



2022 Annual Report
presented on zoom
Annual Meeting February 5, 2023

Revised 2/03/2023



ACTING PASTOR'S REPORT



“There’s no going back.”

I think if I had to pick one sentence to describe where we are as a congregation, it would be that one. For the last three years, so many of us have been hoping for a return to normalcy. That’s true not just for our church, but for virtually every church. While I wasn’t here before the pandemic, I think I’ve learned a little about what we mean when we say we wish we could go back to what was before.

We wish we could go back to having a lot more people in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings.

We wish we could go back to having a full Sunday school with plenty of high school students teaching them.

We wish we could go back to family game nights and the strawberry festival.

We wish we could go back to a time when there was less division.

And we certainly wish we could go back to a time when we didn’t have to think about COVID protocols.

While we will never fully go back to what was, in 2022 we were able to feel a little bit more “normal.” For much of the year, COVID levels allowed us to worship without masks. Thanks to Candice Brown and her team of volunteers, Caroling on the Common was back and was a major highlight of the year. Once again, Alex Barber did an amazing job directing our children’s Christmas pageant. The Board of Benevolence Coat drive along with the hygiene kit collection was a big success. And our live stream service remains strong with nearly 3500 views during the year. Many weeks, we have as many people (or more) worshipping via live stream as we do in the sanctuary. I’m continually grateful for Doug Gaff and all of the AV team for all they do.

When I say we can’t go back, I don’t mean that some of our meaningful traditions can’t come back. Some already have and hopefully more will. Rather, what I mean is that the world has changed significantly in the last three years and no churches anywhere are going to be successful by simply trying to do things like we “used to.” Instead, the challenge for us is to discern who God is calling us to be going forward.

Strategic Planning and Visioning Work

I’m so grateful that this community has responded to that call with an eye towards the future and a willingness to try new things. Early in 2022, we began our strategic planning and visioning work. Nearly 70 people from our church participated in listening sessions where we heard what our community values. Then we turned our work to the larger community by working in partnership with East Congregational Church to have listening sessions from various stakeholders. You can read the full reports from our strategic planning work to this point on our website.

We are now wrapping up our visioning process by developing our specific priorities and our action plan for the next 2-3 years. This is the most important part of our work as we will move from talking about our values and community needs to the specifics of what we are actually going to do. We need strong participation to finish this work to make sure our action plan is representative of the whole congregation.

I do want to address one “elephant in the room.” I’ve heard from a number of people asking about whether there are conversations happening right now about merging with East Church. While there have been people from both congregations who have expressed interest in that possibility, and we have certainly increased our collaboration as two churches working together, I want to be clear that

there are no current conversations about merging that are taking place. Their pastor, Shelly Davis, and I meet every week to make sure we are aware of what each other is doing. East Church is going through their own strategic planning process as well. If both congregations decide we want to begin a conversation about a possible merger in earnest, it would be a transparent process where members from both churches would be fully included and there would be no predetermined outcome. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns about our collaboration with East Church or any part of our visioning process.

Trying New Things

In addition to our visioning work, we also began Nourish and Wacky Wednesday in collaboration with East Church, and we started a monthly intergenerational service along with a children's choir. A huge thanks to Mike Baker and Steve Paxhia for cooking for us each time we hosted Nourish at First Congregational. The overarching idea of Nourish is that after three years of the pandemic, we needed a chance to simply enjoy being together. Sharing a meal together is always a good place to start. Our attendance ranged from 40-70 people each week. In addition to eating together, the adults participated in activities designed to get to know each other better, Bible study, and we heard from speakers from various community organizations. The kids participated in Wacky Wednesday that was all about having fun and being able to be silly together. Overall, I think Nourish was one of our biggest successes of 2022.

I have long felt that one of the shortcomings of our Christian Ed program is that a child can go from birth through graduating high school without ever being a part of worship. I'm so thankful that our Minister of Children and Families, Hannah Smith-Erb challenged us to think of ways we can be more inclusive of kids in worship. On Communion Sunday's, our kids have served as Scripture readers, ushers, and Communion servers. In addition, Adam Ochs started a children's choir that offers musical selections during these intergenerational services. Overall, I feel our intergenerational services and children's choir has been meaningful for everyone and an important reminder of the gift our kids are to our whole congregation.

Staff Transitions

2022 was once again a year of staffing transitions for us. In November, our office and communications administrator Brenda Lee resigned. I am grateful for all the ways she served our congregation during her tenure. We are in the process of searching for candidates to fill this position. Alex Barber has done an amazing job as our interim office administrator and really kept things rolling for us. Also, Hannah Smith-Erb, our Minister and Children and Families left us at the end of January to take a position as a chaplaincy intern and McLean psychiatric hospital. Hannah inherited a difficult task in rebuilding our Sunday school and children's ministry as we reopened after the pandemic and she brought some new and exciting ideas to us. I'm pleased to welcome Katy Fazio as our new Minister of Children and Families. Finally, this year was Matthew Larson's 20th anniversary as our Minister of Music. We are so blessed to have someone with the skill and commitment of Matthew to lead us in worship for the last two decades. The gala concert and reception to mark both the refinishing of the piano and to celebrate Matthew's milestone were a major highlight for the year.

In Memory

Finally, we give thanks to God for the lives of Jean McKenney and Isabel Pinkus who died this year. They were both instrumental parts of our congregation for many years and we cherish their memories and all that they meant to our church.

In closing, while I do believe that “we can’t go back,” I also believe that we will continue to reimagine how God is calling us to worship and serve together in meaningful and impactful ways. Time and again, this church has responded to God’s call in whatever context it has found itself in and I am confident that we will continue to do so. I continue to be honored to serve as your pastor and am grateful to be on this journey with you.

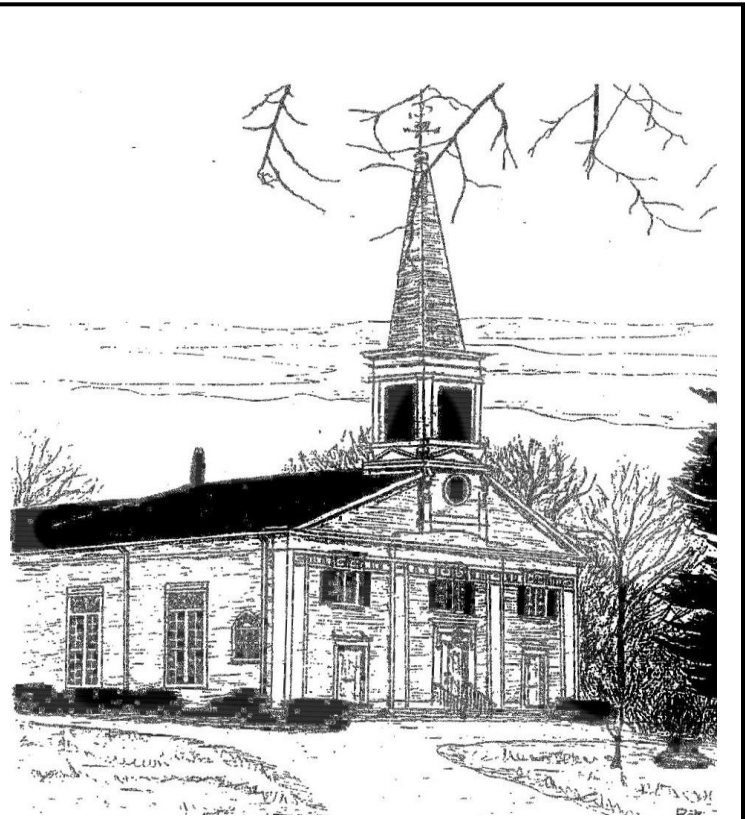
Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R.G. Wilson-Lyons".

