

BARRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2019



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2019 ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

Call to Order

Opening Prayer

Interim Pastor's Remarks

Moderator's Remarks

1. To approve the minutes of the 2019 Annual Meeting (unavailable at time of printing)
2. To approve the minutes of the 2019 Special Congregational Meeting
3. To hear and act upon the annual reports of the pastor, officers, and ministries of the church
4. To elect new officers for the coming year
5. To discuss and adopt the Budget for 2020
6. To hear a presentation, to discuss, and to vote on the next steps for the organ project, and the funding required
7. To transact such other business as may properly come before this meeting

Closing Prayer

Adjourn



2018 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from the 2018 annual meeting were not available at the time of printing. When the minutes are received, they will be added to this document.

2019 SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

Larry Beebe, Acting Secretary

The meeting was called to order by Church Moderator, Kerrick Johnson. A prayer was given by Rev. Bert Marshall. Attendance was taken and a quorum of 53 members was established. Members of the Church Council were introduced.

The agenda for the meeting had two main items.

The first item on the agenda was the election of a Vice Moderator for the remainder of the term ending with the annual meeting 2020. A motion was made and a second given for Pam Murphy to fill the position. The congregation voted in favor of the motion and Pam was elected Vice Moderator.

The second item to be discussed was the By-Law change. Ralph and Jean Brown asked to change the By-Laws to give specific amounts to be approved by the Finance Committee and the Council. Jean gave the background of financial handling in the previous By-Laws where limits were available. Kerrick explained how the current By-Laws are set up. No limits are currently given. A motion was made to specifically limit the amounts of expenditures that could be approved by the Finance Committee and the Council without congregational approval. It was moved to set the limits for approval by the Finance Committee at \$5,000.00 and approval by the Council at \$15,000.00. The motion was made by Jan Avery and seconded by Connie Johnson. Jim West gave background on when financial limits were enacted. Kathy James moved to amend the motion, seconded by Hollie Friot. There was more discussion and a vote was taken. The vote on the amendment went down 51 - 13. More discussion followed on the original motion. Ralph Brown suggested that bequests be left unchanged and a vote of the congregation is only needed on congregational funds. The motion was passed by a unanimous show of hands.

The motion to adjourn was made by David Cary and seconded by Maggie Sample. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

MINISTRIES

Administration Ministry

The Administration Ministry serves as a support group to the Church Council and other Ministries by overseeing Church records (both current and historical), communicating with our local Church community and the broader UCC community, and by providing administrative support to the Pastor and Church staff.

Diaconate Ministry

The Diaconate Ministry works collaboratively with the Pastor to assist in all aspects of pastoral care. The Diaconate Ministry oversees the formation of a Pastoral Relations Team dedicated to the Pastor's self-care and personal well-being.

Faith Formation Ministry

The Faith Formation Ministry focuses on developing, supporting and implementing a well-rounded education program for persons of all ages in the congregation. Additionally, opportunities will be sought to involve and invite the broader community into this learning process.

Finance Ministry

The Finance Ministry is responsible for managing the financial aspects of the Church and providing financial reports, counsel, and advice to the Church Council. The Finance Ministry works in collaboration with the Bookkeeper/Collector to provide oversight and management of the collection and deposit of all offerings and gifts to the Church.

Mission and Outreach Ministry

The Mission and Outreach Ministry works with the congregation, Church Council, Pastor and Faith Formation Leader to provide outreach opportunities to our Church family and the greater community.

Worship and Music Ministry

The Worship and Music Ministry works collaboratively with the Pastor, Music Director, and Christian Education Director to enrich the spiritual life of the congregation and enhance worship using the spoken word, music and the arts. This may include creative enhancements to the worship space.

2019 Church Council

Moderator: Kerrick Johnson,

Vice-Moderator: Pam Murphy

Clerk of the Church: Amanda Pugliese

Treasurer: James West

Diaconate Ministry: Don Singer

Faith Formation Ministry: Larry Beebe

Mission & Outreach Ministry: Darlene Clark

Worship & Music: Jeffrey Tuper-Giles

INTERIM MINISTER

Rev. Bert Marshall

"I never liked jazz music because jazz music doesn't resolve. But I was outside the Bagdad Theater in Portland one night when I saw a man playing the saxophone. I stood there for fifteen minutes, and he never opened his eyes. After that, I liked jazz music. Sometimes you have to watch somebody love something before you can love it yourself. It is as if they are showing you the way." -Donald Miller, Blue Like Jazz

Dear Friends,

My concluding remarks in last year's Annual Report focused on the three church profile questions: Who are you? Who is your neighbor? Who is God calling you to be? I encouraged you to continue to reflect on them. I went on to say that your next settled pastor is waiting for you on the other side of those questions and that our job is to find the path to that place where your future and your next settled pastor meet. I ended with: "I pray that we will travel well and hold each other in the love of God as we go forward."

As we all discovered, traveling well and holding each other in God's love is not always easy. It's not automatic or guaranteed just because we're a church. It requires great effort and struggle – especially in a time of transition. It requires compassion and forgiveness beyond what we thought would be necessary. It requires vision. It requires a level of trust in each other and God that we probably didn't realize we had in us. It requires faith that God will lead us through the wilderness to the promised land. One of the most profound learnings I've gained in interim ministry is that God is indeed present and active in the messiness of congregational transitions, even if it doesn't seem obvious, even when things seem to be going badly. Our God is faithful and does not abandon us. Our God accompanies us through all the changes that are not only inevitable but are essential to the church's vitality and growth. Change is not an option; it's the only way forward.

