous year. Some are visible, like the large LED TV being used in the Sanctuary, and others are not visible, like the switch from Cox Cable to GoNetspeed fiber optic Internet service. We have purchased several new computers, two to support our virtual services in the Sanctuary and one for our new Faith Formation coordinator. We replaced our aged phone system with a new system that uses VoIP (voice over Internet protocol); this system is entirely Internet based and provides significant monthly savings. We have switched to a web-based church network; this has allowed us to eliminate having a church file server (computer) and having to maintain it. We have a new copier as part of our ongoing lease with Canon Business Systems. We have installed an electronic lock on the back door; the lock uses key cards or fobs. The lock is managed by a Sonitrol web-based system; eventually we will eliminate the need for physical exterior keys. We upgraded the controller and software for our heating management system. The old system was installed in 2010 and used software that had become a security risk for our network. An additional benefit of the upgraded system is that we can manage it using a smartphone in addition to a computer. We have made several upgrades to our audio/visual systems over the past two years. So far, a little over \$12,000 has been invested in upgrades, and we are not done yet. A small amount of this is going toward the capability to provide Zoom based services in Chapin Hall this summer; something that we were not able to do last summer.

In our past two Annual Reports, we mentioned a Condition Assessment report by Moser Pilon Nelson Architects (MPN) of Wethersfield. The report was a complete inspection and study of the building envelope and structure. The report identified areas or things in our church building that needed repair, replacement, or restoration. 50% cost of the report was funded by a grant from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). One of the critical projects identified in the report was replacement of the parapets on our church steeple. The upper parapet was removed in 2013 for safety. In 2020 we contracted with MPN to prepare a design for construction for the parapets; because of temporary Covid 19 rules, SHPO paid for the entire cost of the design. The new design matches the current parapet but is much sturdier.

This year we applied to SHPO for a grant to fund 50% of the construction costs of the parapets; we estimate the cost will be \$120,000. We heard this May that our grant application has been approved by SHPO; the next step is to get construction bids. Once we have construction bids, we would hold a congregational meeting for a decision on the project. The parapet project is only one of many that we might do over the next few years; restoration of the Sanctuary windows and exterior painting are two that we mentioned in last year's report.

Report of the Facilities Ministry 2021-2022

We have been developing a comprehensive list of potential projects for the next five years; so far with Council we have identified 21 projects. Some projects are the maintain or restore type; while others are upgrades that support our church vision. The five-year timeframe fits with our 300-year anniversary in 2027. Facilities is working with Council to set project priorities that are consistent with our church vision. We are gathering budget estimates for the projects not identified Conditions Assessment report. The total cost of projects is large and beyond what we could fund from our memorial fund; therefore, we think that a capital fund campaign is needed, and Council is already looking into such a campaign.

The Little Scholars Preschool has received a grant from the state office of Early Childhood Development for classroom upgrades. The funds will be used for new classroom carpet and painting the classroom, ground floor hallway and bathrooms.

We are developing a plan for maintaining the Memorial Garden; the group that designed and created the garden did not leave any plans for maintaining the garden or guidelines for things like hedge height or possible future plantings.

With the end of our program year, we bid farewell to Bill Hoffman who is moving to another ministry, and we welcome Ed Chiucarello and Hilaire Leavitt to Facilities.

Respectfully Submitted,

Facilities Ministry

Ed Bacon, Bill Hoffman, Randy Pulling, Steve Smith, and Dave Sageman

Scholarship Committee Report 2021-2022

The Scholarship Committee reports to Council. Our responsibility is to award funds, typically the interest earned by the Scholarship Fund, to assist educational efforts at the youth, college, & adult level. In 2022 we received 7 college applications and awarded a total of \$10,000. We also pledged funds for RHCC staff's professional development expenses. We are looking into additional ways to expand the fund's involvements as RHCC seeks to further fulfill its mission.

Hilaire Leavitt, Gail Hall, Randy Pulling, Steve Ware

Minutes of the RHCC Annual Meeting – June 20, 2021

The virtual and in-person annual meeting of RHCC was called to order at 11:10 by Moderator Ruth Fitzgerald. An attendance count determined that more than 30 members were in attendance, so a quorum was present.

The first order of business (see Call) was to receive and act upon the 2020-2021 reports of Officers, Ministries, Ministry Teams, and Committees. No changes or additions need to be made. Steve Smith moved we accept the reports as is & Sue Chatfield seconded the motion. The vote passed.

The second order of business was to recognize and affirm any new nominations by the Nominating Committee made since the Budget and Elections Meeting. No additions were proposed, so a vote was not necessary as the slate was approved by vote at the Budget & Elections meeting.

The third order of business was to conduct any additional business to come before the congregation; there was none. The business portion of the meeting was finished and the meeting adjourned.

We then had a reading of the names of members & friends of the church who have entered the Church Eternal between May 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020 and between May 1, 2020 and April 30, 2021 followed by a prayer led by Rev. Nada. We finished by singing "For All the Saints".

Respectfully submitted,
Hilaire Leavitt, Clerk

Minutes of the RHCC Budget and Elections Meeting - April 3, 2022

Welcome from Moderator

Ruth Fitzgerald called the meeting to order at 11:00am. Heather Wolfe-Taylor did an attendance count and determined that there were more than the 30 people required for a quorum.