Rev. R.G. Wilson-Lyons

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WELCOMING STATEMENT

We affirm our faith in Jesus Christ and in the Church that he has called into being, which by his grace and mercy welcomes all.

We encourage all who join us — regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or social, economic, physical, or mental condition — and confess their faith in Jesus Christ to share fully in all aspects of our church life and leadership.

We believe relationships between individuals, groups, and nations must be based on love, justice, commitment, and mutual respect. We strive toward such relationships in our church, homes, and community.

We are especially grateful for the gift of children in our community. We promise to help them grow in faith and to teach them love, respect, and value for themselves and others.

MISSION STATEMENT

First Congregational Church of Milton is a growing and energetic church family. We constantly seek ways to be not only Jesus’ hands and feet, but also his voice, ears, and heart. We worship Christ at our center. We celebrate God’s presence through study, children’s programs, prayer, and music. We build community through small groups and fellowship, and by overcoming challenges together. We serve each other, our neighbors, and the world through outreach. We welcome all to our growing congregation.

2023 ANNUAL MEETING WARRANT

To: Members of First Congregational Church of Milton, Massachusetts

GREETINGS: You are hereby notified that the Annual Meeting of First Congregational Church of Milton, Massachusetts, will be held on Sunday, February 5, 2023, 11:30 a.m., via Zoom, to take action on the following articles:

- Article I: To hear, and to act upon the reports of the officers, standing committees, organizations, and delegates of the church for January 1 to December 31, 2022.
- Article II: To elect officers, church boards, standing committees, delegates, and representatives for the ensuing year.
- Article III: To adopt the budget proposed by the Board of Trustees for the 2023 fiscal year, or to take any action thereon.
- Article IV: To present to the congregation the proposed process for strategic planning and visioning work.
- Article V: To transact any other business that may legally be raised.



*Nancy Barber, Church Clerk
(original, signed warrant on file with clerk)*

2022 CHURCH STATISTICS SUMMARY OF CHANGES AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2022

Members.....226

New Members10

Phil Richenburg, February 27, 2022
Jeff and Barbara Smith, March 6, 2022
Elizabeth and Adam Stankiewicz, May 1, 2022
Avery Roth, May 15, 2022
Corinne Geering, May 15, 2022
Jason Cherry, May 15, 2022
Emerson Dobrindt, May 15, 2022
Kendall Stirling, May 15, 2022

Deaths.....2

Jean McKinney, January 10, 2022
Isabel Pinkus, December 19, 2022

Baptisms..... 2

Lillian Stankiewicz, May 1, 2022
Corinne Geering, May 15, 2022

2023 NOMINATIONS REPORT

Serving February 5, 2023 – February 4, 2024 These nominations are presented by the Nominating Committee, Frank Wilson, Heather Baker, Dierdre Merrill, and Rev. R.G. Wilson-Lyons.

		Serving Since
Moderator:	Frank Wilson	2000
Clerk:	Nancy Barber	2021
Treasurer:	Nicole Rukstalis	2022
Historian:	Jamie Roth	2016

*Newly nominated members being voted on at this meeting are indicated in **bold**.*

CHURCH COUNCIL is the current chair of each committee, as well as the moderator, treasurer, clerk, and pastor.

DIACONATE	Serving Since
Grace Dickerson	2023
David Follett	2023
Alexander Hasha	2022
Wendy Garpow	2022
Barbara Levy	2020
Candice Brown	2019
Ann Riley	2017
Nancy Barber	2017
Steve Paxhia	2015
Doug Stewart	2015
BOARD OF TRUSTEES	
Jeff Smith	2023
Nicole Rukstalis	2021
Paula Goodrich	2021
Jaymee Mannix	2021
Marc Robert	2021
Kate Kibbee	2020
Heather Baker	2019
Carter Fahy	2018
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE	
Barbara Smith	2023
Niels Krejci	2019
Patricia Morisette	2017
AV COMMITTEE	
Mike Baker	2016
Niels Krejci	2015
Doug Gaff	2014
SOCIAL COMMITTEE (inactive, looking for members)	

BOARD OF BENEVOLENCE	Serving Since
Mary Riley	2023
Maya Egan	2021
Erika Swan	2021
Marshall Levy	2021
Anne Regnier	2021
Madeline Regnier	2021
Mavis Anderson	2020
David Follett	2019
Betsy Disharoon	2017
BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	
Niels Krejci	2023
Janine Solomon	2023
Deirdre Merrill	2023
Libby Dunphy	2023
Emily Gorman	2022
Donna Manzi	2017
Adam Ochs	2014
MUSIC COMMITTEE	
Alexander Hasha	2021
Patricia Morisette	2021
Brenda Gaff	2014
PASTOR PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE	
Deirdre Merrill	2022
Niels Krejci	2017
DELEGATES (inactive)	
STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE	
Frank Wilson	2014
USHERS	
Bill Pepe	2015

If you are interested in joining a board or committee, please contact the appropriate chair, Rev. R.G. Wilson-Lyons or Frank Wilson.

2022 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Total church revenue received in 2022 was \$239,121. This was favorable to the budget by \$14,721. The Centre School revenue, reported in non-operating income, was \$259,108, which was \$51,228 favorable to the budget of \$207,876.

Total 2022 expenses were \$394,387 compared to a budget of \$432,677 for a favorable variance of \$32,290. With revenue higher than the plan and the expenses favorable to the plan, the net income for the year was \$129,642, which was \$140,042 favorable to the planned net loss of \$10,401.

Church giving revenue in 2022 was \$182,218. This was \$12,218 favorable to the planned revenue of \$170,000. Of the \$12,218, \$2,800 was generously donated in support of the piano refinishing project that took place over the summer. The rental income was \$56,903 in 2022, which was favorable to the plan by \$2,503. Although transfers were made into the Fidelity account for giving in the amount of \$6,243, the account lost \$48,241 in market decline for an ending balance of \$316,403.

Church operating expenses of \$237,278 was favorable to the budget by \$33,122 due to a delay in planned projects. In addition, the budget included the full cost of the Martin Luther King Day repairs in the youth room, not anticipating any insurance reimbursement from a burst pipe in an exterior wall with a couple of openings to the exterior.

The pastor costs were \$80,337 as compared to a budget of \$85,456 for a favorable variance of \$5,119. Overall, our Acting Pastor did not incur all planned expenses, and the utilities cost of water and sewer at the carriage house was less than budgeted. Music expenses were \$56,444, which was over budget by \$8,272. Soloist compensation was higher than budgeted and the cost of the piano refinishing project of \$3,500 is included in this amount. Christian education costs of \$20,329 were lower than the budget of \$28,650 for a savings of \$8,320. This was due to the delay in hiring a Minister of Children and Families, a reduced number of Sunday school teachers receiving pay, and a reduction in scholarship expense as compared to the budget.