You have come a long way since last year's annual meeting! During the past year, you turned the corner toward your future. I could feel it. Others felt it too. I hope many of you did. Your Search Team was hard at work. Your church leadership embraced the path toward a new era. New people joined in the journey as members or friends. A new spirit

seemed to rise from the midst of the congregation that affirmed our work together, our timing and our direction. We're not there yet, but we're getting closer, our step is livelier now, the horizon is coming into focus. It's an exciting time. The church profile is finished and has been approved by the Vermont Conference. It will be posted on the national UCC website by the time you read this, and soon candidates will be submitting their ministerial profiles to the Search Team, and some of them will be interviewed for the position. On Sunday, January 12th, we blessed the completed church profile in worship and prayed that God will continue to guide your process toward the calling of a new, settled pastor.

Meanwhile, there are still challenges to face, issues to work on, hurdles to overcome, progress to be made. All churches have their "stuff" that needs to be addressed. Some congregational studies have suggested recently that churches need that "stuff" to grow. Disagreements, mistakes, misunderstandings, little failures, and conflicts are the raw materials of growth that can teach us how to be the beloved community of Christ. It is in those awkward thorny places where we can discover how to cultivate right relationship with each other, how to speak to each other respectfully, how to be instruments of justice and peace among ourselves, how to practice compassion and forgiveness – how to "be the church" for ourselves as well as for others.

My journey with you will end sometime later this year. I am grateful for your love and forgiveness, your patience and understanding, your care and compassion, your effort and energy, your time and talent shared. I know this wilderness time has often been difficult for you. I hope and pray that you will find a settled pastor who will walk with you and lead you into a new Spirit-filled era of faithful ministry, growth, and vitality. In my remaining time here, I will continue to do my best to serve as your pastor and to help with a few pressing challenges if possible. In closing, I want to lift up the quote with which I began this report, from Donald Miller's book. He says he discovered how to love something by watching someone else love it first. He needed someone to show him the way. How do you love your church? What does that look like to someone on the outside? How will people find the way to God's love at Barre Congregational Church by watching you? Sometimes you need to stand outside and play your music like you really love it. Others will see and hear, and they will want to come and play that music with you because by loving it you showed them the way.

Grace & Peace,
Rev. Bert

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

Rose Fisher

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your kind welcome since I joined the BCC team in July of 2019. I have enjoyed getting to know you all, and I am looking forward to working with you this year. I would like to express my gratitude to my fellow staff for their warm welcome, their generosity, and guidance. I would also like to thank Rev. Bert and the Church Council for their support and trust.

Since coming to BCC, I have been focused on updating BCC's website, email communications, and print publications. I have worked to create a consistent, clean and modern look for BCC, extending this look to the bulletin and other in-house publications. I have also greatly enjoyed developing promotional materials for events such as the Boutique Bazaar and the Gobble Wobble Turkey Trot.

In terms of member communication, we have stepped up engagement via the e-window and Facebook page. We have an average 38% open rate for e-window communication and relatively low engagement on our Facebook page. Because Facebook suppresses text, photos are key to making sure members and the wider content see our social media message. I ask you to please make sure to take lots of photos at every event and send them along to me for posting.

BCC has a strong social mission and undertakes many activities in support of our community. As part of this effort, we have instituted a digital tracking system for fuel and food assistance, to help us better understand community need. One thing that has become apparent is the need to reconsider security practices in the fellowship hall, the sanctuary, and the offices, as we have had several concerning incidents with members of the general public, including at our weekly breakfasts. We are tracking this carefully and will provide updates as things develop.

Thank you all for warmly welcoming me into your community and for your gracious input and feedback.

Rose Fisher

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Eric Tuper-Giles

Each year as I look back and reflect upon the previous year, I am reminded of how truly blessed I am. It is wonderful working with a devoted staff and large, dedicated group of volunteers who make our strong music program and vibrant worship services possible. I love making music!

I am confident that most of what I would choose to reflect on in this reports have already been covered by other staff members and by the head of the Worship and Music Ministry, so I would like to take this opportunity to submit my reflections on our pipe organ, it's story, and an update of where we stand today on the project.

The Barre Congregational Church has always had a pipe organ in its sanctuary. Our first organ was built by a local organ builder, Ira Bassett. Completed along with our current church building in 1840, it was originally installed in the balcony, later moved to the front left (pulpit) side of the sanctuary. After the building alterations, which included building our building's exterior towers, it was moved front and center in the sanctuary. It served the church until 1896 when we acquired our current instrument. At this time, it was relocated to the East Barre Congregational church where it served that congregation until the 1950's when it was replaced with an electronic instrument that has also been replaced three times since.

In 1896 our pastor's wife saw a listing for a Hook & Hastings organ for sale in Boston, Massachusetts at the New England Conservatory. Hook & Hastings was, at that time, regarded as one of America's top organ building firms. They were contracted to build this instrument for the conservatory, and it was installed in Sleeper Hall utilizing parts from an organ from the 1860s. Our church purchased this instrument in 1896 and had it dismantled, shipped here, and built an addition onto the church to accommodate the larger instrument. Originally the organ had a carved walnut case that was modified to fit in our church and was later cut away when the chancel renovations were done that give our sanctuary the appearance it has today.

Over the years various proposals were submitted to the church for modification, rebuilding, or replacing the Hook & Hastings organ. All these proposals focused on

making the organ more playable, more versatile, and bringing the pitch to today's standard. By the 1970s the organ needed major renovations and an organ committee was formed to discuss the options. It was decided unanimously not to replace the organ with an electronic organ and to instead work at making the current organ playable. Work was completed by David Moore of Vermont, though the work was kept to what the current funds could afford with an understanding that more work would be needed in the future.

I was thrilled when I heard the organist position here had become available after Judith Perry retired. I knew that Barre Congregational Church had the biggest and best organ in Barre and having worked as an organ builder I had great respect for the instruments of Hook & Hastings. It did not take me long however to discover many of the quirks of our instrument that make it one of the most difficult in Barre to play. Despite its mechanical challenges I have always loved its sound and the rich way it fills the sanctuary.

