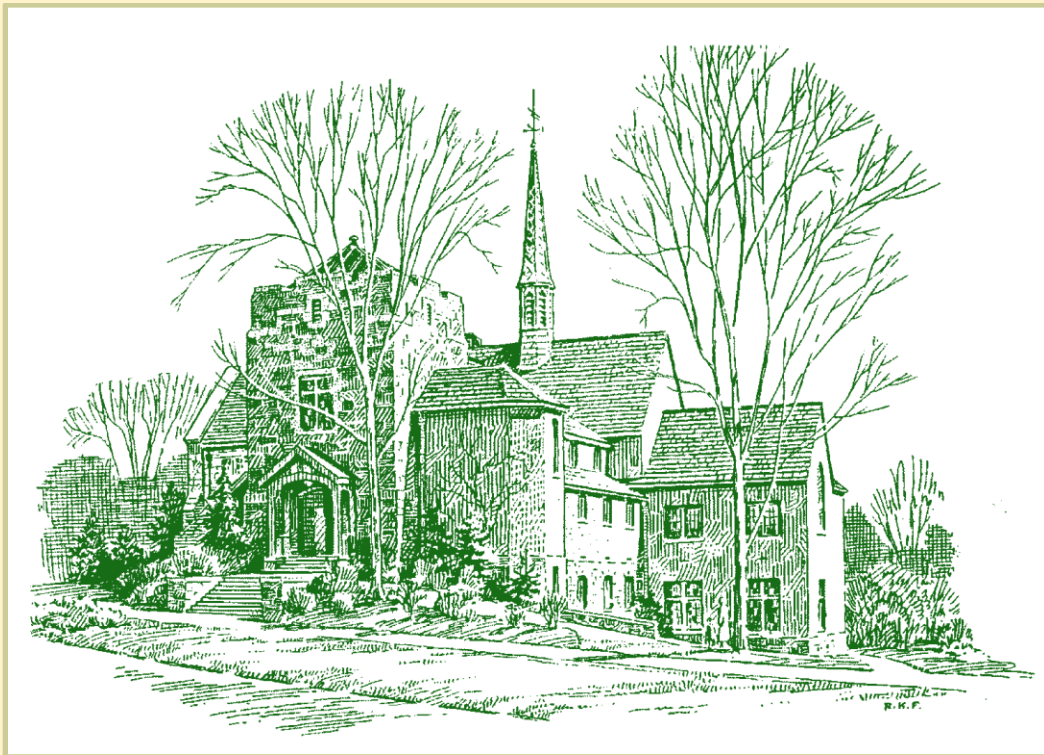


ANNUAL REPORT

2016-2016

(Please note this is a working document and that a final version will be made available for the annual meeting)



THE UNION CHURCH IN WABAN

ANNUAL MEETING
JUNE 5, 2016

OUR COVENANT

We, the members of The Union Church in Waban, true to our founding principle of being an inclusive church, covenant together to nourish and to sustain in our common life and practice a fully welcoming and affirming church for all persons. Welcoming all persons who seek to join with us in a commitment to love God and our neighbors, affirming the inclusive love of Jesus, we are open to all, without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ability or economic circumstance. We invite all to full participation in our worship, membership, leadership and life of this church.

ANNUAL MEETING
OF
THE UNION CHURCH IN WABAN

Sunday, June 5, 2016

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PASTORS REPORT – “IT’S ALL GIFT”

Sabbatical

We slipped the straps of our backpacks over our shoulders and headed out into the predawn darkness. It was day one in what would be a 30 day pilgrimage carrying us 500 miles across northern Spain. We were walking *El Camino de Santiago de Compostela (the Way of St. James)*, my husband and I during my sabbatical this past fall.

I was nervous. Did I have the mental and physical fortitude to meet the challenge of the path? All I had read said that the first day was the hardest. Would I be able to do it?

All of this was churning as we started out in silence in the darkness, head lamps sweeping in front of us as we scanned for a yellow arrow, then another, that marked out the way we were to walk.

As we left the town of Irun and started up the mountain that lay directly before us, my heart was pounding with exertion and also anxiety. And then I heard it quite clearly. I heard it not with my ears, but with my heart. A voice that said quite clearly, “It’s all gift.” And in hearing these words, suddenly all the anxiety and worry melted away. I realized I need not worry about my capacity, but only need embrace my intention, and in doing so I felt freed and literally drawn forward -- not by my own efforts, but by the embrace of something beyond me. It was thrilling, and the invitation I experienced that day stayed with me throughout each day of those 30 days that we walked.

I share this with you, because “It’s all gift” is not only what the sabbatical was, but what this last year and these past six years have been with you all.

When we let go of our own fears of “whether we have what it takes” and “whether we measure up”, when we relax into the truth that our very lives are a gift -- well, I have to say, beauty happens.

That is not to say it isn’t hard. I have never been so physically spent as I was on those first few days on the Camino. It takes effort and will and drive to walk in the Way, but when we dedicated the best of ourselves to the effort, we are carried to a place both physically and metaphorically that is beyond our wildest imaginings.

We as a church are walking in the Way. We are working hard, and bringing the best of ourselves into all we encounter. But we do so not with anxiety, but with gratitude. Not with fear, but with amazement. For we, too, are being carried to places and possibilities beyond our wildest imaginings. And let us never forget – “It’s all gift!”

Let me share with you some highlights of the year that may not be captured in other reports.

Worship

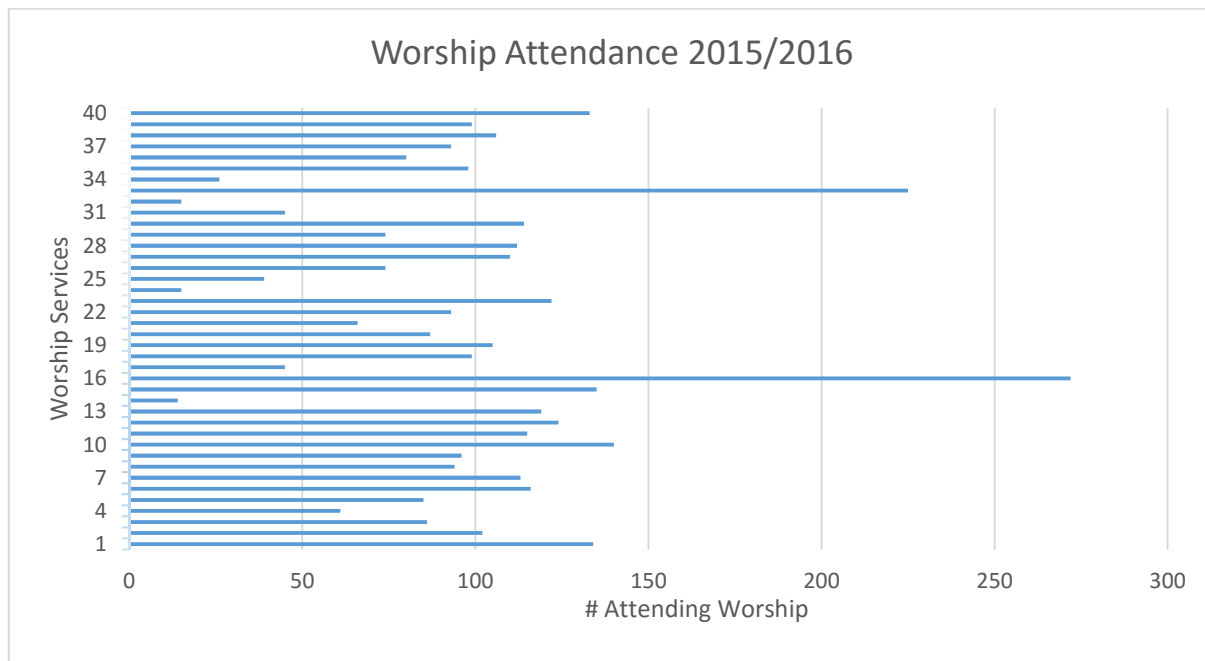
Creating meaningful worship continues to be of the upmost priority for staff, the Deacons and **Worship Team**. (To learn more about worship team, please see below). We seek to create a worship experience that weaves together our core values of inclusivity, child cherishing and mission and outreach mindedness. This year, we were intentional in the liturgy of our Christmas Eve and Easter Sunday Service to include times of movement and activity for our children, who are with us for the entirety of those two services.