The non-operating income was \$248,908 in 2022. That is comprised of three components. The first being the base rent of \$162,880 that we receive from Bright Horizons for management of The Centre School. Second, although they were operational last year, and although they were profitable, there were losses sustained during COVID-19 that needed to be recovered before we participated in any revenue sharing. The amount Bright Horizons paid in revenue sharing during 2022 was \$96,228, which was greater than the \$45,000 budgeted. Finally, during COVID-19, the church was able to participate in the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) offered by the US Small Business Association. This was a loan program offered to help organizations meet their payroll needs. The church was eligible for a \$25,800 loan that was later forgiven in 2022.

We continued to allow Mel O'Drama and Kenny Academy of Irish Dance to hold their classes in the youth room because the town after-school program had not re-opened during the



beginning of 2022. The lease with the Town of Milton to run the after-school program was re-signed and the Wildcat Den opened in September and had on average 28 participants with 270 unique participants over the four months of operation. We had some challenges with the rules and procedures given so many people share the same property and surrounding area outside of the building yet we were able to work through the issues and everyone currently understands and respects the community of which we are all a part. One continued concern is the number of cars that enter from the back town hall parking area into the One Way direction of The Centre School parking lot. This poses a serious safety issue because the parents of The Centre School, the primary users of that lot, do not expect to have a car coming directly at them. This volume of 'one way the wrong way' has increased with the lack of parking at town hall because of the fire station building project. GSEC had returned in December 2021 and have continued to meet weekly on Sundays, however they have not begun their other daily meetings/study groups that they held pre-COVID-19. One anonymous group continues to meet virtually, one group is still using the youth room due to the number of participants that gather weekly and the third group came back in November to use the parlor. Other groups utilizing the youth room include the Milton Youth Advisory Council, the Rainbow Youth Alliance that started in 2022 as a joint effort with First Parish, and Jay Fundling hosts a Dungeons and Dragons game night for the middle and high school youth in the community.

I want to thank Carter Fahy for his tenure as the Chair of the Board of Trustees, serving from November 2020 through February 2022, and still serving as a member. Additionally, a special shout out to Cathy Matejka for her tenure as Treasurer from 2017 until her relocation to Arizona this past fall. FCC has been fortunate to have her expertise dealing with our challenging banking and investment company relationships, her legal acumen with a variety of contracts, and her unparalleled involvement with The Centre School as one of the founding Board of Directors.

Although the COVID-19 protocols have softened, it still remains critical to honor our contract with Bright Horizons, which allows them access to the space in the 505 building from 7:30 a.m. until closing at 5:30 p.m. We had a few hiccups at the beginning of our Nourish program because guests were arriving early. That creates some angst with the school because they are trained to be alert to anyone that does not belong to the children of the school. Scary things are happening in the world and at schools so we need to allow them their space during their contracted hours. Thank you for your continued cooperation.

I again have to offer a resounding thanks of gratitude to Frank Wilson as he truly is "my partner in crime" when it comes to a roof leaking or a basement flooding. And so it began on Martin Luther King Day with the flood in the youth room. Thanks for always being "on call."

(balance sheet and proposed B&G on next page)

Balance Sheet

	As of 12.31.2022	As of 12.31.2021	Change
Assets			
Cash and Investments	\$569,996	\$542,401	\$27,595
Property and Equipment	\$4,557,988	\$4,557,988	\$0
Total Assets	\$5,127,984	\$5,100,389	\$27,595
Liabilities			
Benevolence	\$14,822	\$10,679	\$4,143
	(\$42,140)	(\$60,175)	\$18,035
Capital Campaign Funds (Receivable)			
Reserve Funds/ Youth Programs	\$93,154	\$159,672	(\$66,518)
Total Liabilities	\$65,836	\$110,176	(\$44,340)
Net Worth	\$5,062,148	\$4,990,213	\$71,935

Proposed B&G - Repairs and Improvements for 2023

Carriage House - 483 Canton Ave

Install railings on the back deck to bring up to code	\$2,500	
Replace wobbly unsecured wooden steps at back deck	\$500	
Replace washing machine; only if needed	\$750	\$3,750

Church building - 495 Canton Ave

Replace old smoke detectors with addressable	\$15,000	\$15,000
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Centre School building - 505 Canton Ave

Install barrier arm gate for back entrance	\$10,000	
Electrical work to install barrier arm gate	\$3,000	
Excavation of sidewalk to bury wires for gate	\$2,000	
Dry valve repairs resulting from trip test in Dec	\$2,650	
BLDG INSPECTION: Change remaining exit signs to LED	\$750	
Replace chandeliers in Johnson Hall	\$4,000	
Replace exterior parking lot lights	\$2,500	
Insulate Centre School attic	\$54,000	
Install grinders to ejector pumps - youth room	\$13,000	\$91,900

Total cost projects		<u>\$110,650</u>
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Respectfully Submitted,
Lori Connelly, Director of Finance and Operations

2022 Building Projects Completed

Here is a list of a variety of projects, large and small, without the extra explanations of the potential number of site visits, calls, follow-ups, or any number of other encumbrances encountered in getting things completed with the main objective of keeping The Centre School (TCS) open and operating with as little disruption as possible. There are numerous individuals called upon to facilitate getting this work done in a timely manner. Thank you to all the members that have participated in any of these projects.

Jan '22

- Received call from Mel O'Drama who was holding class on MLK Day in the youth room – it had flooded
- Dropped everything and went to church, calling Frank on the way asking, “Guess what now?”
- Relocated drama classes upstairs
- Called the plumber who instructed me to shut off water to determine source – a pipe had burst
- Demolished the area to expose the pipe
- Waited for plumber to arrive that night to replace pipe to ensure TCS could open next day with running water
- Called remediation crew and waited for them to come that night to remove water; leaving fans for drying
- Called insurance company to file a claim; met adjuster to review damages
- Met with contractors to determine best move forward given the gaping holes around pipes running outside that were not sealed allowing air into wall
- Managed aftermath of 28 inches of snow on January 29 causing Sunday service to be cancelled
- Responded to a 7:15 am Monday call that there was a leak in a classroom as a result of the snow/ice dams
- Relocated children to Huntington Hall
- Called the remediation company who came out to remove the water and dry the floor, wall, ceiling areas
- Met contractor to assess

Feb '22

- Removed snow from roof to prevent further leaking with the assistance of Frank's crew
- Stripped and waxed classroom floors
- Scheduled plasterer/painting contractor for February vacation week to complete youth room
- Insulated with spray foam area inside the walls around pipes to outside so this won't happen again
- Insulated the bottom wall area from the storage door to the corner near the kitchen
- Installed blue board over the insulation, taped, and sealed
- Painted the entire area where the wall was repaired
- Installed new baseboard where the wall was repaired
- Met with water dept for an audit due to inordinately high bill; explained the pipe; requested and received adjustment for sewer charges
- Inspected beeping fire panel – there was a defective smoke detector in the sprinkler room
- Replaced smoke detector which was wet and reset fire panel
- Emptied grease trap in kitchen



-Closely monitored snow plowing/removal for funeral day after another eight inches of snow

Mar '22

- Repaired door handle to sprinkler room
- Replaced broken floor tiles in four of TCS classrooms
- Replaced carpet tiles in TCS lobby that were lifting creating a tripping hazard

Apr '22

- Replaced the belt on the dryer in the carriage house after it was squealing and shaking
- Cleaned the vent in the dryer which was overdue
- Replaced the vent caps on the cupolas for intake and exhaust fans
- Interviewed piano refinisher with Matthew to discuss potential solutions for glue on piano lid
- Met roofer to review the shingles situation that caused the ice dams
- Responded to TCS regarding giant bugs flying out of outlets and cracks in the wall
- Called the pest company for an assessment – termites
- Treated the perimeter of the buildings
- Replaced rotted wood trim on carriage house windows
- Replaced broken living room window in carriage house