Several years ago, Rev. David informed me of a donation being made to the organ fund. We had already received one generous donation as well as countless smaller donations from Women's Fellowship and it was suggested that we form an organ committee to begin researching our options. I immediately sought out builders who would give proposals for restoring our Hook & Hastings organ. I met with a representative from the Andover Company in Massachusetts who came to the church with a folder of his handwritten notes from the 1970s when he had last inspected the organ. He gave the organ a very thorough inspection and discussed what we could do to bring it back into a completely playable condition. Scott Huntington of Connecticut also gave a proposal that would fully restore the organ, making it playable but without any additions or changes. This proposal which came in two years ago was for \$327,000. Our organ committee was saddened by the tremendous expense that would be needed to restore an organ that would still have severe limitations in leading worship services.

After realizing that they needed to explore all options and that restoration was not looking to be the best way to spend our resources, we researched new pipe organs, electronic organs, and investigated locating another instrument that required relocation. It didn't take long to realize that we couldn't support an electronic substitute and we started following leads on relocating another instrument. We followed many leads. The first was an organ in Buffalo, New York built in 1931 by the Kimball Company. It was a good size for our church but sadly had been damaged by water due to a leaky roof. After discussing the repairs needed, we were not prepared to take the risk of needing to repair and replace wooden parts along with bringing the organ up to today's standards. Our second instrument was a 1960s era Aeolian Skinner organ built for the chapel at Rutgers University. This organ was in great condition mechanically, needing only to be re-leathered and updated. However, the asking price was higher than we were hoping to find and most importantly, we realized the sound was much too bright and was not a good fit for our church. This would have meant spending a lot of additional money to make it sound correct in our space. Our third instrument was the organ from the Ira Allen Chapel at UVM in Burlington. It was built in 1927 by the Welte Company and had

been in storage for the past 20 years. Although the organ had a very warm sound, it was lacking in much of the pipework needed to play a broad range of musical literature. The other challenge with this instrument was that the windchests were extremely complex and difficult to rebuild adding greatly to the expense of installing it. Our fourth instrument seemed extremely promising. It was a 1929 Casavant organ located in Potsdam, NY. This organ was a good size and had the right sound. After inspecting it, we made an offer. The church did not, however, accept the offer. Then, in January of 2019, we learned of a 1931 EM Skinner organ located in the Bronx, NY that had been updated by G. Donald Harrison of the Aeolian Skinner firm in 1952. This was an exciting prospect as Ernest Skinner is still viewed today as America's best organ builder. His instruments became what is known as the AGO (American Guild of Organists) standard. His windchest designs are still being used today and the sound of his instruments is the most sought after by organists. After his retirement, the company was led by G Donald Harrison who created what is now known as the American Classic organ sound. While Skinner built warm organs that excelled in leading worship and hymn singing, Harrison added to that sound to make an instrument that could play music from all genres and periods. One of their most famous instruments is the organ in the Mormon Tabernacle which is still being used daily.

Last February on a snowy winter day I made a drive down to the Bronx with Peter Walker to inspect the organ. Upon hearing the organ, we were immediately impressed by its warmth, color, and clarity. Hearing the string tones for the first time was an experience I will never forget. I was excited to present this option to our committee. We knew immediately that this organ would be a perfect fit. Finally, an instrument that was the right size, the perfect sound, and along with being well built was also in great condition. Not surprisingly there were several other churches interested. With the approval of both the Finance Ministry and the Church Council, we made an offer for the organ. The organist and the diocese of New York were pleased with the offer and very impressed with our New England congregation and they recognized what a good home we would be for their instrument.

Our next step was getting our new organ to Vermont. We contracted with Randall Newman whose crew carefully dismantled the instrument, placed all the pipes in trays, loaded it all into a truck and delivered it to our church. With the help of a large group of volunteers we unloaded the truck and carefully put it into storage in the basement of our church.

Now that our church owns a new pipe organ the committee began the work of its installation. We were presented with two options. The first option would install the organ "as is" while the other option includes doing work that will be needed to put the organ in excellent condition for years to come. Although the design of pipe organs with their pipes, windchests, and reservoirs has not changed since the time this instrument was built, the technology that plays them has. In the time before computers and solid-state relays, organs were controlled by a pneumatic system - like a big pneumatic computer. We will be updating this system with modern technology. The committee also

strongly recommends that we have the work done to re-leather the windchests now, rather than waiting. This will give us an instrument that will lead worship for generations to come which we feel is very much the intent of the gift that was given for this project.

After a contract for work is signed, we expect to have the entire project completed in two years. During this time, I will continue leading the music program and providing music during worship. Much of the work on the organ will be done off-site at Peter Walkers shop and we will work to limit the amount of time that we are without an organ.

I am so excited about this project! The completed organ will not only have the rich organ sound that we are accustomed to, but it will also be much more versatile. It will attract visiting organists and encourage a new generation of students to study playing. I hope that we complete this project and continue our tradition of having one of the best organs in the state of Vermont. Although the completion date is still in the future, I am already studying music that has not been possible to play on our current instrument and also planning the exciting possibilities that the new instrument will provide in leading worship here at Barre Congregational Church. Thank you all for allowing me to be your organist and music director. I look forward to many, many more years together

Eric Tuper-Giles

CHURCH SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Hollie Friot

Here we are. Another year has passed - and what a year it has been! Our church has seen so much change and growth over the last year, and I'm very excited about our future. As I've said before, our faith is what leads us through times of change, and this is why it's so important to continue faith formation activities outside of worship. Over the last year, we have been blessed to hear the music of Bobby Jo Valentine and to witness Rev. Bert's performance of The Gospel of Mark. Our book group took a hiatus, but plans are in motion to regroup and begin again. A group has also made commitments to read the UCC Daily Devotional and discuss it.