Budget

Dave Hall reported on the budget. Our proposed budget is up 2.4% from last year. Ongoing sustaining support is down, mostly due to deaths and people moving away. Last year, because Georgette retired midway through the year, our spending was generally in line with our budget. This year we will be hiring her replacement, which means we may have a greater shortfall, particularly if sustaining support continues to decline.

For the past few years, we have been using about 5% per year from our Memorial Fund, which is the maximum that is sustainable over the long term. We may also begin making more use of the Moser Music fund for music-related expenses.

Ruth said that our Memorial Fund contains about 1.1 million dollars. We have been drawing from the capital for about 25 years, which is common in churches. This is not an immediate concern; however, we want to be sure our spending is sustainable, and that the Memorial Fund is available for future generations. Ruth emphasized that this is a challenge, not a crisis.

Dave Hall moved that we accept the budget as presented. Hilaire Leavitt seconded. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed.

Minutes of the RHCC Budget and Elections Meeting - April 3, 2022

Nominating slate

Doretta Andonucci Doretta thanked the nominating committee and all those who served on ministries in the past year. Doretta moved that we accept the nomination slate presented. Hilaire Leavitt seconded. The motion passed.

Pastoral search committee

Ruth explained that because Nada is a Designated Term Pastor, the church and Nada must determine whether she will become the settled pastor. We have formed a search committee for this process. Hilaire Leavitt moved that we accept the members of the search committee. Barry Wilcock seconded. The motion passed.

Constitutional revisions

Ruth explained the proposed changes to the constitution:

- Adding the category of “friends.”
- Adding a provision that Council may fill open positions on Core Ministries as needed.
- Adding Pastoral Relations Committee, which was not in the most recent version of constitution.
- Adding a suggestion to committees and ministries that they have an internal plan for chairs to limit their time in leadership in order to encourage new leaders to take those positions.
- Restructuring Time Talent and Treasure ministry. TTT will replace the former Pledge Committee and Nominating Committee.
- Creating a simpler process for forming ministry teams.
- Adding the option for meetings to be held virtually.
- Changing a 90-day waiting period for constitutional changes to a 60-day waiting period.

These changes will be voted on at the Annual Meeting.

Closing Prayer. Closing prayer by Deb Copes. Adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Report from the Clerk 2021-2022

Membership changes from May 1, 2021 – April 30, 2022

Beginning membership	327
New members	7
Death	6
Adjustment of gains/losses	+1
Total membership	328
Average weekly attendance in worship	58
RHCC Facebook page followers:	346
Email contacts	205

2022-2023 Nominations

for Officers, Ministries, and Elected Committees (starting May 1, 2022)

OFFICERS

2-year terms (Moderator & Clerk terms are offset)

Moderator	Ruth Fitzgerald	2024
Vice Moderator	Heather Wolfe-Taylor	2024
Clerk		2023
Treasurer	Dave Hall	2024

CORE MINISTRIES

3-year terms; no term limits

WORSHIP (3)		FAITH FORMATION (3)		OUTREACH and WITNESS (3)		CONGREGATIONAL CARE (3)	
Michael Andonucci	2024	Julie Burns	2025	Sue Chatfield	2023	Kim Burghoff	2023
Jake D'Addario	2025	Liz Pulling	2024	Heather Collins	2024	Stephanie Heneghan	2024
Bill Hoffman	2023	Nancy Rolfe	2024	Deb Copes	2025	Marsha Hoffman	2025
George Peterson	2025	Candace Smith	2023	Christine Kainamura	2025	Wendy Ware	2023
		Ashley Stanley	2025	Val Triplets	2025		
				Elaine Sellenberg	2023		
FACILITIES (5)		TIME, TALENT and TREASURE (3)		MUSIC (5)			
Ed Bacon	2025	Doretta Andonucci	2025	Holli Bacon	2024		
Ed Chiucarello	2025	Ruth Fitzgerald	2023	Laurel Cole	2022		
Hilaire Leavitt	2025	Judy Graham	2025	Chris Gengenbach	2024		
Randy Pulling	2025	Gail Hall	2025	Marsha Hoffman	2023		
Dave Sageman	2023	Liz Reed-Swale	2024	Jackie Little	2024		
Steve Smith	2023	Jarod Taylor	2024	Suzanne Thompson	2023		

ELECTED COMMITTEES

3-year terms; no term limits

PLEDGING COMMITTEE (3)		NOMINATING (3)	
Doretta Andonucci	2025	Ruth Fitzgerald	2024
Jarod Taylor	2022	Judy Graham	2024
Ruth Fitzgerald	2023	Gail Hall	2023
		Bill Hoffman	2025
		Candy Smith	2023

Numbers in parentheses show the minimum required number of elected members.

