

WILBRAHAM UNITED CHURCH



In 2016 we celebrated
The 275th Anniversary of our UCC Congregation
and The 225th Anniversary of our UMC Congregation

ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2016

JANUARY 29, 2017

WILBRAHAM UNITED CHURCH
ANNUAL MEETING OF JANUARY 29, 2017
AGENDA

Call to Order Bill Trudeau, Moderator

Declare a Quorum: 50 members, including 10 Governing Board members

1. Appoint Tellers

Welcome

1. Thank Women's Evening Fellowship for lunch
2. Thank Governing Board and Commissions

Opening Prayer: The Reverend Susan L. Gibson

Clerk: Nan Shepard

1. Read the **Call to Meeting**
2. Ask for **Vote to Waive** reading the Minutes of the January 31, 2016 Annual Meeting.
3. Ask for **Additions/Corrections** to the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of January 31, 2016
4. Read **List of Members Deceased** in 2016. Rise for Moment of Silence in Loving Respect and Remembrance.

Reports:

1. Request any Additions/Comments from Commission Chairs on Reports as distributed in the Annual Reports for 2017 (less Leadership, Treasurer and Finance Commissions Reports) and to omit reading of Reports. Ask for Vote to Accept Reports inclusive of any additions/comments.
2. Interim Minister: the Reverend Susan L. Gibson
3. Governing Board
4. Parish Life Commission
5. Education Commission
6. Physical Operations Commission
7. Outreach Commission
8. Worship & Music Commission
9. Human Relations Commission
10. Stewardship Commission
11. Visioning Commission
12. Deacons

Report of the Treasurer- Joseph Stiefel

1. Discussion on the Treasurer's Report
2. **Vote to Accept** the Treasurer's Report as presented.

Presentation of the 2017 Budget by the Finance Commission- Lee Miner

1. Discussion on the Finance Commission's Report
2. **Vote to Accept** the Finance Commission's Report as presented.

Shopping Card Comments- Bob Law

Report of the Leadership Commission

1. Ask for **Nominations** from Floor.
2. If none, **Vote to direct Clerk to cast one Ballot** for slate as presented.

Old Business

New Business: Transition Committee Report; Bylaw changes discussion and vote;

Announcements:

Closing Prayer: The Reverend Susan L. Gibson

VOTE TO ADJOURN

WILBRAHAM UNITED CHURCH ANNUAL REPORTS - 2016
Our Two Hundred and Seventy-sixth Year

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Wilbraham United Church Minutes of the Annual Meeting January 31, 2016

The 275th Annual Meeting of the congregation of Wilbraham United Church took place January 31, 2016 in Fellowship Hall. Seeing that lunch was over, Moderator Bill Trudeau called the meeting to order at 12:15 PM. Following a headcount, Bill declared a quorum of 11 Governing Board members and greater than 60 church members to be present.

Bill welcomed the meeting and thanked Women's Evening Fellowship for the delicious luncheon, which was followed by an enthusiastic applause.

Bill thanked commission and committee members for their ongoing commitment to maintain our facilities, promote our vision, and further mission in the community. He then welcomed Pastor Susan Gibson and extended special thanks to the Interim Search Committee for their process matching her with us. The committee was asked to stand for recognition and applause.

Susan took the podium, again thanking the Interim Search Committee for carefully representing our membership, facilitating her move here, and welcoming her into the church family. She expressed special appreciation to Wilbraham United Church staff for their hospitality during the interview process, and looks forward to working with everyone. She ended with a prayer asking for guidance as we follow God's lead to do His work during this time of transition.

Nan Shepard (Clerk) announced the Call to Meeting and asked for a motion to waive the reading of the minutes of the Annual Meeting of January 26, 2015, which appear on pages i-iii of the 2015 Annual Report. The motion passed unanimously without discussion. The Clerk then read the names of those members of the congregation who passed away in 2015: Raymond Heiney, Pamela Isabelle, Delight Rothery, Virginia Luce, Jean Porter, David Birkhauser, and Yvonne Fife. The congregation was asked to rise for a moment of remembrance for these loved ones and friends.

Commission Reports

Bill asked for any additions or corrections from commissions on the reports as distributed. Hearing none, Bill asked for a motion to accept the reports as presented; this was voted and approved unanimously without discussion.

Treasurer's Report

Joseph Stiefel noted that the Treasurer's Report can be found in the yellow addendum to the Annual Report. He commented that the job of Treasurer is a "Team Sport", and thanked Lee Miner, Chair of Finance; former Treasurer Lisa Fallon; Betsy Johnsen- bookkeeper; and Rob Roy- investment advisor for their invaluable contributions throughout the year.

Joseph reported that only half the budgeted 5% Endowment income was required to cover the 2015 deficit, but due to a particularly dismal stock market year the Endowment shrank 5%.

Both Bill and Lee thanked Joseph and his team of advisors who faithfully oversee the financials of this church, especially Joseph and Lisa who worked tirelessly the past few weeks to complete this year's balance sheet.

Budget Report

Lee drew attention to the proposed 2016 budget found on pages 2-5 of the yellow Financial Report. He noted that reporting income and expense does not communicate ministry. The ministries in which we participate are recognized in the Annual Report; the budget is an instrument to enable them.

The following includes notable **changes** or **additions** to the 2016 budget.

Receipts

We have budgeted \$215,000 of pledge income for 2016. This is based on an analysis of last year's trends along with current Stewardship numbers. Prior-year pledges are behind, as they are typically received by this time in January, but we expect up to \$2,600 after 2015 statements are sent.

- Plate collection fell significantly last year and is budgeted at a two year average.
- Gifts to current operations reflects the \$1,500 we have received in recent years from Wilbraham United Players plus a \$1,000 gift already received.
- The Weekday Nursery School has pledged \$14,160 to the church, a 14% increase over last year.
- Investment income is 5% of the 5-year-averaged Unrestricted Endowment, budgeted at \$39,230 for this year.
- Holiday offerings reflect offerings from the Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas envelopes and are budgeted at a three year average.
- The shopping card program will require increased participation to achieve the \$6,500 goal.
- Holly Fair, another huge success in 2015, will need strong leadership to realize the \$11,500 2016 budget goal, about equal to 2015 results.
- The Thrift Shop has been estimated by Outreach to contribute \$6,250 to the budget. Dianne Lyons, in her report states that they need both quality goods to sell and volunteers to staff the shop.
- The total 2016 budgeted income, including miscellaneous fundraisers is \$312,190.

Disbursements

Christian Ministry- The compensation package for Susan Gibson includes salary, housing, pension, and insurance. Expenses (travel, professional, education, moving) include a one-time estimate of \$1,500 for relocation. The total package of \$100,781 is about \$17,000 less than what was budgeted for Reverend Close last year.

Visiting ministers includes the four Sundays that Pastor Tom was with us in 2016 as well as provision for five future Sundays of visiting ministers.

An additional line item of \$500 has been included for future search committee expenses.

Total budgeted for Christian Ministry is \$104,031.

Church Administration- The Public Relations position is budgeted for \$300/month. The articles produced by Dianne Lyons have been wonderful publicity for the church.

Computer expenses have been increased by the \$80/month that we pay for Church Windows Cloud, formerly paid from Capital Improvement Funds.

Overall the Church Administration budget has been increased by about \$5,300.

Physical Operations- Thanks to new fixed contract pricing for both heat and electricity, the total budget for these two items has been lowered by over \$2,000. Also, sewer and insurance costs fell slightly, realizing a reduction of around \$1,250.

The Maintenance and Improvement and Grounds budgets are increased to better reflect actual costs and allow for another step repair project required in 2016. Overall, the Physical Operations budget has increased by \$1,937 and is about 35% of the total budget.

Parish Ministry added \$400 to their budget to cover events, which in the past were largely paid out-of-pocket by commission members.

Outreach Budget is reduced by the elimination of the MOPS fee since the Wilbraham United Church MOPS group is no longer affiliated with the national organization.

Non-Budgeted Outreach- In 2015 the Thrift Shop contributed \$5,640 to missions. Donations to special appeals were \$4,538. Loaves and Fishes, Parish Assistance and Special Benevolences totaled \$7,173. Outreach spent \$500 of the \$5,000 it was granted from invested funds and now enters the year with \$10,534 available. With the money from budgeted Outreach, total Outreach funding was over \$30,000, a fact that we can applaud!

Because the other two Restricted Endowments, Physical Operations and Scholarships, spent all of their available money in 2015, they have the usual 5% budgeted for 2016, \$5,000 and \$5,610 respectively.

Overall View- Total budgeted expenses are \$355,612 which includes a 1.5% cost-of-living salary increase for staff recommended by Human Resources and approved by Governing Board. 2016 income is \$312,190. This shortfall will require an additional \$43,422 from the Unrestricted Endowment to meet budget.

Endowment Status- No one can say for sure how much longer the Unrestricted Endowment will last. If investments continue to be anemic and the budget continues to have a large deficit we could have to invade it within 3 years. Today the Spendable Unrestricted Endowment balance is \$217,000.

At this juncture Lee encouraged the meeting to allow the endowment to buy us time to work toward a balanced budget that is consistent with a clear mission that will continue to be developed this year.

Lee moved “that we vote to accept the budget recommended by the Governing Board and presented here today”. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

Shopping Cards

Bob Law reported that this program has been in place for nine years. The church has realized moderate success, but the program remains under-utilized. Thanks to those who support it, our average return is 4% of purchased cards. Increased participation could be a means to significantly reduce drain on the Endowment. It is a simple way to contribute to church finances without spending money out-of-pocket.

Leadership

Tom Toman presented the slate of commission nominations and continuing commission members for 2016 found on page 32 of the Annual Report. He thanked Leadership members Joyce Pierangelo, Suzanne Zeckhausen, and Bill McCullough, also all those who stepped forward to serve on commissions for the upcoming year.

The Governing Board decided to temporarily disband Visioning in 2016, and instead encourage an “all church effort” to work on discerning a clear understanding of how our church fits into God’s calling, and how this insight will steer our mission and goals.

Outreach has more than the usual four members this year, as the commission has expressed an interest in building momentum and support for mission in 2016.

Three positions remain open: Stewardship and two auditors.

Bill commended Tom and his commission for their superior efforts in keeping our leadership team so well staffed. He asked for volunteers to fill the three open slots, but hearing none, he offered a motion “to accept the roster of commission representatives and officers as presented”, directing the Clerk to cast one vote for the slate. The motion was unanimously approved.

There was no old or new business brought forward.

Bill reminded the Governing Board of the required vote to appoint a Financial Secretary and Associate immediately following this meeting.

A special birthday was celebrated by singing the “Happy Birthday” song in honor of Herb Vieira’s 84th birthday. He was thanked for his tireless efforts on behalf of the church, which often go unrecognized. Herb thanked the meeting, noting that he is now the oldest member of his family, and happy still to be in our midst.