In 2019, we strengthened our ONA commitment by displaying the rainbow flag in a central church window, as well as the beautiful Goods Doors Are Open to All doors outside the church that were ready for our first Pride Service last June. All of this is a strong testament to the LGBTQ community, and the community in general, of our faith and values.

Our Theology on Tap group continues to meet at Espresso Bueno on the 4th Friday of the month at 6 p.m. This is an initiative I run with my longtime friend, Sara Blondin, who attends the First Presbyterian Church. All are welcome!

We continue to have a small, but dedicated group of families and children. We've seen a decline through this interim period, but I have faith that this time will make our community stronger and that we're reaching those who need us. Throughout the year our tween and youth groups have gathered for events we've co-hosted with the Presbyterian Church. Some of the events and outings we've done - including bowling and going to the movies - have even included children who typically don't attend church at all. On another note, I have to say that this was my favorite Christmas Eve service so far - though I think I say that every year! The children were so dedicated to rehearsing the pageant, singing and playing the piano. A special thank you to Ginger and Peter Fruncek who played Mary and Joseph. I'm so grateful for my time with our church children. They understand what it means to "Be the church."

Plans are currently underway for a Vacation Bible Camp. I will also be volunteering at Rock Point in Burlington this summer and some of our church school children are looking

forward to attending. If you know of children who would like to attend either of these events, please be in touch with me.

Finally, a special thank you to Larry Beebe who has represented the Faith Formation Ministry on the church council. Thank you so much for the many hours of dedication you have spent, Larry. You are very much appreciated.

In closing, there are many ways to get involved in our church, and I hope you find your place. If you haven't yet, please reach out. Part of faith formation is being involved in the church community and our ministry is glad to help you 'plug in.' Please keep your eyes on the e-window for upcoming faith formation activities. Blessings to you on this new church year!

Respectfully submitted,

Hollie Friot

PARISH NURSE

Mary Ann Johnson, RN

This is the summary of the activities performed by the Parish Nurse for the year 2019. These activities include blood pressure screenings held on Sundays during coffee hour, home visits, nursing home, and hospital visits as well as out-reach by phone. In January 2019, I presented a program for BCC fellowship on “Winter Wellness” for their meeting.

Members/friends who received blood pressure screenings: 27

Members referred for additional medical attention: 2

Home visits made: 9

Nursing Home/Hospital visits: 10

Outreach/Consultation by phone: 10

Reflecting on my volunteer service as Parish Nurse over this past year I am aware that this was a unique year in that along with the usual fluctuation in the church life cycle I had my own health issue which led me to take an extended break from volunteering.

During this period, I was blessed to be the recipient of care from many members of the congregation. I can't thank you enough for your generous support and good wishes.

I am looking forward to continuing with a Parish Nurse program at Barre Congregational Church in the coming year. I welcome feedback and suggestions on ways to further support our congregation and community in this mission.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mary Ann Johnson RN, Parish Nurse

MEMBERSHIP

Funerals & Memorials

Larry Wade: 7.16.1931 – 1.29.2019
Michael Taylor: 6.10.1957 – 2.6.2019
Jim Daniels: 12.27.1920 – 6.11.2019
Peg Wilmott: 11.23.1947 – 6.14.2019
Bob Tucker: 4.21.1934 – 9.2.2019
Don Allen: 7.3.1931 – 11.29.2019

Weddings

Jackie Johnson and Samn Stockwell: 5.5.2019
Samantha Norway and Steven Apfel: 10.5.2019

Baptisms

Ava James Roy: 5.26.2019
Kelly Funk: 6.8.2019
Caleb Yefchak: 11.24.2019
Cameron Yefchak: 11.24.2019

New Members

Bonnie Finn: 3.31.2019
Jackie Johnson: 3.31. 2019
Samn Stockwell: 3.31. 2019
Scott Funk: 6.9. 2019
Kelly Funk: 6.9. 2019

Removals: 2 (by request)

Total Active Members: 168

Total Active Complimentary Members: 23

Total Inactive Members: 43

CHURCH MODERATOR

Kerrick Johnson

Dear Fellow Members of the Barre Congregational Church,

The word “transition” has been used much for the past almost two years, and appropriately so. Throughout 2019 your Church Council has been engaged in: finding closure on the retirement of a beloved long-time Minister; finding true accord and a working rhythm with our talented Interim Minister; selecting a Search Committee to develop and complete our “Local Church Profile” as a foundational step toward securing a new full-time Minister; absorbing the resignation of key Administration and Council leaders and installing new ones in their stead; improving the Council’s decision-making functionality; navigating the replacement of our failing organ; convening a productive and unifying Special Meeting involving bylaw changes; and seeking to strike a sustainable, Holy Spirit-driven management of our Church’s human, financial and physical assets consistent with serving as a “...vital and engaged Christian community.” By any objective measure, that’s a lot.

We certainly haven’t gotten it right every time. In retrospect, there were moments where I could have and perhaps should have done better. Where we have done well, it has been due to the talents, dedication, and faithfulness of the Council members: Amanda Pugliese, Clerk of the Church; James West, Treasurer; Darlene Clark, Mission and Outreach; Jeffrey Tuper-Giles, Worship and Music; Larry Beebe, Faith Formation; Don Singer, Deacons; Reverend Bert, Interim Minister; and Pamela Murphy, Vice Moderator. Each of these individuals effectively fulfilled their roles but more importantly engaged in candid, respectful deliberation in making decisions on matters of significant substance. I am immensely grateful for their patience, kindness, and perseverance.