RHCC Council Appointed Committees and Positions—2022-23

(Expiration of term in parentheses)

APPOINTED BY COUNCIL

Personnel Committee: Minimum of 3 members/2-year term

Deb Copes (Vice Moderator-Ex-Officio)

Suzanne Thompson (2023)

Steve Ware (2023)

Barry Wilcock (2024)

Advocacy Panel: Four members (2 elected and 2 appointed by Council; 2 male and 2 female)

Steve Smith (2023)

Don Pagnucco (2023)

Sue Van Ness (2024)

Doretta Andonucci (2024)

Investment Committee: Minimum of 3 members/2-year term

Bill Collins (2023)

Dave Hall (Treasurer)

Kathy Morgan (2024)

Dave Sageman (2023)

Scholarship Committee: Minimum of 3 members/2-year term

Gail Hall (2023)

Hilaire Leavitt (2023)

Randy Pulling (2024)

Steve Ware (2024)

Auditor (Annual appointment)

Suzanne Thompson (2023)

Historian (Annual Appointment)

Steve Ware (2023)

Pastoral Relations Committee

Sean Burns (2024)

Sarah DiGiovani (2023)

Marsha Hoffman (2024)

Hilaire Leavitt (2023)

Report of the Investment Committee 2021-2022

The Investment Committee is appointed by the Council to assure the prudent management of the invested assets of the church.

Our investment policy establishes standards for asset allocation, diversification, and reporting. Most of the invested assets are directly managed by our Treasurer, Dave Hall, who has prior professional experience as an institutional portfolio manager and strategist. The general approach is to construct and periodically rebalance a portfolio which essentially mimics a hypothetical benchmark portfolio consisting of broad market indexes for stocks, real estate (via REITs), bonds, and money markets. The Treasurer produces a quarterly report summarizing activity and performance for review by the members of the Investment Committee. As of April 30, 2022, these internally-managed assets total \$1.367 million in market value, which collectively support most of the endowment funds of the church.

The primary investment vehicle for the Special Mission Fund is the Consolidated Trust Fund (CTF) managed under the trusteeship of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, a covenantal partner of the Southern New England Conference. In February, 2022 the Investment Committee approved a full exchange of our holding of the CTF Total Return Fund for an identically-sized holding of the CTF Eden Fund. The latter fund excludes companies with a material exposure to fossil fuel production and distribution, and also benefits from lower investment expenses due to greater use of passively-managed index funds. The Treasurer receives monthly valuations and quarterly performance summaries from an investment consultant retained by the Fund's Board of Directors. As of April 30, 2022, our position in this fund totals \$50,120 in market value. Historical returns on this fund are similar to the returns earned on our internally-managed assets.

After enjoying a +32% total return on our investments in the previous fiscal year, the past year has been "interesting", to say the least. For the 12 months ending 4/30/22, the approximate total return on our invested assets was -4%, with positive returns through December more than fully offset by losses in the first four months of 2022. In spite of the recent market downturn, the portfolio has realized average annual returns of approximately 9% and 8% over the past five and ten years, respectively. The portfolio on 4/30/22 consisted of approximately 60% in common stocks, 30% in bonds, 7% in publicly traded real state trusts (REITs), and 3% in federal money market funds. Our stock, bond, and real estate exposures are all globally diversified, and our stock holdings emphasize companies supportive of articulated Environmental, Social, and corporate Governance standards – often abbreviated as ESG investing.

Report of the Investment Committee 2021-2022

In recent years, we have come to rely on the withdrawal of approximately 5% of our endowment funds each year as a supplement to our operating budget revenues. This is an aggressive long-term posture, but one that should be marginally sustainable at the 5% level. However, our recent budgeting exercise has pointed out that our revenues from other sources (notably member giving) are not keeping pace with our operating costs, thereby placing a greater demand on our endowment to make ends meet. A recent Stewardship appeal has been sent to all members, asking us to consider increases in ongoing sustaining gifts. Should this appeal fall short of its target, the Memorial Fund will likely have to fill the gap, and total withdrawals of as much as 8% of the Fund may be required. While this would be an unsustainable expectation over the long term, we should be able to navigate the short-term implications – although if we continue to experience significant downdrafts in the capital markets, this will complicate the efficient execution of elevated withdrawals.

Beyond our budgeted operating costs, we also have some sizeable looming expenses related to repairs to the church tower, renovation of the sanctuary windows, and a variety of other potential projects. The financial dimensions of these capital needs cannot be supported by our current endowment – especially when the operating budget demands are so reliant on endowment returns. Proverbially speaking, we cannot have our cake and eat it too. As such, these capital costs will need to be funded by a significant capital fundraising campaign, which is likely to be initiated in the coming year.

Recent market turbulence has been severe, but not unusual. Markets go up more often than they go down, but short-term volatility can sometimes obscure the long term benefits of staying invested. As such, our policies and strategies are all framed and managed with a long-term investment horizon in mind. Market volatility sometimes leads to short-term investment management challenges, but also provides opportunities for those with a patient and consistent approach over all market cycles.

Questions on investment management policy and performance should be directed to Dave Hall at treasurer@rhccucc.org.