Susan thanked Bill for his expert leadership, then closed with a prayer.

A motion to adjourn the 275th Annual Meeting was accepted at 1:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nan Shepard (Clerk)
Sshep48622@aol.com

WILBRAHAM UNITED CHURCH STAFF

Interim Minister

Rev. Susan L. Gibson

Director of Music

Mark Jacobson

Parish Administrator

Laurie Milne

Director of Christian Education

Paul Nesbit

Bookkeeper

Betsy Johnsen

Treasurer

Joseph Stiefel

Building Superintendent

William Howell

Custodian

Eric True

Public Relations Coordinator

Dianne Lyons

**WILBRAHAM UNITED CHURCH
MEMBERSHIP STATISTICAL REPORT**

December 31, 2016

METHODIST MEMBERSHIP

CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Total Active Members 12/31/15 71

Total Active Members 12/31/15 205

Changes during 2016

Changes during 2016

Admissions

Confession 1
Confirmation 4
Reaffirmation 1
Letter of Transfer

Admissions

Confession 5
Confirmation 2
Reaffirmation 2
Letter of Transfer 2
Reinstated 1

Total Admissions 6

Total Admissions 10

Removals

Death 2
Transfer
Withdrawn 4
To Inactive 1

Removals

Death 2
Transfer
Withdrawn 3
To Inactive 18

Total Removals 7

Total Removals 23

Total Active Members 12/31/16 70

Total Active Members 12/31/16 192

*TOTAL WUC ACTIVE MEMBERS, December 31, 2016: 262
(33 are high school/college students)*

SACRAMENTS, SERVICES OF THE CHURCH AND OTHER DATA

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
Baptisms	1	6	
Weddings	1	0	
Funerals	3	3	
Holy Communion (number of services)	15	16	
Church School Enrollment (3 yrs. – Gr. 8)	40	26	
Church School Teachers and Aides	6	6	
Average Church School Attendance	20	12	
Projected Budget	\$362,425	\$370,412	\$383,409
No. of Adult Pledges to Annual Budget	113	105	98
Easter Services Attendance	288	251	
Christmas Sunday Service Attendance	167	157	
Christmas Eve Services: 4:00 p.m.	95	88	
7:30 p.m.	148	128	
11:00 p.m.	44	30	
Average Sunday Attendance	86	99	

INTERIM PASTOR ANNUAL REPORT 2016

The Annual Meeting marks one year since I began as your interim pastor, and what a year it has been! I thank you for your kind welcome and warm hospitality. I have been blessed by your faith and commitment. I have been encouraged by your desire to discover how God is at work in you. As interim pastor, I understand my work with you as helping you to discover how God is working in you and through you as a community and to discover how God is calling you to serve in this place and time.

The work of discernment of ministry and mission is key for the future of the congregation and for the calling of your settled pastor. Knowing how God is working in you and discovering how God is calling you to serve helps your search committee identify the gifts and skills needed for the pastor that you will invite to minister with you.

In the summer, a Transition Team consisting of Deb Trimble, Don Williams, Connie Stiefel, Michelle McBride and Kyle Hauser was organized. These folks have faithfully planned 3 meetings centered around three questions—“Who are we?” “Who is our neighbor?” and “What is God calling us to do in this time and place?” They have asked questions, listened to you, prayed and reflected upon all the discoveries gleaned in these meetings -- and will today (January 29, 2017) present the results of your discernment. In some cases this report calls you to deepen already vibrant ministries. In other cases, this report calls you to new horizons that you did not know were there. I so appreciate the dedication and work of these fine and faithful servants, and I look forward to seeing how you work out these discoveries in your ministry and mission. I do want you to know that this work is ongoing—God is always approaching us with questions, prodding us in new directions, introducing us to new neighbors, and calling us to deepen our faith, ministry, and mission. Do not assume that the report is the end. It is a beginning of a new time. And God is always doing something new, so be prepared to be called to prayer, reflection, service and study of God’s call on your life all along your faith journey.

I would like to highlight the work of the Human Resource Commission. Their work of cultivating good relationships between staff and laity is an important gift of stewardship to all of you. One of the important considerations as you prepare for your future ministry and mission is to make sure that you have the staff with the skills needed for the ministry you are called to live into. The HRC has been diligent in working with me to look at staffing, job descriptions, and job skills to make sure you are ready. One of the concerns raised early in my time with you was that you have had difficulty in working with your pastors in the more recent years. Together we have developed an evaluation process that involves a focus on the mission and ministry of the church rather than tasks of ministry. The question is “Are the leadership and the pastor working together effectively so that the values, vision, and goals of the church is being lived out?” The Governing Board and I used this process at the 7-month mark to good effect. Thank you to this Commission for your wisdom, patience, and dedication to this important work.

The question that we have wrestled with most consistently throughout this interim time has been “Who is our neighbor?” I’ve truly enjoyed having the opportunity to work with you to cultivate relationships with your neighbors in Wilbraham. The connections we are making with Christ the King and Church of the Epiphany inspire me. In June we held a joint service in response to the Orlando nightclub shooting, and in December we held another joint service and were challenged and inspired by the dynamic preaching of Rev. Laura Everett, Executive Director of the

Massachusetts Council of Churches. On Ash Wednesday, 2017, we will come together for another joint service. Another connection that we are cultivating is with the Hampden Wilbraham Partners for Youth, a coalition of local community groups and the school district that unite to create safe, healthy, and drug-free communities. I have taken their Youth Mental Health Responder training, and the Outreach Commission has made addressing substance abuse a priority. You may have attended the program sponsored by Partners for Youth—Opioids, Rx Drugs, and Youth, a Community Conversation. More to come! In addition, we have connected with the Interfaith Council of Western Massachusetts. On Sunday, February 12th, they are sponsoring The Opioid Crisis—How Faith Communities Can Help. I hope you will attend!

I can't skip over the amazing celebrations of the past year! Thank you to the Planning Committee for the 275th/225th Anniversary celebration. We honored 40+ year members. We were inspired by Rev. John McCullough's (former Associate Pastor, now CEO of Church World Service) sermon. We donated money to Church World Service. We had a lovely soiree after service on November 20th. WUC is one tenacious community, and reveals a community who trusts God to guide them to new ministry and mission. You are hope in these divided times—2 congregations that got off to a rocky and contentious start discover that God's love is bigger than their differences and join together.

What a great opportunity to celebrate Mark Jacobson's 20 years of ministry with WUC. I know Mark was not comfortable as the center of attention, which is a testament that for Mark, glorifying God is the goal of his work. WUC is very blessed to have such a faithful, thoughtful, and gifted person serving here!

I want to take this opportunity to thank so many people. First, I want to thank Bill Trudeau for his thoughtful and faithful leadership. Bill is a model moderator, and I appreciate his wisdom and commitment. I also want to thank the Interim Pastor Search Committee (Nancy Peck, Deb Trimble, Herb Vieira, Bill Sanderson, Rena Troughton, Shelly Capen, and Connie Stiefel) for your warm welcome and sound guidance as I transitioned.

A big shout out to the staff! Paul Nesbit rocks! I was -- am amazed by his creativity and organization and energy. I can't wait for VBC 2017!!! Laurie Milne loves you and provides a warm and friendly welcome. Her knowledge of the church and its traditions is invaluable. Bill and Eric keep this place humming, and are attentive in their care of the building...and all of us! Bill always remembers the people involved—not just the work. Dianne Lyon's creative mind is a wonder! Her newspaper articles, Facebook posts, and flyers stimulate curiosity and inspire energy. Betsy Johnsen is there to answer a question, with historical understanding, and with compassionate wisdom and patience. (Dealing with money is not an easy job!) Thank you all of you!

And thanks to all of you! For your dedication. For your courage. For your willingness to take the time to pray, to listen, to discern. Remember, God is trustworthy, and God invites WUC into a valuable ministry for this place and time.

I cannot end this report without saying something about the broader cultural picture in our nation. We have just weathered a contentious presidential election, and our nation continues to be deeply divided. The question, "Who is our neighbor?" is not just the question for the church, but it is also the question for our time. As a congregation, WUC has an opportunity to be a witness of God's love that knows no partiality, that turns our world upside down so that the poor, the hungry and thirsty, the meek, the mild are the blessed, and that calls us to love our enemy and

welcome the stranger. These are not easy waters to navigate, but God is with us as we explore more deeply what it means to grow in love of God and neighbor!

Susan

GOVERNING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2016

The Governing Board met regularly in 2016. We were focused primarily on welcoming our Interim Minister, the Reverend Susan Gibson in January of 2016. Those efforts included a number of sessions to allow Pastor Susan to meet with the members of the congregation and for us to get to know one another generally.

Members of Governing Board were intent on making Pastor Susan feel welcome, thus providing a good foundation for us to get started on the important tasks ahead. Pastor Susan helped provide direction and priorities relative to our process of getting the congregation ready to conduct a search for a Settled Pastor. The work that we set out to do with guidance from Pastor Susan and the help of the good people on the Transition Committee was to answer the following important, yet challenging questions

Who are we as a church? Who is our neighbor? What is God calling us to do?

The answers to these questions will help form the basis of the church profile to be completed by the Settled Pastor Search Committee; the Transition Committee work is important as a foundation to the search process.

While we worked to be sure these larger issues were being addressed, we continued to work on the regular duties of running the church -- New phone systems were installed, a Technology Committee was established, Vacation Bible Camp was a smashing success, we added a Public Relations Coordinator, (Dianne Lyons), church wide Wi-Fi was installed, and the Holly Fair was another great success.

As we look to 2017 and what lies ahead, we are working on a variety of challenging, yet important issues:

- 1) Keeping our minds and eyes open for additional ecumenical opportunities like the ones we have undertaken with Christ the King Church and Church of the Epiphany. Our joint service held after the Florida night club tragedy was a shining example of the Christian community in Wilbraham coming together.
- 2) We will work diligently on the settled pastor search process with the assistance of Pastor Susan as well as the UCC Conference minister and the Methodist district superintendent. Ideally, by this time in 2018, our new minister will be with us. We hope to vote on the Settled Pastor Search Committee here in January of 2017.
- 3) We are looking at ways to reform how our committee structures are ordered, or “governance”. The “medium” sized church we have is challenged to fill all of the various boards and committees that exist. We will look at ways to slim down the number of commissions. The goal is to get our work done, but to be sure we provide opportunities for our members to engage in work that is meaningful, and connected to our purpose as a church.

4) We want more of the Governing Board's time spent on strategic and important issues like mission and outreach, opportunities for community engagement, and other areas of focus based on the direction from our Transition Committee.

5) We will look for ways to modernize how we communicate with the members of the congregation.