During the Christmas Eve Service, the children created a Crèche Scene as the Christmas Story was told through Scripture and Song. For Easter Sunday, the children stayed forward during the Scripture reading and sermon and created butterflies that bore words of Good News (peace, love, hope, etc.). After the sermon, the children were invited to share that Good News with the

congregation by speaking the word on their butterfly and by decorating the sanctuary with the butterflies themselves. Similarly, we tried something new on Ash Wednesday. Having received a request from a family within the church to find a way to make that service more accessible to children, we held a pre-Ash Wednesday worship for kids at 6:30 p.m. using a liturgy that again was more interactive and accessible for the three children that were present.

In the coming year, I look forward to working closely with our Associate Pastor of Children, Youth and Family Ministries (should the congregation approve the position and call) and with the worship team in continuing to have worship be an invigorating and accessible experience for all ages.

Worship attendance has been strong this year. Our *average* attendance across all services (including special non-Sunday morning services), is 98 people (26 children, 65 adults, and 7 choir members) with a range from 14 on Blue Christmas to 272 on Christmas Eve. This compares with an *average* worship attendance of 102 people in 2014/2015 (with a range of 15 on Blue Christmas to 264 on Christmas Eve).



I mentioned above but would like to reiterate here as well, my gratitude to Rev. Dr. Christy Lang Hearlson for her leadership during the fall when I was away on Sabbatical. Worship was organized around the theme of “Reading the Scriptures Jesus Would Have Read”, where each Sunday explored different passages and stories from the Hebrew Scriptures.

I would also like to thank our ministerial intern Amy Clark Feldman for her worship leadership this year -- particularly during the two back-to-back Sundays of the February school vacation week when I was with the Nica travelers on the service trip. Thanks also to Rev. Enid Watson, who lead worship on April 3 during the Sunday of the All-Church Retreat; Rev. June Cooper on May 22, and our own Dan Drummond, who will preach for us on June 19.

Finally, in this year to come, staff, Worship Team and Deacons will continue to work together with the hope that everyone who comes into the sanctuary for worship will feel the love of God reflected

in the welcome they receive, will be nourished by music, word, prayer and silence, and will leave feeling more inspired and able to be an ambassador of God's love in the world in the week to come.

If you think you may be interested in joining in this good work by being a part of the Worship Team, please let me know. We'd be grateful for your presence.

All-Church Retreat

During April 1-3, 40 UCWers came together at Toah Nipi Intervarsity Retreat Center in Rindge, New Hampshire, to enjoy our All-Church Retreat.

The theme of the retreat was "Come Away! Finding rest, renewal and resilience." I am very grateful to our planning team (Diane Tillotson, Bart Kelso, Mark Smith, and Amy Clark Feldman).

It was our hope that in our time together we would find the rest, renewal and resilience that we need. Together we listened to Jesus' call to "Come away" and seek ways to honor rest and Sabbath-keeping in our daily lives. We entered into the story of Jesus calming the storm and explored how we, too, may be tossed about by fear, anxiety and worry, and how Jesus' call to faith leads us to calm. And we joined the disciples in the story of the feeding of the 5000 to reclaim a narrative not of scarcity but of abundance, not of isolation but of communion. Our time away led us into a deeper relationship not only with this UCW, but also with our God who loves us without end.

The agenda of the Retreat was as follows:

Friday Evening arrival

- **Dinner 5:30 – 6:00** The Townsend House, located at 2 Depot Street in Townsend: <http://townsendhouserestaurant.com/dinner/>
- **7:00-8:00 p.m.** – Check into rooms
- **8:00 --** Gather in dining room
 - **Pray**
 - **Sing**
 - **Step outside for a reflection under the stars** – "Come Away" Jesus says. What does that mean for each of us? What are we letting go of? Leaving behind in order to come away.
 - **Camino Slides** -- Mark and Stacy will share their slides and talk about what "coming away" on sabbatical meant for them.

Saturday

7:00 a.m. -- Walking meditation. 20 minutes. Meet at Hebron. (If rainy, we will meet inside for a meditative reading of scripture). Stacy

8:00 a.m. Breakfast

9:00 a.m. Saturday arrivals arrive by 9:00 and check in at the welcome table at Hebron.

10:00 – 12:00: Opening Plenary in the main meeting room in Hebron.

12:30 – 1:30: Lunch in the dining room.

1:30 – 3:30: Break-out sessions for adults and children. (details below)

Kid/youth programming (climbing wall will be staffed from 1:30 – 3:30)

- **Younger group:** Amy Clark Feldman and Soo Laski are leading programming for our younger friends. They will rock climb at 2:30.
- **Older kids:** Mark Smith is leading programming for our youth.
 - 1:30 – 2:30 – rock climbing
 - 2:30 – 3:30 – walk in woods to collect items for Sunday’s communion table with emphasis on climate issues

Adult Break-out Groups

(These two groups will be offered twice in 55 minute blocks so that everyone will have a chance to attend both if so desired.)

- **“Why Rest”** – Bart Kelso. How good it must have felt to Jesus’ disciples when he said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” How we need to hear that, too! So, what is God’s design for working, and for getting the rest we need? How are we to find the balance needed in order to be both faithful and effective?
- **“Renewal and Resilience”** Stacy Swain will lead an exploration of how renewal and resilience are key to healthy thriving, and together we will create a “tool box” of practices from which to draw during times of stress and strain.

3:30 – 5:30 Open time to play and rest

We encourage you to enjoy this free time to go for a walk, share in a conversation, take a nap or simply sit on the deck and enjoy the view. Enjoy whatever will help you find rest, renewal and resilience.

We also hope to extend an invitation to:

- Bell ringer rehearsal – See Diane for anyone who is interested in ringing during worship in the morning.
- A nature walk with our resident naturalist Bart Kelso
- Gather informally to read poetry together
- Gather informally to talk about the challenges of parenting and to share support.
- All kid activity – most likely capture the flag... Hopefully some adults will join Mark Smith and help/play.

5:30 – 6:30 Dinner

7:00 Intergenerational fun!

- Gather on the deck outside (weather permitting) -- the dining hall for intergenerational event/ or if it is raining upstairs in Hebron for “Come Fly Away!” and “Keep that egg from breaking!”
- 8:00 – Bonfire at the fire pit to roast marshmallows, or charades, sing along and pretend s’more making if the weather is rainy.

Sunday:

7:00 a.m. -- Walking meditation – Stacy leads meet at Hebron

8:00 – 9:00 Breakfast.

9:00 – Break-out groups to prepare for worship. At the end of breakfast you will be invited to join one of four groups to help prepare for worship: music, liturgy, scripture, and decorating the space.