Investment Committee: Dave Sageman, Bill Collins, Kathy Morgan, Dave Hall (Treasurer)

ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UCC
2021-2022 Financial Summary and 2022-23 Approved Budget

Adopted at Budget & Elections Meeting, April 3, 2022

<u>ONGOING OPERATIONS</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
<u>USES OF FUNDS</u>	<u>FYE 4/30/22</u>	<u>FYE 4/30/22</u>	<u>FYE 4/30/23</u>
A) Total Staffing Costs	\$226,767	\$195,687	\$229,333
B) Ministries, Ministry Team, & Committee Expenditures	12,000	10,451	12,000
C) Facilities & Administration	88,143	90,785	91,967
D) Outreach & Witness (expenditures funded by Budget)	<u>24,457</u>	<u>22,473</u>	<u>26,500</u>
Total USES OF FUNDS (excl. Special Offerings and Targeted Gifts)	\$351,367	\$319,396	\$359,800
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
	<u>FYE 4/30/22</u>	<u>FYE 4/30/22</u>	<u>FYE 4/30/23</u>
<u>SOURCES OF FUNDS</u>			
E) Ongoing Sustaining Giving	244,568	224,731	265,000
F) Fundraising	32,000	34,138	32,000
G) Use of facilities	6,000	4,345	6,000
H) Memorial Fund contribution	49,500	49,500	52,800
I) Moser Music Fund contribution			<u>4,000</u>
Total SOURCES OF FUNDS (excl. Special offerings and Targeted Gifts)	\$332,068	\$312,715	\$359,800
J) PROJECTED GAP (negative value implies shortfall)	(\$19,298)	(\$6,682)	\$0
<u>SPECIAL OFFERINGS and TARGETED GIFTS</u>	<u>Prior Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Next Budget</u>
K) Gifts directed to Ministry Partners	24,000	21,759	
L) Special Mission Fund contribution	2,600	1,500	2,600
Total SPECIAL OFFERINGS and TARGETED GIFTS Disbursed	<u>-26,600</u>	<u>-23,259</u>	<u>-2,600</u>
NET ADDITION TO PROJECTED GAP	\$0	\$0	\$0

Line item commentary

- A) Includes direct compensation for all staff plus benefits, expense allowances, payroll taxes, worker's comp insurance, and provisions for occasional pulpit supply preachers and substitute organists/pianists.
- B) Used to support programs, projects, and initiatives sponsored and administered by the Core Ministries, Ministry Teams, Council, and Committees
- C) Office supplies & equipment, internet services, utilities, insurance, cleaning, and general maintenance
- D) Used for local, national, global, and denominational support, as directed and administered by our Outreach and Witness Ministry
- E) Includes automated and recurring gifts and other donations with no designated purpose
- F) Primarily scrip and church fair
- G) Paid by outside groups for use of church facilities
- H) 5% of Memorial Fund balance is presumed to be available as annual contribution to budget
- I) Moser (Music) Fund will be be tapped to provide for music-related expenses beginning in 2022 (choral and bell choir music, piano tuning, organ maintenance, etc.)
- J) Supplement from the Memorial Fund needed to fund the gap between sources and uses of funds (deficit)
- K) Special offerings and collections for pre-designated purposes (incl. "Abundance Gifts")
- L) 5% of Special Mission Fund balance is presumed to be available for special O/W projects

<u>Recap of Funds directed to Outreach & Witness:</u>	<u>Prior Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Next Budget</u>
10% of Ongoing Sustaining Giving	\$24,457	\$22,473	\$26,500
Special offerings and targeted gifts	24,000	21,759	21,000
Special Mission Fund contribution	<u>2,600</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>2,600</u>
Total Funds Available to Support Outreach and Witness Initiatives	\$51,057	\$45,732	\$50,100

<u>Recap of Total Giving from Members and Friends</u>	<u>Prior Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Next Budget</u>
Ongoing Sustaining Giving	244,568	224,731	265,000
Special offerings and targeted gifts	<u>24,000</u>	<u>21,759</u>	<u>21,000</u>
	\$268,568	\$246,490	\$286,000

Treasurer's Report - Sources and Uses of Funds - Fiscal Year Ending 4/30/22

<u>ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>Prior Year</u>
Ongoing Sustaining Giving [1]	\$224,731	\$244,568	(\$19,837)	\$255,482
Special Offerings & Targeted Gifts [2]	21,759	24,000	(2,241)	26,138
Fundraising	34,138	32,000	2,138	20,074
Use of Facilities	4,345	6,000	(1,655)	2,685
Memorial Fund transfer [10]	49,500	49,500	0	49,500
Special Mission Fund transfer	1,500	2,600	(1,100)	0
TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDS	<u>\$335,974</u>	<u>\$358,668</u>	<u>(\$22,694)</u>	<u>\$353,879</u>
Staff costs	195,687	226,767	(31,080)	226,926
Outreach & Witness [7]	45,732	51,057	(5,325)	52,616
Other Ministries, Ministry Teams	10,451	12,000	(1,549)	6,419
Administration & I.T.	11,781	10,751	1,030	10,153
Facilities	79,005	77,392	1,613	57,408
TOTAL USES OF FUNDS	<u>\$342,655</u>	<u>\$377,967</u>	<u>(\$35,311)</u>	<u>\$353,521</u>
SURPLUS (or DEFICIT)	(6,682)	(19,299)	12,617	358