Finally, on behalf of the Governing Board and the entire congregation, I especially want to thank Pastor Susan for her guidance and wisdom. We are blessed that Susan was called to serve us in this time and place. Pastor Susan has offered guidance on a regular basis, reminding all of us what is important. We can become overly focused on the everyday work at church: buildings, budgets, computers, etc. By reminding us always why we are here, how we might better serve God and our neighbor, Pastor Susan has done us a great service. She has done this with grace and with thoughtfulness, and keen awareness of us as individuals. Susan's leadership from the pulpit as well as with us, side by side each day, has been a source of inspiration to so many of us on our journey of Christian Faith. For this, we are especially grateful.

Respectfully submitted,

William Trudeau
Moderator/ Governing Board Chair

DEACONS

Matthew 26, 26-28

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you: for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

It is an honor to assist in the celebration of the Last Supper.

The Deacons also represent the congregation during new member services and baptisms.

We assist with any in-care candidates, helping them as they work their way through the educational and developmental process of ministerial education. We also offer financial assistance to in-care candidates by allocating funds from the Paul Zeckhausen Memorial Fund.

We are always looking for more folks to assist us in our work. If you would like to learn more about being a Deacon, please contact John Tarbell at 596-2165 or jwtarbell@aol.com

Respectfully submitted,

John W. Tarbell

STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

The Stewardship Commission is working to finish the 2017 campaign, and has received \$174,719 in pledges as of January 11, 2017. Also as of this date, we have received 95 pledge cards out of 200 mailed out. The Stewardship Commission is working with the Finance Commission to reach out to members who have not yet pledged for this year.

As of this writing, the 2017 campaign is wrapping up, and we are about \$50,000 short of our goal of \$215,000.

This year we introduced online giving using the website: www.givingtools.com. This service costs \$14.95 per month, plus a merchant service fee of 2.99% + \$0.25 for each credit card payment processed. ACH direct debits are charged a flat fee of \$0.25 per transaction. These fees are approximately half of the industry standard.

The campaign is an uphill struggle against the backdrop of continued difficult economic times where many seniors struggle in a low interest rate environment and increased costs for necessities and worries about steady employment dog many families. We continue to work with church leadership to promote new ways to increase revenue. Currently pledged donations do not cover the annual budget of the church. Finance has recognized this as a problem going forward, and Stewardship will continue to do its part by working increase pledged dollars.

I am very grateful for the support and hard work of the Stewardship Commission. This year's commission included myself, David Pierangelo, Kim Neelans and Kim Ryan. I'd also like to extend a special thanks to Joseph Stiefel, Herb Vieira, the Governing Board, Technology Commission, and Finance Commission for their support this year.

Sincerely,

April M. Beston
Stewardship Commission Chair

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2016

The Human Relations Commission is charged with ensuring the procedures and benefits in the Personnel Policy are up to date and observed with regard to church employees. It considers United Church of Christ and United Methodist Church guidelines and recommendations for salaries and other benefits for all appropriate staff and follows the Federal and State employment laws to ensure compliance.

We are charged with making sure each employee has a job description, an employment contract and a copy of the Personnel Policy. The Human Relations Commission oversees, assists with, and ensures that employee performance evaluations are completed annually with input from the appropriate commissions and the Governing Board.

We have spent the year making sure that job descriptions are up to date and clear and appropriate. We have worked hard to make sure our employment practices are fair, legal and transparent. We maintain confidential employee files.

The Human Relations Commission is in charge of the overseeing the Safe Church Policy and its implementation. We have brought the Safe Church Policy education and overview to Governing Board and to individual commissions. The HRC oversees incident reports and background checks for those who care for the vulnerable in our midst. We have, in consultation with the Finance Commission and our insurers, determined that we will also begin doing background checks for those who handle our money going forward. We are working on reviewing and updating the Safe Church Policy now and in the coming year.

A member of the Human Relations Commission is assigned as a liaison to each employee at Wilbraham United Church to facilitate communication and provide advocacy.

I would like to thank the Human Relations Commission members (Pam Burch, Judy Hoffman, Kathy Timpson, Gloria Russell) for their dedication and hard work this year, Interim Pastor Susan Gibson for her leadership, and Nancy Peck for her assistance as our representative from Governing Board Members at Large. I would particularly like to thank our outgoing member, Pam Burch, for her many years of caring service and her much appreciated “institutional memory.” Thank you, Pam.

Respectfully submitted for HRC,
Carol Piel, Chair

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2016
DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION / EDUCATION COMMISSION

It is hard to believe that I am near the conclusion of my second year as Director of Christian Education at Wilbraham United Church. My call to serve this church continues to be the best part of my week as I have been given much in return by so many of you.

Vacation Bible School made the leap to **Vacation Bible CAMP (VBC)** to reflect the nature of the program as well as marketing. We had a large number of teen (35) and adult (55) volunteers with **ONE HUNDRED THIRTEEN** (113) registered participants. VBC was held August 1-5; the theme this year was “EGYPT: Joseph’s Journey from Prison to Palace.” Our volunteers ranged in age from 12 to 82 as we had a large contingent of decorators throughout the summer as well as the weekend before the program. This year’s program centered around God’s call to Joseph to be brave, courageous and forgiving in all he did, even in times of stress and turmoil. We ventured in to a new area of Movement and Dance to replace Drama. Four different Dance artists came to help us express ourselves in movement. We had the usual activities of Arts and Crafts (with numerous artists of the day led by **Patty Clements**), Bible Stories (**Bill McCullough**), Music (**Mark Jacobson, Patti Colkos, Aaron Pilarcik**), Games (**Deb Trimble and Taylor Colkos**), Snacks (**Kam Jones, Sharon McAbee, Nan O’Connor, Andrea Stephenson**.) We again had a water slide on the hottest day of the week! **Susan, Laurie, Mark, Bill and Eric** helped out all week. **Donna Carlson** ran the VBC office and kept us all going.

Amy Crocker and Heather Weinberg made sure we had RN coverage all week. We also had children from NINE different churches.

In an effort to keep this ecumenical spirit alive, we continued with our **Family Nights** and invited every one of our VBC families. We have also advertised with St. Cecilia's, Christ the King/Epiphany and even branched out to Facebook. Our September night was small but we picked up steam for our Halloween Night (**80 people**), Thanksgiving Party (**65 people**) and went Caroling to our Homebound and Senior Members (**35 people**.) We even had help from our teens and St. Cecilia's Confirmation students. Many thanks also to **Susan Gibson, Amy Crocker, Tammy Trudeau, Shelly and Matt Capen, Deb Trimble, Nan O'Connor, Heather and Jeff Weinberg, and Mark Jacobson** for their assistance with this program.

Our Sunday School program morphed into **CHURCH SCHOOL** to reflect a more accurate description of who we are. We continued to use a three-year curriculum that is tied to the three-year cycle of the Lectionary through the publisher Spark House. Our teachers returned and we picked up some classroom assistants as well. The set-up of the classes is adaptable for the needs of our program at Wilbraham United Church. We have divided our classes into Pre-K-K-1 (8 registered) with **Becky McCracken** who is assisted by **Patty Clements**. Grades 2, 3, 4 are led by **April Beston**, assisted by **Shey McAbee** (12 registered) while Grades 5-8 (6 registered) are led by **Chrissy Plumb**, assisted by **Brendan Plumb**. We also welcomed NINE new members through Confirmation on May 1, 2016. I had the pleasure of leading these classes. We are also pleased to offer Nursery Care each Sunday. This is coordinated by **Amy Crocker and Jo Miner**. Our Sunday School continues to grow and thrive, even with the changes in worship schedule. As we all become accustomed to the changes, we believe that attendance will become more stable for the students.

Our students and their families have become increasingly involved in **Family Sunday Services**. These services are held on the first Sunday of the month and have grown more popular with our families and church members of all ages. The goal is to have these services be truly inter-generational in nature.

Youth Fellowship continues to be a joint venture between Christ the King, Church of the Epiphany and Wilbraham United Church. The group is social and mission based in nature and has worked to on the Thanksgiving Food Drive as well as the Holly Fair and Caroling. This group has a membership comprised of students in Grades 6-12 and approximately 20 young people have been involved throughout the course of the year. This past year we have gathered for a Bowling Nights, Trampoline Park, Drop-In Activities, Movie Nights, Miniature Golf, Halloween Party, Thanksgiving Dinner, Bright Nights and Caroling. Our Youth Fellowship members have also served as assistants at all Family Night Activities as well as the Easter Egg Hunt. All students in grades 6-12 are encouraged to attend activities.

We delved in to Adult Education activities this year with our Lenten Scripture Series where we looked at the Passion Narratives in all four Gospels. This program, held on Wednesday evenings during Lent, was well-received with an average attendance of 12. The range in age was from 17-84!! We also held a Day of Reflection/Retreat for adults in April that was opened to anyone in the area. While we agreed on the concept, the Education Commission and Reverend Susan agreed that we need to adjust the format for future presentations. Many thanks to **Judy Hoffman** for her efforts in getting this program off the ground.

It is a pleasure to work with our dedicated **Education Commission** chaired by **Amy Crocker, with Shelly Capen and Tammy Trudeau** on the team. They are supportive of EVERY CE event and activity. **Reverend Susan Gibson** has offered invaluable insights to our programs as well as challenged us to broaden and expand. Susan has been at almost every one of our programs as well! **Laurie Milne, Bill Howell, Mark Jacobson, Eric True and Betsy Johnsen** have been a joy to work with and learn from as well.

May we continue to all recognize our call to be Christian Educators in the months and years ahead. It continues to be a sincere honor to serve the people of Wilbraham United Church.

Respectfully submitted, Paul B. Nesbit - Director of Christian Education

WILBRAHAM UNITED CHURCH NURSERY SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR

The Wilbraham United Church Nursery School is a private, non-profit mission of the church. It has been serving our community since 1951. The purpose of the school is to offer children a creative environment in which to grow; both as individuals and as members of a group. We offer our children experiences that can help them with their social, emotional, physical, creative and intellectual development. We strive to instill in our children a strong sense of self-worth, and a respect for the individual differences that make us all unique. The Nursery School is inspected and licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). Our school admits children between the ages of two years nine months and five years old, in two separate self-contained classrooms. We continue to offer a competitively priced program, and we have one of the best early education reputations in the area.

This school year the nursery school has entered into uncharted territory. In June, longtime teachers Patty Ginsburg and Joanne Middleton retired after years of service to the program and children. We anticipated these retirements and were planning accordingly when we received word that Tammy Pelloso, the second room's lead teacher became ill and had to go on extended leave in January to attend to her medical needs. Based on her medical condition, Tammy and her family decided that it would be best for her to retire this year as well. Faced with losing three teachers in one year, the executive board entered into an exhaustive search for new teachers who could provide the same quality education and experience that the previous teachers had for so many years. We are pleased to welcome Elizabeth Esterbrook and Tanya Presz. Elizabeth comes to us after retiring from the Wilbraham school district where she had taught for over 20 years. Tanya was a fulltime substitute last year and we are so happy she joined the staff as a full time teacher this year.