- Group 1, preparing the worship space – leader: Bart Kelso
- Group 2, music – leaders: Diane Tillotson and Mark Smith
- Group 3, liturgy – leader: Amy Clark Feldman
- Group 4, word – leader: Stacy Swain

10:00 – Worship that we create and celebrate together.

11:00 - Pack up and play till lunch. Please complete the evaluation at this time. Evaluation forms will be distributed after worship and collected at lunch.

12:30 – Lunch.

1:30 - Departure

Retreat Expenses		
Income		
	Registration Fees	3255
	Budgeted UCW	1000
Total income:		4255
Expenses		
	Food and Lodging	2871
	Materials - Amy	29
	Materials - Stacy	177.57
Total expenses:		3077.57
Balance:		1177.43

Pastoral Relations

I am grateful for the continued support of the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC). The purpose of the PRC is to *assist* in fostering a healthy relationship between the Pastor and the congregation in order to enhance the effectiveness of the church's mission. The focus of the PRC, therefore is more relational than task oriented and centers on providing support and feedback/communication. I am particularly grateful for leadership of Dan Drummond who has so diligently scheduled and facilitated our gatherings. Other members of the PRC include: Cindy Spertner, Jay O'Beirne, Annie Gatewood, and Alicia Collins.

Website

This year Alex Brown and our office manager, Aidan Cunningham worked, hard to update a new release of our website. The new release has greater flexibility on the home page, enabling timely posting of upcoming events, and is more user friendly on mobile devices. Please take a moment to go to the new site and give us your feedback.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Stacy Swain

CO-MODERATORS' REPORT

*Habakkuk 2:1-2
I will stand at my watchpost,
And station myself on the ramparts;
I will keep watch to see what God will say to me,
And what God will answer concerning my complaint.
Then the Lord answered me and said:
Write the vision;
Make it plain on tablets,
So that a runner may read it.
(so that a herald may run with it.)*

Over the past year, Council has been standing at the watchpost: we have been listening, discussing, debating, praying, and visioning. Today at the Annual Meeting, we are presenting the vision. We hope that we have made it plain - clear and strong - so that the herald, the congregation, may run with it.

We began the year with Stacy on a well-deserved sabbatical. We knew her strong leadership and her pastoral care would be greatly missed. We also knew that this was an opportunity for reflection and to test whether our congregation could support the growth that we have experienced during Stacy's tenure thus far.

Spiritually, we were challenged by our interim minister, Rev. Dr. Christy Lang Hearlson. During her sermon series on the ancient stories of the Old Testament, the stories that Jesus grew up with, we learned the importance of stories: how they ground us, how we can relate them to our own lives, how we can learn from them. We also learned that we are an integral part of the story and that together we have the power to write the next chapter in the story of our church life.

Council delved into the questions of how can we best live out our core values of being inclusive, child cherishing, and mission minded. How do we intertwine these values in all that we do? What is the best way, as a faith organization, to support these values? To answer these questions, we realized that our new structure of teams, rather than the traditional committee structure, was not working as well as we had hoped. While requiring fewer meetings and allowing for more spirit-driven involvement, the teams have not provided the adequate infrastructure that our growing church needs. Concurrently, conversations with the congregation revealed and reaffirmed what child cherishing specifically means to us, including the importance of mission in our children's lives, and nurturing the spirit of inclusivity among ourselves and in our welcome of others.

So, the vision is to faithfully live out our core values and walk humbly with our God. To support this we are calling an Associate Pastor of Children, Youth and Family Ministries and have created two PACS (programming, action, communication, strategy/support): the CC PAC (Child cherishing) and the Mission Outreach PAC. These groups will be comprised of a pastor, a moderator, and co-chair, as well as any other interested congregant. They will be responsible for coordinating all of the corresponding programming teams, while providing them with the support and vision of the larger church value.

The council will continue to meet, but on a quarterly basis, and will continue to monitor the fiscal health and strategic vision of the church -- being sure that the ministries of the church continue to be sustaining and growing our core values of being inclusive, child cherishing and outreach and mission minded. Council will also support and develop HR, communications, building care and tenant relations, and help support and guide Stacy, worship team and Deacons, as they plan worship and offer adult education and spiritual formation programming.

While we had not yet finished writing the new chapter, council felt our community had much to celebrate. We knew we were "Growing Together [and] Growing Stronger" and that there is nothing more energizing than having a party. Well over a hundred of us, young, old and in between, gathered to enjoy dinner, music, and conversation. Some of the conversation was directed, some spontaneous. We celebrated Stacy and her care of us over the past six years. We have grown and written an exciting outline for the next chapter in our lives together as a faith community. We look forward to welcoming our new Associate Pastor and working with him or her and all of you in living out a life of service, care, joy and faith.

Respectfully submitted,
Annie Gatewood and Karen Weisgerber

Clerk's Report

Church Membership

Active membership, July 1, 2015 216
(Please note that Kathy Malone, Jaap van Reijendam, Brent Coull and Jill Coull also joined the church on June 21, 2015 and were not included in the final membership count in the 2014 -2015 clerk's report. They have been added here.)

New members

(Reception on January 17, 2016) 3
Lisa Crocket
James Cooke
Kathleen Hobson

New members

(Reception on March 20, 2016) 4
Beth Beaumont
Alan Cody
Haiden Huskamp
Robin Toone

New members (Expected on June 26, 2016) 4

Christy Desire de Saravia
Christiane Saravia-Paloma
Carol Bascom-Slack
Frank Slack

Member transfers 0

Deaths 0

Active membership, June 7, 2016 227

Services Conducted

Sunday Worship Services 43
Summer Services 4
Waban Health Services 10
Special Services 4
(Blue Christmas, Ash Wednesday,
Maundy Thursday, and Holy Saturday)
Confirmation Services 0
Weddings 1
June 4, 2016 - Veronica Beaumont and
David Ledin
Memorial Services / Internments 0

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra DaDalt, Clerk

Reports of the Teams
of
The Union Church in Waban

BUILDING TEAM

We've accomplished a lot this year, and look forward to continuing our efforts in maintaining our church home, inside and out! Along with the building team are many church members who committed themselves to complete the following:

- For fire safety reasons, an auto close door mechanism for Little Hale room was installed.
- Hall carpet leading to reception room and Stacy's office carpet cleaned.
- The damaged ceiling tiles in the women's bathroom, across from Pastor's study, were repaired, and a new facet was installed to replace the broken one.
- The Crocker Chapel major overhaul! Largely paid for by money left to the church from the Crocker family. The walls were completely done over, carpet strip removed from floor, ceiling patched, floor sanded and refinished, ceiling and walls painted.
- The storage closet on the stage, and the large back wall leading down to Riverside Children's Center, were heavily damaged due to ice dams during the winter of 2015. Those two areas have been repaired - paid for in large part by our insurance coverage.
- Repairs done to the crumbling wall in the Memorial Chapel.
- The Robe Room wall that had extensive peeling and crumbling has been repaired.
- Repairs to the water-damaged ceiling and walls in the Sanctuary.
- Slate roof repairs.
- The Vestry has been repainted.
- The corridor leading to the Reception Room has been repainted.
- Removal of old papers, books: an old organ and broken furniture were hauled away.
- The doors on the main floor were painted.
- New LED bulbs were installed in the Chancel and Sanctuary.

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

Replacing light bulbs, unclogging drains, adjusting door locks and fixing "stuff" that gets broken, cleaning and upkeep of places not contracted with cleaning company. Just to mention a few!

Our grounds require a lot of work as well! There's mowing, weeding, planting, watering, shoveling, sweeping and hauling! Just to mention a few!

TENANTS

We have enjoyed good relations with our tenants!!