May '22

- Met with vendors for a barrier arm gate
- Repaired the leaking master bathtub with new PVC piping and took out the corroded copper pipe
- Replaced leaking faucet at carriage house because handles would not tighten to stop the dripping
- Turned on sprinkler system
- Met with TCS and cleaning company to discuss issues with services provided
- Repaired chimney on carriage house that had moved two inches off of the house
- Inspected kitchen
- Conducted maintenance on the ejector pump system
- Painted TCS signpost – Wilson Painting
- Painted the garage doors at the carriage house – Wilson Painting

June '22

- Inspected carriage house for termites
- Removed and re-shingled the section of roof with ice dams that caused the leak in TCS
- Ordered and installed another DO NOT ENTER sign for the back entrance of TCS parking lot.
- Inspection of HVAC systems and filter replacement
- Inspected fire alarm system and informed again to replace smoke detectors in church building
- Assessed classroom door handles and locks that were not working with locksmith
- Dismantled and removed the piano from the building
- Relocated the upright piano to the sanctuary and found a crack in the leg
- Inspected fire alarm system at TCS – requirement and suggested a trip test of the dry sprinkler system
- Managed the upset caused when an unknown someone entered the lobby of TCS from the church into the area where children were passing through
- Identified the raccoon family that was using the shed roof as their latrine
- Scared them away with male urine – yes, this is true



July '22

- Re-attached the electrical riser on the side of the carriage house
- Replaced an unsafe, unsecured outlet with a secured GFI outlet at the back deck of carriage house
- Installed a wire box to eliminate unnecessary extension cords
- Replaced a non-standard light fixture with an LED light at back door
- Installed light fixture in main bathroom due to frayed wires
- Re-attached the giant electrical box/riser falling off outside wall of TCS
- Installed a bubble cover to an exterior outlet box at the toddler playground
- Replaced a number of lights/ballasts in classrooms and the lobby of TCS
- Plastered ceiling of carriage house from master bathroom leak
- Investigated options for conventional smokes with a sprinkler system
- Investigated potential cost savings of a sprinkler system from an insurance perspective

Aug '22

- Inspected building at TCS by town – requirement
- Replaced door handle hardware, swapping the key cylinders so we could use existing keys
- Installed a privacy lockset on the bathroom door in room 113 – need to lock the door during lockdown
- Adjusted front door lock at TCS to securely lock
- Installed a section of chain link fence at the toddler playground that was in disrepair
- Met with cleaning company to discuss issues with cleaning staff
- Removed a baby bat from the corner of a column in the toddler playground – Wilson Pest just home from vacation and to the rescue
- Inspected the sprinkler system and found it not working
- Installed exterior control boxes for sprinkler system
- Installed exterior control boxes for sprinkler system
- Programmed sprinkler system with new control boxes
- Replaced all valves with nodes on sprinkler system
- Removed old system controller from creepy basement
- Replaced exterior sprinkler controller in toddler playground
- Received refinished piano
- Replaced broken heat rod and bracket mount in piano



Sep '22

- Executed lease with Town of Milton to reopen the Wildcat Den
- Cleaned out pre-pandemic soda cans from youth room that had leaked a sticky mess onto the floor
- Organized the storage closet in the youth room with new shelving
- Collected all hazardous waste to go to recycling
- Plastered the wall around the electrical panel in the hallway between Huntington Hall and TCS
- Plastered the wall around the radiator in the hallway between Huntington Hall and TCS
- Resolved the concern of a gas smell by parents at TCS; it was National Grid at the fire department
- Replaced the cover and side door on the dumpster to prevent the animals from littering the parking lot
- Investigated a beeping fire panel and replaced dirty smoke detectors in room 111 at TCS

Oct '22

- Dealt with the large, rotted branch that fell on the walkway from the tree at the red door
- Shut off sprinkler system
- Replaced vanity light at carriage house – fried wires
- Replaced termite wall at TCS
- Replaced EXIT/emergency lights in Huntington Hall
- Disconnected emergency light in Huntington Hall over the closets in the corner

- Ordered belts for intake/exhaust vents on pantry roof
- Met with safety officer of MPD to discuss FCC safety protocols
- Attempted a makeshift gate with cones and a big red truck to prevent going the wrong way in a one way
- Replaced ballasts in two classrooms

Nov '22

- Met with Bright Horizon on snow policy
- Reviewed conflicts with tenant and cleaning company schedules
- Conducted trip test of dry sprinkler system with sprinkler company and alarm company onsite
- Discussed turnover with management of cleaning company and need for cleaners to fill dumpster correctly
- Replaced kitchen intake/exhaust fan belts
- Repaired the flue on the vent
- Trimmed bushes and shrubs around the church
- Replaced ballast, emergency light, light fixtures in TCS
- Inspected TCS for fire code – requirement
- Raked and bagged leaves around the property
- Replaced broken fence section between track and carriage house

Dec '22

- Worked with Parks and Rec to open at 11:30 am on early release school days on a test basis – all okay
- Managed back parking lot for known busy days at the church to prevent cars from entering
- Filed for kitchen permit and received
- Repaired ball rack on pool table in youth room
- Discussed dumpster issue with cleaners again
- Repaired shelving units in TCS classroom closet

Respectfully Submitted,
Lori Connelly, Director of Finance and Operations

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

This past year was a productive one for our church. Working with the Director of Finance and Operations, Lori Connelly and Acting Pastor R.G. Wilson-Lyons the Trustees participated in the financial, personnel and operational decisions of the church. With the generous pledges and gifts we received, we have allocated funds to support the operations of our faith-based programs and maintain our sanctuary and physical plant. A detailed accounting may be found in the 2022 Financial Overview and other financial statements provided in this annual report.

Staffing: In November, we said good-bye to Brenda Lee Kozuch, our Administrative Assistant for the last 4.5 years. Also, at the end of December our Minister of Children and Families, Hannah Smith-Erb also left our employment to pursue other opportunities. We welcomed Katy Fazio as Minister of Children and Families in Jan of 2023.

We want to thank Carter Fahey for serving as the board's chair in 2021 as well as Niels Krejci for his work on the Board of Trustees over the last few years. Niels will be stepping down at the end of 2022. We were also sad to see Cathy Matejka, our Treasurer and ex-officio member of the board of Trustees, leave the board as her family relocated to Arizona.

Budget: Summarizing our financial report for 2022: We showed a net profit of about \$129,642.00 versus a net loss for 2021 of \$39,800.00. The year had been budgeted to have a net loss of \$10,401.00, however The Centre School provided an unexpected extra profit-sharing gain of \$51,228.00 at the end of the year (the church received no profit sharing in 2021) along with the PPE loan forgiveness of \$25,800. Also giving was \$12,218.00, also up from our original budget. Thus, we were able to show a profit for the year of 2022.

Although, December 2021 had been targeted as the end of the Capital Campaign for the Youth Room build-out we continued to receive some pledges this year. We received \$18,035.00 in gifts toward that capital campaign. Although we collected \$452,000, we were over budget on construction costs leaving a deficit of \$42,000.