<u>ENDOWMENT FUNDS</u>	<u>Memorial</u>	<u>Scholarship</u>	<u>Moser [3]</u>	<u>Special Prog.[9]</u>	<u>Organ [11] Renovation</u>	<u>Special [13] Mission</u>
Beginning Balance	\$1,108,782	\$218,547	\$68,097	\$12,538	\$10,878	\$57,277
Endowment Gifts [4a]	375	0	30	0	0	0
Fundraisers	0	0	374	0	0	0
Investment Income [5]	22,784	4,460	1,408	245	60	952
Increase in Market Value [5]	(71,773)	(13,967)	(4,660)	(686)	(195)	(3,975)
Expenditures	(6,646)	(11,000)	(25)	(2,500)		(1,500)
Budgeted Transfers [10]	(49,500)					
Deficit transfer	(6,682)					
Ending Balance	<u>\$997,341</u>	<u>\$198,040</u>	<u>\$65,224</u>	<u>\$9,598</u>	<u>\$10,744</u>	<u>\$52,754</u>

Total investment return on aggregate investments was -4% for the fiscal year. [5]
Average annualized return over the past five years was approx. 9%.

Fundraising amounts allocated to the Local Operating Budget

\$16,225	Scrip profits
15,299	2021 Fair and related events
<u>2,614</u>	Cashback on church credit card
\$34,138	Total

Memorial Fund Expenditures:

\$2,512	Boiler repairs
2,159	Electronic Key Entry system
1,855	Carpet for Child Care room
<u>120</u>	Memorial garden maintenance
\$6,646	

Bequests and legacy gifts totaling \$5000 were received during the year. [4b]

Numbers in [brackets] refer to the corresponding footnotes that accompany this report.

Treasurer's Report - Balance Sheet Details - Fiscal Year Ending 4/30/22

FUND BALANCES		
	<u>4/30/2022</u>	<u>4/30/2021</u>
OPERATING FUND	\$27,606	\$29,195
ALLOCATED BALANCES		
Reserved for Outreach & Witness	16,801	17,936
Bequests pending allocation [4b]	51,920	49,653
Heavenly Hosts	1,735	1,850
Youth Fund [6]	5,015	4,407
Helping Hand Fund	7,090	14,652
ENDOWMENT FUNDS		
Memorial Fund [4a]	997,341	1,108,782
Moser Fund [3]	65,224	66,972
Scholarship Fund	198,040	218,547
Special Program Fund [9]	9,598	12,538
Organ Renovation Fund [11]	10,744	10,878
Special Mission Fund [13]	<u>52,754</u>	<u>57,277</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	\$1,443,867	\$1,592,690

Components of Operating Fund Balance		
	<u>4/30/2022</u>	<u>4/30/2021</u>
Payroll accruals	4,738	4,561
Payroll taxes accrued	2,649	2,420
Provision for future sick time	3,100	3,100
Expenses booked but unpaid	7,378	1,509
Expenses prepaid for next year	(6,018)	(5,292)
Sunday School offering	754	754
Special purpose gifts & allocations	200	7,045
Available for Events Comm. expenses	3,000	3,000
Budget surplus, carried over to next year		358
Unassigned working capital	<u>11,805</u>	<u>11,740</u>
Total Operating Fund	\$27,606	\$29,195

FINANCIAL ASSETS		
	<u>4/30/2022</u>	<u>4/30/2021</u>
Checking Account	\$12,944	\$20,024
Savings Account	2,506	2,506
Receivable from State of CT (Grant reimbursement)		13,486
Money Market Funds	88,125	63,809
CT Conf. Consolidated Trust - Eden Fund	50,120	54,095
Paypal Giving Fund	0	25
Other Investments	<u>1,276,576</u>	<u>1,423,505</u>
TOTAL CASH & INVESTED ASSETS [8]	1,430,271	1,577,450
Scrip inventory	<u>13,596</u>	<u>11,097</u>
TOTAL FINANCIAL ASSETS	\$1,443,867	\$1,588,547

OUTREACH and WITNESS MINISTRY - FINANCIAL DETAILS for FISCAL PERIOD ENDING 4/30/22

	<u>Allocated Ongoing Support [7]</u>	<u>Designated Collections [2]</u>	<u>Special Mission Fund [13]</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Category Totals</u>
Beginning Cash on Hand (5/1/2021)	6,073	11,863	3,182	21,118	21,118
CASH RECEIVED DURING FISCAL YEAR					
Allocated Pledges and Donations	22,473			22,473	
Monthly Abundance Gifts (MAG)		20,110		20,110	
Other Special Offerings		424		424	
Other targeted donations		1,225		1,225	
Investment income			952	952	45,284
Total Cash Available before expenditures	\$28,546	\$33,722	\$4,134	\$66,402	
ALLOCATED FOR DISBURSEMENT					
UCC Special Mission Offerings					
Neighbors in Need		1,685		1,685	
One Great Hour of Sharing		1,090		1,090	
Strengthen the Church	576	424		1,000	3,775
Global Missions					
ShelterBox (Ukraine relief)		4,045		4,045	
UCC/SNEUCC Proportionate Giving [12]	15,450			15,450	19,495
Local Assistance					
Blue Hills Civic Association		660		660	
Center for Leadership & Justice (formerly known as Christian Activities Council)		3,500		3,500	
Covenant to Care for Children		2,919		2,919	
CT River Conservancy/Save the Sound		1,100		1,100	
IRIS: Refugee & Immigrant Services		6,400		6,400	
Diaper Bank of CT		25		25	
Foodshare Walk for Hunger		1,880		1,880	
Hands On Hartford		498		498	
Free library project		2,122		2,122	
Racial Justice Initiatives		660		660	
Rocky Hill Food Pantry		1,409		1,409	
Rocky Hill Human Services - Comm. Garden		2,073		2,073	
Silver Lake LGBTQIA+ initiative			1,500	1,500	
West End Civic Assoc (Refugee assistance)		500		500	
Soup Kitchen Support		225		225	25,471
Other expenses					
T-shirts for Hunger Walkers	242			242	
Refugee lawn signs	77			77	319
TOTAL ALLOCATED FOR DISBURSEMENT	\$16,345	\$31,215	\$1,500	\$49,061	