In my view, working and worshipping together, we turned a corner in late summer. For the last six months our collective focus, prayers, and energy have centered on creating who and what we are to be. I share the view many of you have expressed to me that this transition – and the reassessment and reflection our work together demands – has enabled a God-driven renewal of faith, of commitment to the Barre Congregational Church and each other. This is truly an exciting time to be about the business of realizing the vision of what our Church can be and what it will be. We continue to be blessed with new members even as we continue to miss some members who are currently absent and

additional financial resources even as we continue to strive for a more stable annual pledge balance. In short, we have come a long way but much more remains.

To that end, we as a Council envision that at our work in 2020 will likely involve a review of existing bylaws and our ministry structure, continuing to work in tandem with the Search Committee to secure a new permanent Minister, providing oversight of the organ replacement project, advancing initiatives to grow membership and seeking to ensure God-inspired stewardship of the resources with which we have been entrusted. I am grateful to those of you who offered your constructive and heartfelt views on Council decisions and invite you to continue to do so going forward. If I have learned anything this past year it is that no one person is bigger than the Church, but any parishioner can accomplish, and help others accomplish, amazing things in service of our Church's mission.

I love the people of this Church. I am grateful to have the opportunity to serve. And I am mindful that I can only be as effective as the amount of trust I earn from each of you. For you are the church. With God's help, may we learn from each other, help each other and grow in faith as we undertake the good work of this great Barre Congregational Church.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kerrick Johnson, Church Moderator

BOARD OF DEACONS

Donald Singer

The deacons have worked closely and collaboratively with the Pastor to assist in all aspects of the church's ministries during 2019. The assistance with regular and special services has continued to be a deacon priority. This included serving communion the first Sunday of the month, Christmas Eve, Easter, baptisms, welcoming new members, and other special services.

We want to say goodbye to the deacons whose service was so helpful to our church: Kerrick Johnson and Lindsey Benton.

In 2020, the deacons plan to identify opportunities for continued service to our church.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald Singer, Chairperson

MISSION & OUTREACH

Darlene Clark

The Mission and Outreach Ministry looks to the commitment of our entire church community to realize our vision of providing support where the need is present within our church family and in the greater community. We would not be able to do all that we do without the volunteers that put in many hours to support our various endeavors as well as the generous financial support that we receive from many in our congregation.

The main outreach missions of our church are the Saturday and Tuesday community breakfasts which provide meals for the Good Samaritan Haven, and our Laundry Love program. We have a core of volunteers that work on each of these programs, for which we are very thankful. The expenses for the breakfasts average about \$3,500 to \$4,000 annually and the meals for the Haven are donated.

We just completed the third year of our Laundry Love initiative which provides free laundry services at the Busy Bubble on the third Tuesday of each month. Our expenses for Laundry Love have averaged \$3,500 annually. The BCC Fellowship group coordinated a Valentine's Day fundraiser for Laundry Love this year which was very successful. We also erected an "angel tree" during Advent and Christmas which also raised funds for this program. Thanks to your very generous donations, we have been able to cover our expenses.

We continue to observe Second Mile Giving Sunday on the second Sunday of each month but have not emphasized them as heavily this year as in previous ones, so those donations are down somewhat. We pray that many of you will continue to donate towards our mission initiatives through this offering.

We opted not to do a Chicken Pie Supper this year after struggling to recruit enough volunteers.

The Gobble Wobble Turkey Trot continues to be our biggest fundraiser. This year's we had close to 200 participants despite the bad weather! We raised \$6,243, making this our most successful year yet! This figure may even increase slightly as there are a few more T-shirts yet to be paid for. Thank you to all who assisted and volunteered for this

fundraiser. We also extend our thanks to Lauren Jo Chase for all her help in securing race sponsors.

Below are many of the commitments and donations made possible through our combined efforts for the 2019 year:

- Good Samaritan Haven meals every Monday (except holidays)
- Friday evening community meals every seventh week
- Saturday breakfast two mornings a month
- Tuesday breakfast weekly
- Coffee hour following Sunday worship services
- Deacon's Fund
- 40 plus Thanksgiving turkey dinners, boxed and delivered
- Donations to UCC Vermont Conference One Great Hour of Sharing and the Neighbors in Need Offering
- Peoples Health and Wellness Clinic
- Circle - Battered Women's Shelter
- Laundry Love
- Hedding Methodist Outreach Support
- Aldrich Public Library for their support of public outreach
- Malayaka House

Fundraising activities:

- Second Mile Giving
- Dessert Sales at the Heritage Festival
- Gobble Wobble Turkey Trot
- Valentine heart tree by BCC Fellowship
- Christmas Angel Tree

We are often encouraged at the end of worship to go out and be the church in our daily lives. Supporting the Missions and Outreach ministry is one of the ways we can do this. If you are interested in serving on this ministry, please know you are welcome to participate and to attend our meetings. There is an ongoing need for volunteers to serve our church and our community through these mission endeavors.

Serving in Christ's love and respectfully submitted,
Jean Brown, Lauren Jo Chase, Joyce Copping, Kate Duffy, Marjorie Wheeler, Bev Thomas and Darlene Clark, chairperson.

WORSHIP & MUSIC

Jeffrey Tuper-Giles

Over the past year, Worship and Music (W&M) has been able to enhance worship in several ways. We have been blessed with a great team of people who volunteer to make our church services a welcoming place to commune with the spirit and bring us closer to God. W&M covers so much about the church and a Sunday service, it will be hard to mention everyone who makes Sunday mornings so special. From the greeters, ushers, and lay readers to the acolytes and kids who sound the rain stick, we are grateful to all who help make our services special.

Looking back over the past year, one of the contributions to worship has been in the area of the visual arts. Linda, Jan, Kate, and the Art Committee have made the sanctuary and front lawn look spectacular and bring new ways of spiritual connection with God. As in years past, the decorations have been stellar.