Riverside asked for permission to install shade umbrellas while replacing their playground turf. Council approved this action. Riverside has asked to install a new dishwasher. We will discuss further, explore options over the summer. With Riverside, we will review the cleaning services. Riverside paid for the key card entry system and its installation, but we did pay for our own entry system keys. It's been quite handy!

Our Taiwanese community are a pleasure to work with! They are enjoying the use of the building, and are very eager to help, when asked. They would like to purchase some bookcases to be put in one of the classrooms. An appropriate place for them can be made over this summer.

LOOKING FORWARD

We have been advised that the slate roof will need to be replaced. We will explore options and costs.

There have been countless folks helping with many of these tasks, and we thank you for your dedication and hard work in caring for our church, inside and out.

Respectfully submitted,

Building Team

Jeff Hadley, Tom Humphrey, Frank Laski, Scott Laughlin, James MacDonald, Judy Nagle and Robert Nagle.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Our Pastor may have walked *El Camino de Santiago de Compostela* (a pilgrimage across northern Spain) while on Sabbatical this fall, but we as a congregation and as the Christian Education program in particular have been on an equally amazing journey. This journey has asked a lot of all of us. It has not been without its difficulties, but it is one that has brought us to amazing vistas and that has ultimately been -- transformative.

You will remember that at our annual meeting last year (2015), as a congregation we decided to dedicate \$9,000 for the 2015-2016 year to enable us to hire a lead teacher for each of our four classrooms. We believed that having a consistent presence in each classroom would provide continuity for the children and enable congregants' greater ease in volunteering in the classrooms. At that same meeting, we acknowledged this was an exploration rather than a plan etched in stone.

Recruitment for lead teachers proved difficult, despite our outreach to local seminaries and responses to applicant interest over the summer. As a result, we did not have lead teachers as we entered the fall.

Our efforts were then placed into strengthening the teaching team model. Clusters of dedicated volunteers surrounding each classroom began to take shape, with teaching duos providing continuity for the rotation through the months.

Over the course of transitions in our program, and with evolving conceptions of how the program would further grow, Karen Salides, our Director of Youth and Children's Ministries, began to feel that the position was not the best fit with her own professional growth. After thoughtful discussions with the moderator and minister, she decided to step down. Her last Sunday was the Christmas Pageant.

Instead of scrambling to fill the position of Director of Youth and Children's Ministries, the CE committee, council, and ultimately the church courageously decided to enter into a period of discernment. We decided to prayerfully talk and listen and lean into where the Spirit may be leading us as we lived more deeply into our child-cherishing values.

Taking this time was not easy. There was much to be done to be sure that our Sunday School continued to care for our children and young people in ways that were nourishing. The CE team, along with our minister, did all we could and we were grateful for those who stepped up and took leadership during this time – our moderators, Karen Weisgerber and Annie Gatewood; Christy Lang Hearlson, who lead an envisioning process for our youth programming (see section on Youth Task Force), and all of you who, in so many ways, rose to the occasion, bringing your gifts forward in service to our children and youth. For all you have given, we are deeply grateful.

Many stepped up to fill the gaps left by the loss of a staff member, and all stepped up to enter the process of discernment. Through three congregational conversations (Feb. 7th and 28th at UCW and one among the 32 travelers to Nicaragua), one on one discussions, and the good work of the youth task force, we heard what we envision for our children, youth (and now families) ministry embraces the following values:

- Each child and young person is valued and welcomed because each is a beloved child of God and a precious member of the Body of Christ;
- The first spiritual home of each child and young person is his/her family. Recognizing that, we will seek to equip parents and guardians with the resources and support they need to nurture the spiritual development of children and youth amid the complexities and challenges of today's world;
- Children and youth grow in faith when they can explore possibilities and ask questions while surrounded by a community of adults who serve as mentors and guides. Consequently, we wish to sustain a ministry that involves many caring adults and fosters exploration and questions.
- The walk of Christian discipleship is revealed and lived out through relationship. As a result, we will seek to promote and nurture loving community in all aspects of our children's and youth ministries, creating experiences that are full of fun and fellowship;
- The life of faith is inextricably linked to loving engagement in the world. Recognizing that, we will provide opportunities for children, youth and families to experience faith in action through hands-on learning and "field education"; and
- We are heirs of the scriptures and tradition of Christian faith. As such, we will lovingly pass them on and ground our children and youth in their teachings. We will also critically interpret their teachings so that the scriptures and tradition serve as a relevant resource for children and youth in a complex, diverse world.

We also heard that the role of this staff member would be more expansive than what we had previously delineated and was one dedicated to shepherding ministries with children, youth, and their families at UCW, connecting these ministries ever more fully with the life of the whole congregation.

On April 6th, the Council of UCW considered the recommendation from the fruits of this careful and prayerful discernment that the staff person who would most support and be in resonance with this vision would be one who is called to ministry and is one who has formal theological and ministerial education and experience.

As such, Council unanimously approved the recommendation to enter into a process to call an Associate Pastor of Children's, Youth and Family Ministry. The recommendation was that this position be up to three-quarters time initially with the hopes of growing it into a full-time position in three years.

Council also unanimously approved the recommendation to name a search committee that was charged with prayerfully entering into the process of calling an Associate Pastor. Molly Owen-Kiritsy, Wat Matsuyasu, and Glenn Cunningham along with co-moderators, Annie Gatewood and Karen Weisgerber and Pastor, Stacy Swain agreed to serve as the search committee.

It has been a journey, and where we started is not where we have ended. The Spirit has been with us as we have traveled and a new vista opens before us. While there is much that is unknown in the journey into this next year, some things are crystal clear. We cherish our children and young people. That is a commitment we made long ago, but one robustly reaffirmed this year. We are dedicated to learning from the past and courageously stepping into the future to grow into who God is calling us to be.

Along with the evolution of an Associate Pastor position, the composition of our committee and team structures will be evolving (for details, see Minister and Co-Moderator's reports). The efforts of our former CE committee will now be enthusiastically embraced by our CE PACS - a group of folks dedicated to the ministry of family and children. We want to thank ALL of those who have participated in the CE program, including our teachers, our team members (Wat Matsuyasu, Susan Gedrick, Cindy Spertner and Sue Hadley), as well as Christy Lang Hearlson for joining our effort. We want to extend a particular thanks to Cindy Spertner and Sue Hadley for faithfully co-leading our CE committee for many years. We lift up Sue as she now moves off the CE team to follow other passions she has within the church. Her dedication and service – for over two decades – to our children has without doubt been a foundation for our growth, for our children truly being cherished, and for all that is now coming to fruition.

Now before we end, let us lift up to you some other amazing highlights from the past year. We continuously conducted Sunday school classes for 4 levels: preK-1st grade; 2-3 graders; 4-5 graders, and a 6-8th Youth class. We traveled with our children to Common Cathedral and Cradles to Crayons, we engaged in a overnight immersion experience with the Heifer farm Global Village, enjoyed an intergenerational church retreat, and traveled with youth and families to San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua. We have shared a full and blessed year with our children's ministry, and look forward to the possibilities ahead.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Christian Education Committee,

Karen Weisgerber, Co-Moderator

YOUTH MINISTRY TASK FORCE

Dear Union Church,

Since January 2016, the Youth Ministry Task Force has met together to discern where God's Spirit is calling the Union Church in its ministry with young people ages 12-18. I offer this preliminary report to apprise you of our progress.

The Youth Task Force is comprised of Co-Moderators Annie Gatewood and Karen Weisgerber, members Karla Armenoff, Cate Brown, Dan Drummond, Susan Hunt Stevens, Kevin Johnson, Soo Laski, Mark Smith, and Jaap van Reijendam, and myself, Christy Lang Hearlson, acting as convener.