(continued on next page)

OUTREACH and WITNESS MINISTRY - FINANCIAL DETAILS for FISCAL PERIOD ENDING 4/30/22

	<u>Allocated Ongoing Support [7]</u>	<u>Designated Collections [2]</u>	<u>Special Mission Fund [13]</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Category Totals</u>
New MAG funds alloc. but not yet disbursed		2,092			
Ending Cash on Hand 4/30/22	12,200	4,601	2,634	19,435	
Investments (4/30/22 - CTF)			50,120	50,120	
TOTAL ASSETS	\$12,200	\$4,601	\$52,754	\$69,555	

CTF = Consolidated Trust Fund, currently the primary investment vehicle for the Special Mission Fund

Monthly Abundance Gifts (MAG) recap - current fiscal year

CT River Conservancy/Save the Sound (Apr 2021)	\$110 (plus \$990 received in April 2021)
RHHS Garden (May-June)	1,748
Covenant-to-Care Backpacks (July)	1,335
Walk for Hunger - supporting Hands on Hartford (Aug-Sep)	1,880
Neighbors in Need (Oct)	1,465
RH Human Svcs & Cov-to-Care (Nov)	2,718
IRIS (Dec)	4,400
Racial Justice (Feb)	1,320
One Great Hour of Sharing (Mar)	1,090
ShelterBox USA - supporting Ukraine (Apr)	<u>4,045</u>
	\$20,110

Auditor's Report

I have examined the available data and determined to the best of my ability that the financial reports in this 2021-2022 RHCC Annual Report accurately present the church's financial position as of April 30, 2022.

My thanks to Dave Hall who has provided throughout the year all the data I asked for and more, and been more than willing to answer my pesky questions.

**Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Thompson
May 18, 2022**

Rocky Hill Congregational Church

Value Statements

RACIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT

June 17, 2020

At Rocky Hill Congregational Church, we condemn racism in all its blatant and insidious forms. In light of recent events in our country, and in order to address hurtful and destructive behaviors and attitudes within our own body, we resolve now to embark on a journey to examine the sin of racism in ourselves, in our church and community, and across our country.

We commit to equipping ourselves to fight racism by:

1. Acknowledging white privilege
2. Confronting white fragility
3. Learning how to be true allies.

We pledge not only to learn, but to work to change the laws, methods and attitudes that have been used, and are **still** being used, to suppress the freedoms, opportunities and health of our siblings of color. To be the church we want to be, we must turn our love for all God's people into actions that will create meaningful change. We invite others in our community and surrounding communities to join with us in working to end the scourge of racism.

OPEN AND AFFIRMING STATEMENT

Approved by congregational vote June 2009

Because we believe that all people are created in God's image and thus are blessed and loved equally by God, and because love is a unifying and strengthening force within our Christian Faith, we, the members of the Rocky Hill Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, hereby declare ourselves an Open and Affirming Christian community, actively expressing Jesus' inclusive embrace of all people.

We welcome all who seek to follow Jesus, including persons of every age, gender, race, national origin, faith background, marital status and family structure, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, mental and physical ability, economic and social status, and educational background, to share in the life, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings and joys of our church family.

Jesus teaches us to welcome all God's children into God's covenantal community. As we grow together in faith and love, we will strive to celebrate the diversity in which God has created us.

Rocky Hill Congregational Church

Letters of Reference

August 8, 2022

Pastoral Search Committee
Rocky Hill Congregational Church
805 Old Main Street
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Dear Friends,

It is with pleasure and confidence that I write this letter of reference, on behalf of Hands On Hartford, for the Rocky Hill Congregational Church's Church Profile. We have been grateful for our relationship with the RHCC church for several decades now, first under our founding name of Center City Churches and also since our rebranding in 2007 as Hands On Hartford (HOH), an affiliate of Points Of Light Global Network. I have served at HOH for the past twenty years and have witnessed, over and over again, RHCC's commitment to the Greater Hartford Community and the church's commitment to bringing time, talent and treasure to our shared work.

We currently have two members of RHCC deeply involved in our work: one on our Board of Directors, where he serves as Vice Chairperson, and one on our Friends of Hands On Hartford group. Both provide support to our work in a myriad of ways, from assisting in the governance of HOH, making budgetary and compensation decisions while participating in the Executive Committee, learning deeply about key issues and financially supporting the folks we serve.