We were prepared to begin the school year with the staff in place, when in late July we received notification from our Director and longest serving teacher, Lorrie Pulsford, that she decided to relocate to Utah to be with her family. Given that Lorrie was involved with the program for so many years, it would be difficult to replace her experience and talents. And we were unsure if we could still provide a program with the loss of Lorrie. However, we are blessed to have found Tara Kozub to fill her position. Tara is well known in the community and has sent most of her own children through the program as well.

The program for years has operated with the generosity of the teachers purchasing their own supplies and materials for the program. Given the level of turnover, we did not fully anticipate the amount of supplies that each teacher provided to the program. We are in the process of replacing these items for the school to give the children an opportunity to explore and expand their knowledge base as they prepare for kindergarten. The resupply of the rooms has forced us to adjust our annual budget amounts to compensate for the lost materials. The program has several significant capital projects that we anticipate this year, including a canopy for the sand box, to replace the loss of our beloved shade tree, replacing windows and doors to the school, and most importantly making an investment in technology to include a new computer, printer and laminator for the teachers. Currently the teachers do not have access to these items at the church and have operated for years without this service. We anticipate conducting a fundraising event this year to raise additional funds for the program and materials.

The Nursery School has experienced a decline in enrollment this year and is currently not at full-enrollment. We had several unfilled openings for the fall semester. It is hard to say exactly why we have not been able to draw full-enrollment this school year, but with the changing demographics in the community and the hours of service provided we feel that there has been a change in the way people view or perceive preschool programs in general. Over the past few years several preschool programs have closed for various reasons. Although many have closed, United remains a focal point for the Wilbraham community and we anticipate that to continue going forward.

Due to the declining enrollment, the Nursery School's pledge amount will be less than previous years. Although the pledge amount has decreased, we anticipate a continued successful operation of the program and success of both the Nursery school and the church. The Executive Board has been in contact with the Church during this transition phase and has maintained a constant dialog to provide updates to the church on the recent events. The Executive Board is comprised of three volunteer members, who are responsible for overseeing and planning the school's budget, tuition billing and collection, supervision of the school's facilities, public relations, etc. The current Board members are: Erin Kiernan, Caitlyn Welch and James Hisgen. Although we experienced changes this year, we believe the school remains in a stable financial position. We anticipate several large capital expenses this year and will work with the Church to ensure that all projects are completed. In closing, we want to again praise our teaching staff for their invaluable contributions. Also, we would like to extend special thanks to Betsy Johnsen for her time and her willingness to work with us.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions, or if you require any further clarifications--we remain at your disposal, and we welcome any comments from our church members and friends. We are so very proud of our nursery school, and as always, you are all invited to come down and take a peek at our classrooms and meet our dedicated and well respected staff. Please come by and see why so many families feel so fortunate to send their children to our program.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erin Kiernan, Caitlyn Welch, James Hisgen

FINANCE COMMISSION 2016

An overview of the 2016 Budget can be found in the Clerk's minutes of the 2016 Annual Meeting. This budget had a projected deficit of \$43,422. While 2016 final results are not complete at the time this is being written, income appears to be about \$1000 more than budget and expenses about \$10,000 less than budgeted. The final 2016 income and expenditures will be available at the annual meeting.

During 2016, Ministry Teams contributed greatly to the life of the church and the church finances. We all owe appreciation to Bob Law, Connie Stiefel, Lisa & Patrick Fallon, Wendy O'Rourke, Georgianne Small, and Dianne Lyons of the Shopping Card Team, to Dianne Lyons for managing the Thrift Shop, and to Jocelyn Roy and her team for leadership of the Holly Fair. Thanks are also due to all of the volunteers who helped make the results so successful. The work of these Ministries has collectively earned about \$27,000 for the church, about \$6200 for special missions, and created community and fun.

2016 pledge income of \$211,450 fell short of expectations, \$3550 less than the \$215,000 budgeted and about \$14,000 less than 2015. Total budgeted Income was about \$2200 more than budget due to Financial Resources and Plate Collection income and some unexpected gifts.

Our missions funding consisted of \$8000 of budgeted Outreach and \$14,500 of non-budgeted missions such as Special Offerings, Thrift Shop, Loaves & Fishes, and Parish Assistance, which with \$5000 from the Outreach Endowment became a total of about \$29,500. This represents about 9% of our annual income, which is respectable for a church in our financial position.

On the Expense side, most cost categories were essentially at budget. Only the Education Ministry, about \$2000 less, and Physical Operations, about \$2000 less, appear to differ significantly from budget. Total Budgeted Expenses for 2016 are currently estimated to be about \$7,000 less than budget. It now appears that the budget deficit will be about \$36,000, about \$8000 less than projected in the 2016 Budget.

The Scholarship Committee, consisting of Judy Hoffman, Paul Nesbit and Heather Weinberg, did a fine job seeking candidates, selecting the seven deserving young people who received the funds from the scholarship endowment and presenting the awards. Thanks again to Judy, Paul and Heather.

There was no Financial Audit of the 2015 church accounts because no church member stepped forward to serve as Auditor.

Finance recognized the need for a Technology Committee and asked for volunteers via the Branch-Line and personal contact. WUC had a ministry team who functioned under the name of the Communications/Technology Ministry Team and saw that the Sunday services were taped, edited and available for local broadcast, with editing done principally by Audrey Hunt, Betsy Johnsen and Tom Toman. Joseph Stiefel and Betsy dealt with the software issues associated with the computers in the office network. Joseph had the burden of responding to the frequent hardware/software emergencies as well as providing leadership to the Ministry Team and handling the monthly website updates. Tom took the additional responsibility of seeing that the sanctuary audio system is functional as well as keeping the taping and editing equipment

running. Paul Krawczynski was the go-to person dealing with the phone/internet provider and worked on the conversion to high-speed internet and phone system of Spectrum Business. Steve Kenniston was active in evaluating components and suppliers for our computer system and WiFi. In addition to the individuals already named, Larry Harris and Deb Trimble volunteered their expertise, and Tom Toman took the lead to draft the role and focus areas for a Technology Committee and called a meeting. Finance proposed a motion that the Committee be formed and report to the Governing Board, and the GB so voted. An appeal for funds was made and about \$7000 was made available from remaining Capital Campaign funds and a generous memorial gift. The Technology Committee has proceeded to upgrade the communications capability of WUC. Their many accomplishments are separately reported in this Annual Report.

To promote planned giving, Finance stated the advantages of bequests in the Branch-Line and Steve Niederfringer organized an Estate Planning seminar presented by Attorney Fred McCoy.

The Endowment Fund is a major contributor to church income. The operating budget receives 5% of the Unrestricted Endowment (\$39,230 in 2016), as well as any deficit (~\$36,000 in 2016). The Restricted Endowment funded Outreach, Physical Operations and Scholarships with a total of about \$15,600 outside of the budget. For most of the year, endowment funds were invested in SEI's Institutional Growth and Income Fund, a mix of 10 individual funds having a 60/40 mix of stocks and bonds. In May, Investment Committee Chair Rob Roy suggested that he and Financial Advisor Rick Doleva investigate a mix that would emphasize value stocks, reduce international equity exposure and emphasize US debt with higher quality and lower duration. At the November meeting, they recommended a portfolio consisting of three funds, the SEI US Large Cap Value Fund for domestic equities, a Western Asset Management government/corporate domestic bond fund and a Schafer Cullen Capital Management International High Dividend Value ADR holding high quality international equity, all management funds utilized by SEI. This reduced the number of funds from 10 to 3, the number of styles/managers from 52 to 9 and the number of securities from 7231 to 287, achieving the desired quality while maintaining adequate diversity. While the former portfolio automatically rebalanced when we withdrew funds, we now have to do rebalancing by selective withdrawals or periodic transfers. In voting this change, Finance elected to hold the international equity allocation to 10%. In 2016, the funds performed about as expected, with a 5.1% investment return (about \$55,000). Settlement of the year-end accounts is incomplete. Detail will be available in the Annual Report Financials. Finance was fortunate to again have Robert Roy, a professional financial manager, serve as Chair of the Investment Committee.

At this writing, a proposed 2017 budget is being prepared for review by the Governing Board. To date, the Stewardship Commission reports that 97 pledges totaling \$181,199 have been made and \$210,000 is forecast, but this number could change before the budget is voted.

Budgeted Donations income, including pledges, is currently \$232,000, about \$10,000 less than the 2016 Budget and \$8,500 less than 2016 actual.

Ministry teams plan to lead fund-raising events that are projected to raise a total of \$25,250, about \$650 more than 2016 budget but \$2000 less than 2016 actual. Budgeted Income from the Unrestricted Endowment will be \$40,265, \$2097 more than in 2016. Other Income, \$6200, is about equal to 2016 budget and actual. Total Budgeted Income is projected to be about \$304,000.

On the Expense side, the 2017 budgets of the Commissions have some changes from the 2016 budget and actual expenses. No salary and wage cost-of-living increase has been recommended

by HR for employees, as the federal COLA is only 0.3%. There was a 1.5% increase last year. Pastor Susan will receive an increase in contracted health and dental insurance that is partially offset by a \$500 reduction in travel, education and professional expenses. But the effect of going from 49 weeks to 52 weeks of compensation increases the Interim Minister account by \$4595. Increased funding of a pastoral search committee (to \$1500), HR's Professional Resources (\$400, same), a reduction in substitute ministers (to \$750) and introduction of a \$600 budget for conference delegates will hold Other Christian Ministry constant at \$3250.

In the Administration budget, an increase of \$600 for Public Relations, \$775 by computer & technology expenses, and \$467 by copier maintenance expense and a \$240 decrease in phone and internet expense results in a total budget increase of \$1763 for Administration.

Denominational Dues remain at the same embarrassingly low level to which they were cut years ago.

The Phys Ops budget includes increases of \$436 in Property & Casualty Insurance, \$378 in Workers Comp Insurance, \$100 in Trash Disposal and \$2000 in Grounds Maintenance, as well as decrease of \$800 in Elevator Inspection & Repair due to reduced inspection cost. The net effect of these ups and downs is a \$2433 decrease in the Phys Ops budget.

There is no change to the Outreach and Worship and Community budgets. The Education Ministry budget has a \$100 decrease. In the Music budget, a \$4306 increase for a \$4000 salary increase brings Mark close to the bottom of the range for his position. Parish Life's Ministry/Hospitality budget has not changed but more Fellowship Hour volunteers are needed. The Stewardship budget remains unchanged.

The net effect on Budgeted Expenses, as currently drafted, is an increase of \$13,000 from the 2016 budget, giving a proposed Expense budget of \$368,609.