First, we learned and listened.

- *We listened to scripture and the Spirit.* In each of our meetings, we began with scripture and prayer. My favorite of the scripture passages we read comes from Deuteronomy 6, in which God tells adults to remember and live out their relationship with God in visible ways—so visibly, in fact, that in days to come, their children will be provoked to ask, “What does this all mean?” When the children ask, then the adults are to respond with the story of what God has done for them. This passage encouraged our group to think about the importance of intergenerational mentorship, the power of community life, the need for concrete expressions of faith and honest conversations, and the process of telling the stories that ground our identity.
- *We learned from excellent resources.* In January, we read and discussed Mark Devries' *Sustainable Youth Ministry*. Devries' work challenged us to avoid pinning all our hopes on a “superstar” youth director, and instead to lay groundwork, listen to church members' needs and concerns, build a network of support, view youth as agents of ministry, and become much clearer about our hopes, goals, and structure. Copies of this book are available in the pastor's office, and we encourage you to read it for yourself.
- *We listened to local experts.* In three of our meetings, we welcomed experts on youth ministry—Dr. Bob Pazmiño, Kathy Malone, and Rev. Bart Kelso. Each of these experienced youth workers and educators shared insights with us about the changing landscape of youth ministry and encouraged us to build not just a program, but a *ministry* that involves and equips youth for faithful living. Some repeated themes were that youth ministry is not about program, but about relationship, the importance of involving many different adults in the lives of youth, and the necessity of both action and reflection as we teach and learn.
- *We listened to you.* The task force contacted many families at UCW to ask your input, and members of our group attended the three listening sessions the church held around Christian Education at UCW. In these conversations, we heard adults and youth emphasize the need for a deeply welcoming, safe, and vital youth ministry that appeals to youth, connects them with a loving community, and recognizes the complex, diverse world in which we all live. We heard you say you want a ministry that helps youth embark on a faith journey in which

they can discover a loving God, and in which they feel empowered to ask and pursue hard questions. We heard you say that we adults need to invite youth to find their own gifts for leadership in worship, mission, and education, and that the most powerful experiences the church can facilitate involve service and mission. We trust you will see these aspirations reflected in our new mission statement, as well as in upcoming program.

What have we accomplished?

In addition to learning and listening, we have been getting a lot of work done! Here are some of our accomplishments.

- *A Mission Statement.* We condensed all we heard and learned into a new mission statement for youth ministry. The new statement appears at the end of this report. The youth ministry team will be guided by this statement in the coming year as it plans program and curriculum.
- *A Youth Directory.* We realized we need to know who our youth are—their names, ages, schools, and interests. That basic and essential document is almost complete and will be used by church leadership to respond to and reach out to the young people in our congregation.
- *An Organizational Chart.* We have constructed a preliminary chart that makes evident responsibilities for youth ministry at UCW. This task helped us realize the need for at least two different working groups of volunteers—a Children's and Family Ministries group and a Youth and Family Ministry Group, both of which will report to the new Associate Pastor for Children, Youth, and Family Ministries. Throughout our work, we became convinced of the need for staff who understand youth ministry as a vital part of Christian education, and who have been prepared through education and experience to equip volunteers to work with youth. For this reason, this task force was thrilled when the church's leadership proposed the idea of an Associate Pastor for Children, Youth, and Families. This new role, in our assessment, is exactly what the church needs. (In the long term, we dream that we might have a dedicated director for Middle and High School Ministries at UCW...want to dream that dream with us?)
- *A List of Adult Volunteers,* with indications of what each volunteer might be called upon to do. We are still formulating this list, and we'd be glad to hear from you about any special gifts or interests you bring to youth ministry.
- *A Program Calendar* for the coming year. This is an ongoing task, and it flows from our current practices and partnerships, as well as our mission statement. Expect to be able to put some dates on your calendar this spring for the coming school year.
- *A List of Partners* for our youth ministry. UCW already partners with the Heifer Farm and with Common Cathedral, and we can partner with many others in our community. We are still constructing this list.

What's next?

At the end of this school year, our current youth task force will end its time of intense work, but several of its members will roll over into a newly formulated Youth and Family Ministry team,

which will provide ongoing support and guidance for this congregation's ministry with youth. If you are interested in participating on that team or offering support in other ways, please reach out to the Moderators or to me.

I am deeply grateful for all those who have participated in this process, and I give thanks for the guidance of God's Holy Spirit throughout the past months.

With joy and gratitude,
Christy Lang Hearlson

NEW Youth Ministry Mission Statement

The Youth Ministry of the Union Church in Waban is a fully welcoming community that sees all young people as beloved children of God who can live out God's love in the world. In our ministry, young people are invited to:

- **Develop** authentic relationships with other youth, caring adults, and God;
- **Embark** on a spiritual journey grounded in the life, teachings, and community of Jesus Christ;
- **Explore** how their gifts and questions can contribute to the life of the church and the flourishing of all creation;
- **Participate** in meaningful service and joyful mission as part of this community of faith.

HUMAN RESOURCES

This fall, Stacy went on her sabbatical leave, which was beautifully covered by Rev. Christy Lang Hearlson, the deacons, moderators and so many other members of our church community. We enjoyed appreciating the many talents of other members of our church community, but we were so happy to welcome back a rested, rejuvenated and inspired pastor. One need only remember our April 29, Friday evening celebration to see how cherished Stacy is to our growing church!

Our ideas of hiring part-time paid Sunday school teachers for the church year (brought forward in last year's annual meeting) was unsuccessful. Although there were some applicants, we were unable to find the right type of applicant for this type of position. Late this fall, Karen Salides resigned as the Director of Christian Education (she departed just after the Children's Pageant). The moderators and members of the Christian Education team designed a team teaching model for the CE classrooms to allow us to continue Sunday school for the remainder of the church year. We have had a successful year by welcoming some new volunteer teachers and assistants, as well as some increased commitment from our existing pool of volunteer Sunday school teachers. It is in the spirit of collaboration that we have had a relatively bump free church year! We are looking forward to moving ahead with the vision of an Associate Pastor for Children, Youth and Family Ministry.

William (Bill) Merrill has had another fabulous year. We were fortunate to bring on an Assistant Music Minister (Bethany Worrell) this year. The shared vision of the Music Committee and Bill were brought to fruition through this complementary pairing of musical talent and UCW values.

We look forward to the expansion and exploration of new ideas and moving forward with music that is complementary to our progressive, lively church community.

Aidan Cunningham continues to develop and expand his role in the UCW office. We feel fortunate to have him as a stable member of our staff.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Laste, HR team leader

INTERIM PASTOR

Dear Congregation,

I was blessed to serve as your Interim Senior Pastor in the fall of 2015. During my tenure, the staff worked hard to update the website, coordinate the calendar, manage programs, plan meaningful worship, and look ahead to the winter—and all with a pastor who was only in the office two days per week! The leadership of the church was also wonderfully supportive, and I especially enjoyed working with our wise co-moderators, Karen Weisgerber and Annie Gatewood.

Last summer, as I prepared for my time at UCW, I was in the process of reflecting on my research on people's attitudes toward the Bible at UCW. One of the recurring themes I'd heard in my interviews with adults and youth was that many in this congregation do not feel comfortable with the Old Testament. Some suggested that the Hebrew Scriptures portray a different God than the New Testament does. Since all of us have Jewish neighbors and friends, and since we live in a time when interfaith understanding is so important, I felt it was important for this congregation to become more acquainted with the body of scripture we share with our Jewish neighbors. I decided to preach on the Old Testament lectionary texts the whole fall.