Buildings: Even with the limited budgeted funds available at the start of 2022, we were able to address the most critical items on our deferred maintenance and repair list including several Centre School repairs and upgrades, replacing and upgrading smoke detectors, maintenance on our ejector pump, replacing vent caps on the cupolas and minor repairs on the carriage house (Parsonage). A detailed list of all projects and repairs can be seen in the finance and operations report. We want to extend a huge "thank you" to Lori Connelly for her planning and implementing of all the projects during 2022.

We saw the return of the Wildcat Den (after school program for the children of Milton Public Schools) to the Youth Room in September of 2022. Although we continued to face some challenges with the restrictions caused by COVID-19, most of our FCC and community groups, as well as our paying tenants did return to use space in our church and buildings close to the pre-pandemic levels.

Thank you to all of the board members and to this congregations for their support and hard work. We are looking forward working with you 2023!

Submitted by,
Kate Kibbee, Chair

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

The 2022 Stewardship Campaign was announced by R.G. in worship in early October and a letter and email to the extended Congregation by Frank Wilson and R.G.

R.G. dedicated a sermon on stewardship and members Patricia Morisette and Susan Ferrari spoke on what the FCC means to them and why they support the Church with time and treasure.

Pledge Sunday was November 20.

This year we have 58 pledges totaling \$156,000 to the general fund and \$35,000 to Benevolence.

Pledges to the general fund are down by \$10,000 while Benevolence is up \$6000 from 2021.

Monthly electronic giving has significantly reduced the Stewardship Campaign effort and greatly reduced the administrative workload.

Thanks to all who have pledged to support our Church in 2023.

Respectfully submitted,
Frank Wilson, moderator

SHOPWITHSCRIP REPORT

Gift card purchase participation has remained slow due to remote worship, suspension of coffee hour, and reduced attendance at in house worship and coffee hour.

Despite the above 8 members have continued to purchase gift cards resulting in a \$2052 contribution to the general fund, a \$300 increase over 2021.

You can painlessly increase your financial support of the Church by participating in the program. Select one store you shop regularly. Example- Milton Market Place, Stop & Shop, or Star/Shaw and 4% of your spending goes to FCC. \$200 weekly spend = \$8. X 52 weeks = \$416 to FCC. At no cost to you! — *Frank Wilson, Moderator*

CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

The Council was inactive during the first 9 months of 2022 due to the Covid pandemic restraints.

We returned to action in September with an enthusiastic meeting with 100% participation focusing on the challenges facing the Church following the pandemic; how to rebuild membership participation, programs, outreach to members who have drifted away, and refreshing existing bonds.

R.G. started the meeting by asking each member what had they experienced in the past 9 months. After two hours of incredible sharing and comradeship we briefly addressed the issues and scheduled another meeting.

Our bonds of trust and friendships were vigorously reinforced.

At the October meeting Alex Shea Will, conference minister joined us to share the actions and challenges some other congregations were facing in the post pandemic.

We explored strategies to reach out to members and how to foster interest and participation in the activities of the Congregation.

Respectfully submitted,
Frank Wilson, Moderator

BOARD OF BENEVOLENCE AND SOCIAL CONCERN REPORT

The members of the Board of Benevolence and Social Concern consider it an honor to share the abundance of this congregation with our immediate and extended community. This congregation and community continued to step up and serve boldly with dollars, time and physical labor in meaningful ways.

The historically supportive efforts that continued were:

1. providing hot meals and bagged lunches to Mainspring Shelter in Brockton on a monthly basis. In addition, a presentation was made to the congregation during worship describing our partnership with these projects.
2. winter coat drive in January resulting in 545 coats donated to MANNA and Solutions at Work.

In lieu of a food drive this year, Interfaith Social Services requested books and hygiene supplies. Seventy books and 20 bags of hygiene supplies were donated.

MICA's project to aid resettlement of a Syrian refugee family was supported with donations totaling \$2000.

The Rainbow Youth Alliance, supporting LGBTQ+ youth, was very successful this year. BoB&SC supported this group with total donations of \$2800.

The Southern New England United Church of Christ received the customary \$6000.

Total monetary disbursements was \$31,700.

An important part of FCCM Envisioning Process was the community interviews to determine how our congregation can partner with others to better interact and serve beyond our doors. Betsy Disharoon and Maya Egan served on the Racial/Social Justice Interviewing Team and found it a gratifying experience.

Betsy Disharoon represented FCCM attending SNEUCC Justice Summit in September.

This Board gained great satisfaction in assisting our congregation in sharing blessings of money and time during this past year of continuing challenges in the world.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Disharoon, Chair

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION REPORT

2022 had us settled into the “new normal” of living with, and coming out of, the Covid-19 pandemic. After a long search and quite a few interviews, we found our wonderful new Minister of Children and Families, Hannah Smith-Erb. She was able to provide some great ideas on how to regain some traction and get participation levels higher. The Centre School continued to have strict guidelines for usage of their space, which meant that we had to be creative with our approach to reopening our Sunday School. We adapted and made do using a single room classroom environment in the basement youth room until the Centre School began to open again. The number of children participating in Sunday School steadily increased throughout the year but remained lower than pre-pandemic levels.

After years of the Board discussing how to get music to be more a part of the Sunday School experience, this year Adam Ochs offered to organize and become director of a children’s choir. Though the choir is a small group, it has been met with great exuberance by the congregation, and we will hopefully continue to add more singers and musical components as time passes.

Hannah and Reverend Wilson-Lyons organized a mid-week get together for families, alternating weeks between FCC and East Congregational Churches, called “Wacky Wednesdays”. These offer food and fellowship in a fun and casual atmosphere that has been a resounding success.

We continued to have weekly youth group meetings and meetups under the direction of RG.

We once again ended the year on a high note, with the production of a wonderful Christmas Pageant written and directed by Alex Barber. It was a real treat and a fantastic end to the calendar year for our children!

Unfortunately, Hannah was called to a new position in ministry at the end of the year, and our search for a new Minister of Children and Families started once again. We were offered a fantastic contact from RG in Katy Fazio, a bright young seminary student from Boston University. She accepted the position and has hit the ground running.

We would like to thank the members of the BoCE who served during 2022 for their continued dedication over this past year: Adam Ochs, Emily Gorman, Alex Barber, Janine Solomon, Deirdre Merrill, and Niels Krejci.

Respectfully Submitted,
Adam Ochs, Chair

DIGITAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE REPORT

Mission and Team

The Digital Ministry team consists of:

Doug Gaff
Niels Krejci
Mike Baker

The team is responsible for running live church events and supporting our streaming ministry. Events include church services, special music events, memorial services, Caroling on the Commons, and the children's Christmas pageant. We rotate responsibilities for running the church's live and streamed service.

2022 Streaming Statistics

Since the pandemic, we continue to see a shift in church service participation with significant attendance outside of the traditional Sunday worship service time slot. Here are the YouTube viewing stats from 2021 and 2022.

	2021	2022
Channel Subscribers	133	151
Total Video Views	4701	3928
Hours of Watch Time	992	705
Average Views Per Service	60	52

At the top of the number of views for 2022 were the following services:

145 views -- "Half-Way There," Rev. R.G. Wilson-Lyons, May 29, 2022

99 views -- Christmas Day Service

92 views -- "Welcome to this Place," Rev. R.G. Wilson-Lyons, September 11, 2022

YouTube doesn't provide historical statistics prior to September 2022 for live viewers (people who watch the stream as it's broadcasting), so we don't have good historical data on live viewers for the year. However, we saw a range of 5 to 19 concurrent viewers for the last quarter of 2022 according to YouTube's dashboard. Our guess is 8-10 families are viewing the service on Sundays as it streams.