One of the most visible additions to the art of our church has been the addition of the rainbow doors at the front of the building. These are part of a growing moment in the UCC to show how welcoming churches are. If you would like more information on this, you can see what other churches are doing by visiting <http://godsdoors.org/>.

Another exciting part of our year was the ecumenical Pride Service. This service involved many people of different faiths reading stories. This focused on transgendered people, who are living into their faith and being supported by their faith communities. By continuing to hold this type of service in the future, we will show our commitment to the Open and Affirming ministry that our church has embraced.

We have had the opportunity to work with guest speakers, groups, and talented musicians. We were blessed to have the Covenant Players come to show us a different point of view on stewardship with their performance. We have heard nothing but great things about their presentation, and they might even come back to give us another lesson. Bobby Jo Valentine joined us again despite his hectic schedule. His music is inspirational and right from the heart.

We continue to help create a worship space that engages all the senses. The Thanksgiving painted pumpkins were a delight to all those who saw them. We brought back the beautifully handcrafted angels that were donated for the “Angels Among Us” theme during Advent this year. They hung beautifully on the organ pipes announcing the arrival of the Christ Child.

The music is and continues to be an important part of the service and, even with the organ in such disrepair, Eric volunteers his time to keep it running and sounding good for our Sunday morning worship. We’re incredibly grateful that our music director has given his time for this and has the skills to do it well (mostly without us knowing anything is amiss!).

With that being said, the Organ Committee has been active behind the scenes this past year. They were able to find a beautiful pipe organ priced well below its actual value, secure it, and have it shipped to the church. It is being prepped for refurbishment and installation.

This past year we had a wonderful addition to the Christmas Eve service with our own Amelia Friot accompanying the voice of our children on piano. We would be remiss if we failed to mention the beautiful music that our choir makes every Sunday. They are small in number but big in spirit and sound. We encourage anyone who would like to volunteer their voices to reach out and speak with Eric or any choir member. The choir opens its arms to all.

W&M continues to be a thriving ministry. We are always looking for more people to help with things like bringing new ideas to the table, helping the Art Committee create stunning visuals, or even giving lay preaching a whirl—we all have a sermon or two in us! We encourage participation in every way possible so that the congregation can feel more connected to the church and to God.

Be blessed in 2020!

Jeffrey Tuper-Giles & Ritva LaFlower

FINANCE MINISTRY

Jim West

This ministry is responsible for all money matters of the church. Work includes working with the Bookkeeper/Collector to prepare and review monthly financial reports, create the annual budget, and oversee the following ministries:

- Property
- Stewardship
- Scholarship
- Book of Remembrance.

Finance Ministry Members: Chair/Treasurer; Jim West, Assistant Treasurer; Sally Beebe, Ed Priot, Peter James, Carol Ellison, and Pam Murphy

Peter Anthony served part of the year and then resigned. Rev. Bert Marshall attended some of our meetings and served as an advisor.

Property Ministry Members: Matt Safford, Eric Tuper-Giles, and Linda West,

Stewardship Ministry Members: Rev. Bert, Kelly Funk, and Samn Stockwell

Scholarship Ministry Members: Carol Ellison. Ernie Wheeler also served until leaving the Barre area.

Book of Remembrance Ministry Members: Jean Brown, Ralph Brown, and Phoebe Chapin

Investment Portfolio

Our investments did very well this past year. TD Wealth investments grew from a total of \$630,340 at the end of 2018 to \$744,107 at the end of 2019. This increase includes a transfer of \$33,000 from the Nevia Campi gift to the investment account. The Jones' fund did even better, growing from \$493,127 at the end of 2018 to \$597,099 at the end of 2019. \$87,200 from the Lynne P. Reid Organ Fund was spent for the purchase and

delivery of the replacement organ. As a result of the combined transfers and disbursements, our total assets increased from \$2,177,996 to \$2,249,677.

Operating Budget

We started the year with an approved planned deficit of \$6,994. The total income budgeted was \$192,244. The actual income received was \$189,255, \$2,989 less than budgeted. This included receipt of pledges at the very end of the year and an unanticipated pledge of \$12,000. Thanks to all of those who honored their pledge commitments.

Our total expenses for the year were less than the budgeted amount of \$199,238. The actual expenses were \$192,181, \$7,057 less than the budgeted amount. Therefore, the result of the income versus expenses left us with a deficit of \$2,925. This is \$4,068 less than the \$6,994 deficit that was projected. Credit should go to all who helped keep the expenses down.

Meeting Dates and Significant Discussions/Actions

Our regular meeting dates were the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Common at each meeting is a review and approval of the previous meeting minutes, review and discussions of each month's financial reports, discussions on new business, and a review of the status of action items. Following is an abbreviated recap of other discussions and decisions:

January 8th

- Reviewed salary and other compensation line items with Rev. Bert.
- Discussed pledge goals and stewardship options with Rev. Bert to promote pledging by members of the church.
- Reviewed and discussed the Finance Ministry Report.
- Discussed the implications of switching from a community model to a ministry model and how that was affecting getting work accomplished. Rev. Bert recommended not changing the bylaws in 2019.
- Initial discussion of the refurbishment of the Fellowship Hall and the Fireplace Room.

February 5th

- Discussed the reasoning and facts regarding forgiving the loan to ourselves for the building addition.
- Prepared for our upcoming meeting with TD Wealth.
- Learned that a Jones Elderly Committee was formed to determine projects for the fund. Some minor expenditures have been made.
- Discussed concerns regarding our Property Committee and their difficulty in getting things accomplished.