Given the current income estimate of about \$304,000, this would result in a budget deficit of over \$64,000. This budget and the money available from restricted funds, if spent, could require a total of \$126,000 from invested funds. These budgets are subject to change in the Finance and Governing Board meetings that will occur between now and Annual Meeting. While the exact size is not known, a significant budget deficit is expected. The budget deficit causes concern, for it continues to erode the unrestricted endowment and, if it continues, will substantially limit the contribution of the unrestricted endowment to the ministries and upkeep of the church. In 2016, no actions to improve finances have been taken in the areas recommended during the Visioning process. The areas of cooperation with our neighboring churches are helping our ministries, and future cooperation may lead to improved conditions for our churches, but independent action is required in 2017 to significantly reduce the deficit.

In closing, the Commission would like to recognize and thank two extremely capable and unusually dedicated people, Church Treasurer Joseph Stiefel and Financial Secretary Herb Vieira, for their fine work and selfless volunteerism, without which this church would not function. We thank Bookkeeper Betsy Johnsen and Church Administrator Laurie Milne for their constant support and Nancy Peck for her diligent work on Memorial Funds. We are also thankful for the service of Steve Kenniston and Steve Niederfringer who are completing their terms this year.

Respectfully submitted by the Finance Commission:

Matt Capen, Lisa Fallon, Steve Kenniston, Steve Niederfringer, and Lee Miner, Chair

MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE 2016

This committee is appointed by the Finance Commission and is responsible for selecting recipients for scholarships established in memory of Wilbraham United Church members. Each spring high school and college students fill out applications for the scholarships. The committee then meets to make its selections.

The scholarships were awarded on Celebration Sunday in June. The 2016 recipients were:

Graeme Bazarian
Kelsey Jones
Christopher Tracy

Mathew Bernard
Samantha Peck

Jebediah Howell
Monica Stiefel

We thank the families of John Byam, Fred and Eleanor Cohn, Charles Dinnie, Lee G. Flathers, Gordon and Bobbie Fountain, Milo and Millicent Green, Albert and Rae Howes,, Joan H. Neelans, and Josephine Gilson Vieira for establishing these scholarships.

Awarding scholarships to our youth is one of the highlights of the church year, so it is a privilege to serve on this committee. We appreciate the support of the Finance Commission.

Respectfully submitted, Judy Hoffman, Paul Nesbit, and Heather Weinberg

SHOPPING CARD MINISTRY TEAM 2016

The Shopping Card Ministry Team continues its mission to help fund the ministries of the Wilbraham United Church. While the return to the church for 2016 has yet to be finalized, we predict it will approximate \$7,000. In the ten years the program has existed, the church has received over \$50,000 in profit.

We continue to search for ways to make the program more appealing, and therefore used by more members of the congregation. This past year, there has been a significant increase in the on-line purchase feature. Our computer savvy parishioners can purchase a variety of cards via their computer, and have access to the card within minutes. Then purchase the desired item on-line, all without leaving home. And the church receives a commission for the sale.

The team continues to monitor sales and carry in inventory cards that reflect demand. We do not want to tie up funds in cards that have limited appeal. However, if there is a retailer that you use on a regular basis, and our supplier has access to that card, let us know and we will carry that card in stock.

Remember, this program is designed to benefit the church without any impact on household expenses. *It is money you were going to spend anyway.* You spend it in a manner that helps fund church programs.

The ministry team thanks Joseph Stiefel, church treasurer, Lee Miner, chair of the Finance commission, and Pastor Susan for their support.

Connie Stiefel, Bob Law, Lisa Fallon, Wendy O'Rourke, Diane Lyons

OUTREACH COMMISSION 2016

Outreach Commission began the year with one new member, Ruth Karlson and the absence of Jackie Daniels who eventually moved from the area. Monica Gubala willingly joined the group to fill the vacancy.

Outreach members act as liaison to six Ministry Teams: Dress-a-Girl, Community Survival Center, Springfield Loaves and Fishes, PieceMakers, Thrift Shop and Awakening Heart. Awakening Heart is currently limited to two Yoga classes per week, taught by Sarah Johnson.

Through 2016 the commission supported local and foreign missions by participation and/or financial contributions. In addition to moneys budgeted to Outreach we also spent some of the Outreach Endowment money allocated each year.

Local programs include:

Radcliffe is the Reason and Arthur Too (Autism); Community Survival Center
Springfield Loaves and Fishes; Many Hands One Heart
Soda Tabs for Springfield Shriners and Ronald McDonald House
One Warm Coat Challenge; Wilbraham Senior Center Gift Fund

Non-local programs were:

One Great Hour of Sharing
Neighbors in Need
Dress-a-Girl
Cropwalk
Church World Services
Massachusetts Council of Churches
UMC missionary, Belinda Forbes
UCC missionary
Heifer International (purchased a cow)

In September we sponsored a presentation by Belinda Forbes, our UMC missionary.

In November we enjoyed a friendly competition with Monson and East Longmeadow churches as we again participated in the National One Warm Coat Drive. We collected 115 adult and 50 children's coats to be distributed by the Springfield Rescue Mission.

We developed an Outreach section in the monthly Branch-Line as well as maintaining the Outreach section of the bulletin board in the Narthex.

Some plans for 2017 include updating the church brochure of programs and services, becoming involved in the community Opioid Abuse project and possibly developing a Ministry Team related to Climate Change, and a Church World Service project to purchase blankets. We plan to designate a different UCC Mission project as well.

Many thanks to all persons who contributed in making this a productive and successful year for the Outreach Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Nanette Bernard, Monica Gubala, Ruth Karlson, Kelcie Knowles, Becky McCracken, Phyllis Walsh

CALLED TO CARE MINISTRY TEAM ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Our Called to Care team was formed in 1999 by Nancy Schenk and the Rev. Lynne Dolan. It is our mission to keep in touch with our senior church members and friends who find it difficult to attend church. We accomplish this through personal visits, phone calls, cards and notes.

We meet every other month from September to June on the first Wednesday of those months. We work closely with our Interim Minister, Rev. Susan Gibson. She provides an educational moment at each meeting and keeps us up-to-date on our church members' needs. She has visited many persons since her arrival here one year ago. During each meeting we share, in confidence, recent visits with our special persons. When a church member passes away, we hold a time of remembrance and share our memories of that person.

Another part of our work is the Prayer Shawl Ministry, under the leadership of Phyllis Walsh. The warm and colorful shawls are knitted by volunteers (mostly from our church) and given to church persons who are ill, grieving or in need of a little extra comfort. We enclose a card with a message and the name of the knitter. Phyllis reports we have given over 55 shawls.

We recognize our church members who are over 80 with birthday cards. We also send get well, sympathy and thinking of you cards. The birthday list is kept up-to-date by Margaret Bearse. We also deliver Christmas poinsettias and Easter flowers that have been on the altar for those special services. Jo Minor organizes this project with assistance from Connie Law.

Called to Care members wear a yellow band on their name tags. Our group is small, so we are looking for new members who are called to care. If you are interested in becoming a part of this rewarding ministry, please talk with one of the persons listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Hoffman and Phyllis Walsh (Co-Chairs), Rev. Susan Gibson, Jane Godfrey, Ruth Karlson, Connie Law, Jeanine Little, Judy Marek, Jo Minor, Nancy Schenk, and Herb Vieira

LOAVES AND FISHES OUTREACH ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Our Loaves and Fishes mission team is still on the go with our monthly meal. It is a vibrant ministry and we want to thank all that are involved. There are too many people to list them all here, but you are all so important to the mission. Support comes in the form of money, prayers, preparation of food, clean up, delivering, and serving downtown at South Congregational Church.

We feed between 150 and 200 people the third Thursday of each month. And everyone loves our chicken and rice casserole! In the fall, we often have produce donations from Llewellyn Merrick, and so change up the casserole a little. It is delicious either way!

We have two volunteers who have retired from Loaves and Fishes service - Alice Belsky and Gus Hoffmann. They have tirelessly helped for maybe as many years as we have been serving.

THANK YOU!! We always welcome new helpers. The opportunity to serve is available to long time members, new members, as well as friends from other churches or most anywhere!

If you would like to know more or sign up, please call Judy Hoffman (596-8352) or Betsy Johnsen (599-1325 or 433-4922), or just show up any of the times!

For the team, Betsy Johnsen

PIECEMAKERS ANNUAL REPORT 2016

The PieceMakers are a group of women who enjoy meeting two Monday mornings a month to make quilts to donate to the pediatric emergency room at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield. Next year will be ten years that we have been sewing quilts and have delivered nearly 100 quilts to Baystate. We use donated and purchased fabric and batting to create the quilts. We also sew various items including pot holders, placemats, and aprons that we sell at the Holly Fair to raise money for the church.

Current members include Evie Auchter, Pam Burch, Millie Carew, Audrey Hunt, Patty Keizer, Claire McCullough, Nancy Peck, Judy Putnam, Gail Wholley, and Suzanne Zeckhausen. We welcome new members at any time.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Peck

THRIFT SHOP ANNUAL REPORT 2016

The Thrift Shop at Wilbraham United Church opened its doors in March 2009, housed in the basement rooms 8B and 10B (with 6B as storage). Thanks to dedicated volunteers and ongoing donations of quality used goods, the Thrift Shop continues to be a financial success and a positive influence in the church and local community.

The Thrift Shop earned \$15,986.85 in net profits in 2016, which was approximately **\$1,850 over 2015 profits**. A significant increase in donations, increased publicity, shorter vacation periods, and highly visible promotions such as the \$2.75 Bag Sale were contributing factors.

2016 income was distributed in accordance with the policies proposed by Thrift Shop founder, Dianne Lyons, and approved and adopted by the WUC Governing Board in 2009: **Fifty percent of the profits (\$7,725)** was released to the church's general fund; **forty percent (\$6,396)** was designated for distribution to local nonprofit organizations, as outlined below; **and ten percent (\$1,545)** was paid as a stipend to Dianne Lyons as Thrift Shop Manager.

In 2016, the Thrift Shop profits were used to support:

- * **Links to Libraries - 1st quarter, \$1,660**
- * **Safe Passage - 2nd quarter, \$1,400**
- * **Barton Center for Diabetes Education - 3rd quarter, \$1,000**
- * **National Alliance on Mental Illness, Western Massachusetts - 4th quarter, \$2,120**

This year, though we normally close on holiday weekends, **we stayed open on Veterans' Day weekend and pledged 40% of our profits for that weekend to Homeward Vets**, a local organization that helps veterans recovering from homelessness. **Our sales that weekend resulted in a donation of approximately \$216 to Homeward Vets.**

In 2016, the shop recorded reimbursable expenses of \$270. These expenses included \$256 for imprinted Thrift Shop reusable shopping bags for a \$2.75 Bag Sale in celebration of the church's 275th anniversary, and a \$14 newspaper ad to promote the sale.