I was immediately grateful to find that Bill Merrill was willing to choose (and—surprise!—compose) music that reflected on the stories of the Old Testament, and the other preachers were excited to preach – some for the first time—on the Old Testament. I was also grateful for all those who were willing to be part of our readers' theater group in presenting scripture.

In our fall series, Ancient Stories of a Living Faith, the preachers (Amy Clark Feldman, Karen Weisgerber, John Bassett, and I) explored the story of baby Moses and the brave women who saved him (Exodus 1-2); on the young queen Esther and her courage in a time of persecution of the Jewish people (The Book of Esther); on Job, God's suffering servant, who lamented honestly before God (The Book of Job); on the refugee women Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth (The Book of Ruth), who showed such loyalty to one another; and on Hannah, mother of the prophet Samuel, who gave her son to the temple (1 Samuel 2-3). I pray that this extended engagement with the Old Testament brought these stories alive for you in a new way and helped you imagine yourself as part of God's ongoing story in the world.

Thank you for giving me the privilege of serving as your interim pastor. It was a joy!

Grace and Peace,

Christy Lang Hearlson

FROM THE MINISTERIAL INTERN, AMY CLARK FELDMAN

On Pentecost we remembered those disciples in the upper room, waiting faithfully for what God was going to do next. Instead of a set of plans or instructions, God sent the Holy Spirit to guide them, with excitement, hope and love, into the world and into the mission that was and is *being Church*. For the past two years, I have seen that same Holy Spirit moving – with great freedom and joy – in, among, and through the beloved community of Union Church in Waban. This is a church full of God's Love, living and journeying together, and I could not be more grateful to have been part of that journey as your ministerial intern.

As we set off together last year, the path was full of *firsts* for me – my first time meeting so many of you; my first time learning and experiencing aspects of worship and ministry. This second year has allowed me to practice so much of what I learned, deepen relationships, explore new aspects of our church life, and grow in my ministry and sense of call. This church and its ministry to students – the level of nurture, support and freedom it provides – really is special. I know your student intern next year will likewise be blessed.

Looking back over the year, snapshots of our travels together come to mind: the faces of the community coming through the doors on Sunday mornings; worship with our blended congregation at Waban Health and Rehab; the children participating in new ways in worship, filling the manger on Christmas Eve, or decorating the sanctuary with butterflies on Easter; praying for those traveling to Nicaragua; running the road race at with the Russell School; intergenerational ping-pong, s'more-making, and worship at the spring retreat at Toah Nipi; lunchtime conversations with the wise and faithful women of the Lunch Bunch. I could go on. It has been a good and fruitful journey, with the best of traveling companions.

I am grateful for each of the members of this community, its council, committees and leadership; as well as for the particular joy of ministering with the talented Bill Merrill, Bethany Worrell, and Aidan Cunningham. Most particularly, I am grateful for the members of the Teaching Parish Committee – Frank Laski, Jim MacDonald, Jaap van Reijendam, and Tom Vawter – who have so generously shared their time, wisdom, and support with me again this year.

I would like to say a special thank you for the mentoring and ministry of Rev. Dr. Christy Lang Hearlson during the months of Stacy's sabbatical. What a privilege it was to work with and learn from Christy's creativity, skill and faithfulness! Last but certainly not least, I would also like to thank Rev. Stacy Swain, whose grace-filled example, generosity, encouragement and guidance have and will continue to shape and provide inspiration for my own ministry. I will be forever grateful for her, for my years as a student at Union Church, and for all the ways the Holy Spirit is living, active and spreading God's Love in and through this community.

MISSION AND OUTREACH

This year the Mission Team broadened the participation of the congregation in many social justice issues around hunger, homelessness, water, and education. The “Growing Together, Growing Stronger” celebration dinner in April was one reflection of the way in which we as a congregation all reach out into the world to be mission minded. The large number of participants on the Nicaragua trip in February, the growth of programming and participation at the Russell School, and the myriad small acts are a reflection of how alive this church is.

We responded to the water crisis in Flint, Michigan through the UCC wider mission with a special collection to help that community cope with the effects of lead in their water.

We had a special collection for Boston Warm to support all the good work they do for homeless populations.

Our Christmas Mitten Tree gifts provided comfort and care for the homebound in Dorchester during the holiday season under the guidance of Sister Joyce McMullen at Project Care and Concern.

Our children went to the Heifer project overnight, experienced real life challenges faced by third world communities, and learned about their local economies.

Our children went to Cradles to Crayons to help under-privileged children age K-12 receive the things they need.

Our annual Thanksgiving dinner brought a rich community experience to those who would otherwise not have a meal on the holiday.

Please see detailed reports from the following mission outreach initiatives and teams:

- Homeless/Hunger Outreach mission initiatives
- 1K Church Local Initiative
- Nicaragua Team
- Nicaragua Trip
- Russell Elementary School Partnership and Local Initiative

As we grow as a congregation and change our mission model next year, we look forward to deepening our commitment to mission with the valuable talents that make up this wonderful congregation. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,
Kent Wittler

HOMELESS/HUNGER OUTREACH MISSION INITIATIVES

The congregation of the Union Church continues, with great joy, to partner with others, including other organizations, to support our neighbors who are currently unhoused or food insecure.

Highlights of 2015-16 include:

N. Beacon Inn

Union Church continues our relationship with families who live in hotels. Families have joined us at Thanksgiving Dinner, we were able to help them with grocery shopping during the holiday season, and we planned a fun Saturday event of cooking healthy meals with them and their children in our kitchen.

Bread for The World

We continue our partnership with this advocacy organization of 2,000 communities of faith, working with legislators to build food security in the US and overseas. The congregation as a whole has been given opportunities to communicate with our House and Senate Representatives on legislation including The Global Food Security Act - recently passed.

Shout For Joy

We offered a wonderful concert in our Union Church sanctuary to benefit Boston Warm. In addition to an outstanding night of music, Rev. June Cooper spoke to those in attendance about initiatives to end homelessness.

Boston Warm

In addition to the concert fundraiser, Union Church has been partnering with Ecclesia ministries in several ways. We arranged for a Mission Moment offered by Executive Director, Rev. Amanda Grant-Rose.

Christmas Special Collection

Union Church members were privileged to meet with dozens of unhoused individuals at Boston Warm when we delivered the generous special collection offering to them. Among other outcomes of meeting these folks, an art show was planned to view the Common Art of Boston Warm participants.

Common Art Show

Ten artists from Common Art joined Amanda Grant-Rose at an art show and sale in our vestry. Beautiful art was displayed and sold over coffee, lemonade and sandwiches.

Thanksgiving Special Collection

Union Church wanted to help families buy food for their holidays, and because of the successful Thanksgiving special collection, three of our partner organizations benefited from the grocery gift cards delivered just in time for the holidays. Families at Family Access of Newton, Newton Food Pantry, families living in N. Beacon Inn hotel, and families at Russell School, identified as recently losing their apartment or otherwise going through particularly difficult financial times, all received contributions.

Thanksgiving Dinner

Our Thanksgiving Dinner for community members and our neighbors was bigger than ever. After shopping, cooking, and driving, we enjoyed a delicious meal together in the vestry with festive tables, beautiful song, prayer and laughter.

Housing for Homeless

The Union Church is home to the Engine 6 housing advocates, who meet at our church to achieve affordable housing and to house formerly homeless individuals.