As noted in last year's report, we operate on a skeleton crew compared to larger churches with similar streaming and live worship capabilities. Specifically, a larger church would have at least 3 people working on Sunday: one live sound engineer, one broadcast audio/video engineer for the stream, and at least one camera person. Given that we have a limited number of volunteers and limited space in the balcony, one person does three jobs on Sunday. So of course, we appreciate your patience if the recorded or live experience isn't perfect!

Current and Future Infrastructure

In 2022, we made several improvements to the infrastructure.

1. Permanently mounted the two extra cameras purchased during the remote-only church services so they can be used as part of our regular worship service.
2. Added a third permanent camera to showcase the choir when they sing from the balcony.
3. Upgraded the video switcher and switcher monitor to handle more camera channels.
4. Replaced the broken tripod for our primary camera.
5. Upgraded the church office and balcony network to mitigate ongoing streaming bandwidth problems we were having during Sunday service.
6. Fixed damaged in-wall wiring in the balcony caused by mice. (Mice like to eat the rubber insulation off of wires.)

We still have a few projects carried over from last year. These are labor-intensive projects which require significant work in the attic and basement, which is why they haven't been completed yet.

- Install two additional house mics to better record the congregation singing on the live stream.
- Lower the height of the two existing house mics, which currently pick up too much organ and house echo.
- Install a dedicated organ mic for the live stream.
- Replace several damaged microphone floor jacks on the stage.
- Investigate wireless and wired mic interference issues.

We have requested funding in the 2023 budget to replace our 10-year-old soundboard. Soundboards are like laptop computers and have a limited shelf life. We also buy more affordable equipment, since we're not a megachurch, and the less expensive equipment doesn't last as long. Our current board has been repaired a few times by Doug, but some of its current issues cannot be addressed in a cost-effective manner.

As a general request to the church, we'd like a couple of things. First, give us your feedback! If you're someone who regularly consumes streamed content, please let us know what's working well and what's not working. If you're someone in the live service who has opinions on the experience, please let us know. Second, we're always looking for volunteers. You don't need to be technical to help out. We're happy to teach you the basics of running the service.

AV System History

Given the newness of technology relative to our church bylaws, our committee is not yet an official committee in the bylaws, even though we've been around for 10 years. Since we've only been reporting in the annual report recently, we thought we'd like to take a moment to summarize the history of our infrastructure and capabilities.



The initial version of FCC Milton’s Digital Ministry infrastructure was funded in 2012 by donations from John Keith, Audrey Brown, and Doug & Brenda Gaff. The project was led by Doug Gaff working with a professional sound design company, Parsons Audio, which Doug used when he worked at NPR. As part of the design process, Parsons acoustically modeled the sanctuary and recommend a variety of equipment choices to maximize the flexibility of our system and space.

The original system was predominantly audio-focused and included:

- A digital mixing console.
- Multiple wireless microphone channels and mics.
- Permanently installed house, balcony, and piano microphones.
- Power amplifiers for the sanctuary and Huntington Hall.
- Speaker line arrays.
- A prosumer video camera to record the service.
- Assisted listening devices for those who have trouble hearing.
- A variety of installation gear and cabling.

Over the past 10 years, several upgrades have been made to the system with a focus on increased miking capacity, enhanced live streaming, and fully remote service support:

- Streaming hardware - we’ve streamed the service for several years prior to the pandemic, but we upgraded the system significantly for remote-only services during the pandemic.
- A stage box for special events which require more connections on stage and for services that were partially hosted outside.
- Additional wireless mic channels.
- Head-worn microphones for special productions, e.g. children’s performances and Caroling on the Commons.
- Additional consumer-grade cameras and a video switcher for the pandemic remote-only services.
- Broadcast metering for improved streaming audio consistency and quality.
- Additional specialized mics, cables, and installation hardware.

- Most recently, upgraded networking equipment to improve network performance and reliability issues affecting our stream.

Some of these upgrades were funded by the church. Others were funded by private donations. The upgrades over the past 10 years reflect the changing nature of our worship service and the types of events we host – special programs, the need to record various special events, and of course the need to stream live services in both remote and hybrid worship experiences.

Finally, at FCC Milton we have traditional worship services. As such, our system doesn't include the components one would find in churches that run "contemporary" worship services—services with multiple band instruments and singers. We also don't use stage lighting, which is often found in larger churches.

Respectfully submitted,
Doug Gaff, chair

DELEGATES REPORT

Due to COVID, we didn't have anyone representing our church as delegate to the Southern New England Conference of the UCC annual meeting.

DIACONATE REPORT

2022 was a productive year for First Congregational Church of Milton. As we began to recover from the challenges of the Covid pandemic, we embarked on several key initiatives. We began a comprehensive visioning process featuring small group discussions, followed by more than 50 community conversations. The vision team is now working to assimilate the gathered information to prepare us for the next stages of the process.

In September, we started the highly successful Nourish Wednesday night dinners in conjunction with East Church. While the kids enjoyed the Wacky Wednesday activities, the adults enjoyed an economical home cooked meal and conversations on spiritual topics and bible studies. We also heard from the Milton Alliance and Sustainable Milton.

We continue to be blessed RG's compelling messages and leadership. He has worked closely with the Deacons to consider worship themes and sacraments. In the fall we transitioned to a family service for communion that has been enthusiastically received. Because Christmas and New Year's Day fell on Sundays, we crafted new worship formats that allowed families to enjoy the holidays together. The New Year's brunch service was particularly successful.

We welcomed Wendy Garpow as a deacon and are thankful for the continuing efforts of the other deacons.

Respectfully submitted,
Steve Paxhia, chair

HISTORIAN REPORT

The records of the First Congregational Church of Milton are valuable assets that contain information pertaining to the Church's mission, initiatives, activities, operations, heritage, and legacy. Stewardship of information assets is an important responsibility for all individual congregations and particularly for those who are record-creators for our church. Records with lasting legal or operational value or those that document our Church's history and accomplishments must be identified and preserved.

* *

During the past year, I continued to work on systematically documenting our records based on archival principles and best practices. This past year I created inventories for 2 boxes of materials.

Based on the work of a reference request (see below), I began consolidating information about baptisms, funerals, and weddings into an Excel spreadsheet. Information about baptisms is spread throughout the archives and in the Church Office files and is incomplete. In order to better track the information, I created a spreadsheet to capture the information found on the various forms and bulletins in the archives. While the records reviewed were from the past 20 years (2000-2021), I will continue to add older records' information as I find them.

There were three reference enquiries to the Archives, internal and external.

In April, the Church Office was contacted by an outside researcher who was searching for any information related to her fourth great grandmother Mary Louisa Emilia Teale, who married Jonathan Belcher in 1748. After reviewing the archival holdings, it was determined we held no records. The archives don't hold many records prior to the split of 1834. I directed them to the Unitarian Church across the Green, who holds those earlier records. I also directed their search to the Milton Cemetery records and to the Massachusetts Historical Society.

In October, there was an internal request for Annual Reports. I retrieved and provided the annual reports from the past decade.

In December, there was an internal request for baptismal records from 2005. While the exact record was not located, it prompted a review of baptismal records as described above.