Dianne Lyons and Nancy Apple shared management duties since 2011, but midway through 2016, Nancy Apple resigned from her unpaid position at the shop. Nancy Krawczynski volunteered to take over Nancy A's pricing and restocking responsibilities and has done a wonderful job, putting in long hours weeding through donations, pricing items, and keeping the shelves full. Edna Colcord offered to assume volunteer management responsibilities, and has done a great job of communicating with our volunteers and being sure all shifts are covered. Late in 2016, Phyllis Walsh enthusiastically assumed responsibility for the shop's book section and has done a stellar job of organizing, weeding, and displaying our inventory.

In addition to Nancy, Phyllis, and Edna, the Thrift Shop has established a core group of faithful volunteers, most of whom work roughly one shift a month. We are very grateful for and indebted to our volunteers, including Poppy Nelson, Bill Sanderson, Alan Burch, Tammy Trudeau, Connie Stiefel, Lisa Fallon, Sandy and Larry Harris, Elaine Fisk, Nancy Apple, Monica Gubala, Melissa Reeves, Joyce Emerle, and Millie Carew. More volunteers are needed, particularly during the winter months when several regular volunteers go to Florida. Any member of WUC who would like to volunteer should email diannejbl@aol.com

At an Outreach Commission meeting held in late 2012, it was decided by the Commission that Thrift Shop volunteers should have input into what organizations would receive the fruits of their labors. A voting procedure was implemented to a) give Thrift Shop volunteers a voice in where shop profits should be spent; b) give customers an idea of where their money is going; and c) give us the opportunity, in advance, to notify the present and future recipients of our donations and publicize our contributions to these groups, both for our benefit and theirs.

The nomination and voting procedure for determining 2017 recipients is still underway as of this writing. The final vote will be tallied by January 31, 2017 and final recipients will be chosen in coordination with the Outreach Commission in order to avoid duplication of efforts.

2017 Challenges:

a) Storage: The shop's only dedicated storage space is basement room 6B, which is a very, very, very small room. Nancy makes the best possible use of the small space by organizing and labeling bins and stacking merchandise to the ceiling, but bins and boxes are forever clogging the hallways, incoming donations fill the space under the stairs, and 6B is too cramped and congested to work in. At this writing, we have already filled the space behind the curtain in the yoga room with off-season merchandise, have little room to move in 6B, and have donations piling up under the basement stairs. Clearly, more storage and sorting space is **DESPERATELY**

needed. We would like to see the Physical Operations Commission explore additional possibilities for basement storage, and perhaps a larger retail space as well.

b) Recruitment of additional volunteers: In a perfect world, the shop would be staffed by two people at all times, but given our limited and dwindling number of volunteers, it is an ongoing challenge to schedule just one volunteer per shift. Any WUC member that is interested in volunteering on a regular or irregular basis is encouraged to email Dianne Lyons at dianneJBL@aol.com. Training is provided – and if you arrive early for your shift, you get first dibs on the new merchandise!

With all of its challenges, we remain very enthusiastic and excited about our Thrift Shop and the wonderful support we have received from our fellow church members and the larger community. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the WUC members and friends who have volunteered their weekends, donated many wonderful items to our shop, and become regular customers. You are all critical to our mission's success; we can't do it without you! The members of Wilbraham United Church and the many hundreds of children, single mothers, seniors, cancer victims and others that we have helped are also extremely appreciative of your continued support.

Respectfully submitted,
Dianne Lyons, Thrift Shop Founder and Manager

PARISH LIFE COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2016

“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.”
Acts 20:28

The primary mission of the Parish Life Commission remains reaching out to those seeking a church home and showing interest in our church, and then welcoming and involving those new members into our church. Our secondary goal is to help maintain a vibrant and nurturing church life by means of Sunday morning refreshments and special event gatherings and celebrations.

We are thankful for our Membership Committee: Judy Hoffman, Alesia Peck, Connie Law and Claire McCollough. These ladies generously assist our Commission on a weekly basis collecting pew pads and reporting visitors. They also make face to face contact with visitors and those showing interest in joining our church family following up with a personal note of welcome. They also meet once a year for the annual review of our church membership rolls, which is not an easy task. These efforts are invaluable to our Commission and we praise them! From their labor we bear the fruits of a New Member Sunday!

Once again we are very grateful for our Hospitality Committee under the leadership of Chrissy Plumb. Thanks to Chrissy and her volunteers we have a great source of assistance and refreshment for our larger gatherings and special events. There is always room for more volunteers and there is no obligation - you simply will receive an email of what is needed and

can sign up if you wish. Please see Chrissy if you are interested. We are a fun and talented group!

On February 7th, our Church welcomed our Interim Pastor, Rev. Susan Gibson. After a special service full of wonderful music and prayer, a light luncheon was served. Easter 2016 was indeed a glorious day at our church! Parish Life, and our Hospitality Committee hosted a special brunch after the service.

We were thrilled to have 6 new members join Wilbraham United Church last April. We enthusiastically welcomed them and their families with a special Worship Service led by Rev. Susan Gibson and afterwards in Fellowship Hall cake and refreshments were served in their honor. They have already lent their time and talents to the church and we thank them for their stewardship.

Parish Life has the pleasure to host our Church's Annual Homecoming Sunday in September and warmly welcome members back from busy summer schedules with fellowship and refreshments.

Wilbraham United Church observed its 225th / 275th Anniversary in 2016. On Thanksgiving Sunday, November 20th Parish Life along with Hospitality hosted a very special celebration! It was a delicious way to commemorate our church's history and we thank all who attended and everyone who prepared the tasty food.

Another anniversary was celebrated in 2016 - our own Mark Jacobson marked 20 years of dedicated service to our congregation. In October, Parish Life and Hospitality had the honor of serving his "favorites" in fellowship hall after a wonderful service of music and worship. We even served an Italian rum cake! It was a fun and yummy way to show our appreciation for all he does!

The lack of volunteers to sign up and host Fellowship Hour continues to be a problem. We want to thank all of those who hosted in 2016 - you contribute so much to the life of the church with your efforts! We encourage more of you to host, there are directions posted in the kitchen closet; you can ask one of us on PL to help; or you can buddy up with another friend from the church; and store-bought cookies and crackers are more than acceptable !

Thankfully, our church commissions hosted one Sunday a month, in which they were able to be highlighted for their good works. "Spotlight on Commission Sunday" was very successful (in our eyes) and we hope to have the continued support from our commissions in 2017.

Respectively submitted by the 2016 Parish Life Commission,
Lesley Tarbell (chair), Tina Bazarian, Heather Weinberg, Rena Troughton,
Jocelyn Roy and Kim Neelans

PHYSICAL OPERATIONS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Snow plowed, grass cut, vacuum, paint, plumbing, storage, table and chair set up, cooking, cleaning, wash windows, learn about the Safe Church Policy, fix the stairs, watch the budget, meet with Bill (you supply the last name), repair this, fix that, take notes, read e-mails, a guest speaker on Sunday, the Holly Fair, another meeting and do it all over again!

The Physical Operations Commission teams up with our Building Superintendent, Bill Howell,

to provide the necessary drive and perseverance to keep this building going. Wilbraham United Church is a spacious facility that sees a wide variety of use by many individuals and groups. It plays an important part in our missions and is a great opportunity and responsibility. Think of the diverse people we welcome to our doors -- pre-school, youth groups, worshippers, yoga enthusiasts, Thrift Shop supporters, Holly Fair vendors, shoppers and volunteers, Thanksgiving Day road racers, new comers and well, the rest of us, too. That is the short list. And, our building responds well -- it is welcoming, accommodating and versatile -- thanks to your generous support.

As our commission members grow in our learning about how the building works and the interactions of members, staff and the community, we have come to appreciate the care necessary to maintain and make this place thrive. Major events this year included repair of the furnace. This repair has also improved our ability to program and regulate it to be ever more efficient. The stair replacement of 2015 was not at top quality and this year saw a replacement by the contractor that is much better at dealing with the usual rain and snow. We also have significant improvements to the stone steps in front of the church.

There are many behind the scenes efforts that keep things going. We are thankful for the task forces and individuals that have concentrated on the needs of our church such as deep cleaning and lawn care.

With all the everyday concern for nuts and bolts, it is refreshing to remind ourselves that this is also a sacred place.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Timpson

Chair, Physical Operations Commission

WORSHIP AND MUSIC COMMISSION 2016

The 2016 commission members are Patricia Colkos, Michelle McBride, Herb Vieira and Deborah Trimble with Rev. Susan Gibson and Mark Jacobson. This commission is charged with scheduling ushers, liturgists, and greeter volunteers for each week's Sunday service. It also provides support for the Minister and Music Director with regard to Worship. The Worship Commission organizes and arranges for guest ministers and laity to lead worship when the Minister is away.

In 2016 we were fortunate to have many dedicated church member volunteers who served as Ushers (30), Liturgists (12), greeters (20), and flower delivery (11). The commission thanks to all who served throughout the year. We are always looking for more volunteers.

This was the year for special services and celebrations!! We began the year by welcoming the Rev Susan Gibson as our interim minister on January 25th.

Our Ash Wednesday service began with a pot luck supper followed by our service in Fellowship Hall. This was led by Rev. Susan Gibson.

Rev. Gibson brought to us a reader's theater program called "Voices of the Cross" for our Palm Sunday service. The Seder supper and our Maundy Thursday service was a combined effort this year. Good Friday service this year was hosted by The Hampden Federated church. Our Easter service was at 10am with our communion table set with the symbols of the Resurrection. In April, our choir combined with the Springfield Unitarian Universalist Church choir to perform a rock cantata, "The Creation". On April 3rd, both choirs performed at the Springfield church. On April 10th, the choirs brought the music to our Wilbraham Church. The cantata was performed during the church services.

With the help of Marge Trimble and Bill Howell, our Earth Day service was followed with a tree planting in the front of the church. There were symbols of planting during the worship with a litany at the tree planting led by Rev. Gibson.

A dedication of the stained-glass window was held in May. The Bliss family were the original donors of this window. Will Blomerth, as part of his Eagle Scout project, and a few church members helped to restore this beautiful window. It can now be seen outside Fellowship Hall. Summer services were held at 9:30 a.m. Substitute pulpit coverage was provided by Deb Trimble, Rev. Louis Mitchell, Paul Nesbit, and Rev. Tom Howells. We are grateful to our lay leaders who took the time to share their faith with us. Homecoming Sunday was held on September 11th to welcome our church families back from their summer vacations. Rev. David Calhoun, the Methodist Area Minister, led our service on Sept. 25th.