City Mission Society

As our partners at CMS, a faith-based organization dedicated to the most in need, celebrate 200 years of community work in Boston, we have collaborated on our work together, our future work, and their dedication to ending homelessness in Boston. CMS is also our liaison and facilitator at Russell Elementary School.

Greater Boston Interfaith Organization

We have been invited to join GBIO, a broad-based organization that works to coalesce, train, and organize the communities of Greater Boston across religious, racial, ethnic, class, and neighborhood lines for the public good, to fight for social justice. Stacy and others are researching our involvement with GBIO as we attend meetings, dialogue, join events, and learn more about this work.

This area of mission work is funded by a very successful Christmas Greens Sale that was supported by the Hunger/Homeless initiative members.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Zollers

1K CHURCHES LOCAL INITIATIVE

In November and December of 2015, 10 of us committed ourselves for six weeks to study together what it might mean to enfold a vision of God's Economy among us in some small way. We explored the 1K curriculum "Discovering God's Economy" provided by the Criterion Institute. The 1K movement is a movement to recruit 1,000 churches to give microfinance loans in their communities to help reinvigorate and support the local economies in the United States by making a microfinance loan to a small business of five or fewer employees. The Bible study and economic reflection was led by Bart Kelso and Brita Gill-Austern. In addition to studying biblical texts that reveal what God's economy would look like, we studied how microfinance loans can help address issues of unemployment, underemployment, and economic insecurity that plague so many in our country. At the end of the Bible study, the group unanimously decided to submit a proposal to the Church Council for funds for a microfinance loan. We requested money for this microfinance loan from a special fund set up for local initiatives from the capital fund campaign at Union Church that

set aside 10% for mission. The local initiatives of this mission fund must meet the following criteria:

- Promotes sustainability by contributing to long-term financial viability and the empowerment of people with whom we are engaged in ways that enhance human dignity
- Promotes relationship-based involvement and engagement of UCW community
- Promotes global and local high impact work – work that makes a difference and can be measured; and
- Promotes charity/justice – overcoming of inequities and divisions in our world by working for the fullness of humanity, community, and the health and wholeness of the planet.

Our proposal met these criteria, and was approved by Council at their April meeting. We are in the process of identifying an appropriate recipient for a microfinance loan of between \$500 and \$5,000, in the larger metropolitan Boston area, as far north as Lowell and as far south as New Bedford. We are seeking a business or non-profit which reflects the values and priorities of Union Church. We would be particularly interested in businesses or non-profits that help: support immigrants and refugees, provide services to children, create opportunities for rehabilitation, re-entry and service to inmates of prisons, promote non-violence, organizations or businesses that provide food and services to unemployed or underemployed people, housing and family support and businesses that are seeking to promote alternative energy sources. Preference will be given to those that operate in geographical areas showing need for economic investment.

We are hoping to identify a qualified recipient by September. Loans will be paid back at a 1 to 2% interest rate in a year, allowing us to continue to make future microfinance loans.

(1K Task Force: Bart and Priscilla Kelso, Gerry Elion, Wanda Getchell, Frank Laski, Soo Laski, Nancy Zollers, Stacy Swain, Kent Wittler, Thomas Vawter, Alison McCarty, Brita Gill-Austern)

Respectfully submitted,
Brita Gill-Austern
1K Church, local initiative leader

NICARAGUA TEAM

Nicaragua Team as a whole supported the planning and preparations of the trip. Thank you, Jim MacDonald, Judy MacDonald, Sue Hadley, Tom Vawter, Robert Nagle, and members who were travelers.

Nicaragua Trip 2016: (for more detail please see Nicaragua Trip report below)

Trip Leaders: David Spertner, Stacy Swain, and Cate Brown (youth)

of Participants: 32 church members

Dates: February 12-21, 2016

Projects:

- Cebadilla Barrio: Clean water project
- Decilcias Barrio: Painting and repairing two school buildings
- Alpha Omega Church: school building construction

Other activities:

- Soccer game with Ojachal community (solar panel water pump 2008)
- Baseball clinic with Brugger foundation
- Visited former projects
- Mobile Book Library
 - School supplies delivery
 - Book distribution
- Alpha Omega Church service
- Alpha Omega Community dinner
- Distribution of books, soap, Bibles in Spanish, Lukes Lights

Nicaragua Team Planning for 2017:

Hopes and Dreams:

We reiterated the Hopes and Dreams history at Union Church. Criteria includes sustainability, community impact, community input, relationship-based, strategic.

There were many ideas suggested to research further: Ideas included:

- A Solar/Wind Energy project with Mobile Book Library
- Public health education effort focused on Zika. (Perhaps with Library or Free High School)
- Ambulance purchase with provision for gas and repair
- Well-drilling
- Rural health clinic support
- Micro-loans
- Post-graduation support students
- Systemic sanitation initiative (check with Brookline Sister City group)
- Brugger students

All ideas were from us, and a real process has not yet been engaged, not all discussed with locals yet. Subcommittee created including: David Spertner, Frank Slack, Cate Brown, Frank Laski, Nancy Zollers, Soo Laski

Another sub-committee meeting to be scheduled soon, Dates Proposed: Monday, June 6 or 13.

Alpha Omega Church relationship:

Everyone spoke about the valuable connection with the church in Nicaragua (Jane connected us). We want to reconnect and to start we can coordinate a Skype call with La Pastora with Stacy to find out some ways we can grow this relationship.

Nancy, Stacy, and Soo to coordinate with Pastora.

Events/Activities with the whole church community in off-trip year:

- a. Alfonso Hernandez ---Talk to Nicas en Boston/Alfonso for joint community events with us
- b. Plan an educational event about Nicaragua current events

Respectfully submitted,
Soo Laski, Team Leader

NICARAGUA TRIP

Summary

The 2016 trip to Nicaragua was a testament to our long-standing commitment to this wonderful ministry of service. It continues to have great energy and enthusiasm from the congregation. Thirty two people traveled this year, with many more supporting the trip from home. Just over half of the group were first timers on the trip, and there was a healthy mix of youth and adults. I expect another big turnout for our next trip.

The trip was led by myself, Stacy and Cate Brown (as youth leader). As the group was quite large, many of the participants stepped up to assist in leadership and spread out the large amount of work necessary for such a big group to function.

There were many highlights to the trip both with what we accomplished physically (what can be seen, like fresh paint and clean water) and what is difficult to measure (the bonding, the faith, and the hope that occurs with all people involved -- Nicaraguans, travelers, and our UCW congregants).

- Some Highlights of 2016
 - Added a roof to the new Alpha Omega Church School
 - Painted three classrooms at a school in Las Delicias
 - Added a crucial component of underground pvc piping to get clean water to a school and community in Cebadilla
 - Participated in service and fellowship at the Alpha Omega Church
 - Broke bread with the people of the Alpha Omega Church
 - Participated in a “smile ridden” soccer game at the community of Ojochal where we had previously worked on an earlier trip where we only gave “of ourselves” to the people
 - Delivered school supplies and educational material via the Mobil Book Library to many schools including many where we have previously worked
 - Participated in a baseball clinic via The Brugger Foundation
 - Met our current former Brugger Foundation student, who is hard at work and extremely appreciative of our support
 - Broke bread and enjoyed the company of our former Brugger Foundation student Yarileidy, who is now working in community service