Their gifts greatly add to the other truly appreciated and impactful support that the church, as a whole, has brought to HOH over the decades including, most recently, through homeless outreach kit-packing events, donating gift cards, contributing cookies as dessert for our Community Meals Program, hosting a Faces of Homelessness speaking event and participating, once again, in the annual Walk Against Hunger in support of our MANNA food programs.

All of this means a great deal to us, our team members, staff and clients. That being said, there are two other commitments that come to mind:

- I fondly remember a time, some years ago, when the congregation welcomed to the pulpit one of the residents of our congregate living program for folks living with HIV/AIDS. The pastor and congregants could not have been more warm or welcoming to Joe and to our AmeriCorps Service member who supported Joe, a first time speaker, in coming to RHCC. It was a pivotal moment that Joe still

Board of Directors

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Chairperson
Harry Amadasun, Jr.
Nichole Berklas
Lisa Cameron
Christopher Collibee
Michele Frey
Rev. Nicole Grant Yonkman
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Thomas Kainamura
Brian Neary
Jenn Plasse-Puzey
Michael Tetreault
Ngoc Trang
LaToya Tyson
Dianna M. Wallquist
Sharon M. Ware

Barbara A. Shaw, LCSW,
Executive Director

Hands On Hartford
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Board of Directors

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Sharon M. Ware

speaks of to this day; it helped him build confidence to be able to tell his story of the stigma and losses he'd experienced as a result of his HIV diagnosis and what it had been like to live with the virus for many years. Further, it was a special experience for both him and for the folks who heard Joe that day.

- I also celebrate the fact that we at HOH and RHCC think of ourselves as true partners who seek mutual giving, connection and impacts. We were able, several times, to purchase gift cards for our team members through RHCC, who could also then benefit a bit from them financially- a win/win if there ever was one. And the RHCC team made it so easy and streamlined it too.

In summary, HOH has experienced RHCC to be a congregation that is devoted to not only serving the community, but also to learning about the issues facing low-income and housing-insecure folks in our communities. They offer an extravagant welcome, along with combining volunteering with financial support in impactful ways.

I'd be delighted to provide any further information that might be helpful as you begin this journey and, in the meantime, to send along our deepest appreciation and admiration for RHCC, along with best wishes for the journey upon which you are embarking.

With warmest regards,

Barbara A. Shaw, LCSW

Executive Director

Barbara A. Shaw, LCSW,

Executive Director

Hands On Hartford

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I was asked to write a letter outlining my experience with Rocky Hill Congregational Church, but I honestly don't know where to start. I suppose I'll start at the beginning where most journeys start. I was eight years old when my family began attending the church, we had recently moved to Rocky Hill, just myself, my sister, and my mother. I'm not certain how we came to find the church, but it became our new worship family and the building itself became a second home.

My mother was a single mother, I believe she was in search of community and a sense of belonging, and that is what she found in the church. When I was younger the youth program was thriving, the upper floor of the church had classrooms full on Sundays. There was a decent sized youth group that I was part of. I have beautiful memories of painting a mural with my friends in the youth room; that act made it ours, we had ownership of our place in the church and I remember feeling really proud of that.

As I got a little older, I rebelled and pulled away from the church a bit, I was too cool for church. During that time period there was one experience my mother insisted I was part of and that was going to Biloxi Mississippi on a mission's trip. I'm so glad she dragged me there. Even on that trip I was a cold and distant teenager, but the trip imprinted for me what it meant to be a faith community and support others in need.

I moved away to live with my father shortly after that and only attended church a couple times a year until I was older. When I returned to the area I did so with my boyfriend Jeremy. He was agnostic at the time, but still attended church with me. He ended up taking on the assistant sexton position at the church and began to form relationships with other church members. To this day he will say how much he learned from Dick Webster about taking pride in your work no matter what you do and how it all matters. Dick Webster really taught Jeremy what an amazing work ethic was and that just because someone can't see something doesn't mean that it doesn't matter.

Then we jump forward a year or two and Jeremy has a revelation, he finds Jesus, well actually Jesus comes to him. Jeremy is baptized in the church, the same church I was confirmed in, and years later the same church my son will be baptized in. The church holds so many precious memories for me and my family.

During our last couple of years with the church, before we moved to Florida, Jeremy became very involved with Christian Education and worked alongside Georgette to try and revitalize the youth program of the church; by that point the youth program was a shell of what it had once been. It was frustrating to see the state of the church, especially in comparison to other thriving churches. The most frustrating thing was that we had a BETTER message and people weren't hearing it because we were not appealing to people.

From the time I was little the messaging from the church has always been a message of love and inclusion. That message helped shape me from the time I was young. The whole "we accept you no matter where you are on life's journey" felt so true at church; A church that not only allowed, but fully supported gay marriage; A church that supported members during recovery from addiction; A church that lived up to what they were preaching. We now attend "Different Church" in St. Petersburg FL and it has been amazing. My experiences at this new church have made me even more grateful for my time at RHCC. Week after week "Different Church" addresses trauma that other members had inflicted upon them by institutionalized

religion, and it breaks my heart. Kids being told they will go to hell for being gay or trans, just horrible heartbreaking stories. Even members who are not queer endured trauma at the hands of their church and I am so grateful that I can empathize, but not relate. I will forever be grateful that I was raised in a progressive and inclusive environment at RHCC.