Accessioned 3 transfers to the collection:

2022-001: Board of Benevolence Minutes (2022), received from Betsy Disharoon, 5/16/2022 (e-files)

2022-002: Records related to Church Boards, Trustees and Center School Board, received from Cathy Arnold and Tom Matejka, 9/3/2022 (4 cuft)

2022-003: Council Meeting Notes, received from Rev. RG Wilson, 11/15/2022 (e-files)

Respectfully Submitted,
James Roth, Church Historian

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Mission: To support and welcome visitors, and to orient new members as we nurture the faith experience of all members.

The Membership Committee reaches out to our greater community and welcomes all visitors to our congregation. We plan and facilitate five large family events each year that make it easy for members to invite their friends and neighbors to visit our church and get to know members of the congregation. We look forward to welcoming visitors and to helping them get to know our congregation through introductions and connections to small groups of interest. A representative of the Membership Committee meets with new members during their new member classes. To help nurture families, the Membership Committee works with other committees on family friendly events for members of all ages. Due to COVID-19 and the small composition of the committee, the Membership Committee was unable to organize and host many of the events usually held during the year.

The **Caroling on the Common** event was held on December 10, 2022 returned to its traditional pre-pandemic format. The event this year featured a concert in the sanctuary with singers from the Boston Conservatory at Berkeley Cabaret and the Milton High School Holiday Choir, followed by a family friendly gathering with Christmas cookies, hot cocoa, cider, crafts for the children, and marshmallow roasting. Around 105 people attended the 15th annual free event. An enormous thank you to Candice Brown, and all volunteers who were instrumental in organizing this event. Also thank you again to all members and friends for organizing this event and supplying the wonderful cookies for us to all enjoy.

The Membership Committee's goals for the future are to continue focusing on how to best support our congregation and working with other committees to create new opportunities for members and visitors to integrate and deepen their faith, and ways to become better ambassadors for our church. The Membership Committee welcomes your ideas for any in-person or virtual events that foster members and visitors. Previous events held have included: a welcome picnic, progressive suppers; welcome picnic, a fall pumpkin festival; an all church birthday celebration, and family supper and game nights.

Finally, the Membership Committee is always interested in helping newer members to express their ideas for new programs. Please feel free to contact us with your ideas and needs. We are here to welcome and nurture our Membership and we look forward to becoming more active in 2023.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Morissette, chair

MUSIC MINISTRY REPORT

The Music Ministry has had a relatively stable and successful 2022. Our soloists (Angela Gooch, Lorna Jane Norris and Emily Harmon) have been the anchors of the Choir; it is remarkable to have such dedicated soloists serve for so long at one church, and we are incredibly lucky to have them! Our former soloist, Gabrielle Barkidjija, left us in May to accept a position at Detroit Opera.

Highlights of the year include the following:

FCC's Choir and soloists, including Gabrielle, Emily, Lorna, Angela, and guest tenor Marcus Huber, joined with the soloists and choir of St. Michael's Episcopal church to present Camille Saint-Saëns' "Requiem" for Good Friday 2022. I conducted the 7-piece orchestra and a chorus of about 40 people, and it was a wonderful event for both churches.

Thanks to the generosity of a few anonymous donors in our congregation, our amazing 1914 Mason and Hamlin grand piano had a much-needed facelift! The entire surface of the piano was completely refinished, and all the metal components (hinges, pedals, screws etc) were re-plated in nickel. The result is just beautiful.

These donors requested that I present a concert of my choosing to celebrate the re-do. In November, we had a Gala program entitled "In Praise of Women" that was comprised of music for soloists, choir, piano, and organ, all written by women spanning 500 years of history. The concert included our soloists plus guest artist Patrice Tiedemann and was a huge success. I was surprised that the amazing reception following the concert (engineered by Paula Goodrich) was also a celebration of my 20 years as Minister of Music at First Congregational Church. I was gifted a beautiful new chair (in which I'm sitting as I write this report), and a Delta Airlines gift card, which I've used to purchase a ticket to San Francisco for Spring Break!

The Choir and soloists also participated in the memorial service for longtime choir member and congregant Jean McKenney, which was a moving and special for all present.

Although it's 2023, I must also mention the sad passing of another longtime Choir member, Linda Bent. Her sudden death a few days ago was a shock to all of us in the Music Ministry – Linda was a wonderful and faithful member of the Choir and the church, and we will all miss her.

I hope to continue to offer this church the highest level of music in 2023, and I am thankful to work in a place where the congregation is so appreciative of the Music Ministry.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Matthew Larson, Minister of Music

PASTOR PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Pastor Parish Relations Committee met three times in 2021. Discussions were general and are confidential. Two members left the committee in 2021 and Deirdre Merrill joined in 2022 resulting in a committee of four: R.G. Wilson-Lyons, Niels Kreji, Deirdre Merrill and Nancy Barber

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Barber, Member

SMALL GROUPS REPORT

We have several active small groups at the church that met during 2022 including the Men's breakfast, Spiritual Book Club, Women's Breakfast, Senior Book Group, the Midlife Men's Group, and the Knitters. There's a description of each group as well as information on how to join on our website.

Respectfully submitted,
R.G. Wilson-Lyons, acting pastor

YOUTH GROUP REPORT

This year we saw a decline in participation of youth group. I think there are several factors that explain the decline including kids being involved in other activities that conflicted with youth group as well as some kids simply not finding youth group to be a meaningful experience. I've struggled to figure out how to strengthen this part of our church and make the experience more meaningful.

By the end of the year, we had five kids regularly participating. During the school year, our gatherings always included a time for games and a discussion about something relating to faith and life. Over the summer, we had a few special events planned. I'd like to thank Nancy Barber for once again hosting the youth group swimming party at her house.

Finally, I would like to especially thank those who served as youth group chaperones during the year: Mike Baker, Adam Ochs, Dierdre Merrill, Jamie Roth, Ann Riley, and Barney Morisette. We are still in need of chaperones for this year. If anyone is interested, please reach out to me.

Respectfully submitted,
Reverend R.G. Wilson-Lyons, Youth Minister

YOUTH ROOM REPORT

In early 2020, we celebrated the completion of the new Youth Room, as both a place for our youth to gather, as well as a way to serve the larger community by providing space for the Wildcat Den, the town's after school program for middle school students. Then, the pandemic hit, and all of our plans were put on pause for a time. Even last Spring, when we reopened, the former director of the Wildcat Den was no longer available. While we put the youth room to good use last year, this year it is starting to fulfill its original purpose.

This Fall, the Wildcat opened. Monday-Thursday anywhere from 15-45 middle school students come and have a safe and fun place to hang out after school. The Milton Youth Advocates for Change, the youth leadership initiative of the Milton Coalition, continues to have their weekly meetings in the space. Last year, we started the Rainbow Youth Alliance in collaboration with First Parish to give LGBTQ kids and allies a safe place to simply be themselves. 10-20 kids come each week while a parenting support group takes place at First Parish. And Jay Fundling started a Dungeons and Dragons game night for kids in the community.

In addition, we've continued to use the youth room for a variety of church activities including youth group meetings, Sunday school, Wacky Wednesday fun nights, and the Midweek Men's Meetup.

All of this is possible because of the generosity of so many people who donated to the Capital Campaign. I hope you are all proud of your incredible generosity and the real impact it is having, not only for our church, but for youth throughout the Milton community.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. R.G. Wilson-Lyons, Acting Pastor

2022 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES from FEBRUARY 6, 2022

Frank Wilson, moderator, called the 2022 Annual Meeting to order via Zoom at 11 am. According to names listed on the Zoom call, there were more than 40 attendees. Acting pastor R.G. Wilson-Lyons offered an opening prayer.