In October, we celebrated 20 years of service with Mark Jacobson. Thanks to our Parish Life ministry, a special reception was held after our church service. We are blessed with the outstanding leadership of Mark Jacobson in our music ministry.

Our Congregational Society celebrated its 275th anniversary and it was the 225th anniversary of the Wilbraham Methodist congregation. Our theme for this celebration was "Giving Joyful Thanks". Beginning with Sunday, September 25th, history moments and memories of our church were shared by members of all ages during Sunday worship, culminating in the celebration of anniversaries during the November 20th Thanksgiving service. John McCullough, who is now the head of Church World Service and former associate pastor of Wilbraham United Church, was our guest preacher.

Our Advent Services featured the lighting of our advent wreath. Six church families assisted with the lighting of the wreath during these services.

On December 4th, a joint service was held welcoming Laura Everett, the head of the Massachusetts Council of Churches to our pulpit. This was a joint service along with Christ the King Lutheran and Epiphany Episcopal church including elements from all the represented faiths.

On December 18th, Advent and the Christmas story was told with the presentation of our Christmas pageant. The pageant, under the joint leadership of Mark Jacobson and Kim Neelans, included an inter-generational cast, the Handbell choir, the Junior choir, the Senior choir, our Sounds of Service band, and guest musicians. It was followed by a delicious coffee hour. A special mention should be made of the beautiful holiday décor provided by the "church mice" and our organist Mark Jacobson. Three Christmas Eve Services – a family service at 4pm with

the Junior choir, the candlelight service at 7:30pm with the Handbell choir and the Senior choir, and the 11pm service were held.

Mark has enriched the music of the handbell choir with the purchase of a three-octave set of hand chimes. The choir is enjoying the challenge of the new instruments, the junior choir has learned how to play them and the music they contribute to has been well received.

The Worship commission has continued to periodically utilize the niche in the Narthex as a “Worship Center”. We have highlighted themes such as Social Action, Love in Action (highlighting the services our members and friends participate in), Thankfulness, and Saints in our Congregation in this Worship Center.

It has been a pleasure sharing in the planning of our worship and music with our two inspirational leaders Rev. Susan Gibson and Mark Jacobson!!

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Colkos and Deborah Trimble

MUSIC MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT 2016

The Music Ministry continues to serve The Church as an enthusiastic band of merry-makers committed to elevating our corporate worship experience through musical leadership and offerings to almighty God. Approximately forty different people comprise four groups; the Adult Choir, the Junior Choir, the Hand Bell Choir, and the “Sound of Service” band. Several people are in more than one group.

Throughout the church program year we punctuate holydays and milestones with special music. This year in particular seemed to be busy. Just after Easter we presented a Rock Cantata, “The Creation” with the combined choirs of the Universalist Society and Wilbraham United Church. We hosted a Handbell Workshop and Concert presented by the Merrimack Valley Ringers. We had several joint Services with The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany and Christ the King Lutheran, combining musical forces, once to acknowledge national tragedy, and a second time to hear Rev Laura Everett speak on common issues. In the Fall we celebrated 225/275 year anniversaries of the UMC and UCC churches with glorious music and the appropriate fanfare.

My own 20th anniversary was acknowledged with extravagant generosity and too much fanfare. I don’t have the words to express the depth of my gratitude.

The year ended as it always does; with our Christmas Pageant. This particular event combines all of our forces and many parents, children and behind the scenes workers. It takes a village to raise a Music Ministry. We welcome new members ALWAYS into our circle!

Bell Choir

(limited number of positions, but we could use two more people)
Meets Thursdays from 7:00 to 7:45 pm

Adult Choir

Joining this group could quite possibly be the best decision you make all year.
We rehearse on Thursday nights, right after Bell Choir from 7:45 to 9:00 pm

Junior Choir

Music, games, snacks and a chicken named Wilber all can be found on Sat. from 10 – 11 am

Praise Band

Singers, shakers, strummers and rockers, all are welcome! Rehearsal times vary. Just ask!

It is a pleasure to be here! The staff is fantastic; the congregation is incredibly supportive and encouraging; “my” choirs are skillful, talented and dedicated. Thank you all. I thank God for the privilege of serving as your organist and choir director and I thank God for this place called Wilbraham United Church.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mark Jacobson,
Director of Music

REPORT OF ALTAR FLOWER COMMITTEE – 2016

Memorial Altar Flowers grace our altar during the weekly Sunday service. During 2016 coast remained constant at a single arrangement - \$40 and double arrangements in the Memorial Urns - \$45. The sign up chart is located in the Narthex on the left side of the Missions bulletin board.

During 2016, our church was fortunate to have Memorial Altar Flowers donated for the Easter and Christmas holidays. Our supplier, Western Growers out of West Springfield continues to furnish us with quality, healthy plants. The small profit made from these donations is in turn used to buy boutonnieres/corsages for new members and for ushers during special services, rosebuds for new babies throughout the year, and outdoor wreaths on the four main doors – also supplied by Western Growers.

This year we used an artfully designed silk arrangement made by Mark Giza, of Mark Henry Florists only once, when Mark closed his shop to attend big happenings in Hollywood. This arrangement, made in 2007, is stored in the flower room when not in use and is covered to retain its vibrant colors.

Normally, since 2015 if there is no one signed up for any given week, a generous donation by Steve and Rebecca Kenniston is to be used in lieu of the silk arrangement. On these weeks, the arrangement is dedicated to our late parishioner, Susan T. Kenniston. With this donation, live flowers are available, Mark Henry Florists benefit with the commerce and some of our members or friends enjoy the flowers after the service. Situations that do not happen with the silk arrangement!

During the week prior to the Sunday service, the office contacts the person listed for the coming Sunday to find out to whom the flowers will be dedicated and the wording requested for the bulletin.

After the service, the altar flowers are delivered to Church family members or friends in need of a little cheer following a hospital stay or an illness, as a birthday wish to those who have reached a milestone year, or for various reasons of goodwill.

Wilbraham United Church thanks our team of volunteers who fill a weekly rotation within each month, and give their time and energy to deliver the flowers -- and from all accounts, cheerful visits to the designated recipients.

This committee is under the direction of the Worship Commission, and the following are the people who help with the deliveries either as regularly scheduled specific weeks of the month, or as substitutes. Mary Blomerth and her friend, Judy Kieliszek, Gail Wholley, Andrea Stephenson, Connie Law, Gennie Keddy, Nan Shepard, Norma Hill, Nanette Bernard, Janet Neiderfringer, Monica Gubala, Ann Lynch, Jennie Kinder, Ed McCorkindale, and Jo Miner.

Respectfully submitted, Laurie Milne, Parish Administrator

MEMORIAL FUND ANNUAL REPORT 2016

During 2016 memorial donations were received in memory of Yvonne Fife, June Carmen, Richard Berry, Eunice Lamb, Virginia Swallow, Loni and Van Brower and Ed Schenk.

Loved ones choose how the gifts will be used: the Unrestricted Endowment Fund; specific funds, such as Scholarship, Community and World Ministry, or Property; existing working funds, such as the Music Fund, Memorial Garden, Habitat Ministry Team, etc.; or specific directed gifts.

The Wilbraham United Church appreciates the generous gifts given in memory of former members and friends.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Peck, Memorial Fund Secretary

MEMORIAL GARDEN ANNUAL REPORT 2016

The purpose of this ministry team is to look after and care for the Memorial Garden, which is the space provided for a churchyard burying place.

Hanging on the wall in the church narthex, there is a large wooden memorial plaque in the shape of a tree containing the names of those who are interred or scattered in the Garden.

In 2016, there were two burials in the garden – our sister, Virginia R. Swallow, and our brother, Edward J. Schenk. There were no scatterings during 2016.

Also, in 2016, Bill Howell installed a memorial bench given by Catherine Tucker in memory of her son, Donald W. Tucker.

Our Memorial Garden adds beauty and peace for their families and the Wilbraham United Church. Anyone interested in more information concerning our Memorial Garden should contact the office.

Respectfully submitted, Laurie Milne, Parish Administrator

WOMEN'S EVENING FELLOWSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2016

The purpose of the Women's Evening Fellowship shall be to provide opportunities for sharing in Christian fellowship and to promote service to the church and the community.

We do this service in many ways:

- We sponsor the angel tree where gifts of clothing are donated to needy children.
- We provide Thanksgiving dinner at Prospect Street Shelter.
- We donate a "least coin" collection to Church Women United.
- We serve lunch at Loaves and Fishes.
- We prepare and serve lunch before our annual meeting.

Our monetary contributions went to the following in 2016:

- Wilbraham United Church.
- Vacation Bible Camp at W.U.C.
- United Mothers.
- The Indian Orchard Survival Center.
- Dress a Girl.
- Loaves and Fishes.
- Prospect Street Shelter.
- Billy Riordan Memorial Medical Clinic in Malawi Africa. (Mags Riordan (mom) and Suzanne Stempka Shea visited our meeting in 2015 and shared Mag's journey depicted in the book "This Is Paradise")

We had a variety of meetings this past year:

- January was "Girls Night Out".
- In March, Reverend Jeffrey Erb led us in Lenten reflections.
- In April, Marge Tremble shared her slide presentation of the history of the Wilbraham United Church.
- Our May meeting was our Annual Meeting at LaCucina Restaurant.
- Our September meeting was a pot luck supper (we like to eat).
- In October, Andrea Luttrell, a dietician for Big Y, inspired us to eat healthy.
- In November, Detective Alison Metcalfe and her adorable dog, Jamison shared the story of how they found each other.

Women's Evening Fellowship meets on the fourth Tuesday, eight months of the year. Our meeting include a devotional reading, wonderful refreshments and a short business meeting .We have a speaker or hands on crafts and lots of friendship.

Respectfully submitted, Gail Wholley, President

LEADERSHIP COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Thank you, thank you, thank you to the many church members who volunteer to give of their time and talents to serve on our church commissions, as officers and on the many small mission groups in the church. While most positions have been filled during 2016, there have been openings in some areas all year that have been difficult to fill resulting in some commissions without a full complement of members for at least part of the year. In addition, the Auditor positions went unfilled for the year so the audit of church financial records and control procedures was not performed during 2016.

Leadership Commission met throughout the year to fill open positions remaining at the start of the year and several that opened during the year as the result of resignations. During the past four months we have met more frequently to find volunteers for open commission positions and for church officers for the 2017 year. We are pleased to report that many of our members have stepped forward once again and agreed to give generously of their time and talents to serve as officers or as members of the nine commissions that serve the extensive missions and administrative needs of our church so very well.

A few very important positions still remain open as we go into Annual Meeting. These include three of the six volunteer positions on Parish Life Commission. This is a critical commission that is seriously understaffed. This commission is responsible to identify and follow up with candidates for church membership and also for coffee hour and other celebratory luncheons. There are also three Deacon positions open. Deacons are responsible for assisting with communion services and assisting at the induction services for new members.