I guess what I'm saying here is that it's the message that's right. The church has the right message and the members of the church try very hard to live that message and live it through their actions. Sometimes people forget that God does not live within the four walls of the church, he lives everywhere. I think that the work RHCC does and has always done within the community is important.

The other thing that was really important for me and my husband was that the church was opened to different interpretations of the Bible, and everything was up for discussion. We were never bound to a certain interpretation of a passage in the Bible, we were allowed to read and interpret mean for ourselves. We could question what something meant and not fear hellfire. It helped me to know God as loving and merciful rather than mean and vengeful.

Another thing that the church did well in my opinion was create a support system for people in times of need. I never had to, but I know that if I had needed help immediately that I could have called on any number of church members and they would be there in a heartbeat! It often felt like the love of many parents growing up, in that they supported my mom no matter what she was going through with me; they also didn't hold back when they told me what was what as I made stupid decisions.

The church helped to shape me during my formative years. I do apologize if it feels like I'm rambling.

What needs to be better, what needs to change? Youth ministry, music ministry, and further education within sermons, not after church seminars, on inclusion and diversity.

Youth ministry. If kids want to go back to church then the parents come back, if the kids are indifferent or don't want to go, then the decision is pretty much made. They need the existing kids to have SO MUCH FUN that they tell their friends and then get their friends interested in coming to church. Paint the walls, host a lock-in, family movies nights, rock climbing, just anything that is fun for kids. Find teachers who are excited to be there and passionate about the youth program, there is nothing worse than a CE teacher just there to fulfill an obligation. The other thing, the adults in the church need to let loose a bit, the kids need to see that it's ok to have fun at church. Things can't be rigid, gotta go with the flow sometimes.

This brings me to the music ministry. I'm not trying to say anything negative about the music of the church, my mother was proudly part of choir and bells for many of her years at the church and I often sang with the choir as well, but I think a fresh take is needed on occasion. Music is a powerful tool for worship that is often underestimated. A few weeks ago at "Different Church" we sang "Fix You" by Coldplay and I could feel it in my soul. It was powerful and beautiful. I felt connected to the song, connected to myself, and connected to the community I was singing with. Not every person is going to connect with hymns and the church needs to work to connect with everyone. Music can ignite passion and fire in the soul, so time to spark passion.

The last thing I feel the church could do better is to hold the elders of the church accountable for their actions and words rather than excusing them because "it's just their

generation". Excusing, even unintentional, harmful words and actions is trauma inducing to the people on the receiving end. It is ok to talk about "touchy" subjects within sermons and it SHOULD be done. Race, gender, sexuality, abortion, mental illness; these are topics that we confront every single day and they should be addressed in church, if we are listening then we know that Jesus had something to say about everything, why would we not address that in church? Why would we allow a few elder members of the congregation to dictate how things are done, especially when "the way it's always been" is clearly not working? The church acts as a democracy, everyone gets a say, it is the just a few that should be making all of the decisions.

The older members of the church and those who have "been there forever" are given the most grace, when they should be held accountable. They have the hardest time adapting with the times and being receptive to change. But the time for change is now. Church isn't dying, but church as we once knew it is dying and the way to survive and THRIVE is to adapt.

I may have rambled, but I hope this contained what is needed. I hope some of these comments aren't taken negatively, I love the church so much and truly just want to see it thrive. I have so much love for the members of the church, so many have touched my life in profound ways even if they don't know it. If you have any further questions or need any clarification please feel free to reach out to me and I would be glad to have a phone or virtual conversation. The potential of RHCC and the passion in the parishioners just waiting to be unlocked is abundant.

Warm Regards,
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REFERENCE – ROCKY HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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STRENGTHS OF RHCC

Members are committed to serving God through various ministries:

Racial Justice, Green Team Environmental, Time-Talent-Treasure, Prayer Shawls, Congregational Care. Through Time-Talent-Treasure ministry, the church members contribute donations to various local and national programs that feed the hungry, help immigrants, support moms in need with diaper drive and support to women's shelter, national UCC initiatives, and more.

The church is comprised of a great group of people, many of whom have been coming to the church for 10, 20, 30 years. There is a sense of a shared purpose, in caring for each other, (i.e.: those who are going through illness or other struggles) and in working together to make lasting change in the world through participating in marches, being active in various causes, attending or hosting informational events, and more!

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Some areas of improvement would be similar to what many churches need help with: Communication and Record-Keeping.

While the communication channels are working fairly well at RHCC, there is room for improvement in having more one-to-one communication between ministry teams and council; and communication from council/leaders to the wider congregation.

Record-keeping, leadership transition planning, and retaining institutional knowledge is an area that could also be looked at by the church and improved upon. This has been fairly well handled at RHCC, but this is an area that can benefit from more attention.

Submitted by Theresa Eldredge Cleary on 8/28/22