Soccer in Ojachal



Break time with the locals



Work at Alpha Omega Church



Side by side with our partners



Trench digging at Cebadilla



The water finally flows at Cebadilla



Sharing a service at Alpha Omega Church



Painting at one of the schools in Las Delicias



The soil was hard in Cebadilla



Always having fun with the local kids



Kids enjoying the new water source at school



More work at the Alpha Omega Church

Budget

Nicaragua 2016			
	Actual	Actual	Estimated
Income	Income	Comments	Income
Project Funds Budgeted from Church	5,225.27		5,000
Newton Sister City - Generous Transportation Grant	800.00		800
Bake Sale	823.00		803
Potential supply donation for Las Delicias	0.00	Nancy checking on possible donation	0
total:	6,848.27		6,603
	Actual	Actual	Estimated
Expenses	Expenses	Comments	Expense
Project Supplies - Alpha Omega Church School	3,560.16		3,000
Project Supplies - Secular School	350.00		350
Project Supplies - Cebadilla	350.00		350
Transportation in SJDS	296.87		400
School Supplies	800.00		400
Translator	650.00		560
Baseball Camp	250.00	200+50 towards another future clinic	320
Transportation Pick-Up Truck	591.24		300
sub total:	6,848.27		5,680
deficit/surplus	0.00		923

Future

The future of the ministry in terms of energy and commitment seems to be strong. In the coming weeks and months the Nicaragua Team will re-visit the “Hopes and Dreams” discussion. “Hopes and Dreams” is the name we have given to envisioning and planning for how the \$10K funds (allocated to our Nica partnership from funds tithed to mission from the capital campaign of several years ago that enabled our building to become accessible) would be best spent. The Nicaragua Trip Leaders will also be reviewing the feedback from this trip and strategizing how to incorporate what can be learned to improve future trips.

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Spertner, Trip Leader

RUSSELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP AND LOCAL INITIATIVE

Background:

The Union Church partnership with the Russell Elementary School (a Boston Public School) is the UCW Local Initiative.

Through our partnership with City Mission Society, we were led to this K-5 school in Dorchester that needed support, and was willing to partner with us to support students, families and staff.

Partnering:

Again this year, the matches between school needs and Union Church capabilities were many. Many members actively partner with Russell and meeting a number of objectives. We have a strong relationship with Principal Blake, parents, teachers and staff. Our involvement has been sustained, and we have supported the school in their objectives, while school funding and other supports are fewer than ever. It continues to be a joy for so many.

The ways we were involved at Russell this year include:

- Creating and staffing a Computer Coding Club;
- Supporting Math Night and Literacy Night with families and teachers;
- Participating in School Site Council decisions;
- Supporting the 5K fundraiser with Union Church runners, raffles and staffing the refreshment stand. We also sponsored student runners participating in this event;
- Creating a growing before-school soccer initiative;
- Supporting Parent Council and
- Supporting a Saturday Garden and Healthy Living event for students and their families.

We keep Russell School in mind in all our outreach work, e.g. identifying Russell families in need for special Thanksgiving Collection gift cards for holiday shopping, outreach to the Russell community for our 1K initiative, inviting families to our Thanksgiving dinner, and planning outreach activities with Russell or our youth in the year to come.

Our partnership with Russell involves some funds and many people. This work began when UCW members looking at the issue of prisons, prison reform and incarceration of youth wanted to impact the school-to-prison pipeline. They determined that inequitable resources in urban schools, unfortunate and inequitable outcomes for minority youth, drop-out rates, struggling schools and families in Boston, and the hopelessness of some neighborhoods should lead us to school partnering. It is funded by the Capital Campaign.

The UCW members' time and talents, infused into the life of the school, are viewed as highly valuable to the parents, the principal and the staff at Russell, and also the BPS Engagement Office.

Union Church members have learned from, and benefited from this partnership. The Principal, teachers, and parents are available to us and our questions at every point. They accept us and our ideas, despite our suburban home-base and are open to our full participation at Russell.

As in every year prior, principal Blake, parent leaders and their children joined us at a May worship service; and then offered an after-church conversation/educational event for all.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Zollers
Russell School Team Leader

MUSIC PROGRAM

Just as the season of spring is the time of rebirth and change, so did the music program at Union Church experience new life and a fundamental change in May of 2015.

The Worship Team, under the leadership of Rev. Stacy Swain, decided upon a different direction for music within the Worship service.

Rather than the choir being a separate entity apart from the congregation, it was felt that it should have a closer bond with the church family. The music should also be less of a “performance” and more a “prayer through song”.

With that in mind, a search was made over a two month period for a musical “assistant” to help us establish a closer bond with the congregation. We found what I feel is the ideal candidate for this position in our soprano soloist, Bethany Worrell. Bethany has been an invaluable addition to the church, not only because of her wonderful singing, but also due to her warm personality and ability to relate to the congregation.

Other changes instituted this year were the effort to have the “Call to Worship” and the” Prayer Response” shared between the choir and the congregation, rather than being sung only by the choir.

Our newly formed Bell Choir promises to become a vital part of the musical life at UCW. I look forward to their ringing for us on the last Sunday of the church year, June 26th.

	Actual	Budget
E - Music Expenses	19.05	
a - Music Director Salary	15,754.47	19,034.00
b - General Music Expenses (Soloists, New Music, Other)	928.58	2,600.00
c - Piano & Organ Maintenance	110.00	500.00
g - Assistant Music Minister Salary	3,150.00	4,500.00
Total E - Music Expenses	\$ 19,962.10	\$ 26,634.00

In closing, I wish to say that I thoroughly enjoyed this year and hope that our music continues to be a vibrant and exciting part of the life at Union Church in Waban.

Sincerely yours,
William Merrill
Music Director

TEACHING PARISH COMMITTEE (TPC)

This past year, Union Church again served as a field education site for Ms. Amy Clark Feldman from Andover Newton Theological School. Ms. Feldman completed her second year as a ministerial intern with our church.

Throughout the year, the TPC provided advice and support to Amy and her supervisors Rev. Stacy Swain and Rev. Christy Lang Hearlson. The TPC met monthly conferring with the student on the development of her learning goals and learning plan objectives, and assessing her progress. Our monthly meetings were productive, focused on the support needs of the student and allowing for in-depth exploration of the opportunities and challenges of pastoral ministry in a setting, like Union Church, that values congregational polity and involvement.

In addition to the monthly meetings, individual TPC members provided support as requested on an ongoing basis, and through their efforts made significant contributions to the learning process.

This year, the Teaching Parish Committee felt truly blessed to be a part of Amy's learning experience, and to be able to observe tremendous progress and growth throughout year two. Rev. Lorena Parrish, Director of Ministry Studies, Andover Newton Theological School summed up Amy's second year's accomplishments. In her final review of Amy's internship, Professor Parrish wrote:

It was a joy to receive such a wonderful report regarding your field education experience. I am delighted to see that you have excelled in your pursuit of developing skills that will serve you well as you pursue your ministerial goals.

The Teaching Parish Committee members look forward to growing this most important ministry next year. We are pleased to report, after recruitment and screening process in the winter of 2016, Andrew Heintz was selected to be our student intern for the academic year 2016-2017. Andrew is a Masters of Divinity student at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge. He comes to us from North Carolina, where he serves as a Deacon at the United Church of Christ, Chapel Hill.

The Teaching Parish Committee is thankful to our spiritual leader and mentor, Reverend Stacy Swain, and to the many members of the congregation who welcome our ministry students, enjoy their presence, and contribute to making the Union Church a true teaching parish. We particularly lift up Rev. Christy Lang Hearlson, who, as Amy's supervisor and mentor during her service as interim minister, contributed much to our successful TPC year.

Respectfully submitted,
Teaching Parish Committee
Frank Laski, James MacDonald, Jaap van Reijendam, Thomas Vawter

THE UNION CHURCH IN WABAN

ANNUAL REPORT 2015 -2016
(Draft – WIP, version May 27th)