Frank Wilson, moderator, asked for a motion to waive the reading of the committee reports which was offered and seconded.

There was a review of nominations of boards and committees. Frank then moved for a motion to accept all nominees. It was made, seconded and approved.

A motion was made and seconded to not read each report within the Annual Report, but to accept them as written. This also was approved.

R.G. Wilson-Lyons summarized the **pastors report** stressing this past year has been a year of transition for our congregation, as we've gradually begun to come back into the building as more and more people in our community have been vaccinated. On May 16, 2021, our youth group started meeting in person back in the Youth Room. We restarted in-person worship on Sunday, June 13, and slowly incorporated singing back into the service. In October, we re-started Sunday school. Sunday school got off to a slow start, but soon we were averaging more than 10 children each Sunday morning. We really had a boost when Alex Barber agreed to direct our children's Christmas pageant — 17 kids participated. We celebrated, laughed and were moved as our kids shared with us the Christmas story through their pageant, "Christmas Gifts." They reminded us that the true gifts of Christmas are faith, peace, hope and love. Our church owes our deep gratitude to Alex for a job well done.

In May we celebrated Emma Brewer-Wallin, our student minister for the last two years.

The largest transition, however, was saying goodbye to our pastor, Rev. John Allen, as he accepted a call to serve as senior pastor at First Parish in Brunswick, Maine. Our congregation was truly blessed by John's leadership, his incredible preaching and his warm and pastoral spirit. During his tenure, our church saw significant growth — especially among families with children — became a more active presence in the community, and launched a capital campaign that transformed our basement into a youth room we enjoy today. On September 26, our congregation joined together to celebrate John's time with us. We are grateful for the message of God's love and grace that he both spoke and demonstrated through his sermons and actions that we carry with us even as we miss him, Molli, Cora, and Lydia.

In October, R.G. accepted the role of Acting Pastor as the congregation enters into a strategic visioning process before calling the next settled pastor. R.G. expressed his appreciation to John and all of the congregation for helping him make that transition.

R.G. acknowledged the resumption of some of the pre-Covid activities, a sign of hope to returning to a strong, active church community. Caroling on the Common resumed, albeit as an outside activity. Sunday school was again an in-person activity, but is slow to return. R.G. stressed that will be an area of focus for 2022. Our coat and clothing drive brought in more than 1000 items to share with those in need, while our food drive filled the altar with bags of groceries. He expressed gratitude for the people and committees which made this happen despite the restrictions still in place for Covid protection.

Another sign of returning to “normal” and important milestones, In June, we celebrated Confirmation Sunday in an in-person, outdoor service. Maya Egan, Lydia Geering, Sophie Roth, Wesley Morissette and Madeline Regnier all completed their confirmation class and took the vows to become full members of our church. This group of confirmands showed not only deep commitment to our church, but also great perseverance to complete confirmation during such a challenging time.

R.G. reported our livestream worship continued to be a vital way of worshiping, by providing an alternative worship experience for those who are not yet ready to resume in-person worship or find online worship more meaningful. In 2021, we had more than 4500 views on our YouTube page, and, even after restarting in-person worship, we continue to have 35 to 50 views on the livestream each week.

In conclusion, R.G. noted we have continued finding new ways of doing church during the pandemic, we do not have to be afraid of the unknown, or of trying new things. In the coming months, our church will, in earnest, begin its strategic visioning process around the question, “Who is God calling us to be going forward?” This church has a long history of faithfully responding to God’s call at different times and seasons in its history, and I’m and we will continue to do so no matter what 2022 throws our way.

The next order of business was the **Stewardship Committee report** presented by Frank Wilson. As of the meeting, pledges for 2022 included 43 families participating in the electronic giving program.

Total pledging to 2022 general fund is \$170,000. Pledges to benevolence are \$30,336. Lost pledges from 2021 are \$19,150 which includes \$9,600 from members who moved, and \$9,550 from those who reduced or canceled their pledges. New or increased pledges equal \$48,340.

In response to Rev. John Allen’s appeal in February 2021 for additional financial support due to the COVID-19 situation, \$5,700 was received and noted as such.

Carter Fahey, president, gave the **trustees report**. Total church revenue received in 2021 was \$187,268. This was favorable to the budget by \$5,648, but below 2020 by \$15,870. The Centre School revenue, reported in non-operating income, was \$158,907, which was \$1,311 favorable to the budget of \$157,596. The net result was an overall increase in revenue of \$6,959 in 2021 as compared to the budget, although representing a \$73,077 decline compared to 2020.

Total 2021 expenses were \$385,971 compared to a budget of \$401,872 for a favorable variance of \$15,901. With revenue slightly higher than the plan and the expenses favorable to the plan, the net loss for the year was \$39,796, which was \$32,860 favorable to the planned net loss of \$72,656.

Church giving revenue in 2021 was \$168,030. This was \$4,030 favorable to the planned revenue of \$164,000. Although favorable to the plan, the 2021 giving revenue was less than the 2020 giving revenue by \$21,061. The rental income was \$19,237 in 2021, which was favorable to the plan by \$1,617. GSEC did not return until December vs. a planned return in September, but that reduction in

revenue was offset by the rental income from the carriage house, previously known as the parsonage. Transfers were made into the Fidelity account for giving and the capital campaign (\$27,893) as well as earning an overall 12.2% on our holdings.

Church operating expenses of \$228,448 were slightly unfavorable to the budget but substantially lower than 2020 by \$67,505. The planned repairs and improvements account for the church and carriage house was budgeted at \$15,030. This was closely managed and as a result only incurred costs of \$4,680 for needed gutters, resulting in a favorable variance of \$10,350. Church utilities were also favorable to the plan by \$6,044. The ongoing building maintenance, which was \$77,952, was \$21,407 unfavorable to the plan of \$56,545. These additional expenses related to the three new HVAC systems in The Centre School, an eviction and exclusion of raccoons and squirrels at The Centre School, lighting issues in Johnson Hall and the parking lot, and deferred maintenance at the carriage house.

The next order of business was to present to the congregation the proposed process for strategic planning. Steve Paxhia reported on work that had already started. Due to both time passed and the dramatic changes brought about by Covid 19, the church agreed to begin a visioning process to answer the following:

- Who is God calling us to be?
- What are the roles of the church?
- How can we better serve our community?
- How can we strengthen our commitment to social and racial Justice?
- How can we attract more “unchurched” people?

The church has engaged consultants to facilitate this process which was begun last quarter. Updates will be made periodically and all are enthusiastically invited to participate. Steve reported on the learnings to date (see below) and that we are in the first phase of the process.

Learnings:

- The pandemic helped reveal a spiritual/religious appetite not being fully met by traditional Sunday services <https://spiritualitystudy.fetzer.org>
- People like the flexibility of online participation but miss the fellowship
- Small groups work online for some congregants
- Committee meetings work well online
- We need to consider new Hybrid worship opportunities going forward
- We cannot expect (nor should we) to return to “normal”
- We have seen increased interest in participation in social and racial justice activities.
- Like most churches, our Christian education participation numbers have dropped
- Happily, participation in our youth program has increased.

Frank Wilson expressed our deep appreciation to Lori Connelly, Brenda Lee, and Kevin Harnden for all their work, especially during the pandemic and its many changes.

There being no other business requested, Frank Wilson asked for a motion to adjourn which was proposed, seconded and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectively submitted,
Nancy Barber, Clerk