March 12th

- Learned from our auditor that an additional \$6,200 will be forthcoming from the Nevia Campi estate.
- Discussed the organ cost and funds that might be available to pay for it.
- Ed presented Policy Letters 1 through 7 for review.
- Discussed having a Double Mint Sunday to bolster the operating budget.

April 9th

- The meeting was devoted to a review of our investments with TD Wealth representatives.

May 14th

- Continued our discussions regarding the organ cost.
- Ed requested some financial information for the Church Profile.
- Discussed obtaining a credit card for small miscellaneous expenses.

June 11th

- Discussed and rejected the Search Committee's request for \$1,800 for a one-day team-building conference.
- Continued discussions regarding the organ cost.
- Continued discussions regarding a credit card for the church.
- Discussed the need to sign bank forms for authorizing check signatures.

July 9th

- Rev. Bert and Kerrick Johnson attended and informed us that a new church administrator has been hired. They informed us of her salary, anticipated work hours, and benefits. Kerrick also informed us of a salary restructuring for three of our employees to bring them closer to the salaries of similar positions in the area. The proposed restructuring was approved by the Finance Ministry with final approval required from the Council.
- Discussed the Scholarship amounts awarded this year.
- Ed updated us on the Search Committee's progress.
- Continued discussions regarding the organ costs and Fellowship Hall refurbishment.
- We agreed not to pursue a credit card due to personal liabilities.
- Voted to pre-purchase fuel oil for 2020 from Conti Oil.

August 13th

- Jim noted that Ernie and Marjorie Wheeler have left the church which will require positions to be filled on the Scholarship and Stewardship committees.

September 10th

- Ed reported on the previous Council meeting that he attended.

- Received updated cost information from Eric Tupper-Giles for installing the organ.
- Discussed the need to obtain a ballpark estimate for the refurbishment of the Fellowship Hall and Fireplace Room.
- The Finance Ministry approved putting our current Budget Performance and Balance Sheet into the Church Profile.

October 8th

- Rev. Bert noted discrepancies between the 2019 budget amounts and what he is receiving. The budget will not be changed as it is what was approved by the congregation.
- Discussed the need for a new copier and whether to purchase or lease a copier. No decision made at this meeting.
- Rev. Bert informed us that Neil's car was vandalized and congregants at the church made contributions to pay for repairs.
- Rev. Bert informed us of the purchase of new office chairs and the pending purchase of a new computer.
- Rev. Bert informed us of a group called Covenant Players that will perform on November 10th as part of our Stewardship Sunday and the associated costs.
- Rev. Bert will pursue obtaining a credit card for the church's use which will have his name on it.

November 12th

- Jim Donovan updated us on the Church Profile and information contained within regarding pastor's compensation.
- Reviewed the first draft of the 2020 proposed budget.

December 10th

- Nancy Pope attended our meeting and pointed out some information in the Church Profile that doesn't accurately reflect the church's present status and offered some suggestions.
- Reviewed the second draft of the proposed 2020 budget.
- Received a ballpark estimate for refurbishing the downstairs and discussed the ramifications if part of Lynne Reid's General Fund monies are used to help pay for the organ.
- Discussed the need to recruit a new Treasurer for 2020.
- Discussed the need to recruit members to serve on the Property Committee.

Respectfully Submitted,
James H. West, Chair

PROPERTY MINISTRY

Linda West

2020 was another challenging year. The ministry functioned primarily with two members. An appeal was issued for new members. Despite low membership, we still managed to complete several projects.

- We believe that we finally solved the dishwasher problem. J Gould Plumbing replaced a valve on the nozzle of the faucet. At the time of writing it is working.
- The broken window and sill in the basement were repaired by Richard Couture.
- We painted the church office and replaced the window blinds.
- We removed the closet outside of the Conference Room.
- We repaired the middle outside door and the rotted arch. This work was performed by Richard Couture.
- We repaired the broken stained-glass window at the lower entrance.
- We replaced the closer on the back door.
- We fixed the kitchen door sill and the main door.
- We fixed the latch on the door to the bell tower.
- We received a ballpark estimate to refurbish the Fellowship Hall and Fireplace rooms.
- We received the purchased organ parts.
- We ordered more church keys and revised the list of keys issued.
- We installed new carpets at the lower entrance.
- Broken tree limbs removed from the maple tree in front of the church.
- We responded to a flood issue behind the basement stairs. No further issues.

We were going to obtain a church credit card to be used for miscellaneous purchases. Reverend Bert Marshall is proceeding with this attempt.

Ongoing Issues and Projects

- Review elevator service contract
- Review the key policy and possibly turn the responsibility to another committee or office personnel.
- Following the installation of the organ, obtain bids for refurbishing the Fellowship Hall and Fireplace Rooms. We need an ad hoc committee to work on this project.
- Get the organ installed.

- Determine why the heating register in the balcony is not working and get it fixed.
- Fix the lighting of the Rose Window.
- Regrading and paving of the walkways at the side of the church.
- Resetting granite walkway at the front entrance.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda P. West

SEARCH COMMITTEE

Ritva LaFlower

At the beginning of 2019, our Search Committee was formed by the Church Council and tasked to look for a full-time, settled minister. In February, the congregation, led by interim minister Rev. Bert Marshall, blessed and commissioned us. We started meeting in March with nine committee members. Due to personal obligations, two members resigned.

One of the first things we did was reach out to and interview the search committees of other churches. We found that rushing the process could result in a shallow, less than honest profile, which would lead to the hiring of an unsuitable minister. Our goal: Create a local church profile that was honest about who we are as a church and who we wanted to become so that we could find a great minister meant for us.

As we continued to meet throughout the spring and summer months, it became clear that many of the topics required in the template of the profile would require careful thought and research. As the scope of the project became clear, the 90-minute meetings evolved into three-hour meetings, even when the sun was shining. Everyone divvied up responsibilities to keep the work moving outside of meetings. We also held Coffee Hour Mingles with church members.