In addition there are ongoing needs for volunteers to assist in other areas of church missions and operation. Included are needs to assist with the filming and editing of our Sunday services for broadcast on Public Access television. Members who cannot attend church services depend on these broadcasts, as well as other interested members of our community. Other areas of need include Loaves and Fishes and assisting with administrative office functions. These volunteer opportunities are not difficult or time consuming.

Leadership Commission will continue to search for volunteers for the open positions to maintain a full slate on Church commissions so we can meet the essential needs of our church as we move forward in 2017. Can you join so many of your friends and neighbors to volunteer to give of your time to fill our remaining open positions? It would be most appreciated.

Respectfully submitted:

Tom Toman, Bill McCollough, Joyce Pierangelo, Suzanne Zeckhausen

Leadership Commission Nominations and Continuing Commission Members for 2017

Terms Ending Jan 2018

Terms Ending Jan 2019

Governing Board Members-At-Large (4)

Nancy Peck
Bill McCollough

*Nancy Krawczynski
*John Colkos

* new term of two years
one year extension
+ new one year term

Leadership Commission (4)

Joyce Pierangelo
Tom Toman

*Bill McCollough
*Suzanne Zeckhausen

Deacons: all two year terms
ending 2019 with unlimited
number of terms

Visioning Commission (4)

+ _____
+ _____

* _____
* _____

All commissions limited to re-election
to two consecutive two year
terms (total of 6 years) with possible
one year extension (repeatable)

Worship & Music Commission (4)

Deb Trimble
Patricia Colkos

*Michelle McBride
*Herb Vieira

Church Officers one year terms
w/limits

Education Commission (4)

Amy Crocker
Tammy Trudeau

*Shelly Capen
*Gail Wholley

Moderator: 3 consecutive terms
Treasurer: 9 consecutive terms
Church Clerk: 4 consecutive terms
Auditors: 9 consecutive terms
One year (repeatable) extension
to all above

Parish Life Commission (6)

+ _____
+ _____
+ _____

*Kim Jones
*Jocelyn Roy
*Sandy Harris

Outreach Commission (4)

Nan Bernard
Kelcie Knowles
Phyllis Walsh
Ruth Karlson

*Becky McCracken
*Monica Gubala

**Moderator
(Chair of Governing Board)**

Physical Operations Commission (4)

Hunter Marosits
Graeme Bazarian

*Tim Timpson
*Jocelyn Roy

+Bill Trudeau
Church Clerk
+Nan Shepard
Treasurer
+Joseph Stiefel
Auditors
+John Colkos
+Carol Piel

Human Relations Commission (4)

Judy Hoffman
Gloria Russell
+Kathy Timpson

*Carol Piel
*Edna Colcorde

**Representatives to Council of
Churches of Greater Springfield**
Poppy Nelson
Terry Nelson

Stewardship Commission (4)

Kim Jones
Kim Ryan

*April Beston
*David Pierangelo

Finance Commission (4)

Matt Capen
#Lee Miner

*April Beston
*Larry Harris
*Lisa Fallon

Deacons term to Jan. 2019

Ed Bernard
Nanette Bernard
Richard Brown
John Colkos

Patricia Colkos
Lisa Fallon
Ellen Farquharson
Kirk Farquharson

William Lynch
Sharon McAbee
Michele McBride
Poppy Nelson

Terry Nelson
Nan Shepard
John Tarbell
Lesley Tarbell
Herb Vieira

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2016

The reconfigured Technology Committee has an expanded membership to seven, which has allowed us to tackle the many upgrades needed to our church's technology. We began meeting in August and since then have completed several actions that have allowed the church staff to be more efficient with more up-to-date technology at their disposal.

Items completed to date:

- We have contracted with JBIT Solutions to provide both hardware and software support and installation. They are also contracted to provide ongoing computer support as needed.
- Computer System Upgrade for the Staff – both Hardware and software. Computers for all staff members have been replaced with newer models, and a more up-to-date version of Windows and Office software installed.
- Internet service has been changed over from Verizon to Charter
- Filming/Editing computer has been upgraded along with the software used for this activity
- WI-FI signal has been extended to reach throughout all areas of the church. In addition, the load to the signal has been enhanced enough to the point where our vendors at the Holly Fair are able to use the signal during the day of the fair without issues.
- Additional Assisted Listening Devices have been purchased and made available for our members who need them during worship services

Most of the funding for the upgrades were made possible by a portion allotted from the Capitol Funds account. However, we would not have been able to complete these projects without the donation of both materials and time provided by church and committee members including:

7 used computers from ICNE	1 used computer from JBIT
1 new computer (\$529.11)	\$3,000 from a member donation
7 Assisted Listening Devices (\$811.95)	

Committee members who have been on-hand to test WI-FI signals and monitor the automatic back up of data, assist church staff with training and working through minor issues.

The ongoing projects still to be addressed are the movement of our email server and web hosting to a more accessible entity, an update of our church's website, installing an uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) and a Rack and Patch Panel in the office to clean up wiring and other pieces of equipment that are currently sitting loose on a shelf.

Finally, we still rely very heavily on the good natured and humorous Joseph Stiefel who shares his knowledge, time and energy to help us work through questions and problems as they occur. It is our hope that as the committee members become more knowledgeable and JBIT eases into a "Day Two" support model, that Joseph will not always be our single point of dependency, and that he will have more time to devote to his other hobbies.

Technology Committee:

Tom Toman (Chair), Larry Harris, Paul Krawczynski, Steve Kenniston, Joseph Stiefel
Deb Trimble, Betsy Johnsen, Lee Miner (liaison from Finance)

PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR ANNUAL REPORT 2016

My position as Public Relations Coordinator started with a bang in late November 2015, when vandals broke into the church and did several thousand dollars' worth of damage. I sent iPhone photos of the damage to local papers, was interviewed by their reporters, and directed them to the appropriate contacts at the church. Shortly thereafter I was asked to do 11th-hour publicity for the upcoming Holly Fair, and my job as PR Coordinator was in full swing as I spent numerous hours figuring out what still needed to be done (which was almost everything!) and getting it done as efficiently as possible. Fortunately, it all worked out!

My contract stated that I would provide professional public relations services to promote church events and activities for a fee of \$300 per month, which at \$25 per hour works out to an average of 3 hours per week. Payment is as an independent contractor and no withholding or benefits. Sample duties described in the contract include taking photographs, writing articles and press releases, updating Facebook and the church website as appropriate, and encouraging commissions and church members to contribute information about their events and take their own photographs.

One of my first activities was to ask Bill Trudeau to order a new outdoor letterboard sign, as our old one had been glued and re-glued so many times it was nearly impossible to work with. This small investment has enabled the use of the outdoor sign to promote special worship services, visiting pastors, the Christmas pageant, thrift shop hours and closures, concerts, seminars, Vacation Bible Camp, food drives, and more.

My previous work as a freelance writer for the Springfield *Republican* helped me to get numerous full-length feature stories and photographs about WUC published in the newspaper, primarily in the Wednesday "Plus" section. Since December 2015, these have included our 2015 ecumenical Christmas Pageant (Dec 2015); the ecumenical One Warm Coat drive (Jan 2016); Rev. Susan Gibson's arrival at WUC (Mar 2016); "The Creation" concert (Mar 2016); Yearning for God seminar (Apr 2016); Many Hands, One Heart Fountain Park food drive (June 2016); and Wilbraham United Players' 60th anniversary (Sep 2016).

In addition, many of my press releases and photographs have been printed anonymously in the *Republican*, *Wilbraham-Hampden Times*, and *The Reminder*, or have served as background material for other reporters' stories. These include, but are not limited to, announcements about Easter week services, Thrift Shop charitable causes, the church's 275th anniversary, the Thrift Shop \$2.75 bag sale and food drive, the 2016 One Warm Coat drive, Holly Fair, and many others.

Also, in 2016 I took photographs at several church events for Facebook and the *Branch-Line*, including the dedication of Will Blometh's stained glass window project, the Holly Fair, WUC 275th anniversary with Rev. John McCullough, the Thrift Shop \$2.75 bag sale, Mark Jacobson's 20th anniversary celebration, Easter worship service, Christmas pageant, WUP's Pirates of Penzance, missionary Belinda Forbes' presentation, ecumenical service for Orlando shooting victims, service honoring 40+-year members of WUC, and many others.

In addition to the newspapers and Facebook, I've been regularly posting WUC events on local access television, the church website, craigslist.org and masslive.com; sending all-WUC and area-church email blasts; and also created a church Twitter account (which is not proving as popular as Facebook and probably is not worth the effort.)

I learned a lot in my first year as PR Coordinator. In 2017, I hope to continue to provide excellent public relations services to the church while scaling back my hours somewhat to more accurately reflect the agreed-upon expectations and payment [I really went above and beyond this year!]. I also hope that the commissions will be able to provide more of their own photographs, as unfortunately I can't be available to attend every event – unless, of course, I was hired as a *full-time* Public Relations and Event Coordinator.....

Respectively submitted,
Dianne B. Lyons, Public Relations Coordinator

PRAYER / STUDY GROUP ANNUAL REPORT 2016

We are a small group that meets on Thursdays at 4 PM in the Library. We make a Prayer List Each week and pray for those on the list each day. We maintain confidentiality for those on the list. In addition, we study and discuss books and other reading material, sharing leadership.

We welcome others to join our group.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Bennett, Kathie Birkhaeuser, Pam Burch, Joyce Emerle, Ellen Farquharson, Judy Hoffman, Connie Law

CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY ~ NOMINATIONS FOR 2017

Moderator:	* John Tarbell	3 Years
Trustees:	Marge Trimble	3 Years
	_____	2 Years
	_____	1 Year
Clerk:	* Herbert Vieira	3 Years
Treasurer:	† Joseph Stiefel	1 Year
Nominating Committee:	Monica Gubala	2 Years
	_____	2 Years
	_____	2 Years
Delegates to Hampden Association of the MA Conference of the UCC:	* Deb Trimble	1 Year
	* Paul Nesbit	1 Year
Delegates to the MA State Conference of the UCC:	* Paul Nesbit	1 Year
	* Deb Trimble	1 Year

Respectfully submitted,
Nominating Committee

- * Nominees to be voted upon
- ## Volunteer nominated from the Floor at the Meeting
- @ Position remains unfilled in Slate as adopted
- † Treasurer of Wilbraham United Church; serves as Treasurer of the Congregational Society per Bylaws

NOMINATIONS FOR MEMORIAL METHODIST CHURCH - 2017

Recording Secretary	Alesia Peck
Lay Leader	Kim Neelans
Members to	{_____}
Annual Conference	{_____}
Archives and History	_____
Race and Religion	Terry Nelson
Nominating Committee	_____
	Kim Neelans