As we approached the end of the drafting process in September, we found we had over 80 pages of content. While still wrapping up some loose ends, we boiled it down to 35 pages. As each section was completed, the whole committee discussed and voted on each one. We all had to have the same vision for our church so that we could have the same vision for who we wanted as a minister.

Throughout the fall, we shared our spiritual journeys. It's amazing how much we didn't know about each other. This culminated in a team-building retreat in late November with facilitator Martha Peck from Lowell, Vermont. This retreat helped us reflect on our priorities and determine how best we could work together as a group.

As the year wrapped up, so too did the final phase of developing the profile. We shared it with the congregation in December, collected comments, and did some revising

considering what was said. The result went beyond our expectations. We feel that the profile represents us accurately and honestly.

As of January 15th, 2020, the position was posted to the national UCC website, where ministers can request a copy of the profile if they are interested. We're looking forward to seeing the candidate profiles. Of course, the names and details of candidates will be held in strict confidence.

We will continue updating the congregation in the E-Window. So, stay tuned for more news from us.

In fellowship,

Jim Donovan & Ritva LaFlower (co-chairs), and Cary Friberg, Ed Friot, Jackie Johnson, Mary Ann Johnson, and Sherry Singer

BCC FELLOWSHIP

Kate Duffy

The BCC Fellowship regrouped this fall to encourage friendships and comradery amongst our congregation. Our goal has been to unite all members and friends of the church, male and female, young and aged, to greet each other for personal and social growth. In general, our meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at midday.

We have enjoyed a field trip to the Barre Country Club for lunch, a demonstration of jewelry enameling by Bev Shevas, an event where we decorated pumpkins for our church alter and Thanksgiving tables, and a tour of the Reynolds House where we also enjoyed Christmas lunch.

We must plan meetings that will be of interest to everyone. We hope to draw in those who work during the week by planning a Saturday or evening program. We are open to all suggestions. There are no dues and no restrictions. Our financial support comes from the revenue generated by our church receptions, headed by Linda Kiniry, and Cathy McCann.

Officers

President: Jan Avery

Vice President: Jean Brown

Secretary: Kate Duffy

Treasurers: Sally Beebe and Mary Ann Johnson

Programs: Diane Blodgett and Pam Murphy

ART COMMITTEE

Linda Kiniry

In 2019, our committee started with a Hearts for Laundry Love tree in the narthex. We plan to do this again in February. We bought two banners for Easter and worked with Kate Duffy enhancing our church through out the Lenten season. In the past few years, we have slowly been buying a variety of beautiful banners and will continue to hang them with each new season. For Christmas, we have also been investing in things that can be reused in many ways. This helps with our costs. With all the decorative items, we have acquired we have had to have several workdays to keep our storage and workspace organized. We are always looking for new ideas and helping hands

Linda Kiniry, Chairperson

BARRE CONGREGATIONAL CAMPERS

Scott Funk

The idea of a church camping club came out of a Vitality meeting brainstorming session. The thought was such a club could encourage greater fellowship and provide an easier platform for introducing people to our church. (It might feel easier to invite friends to talk about camping than to join us at church.) From there, the club developed on its own.

Everyone is invited to join us. That includes former and prospective campers, as well as active ones. Our ages run from Oliver Frunceck who are very young to Lee and Christine Rosseau, who are not quite so young. Meetings take place at our homes, as well as at the church.

We settled on the name, Barre Congregational Campers as a way of identifying ourselves as a church group, and matching our church's initials, BCC, felt right. Just how does being a church club inform us as a club that camps? This is something we continue to explore.

What kind of campers are we? Every kind, especially given the many options available in Vermont's beautiful state parks, including cabins and comfy cottages. We are also backpacking campers who pitch tents in the wild, RV or trailer campers, small and large tent campers. Some of us look forward to roughing it, while others want to make sure clean restrooms and warm showers are available.

The other question is what we do at our meetings. We enjoy good food, fellowship, and joyful conversations about camping plans, memories, and disasters that are enjoyable only as a good story. We've shared our favorite camping tool/item, as well as hiking/camping books. Currently, we are planning for a group camping trip at Groton State Park for early summer. We hope that's near enough for members of the congregation who aren't camping to drop by for a visit, maybe joining us for a sing-along around the campfire.

How can you participate? Come to our meetings and bring your friends. Even if you don't camp, you could join us on a hike this summer. The whole idea is fellowship while talking about or enjoying our state's beautiful Green Mountains.

Respectfully Submitted,
Scott Funk

SCOUT PACK 717

Carl Elwert

Pack 717 is proud to announce to the members of the Church that their Cub Scout Pack has once again obtained the Journey to Excellence Gold status for running a quality Cub Scout program. This status requires meeting 11 requirements related to the program, leadership and parent training, and Scout membership. Gold status is the highest level.

We have 15 dedicated leaders who have kept the joy and enthusiasm in our scouting program for the last year. These leaders are dedicated to the ideals of scouting and are a great team.

This year, our Scouts teamed up with the Spaulding Football Program for our biggest service project yet. The Scouts created over 70 backpacks for Tatum's Totes, an organization in Vermont that helps children entering foster care.

Currently, the pack has 38 scouts in six dens, that meet at the Church on Wednesday and Thursday evenings.

We have 3 Arrow of Light scouts (5th graders), 6 Webelos scouts (4th graders), 10 Bear scouts (3rd graders), 8 Wolf scouts (2nd graders), 4 Tigers scouts (1st graders), and 7 Lion scouts (Kindergarten).

Respectfully submitted,
Carl Elwert, Pack 717 Charter Organization Representative

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Jeffrey Tuper-Giles

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Compiled and designed by Rose Fisher

