



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH UCC
WISCASSET, MAINE



Annual Report for 2020
January 2020 - December 2020



First Congregational Church Wiscasset UCC
October 11 at 9:34 AM · 🌐

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72 People Reached 35 Engagements

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**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
WISCASSET, MAINE JANUARY 31, 2021**

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First Congregational Church UCC
Wiscasset, Maine

Notice of Annual Meeting
To be held on

-
January 31, 2021
11:00 am

Call: In accordance with its by-laws, members of the First Congregational Church, UCC of Wiscasset, Maine, are hereby notified that the annual meeting will be held Sunday, January 31, 2021 after the service *via Zoom*. Members without internet capability or with limited access will be able to call in to participate. More information regarding how to access the meeting will be shared as the meeting date draws closer.

December 28, 2020

Deb Olson,
Church Clerk

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA
January 31, 2021

1. Opening Prayer
2. Reading of the Call
3. Presentation / Acceptance of Minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting
4. Memorials: Robert “Jib” Fowles, John Ross, Ken Sullivan, Barbara Sullivan, Leigh Campbell, Richard Kubler, Cora Tarbox, Betty Bradford
5. Report of the Minister
6. Reports: Church Committees and Treasurer
7. Report of the Nominating Committee
8. Election of Officers for 2021 and Commissioning
9. Presentation of the Proposed 2021 Budget
10. Old Business
 Habitat for Humanity Church Representative
11. New Business
12. Adjournment

MINISTER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020

"Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established." - Proverbs 16:3

2020 has been a year of ministry that none of us ever expected as we found ourselves responding to a pandemic world. Plans were changed quickly, traditions were shifted, and we began walking a path for ministry together for a unique year as we cared for our congregation and community. There are certainly aspects of our shared life that we have greatly missed and, for some, this has left a void. From Easter to Christmas, our special worship celebrations were quite different than the norm. We have been longing for the familiarity of our sanctuary worship as it was. We have not been gathering after worship to share comradery with cookies and companionship over coffee. Long standing traditions, like Summerfest were canceled due to the pandemic. Newer outreach programs, like monthly coffees with Wiscasset Green or worship services led at Chase Point Assisted Living, have been suspended. Plans we hoped would come to fruition, like hosting another year of mission trips in Wiscasset or starting a monthly after school program on early release days for Wiscasset children, have been delayed. And in the moments when we have seen one another in-person, it has been with masks and from a further distance than we are accustomed to greeting one another. There is no doubt that this year has had its difficult moments and challenging considerations, and yet we remained committed to the work of our God and we continued on!

This past year has been a year of innovation. Our church now has an online worship presence, made possible by our Diaconate and Trustees and particularly Jim Nelon and Brian Adams. This presence and ability to connect virtually has the potential to bless our ongoing ministry indefinitely! With online and livestreamed services being accessible to our congregation and community, we have expanded the reach of our ministry significantly. For years to come, members who are away seasonally, congregants who are unable to attend any Sunday, community members who are curious about our church or are in need of inspiration, and friends of our congregation regardless of geographical bounds, can now worship with us and be a part of who we are! Thanks be to God!

We have been innovative in how we care for many of the influential causes we support annually. From a successful online campaign for Habitat for Humanity featuring, "Where in the World is Pastor Josh?", to a fundraising drive which kept the mission of Summerfest alive, we have stepped up and supported many vital programs and services as they too faced a hard year. We have supported Pilgrim Lodge, donating our \$1,000 scholarship budget line to help sustain them in a year without camp and we have raised funds for the Maine School of Ministry, an important educational endeavor of the Maine

Conference for church leaders. This continued support is to be celebrated! Thanks be to God!

This past year also has highlighted yet again the commitment and strength of our staff and volunteers. Ms. Colleen Crowley, who completed her time with us as our Church School Teacher & Coordinator in June, transitioned flawlessly to offering online classes for our children in an effort to continue our ministry and commitment to the youth of our church as the effects of the pandemic began. Her work has been continued in the fall by Rev. Oscar Wallace, CE Chair, and myself as we have nurtured the faith journeys of the children among us. Ms. Linda Adams, who resigned her position as our Minister of Music effective December 20, 2020, did a beautiful job keeping music alive in our services as we have journeyed through several iterations of worship. In every musical offering, in every effort to coordinate volunteers to sing and play, and in her constant care for our choir family, she has lived her faith. For her work among us, we will always be grateful. Ms. Mary McKinney has responded to any need that has arisen to care for our facility and Ms. Janet Leonard has been a steadfast and committed support to our ministry from the church office. Our work together was also made possible by scripture readers, soloists, musicians, ushers, providers of flowers, Trustees who have worked so diligently to make our sanctuary as safe as possible, Deacons who have called our congregation and offered continual support, and all our church members who have supported this work in gifts of time, talent, and treasure. This list is likely incomplete because so many have made our year possible and we see the strength of our congregation emerge yet again in inspiring ways. Thanks be to God!

As colleagues and I have mused, this year in the Church Universal will likely be a case study that future pastors and church leaders look back on and from which they will learn. What will future generations say about our ministry in Wiscasset during the year 2020? Only time will tell, and while we certainly do not claim to have traversed this year perfectly, without stumbling or without fault, I believe we have journeyed faithfully. We have leaned into the congregational way of being, allowing the Holy Spirit to move as our church leaders discern, take steps forward, take steps back, and dream of what will yet be. We have created and we have embraced new ways of being church which will surely transcend this moment in our history and will continue to expand the reach of our shared ministry. Have we had our difficult moments? *Absolutely*. Have we all agreed? *No*. Have we and will we continue persevere? *Most definitely*. Thanks be to God for the ministry we have been able to do this year, and may God bless the work that we will still do and establish our plans as we continue to journey faithfully through 2021!

Faithfully Journeying with You,
Rev. Josh Fitterling

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Members: Lisa Hargreaves, Oscar Wallace, Beth Whitney (Treasurer), Roger Whitney, Cheryl Wusterbarth, Tom Kovarik (incoming Treasurer), Steve Whitfield (Chair) – special thanks to Brian Adams (who was the chair for most of the year)

As it was for all the committees, 2020 was an interesting and challenging year. Beth Whitney successfully guided the Church through applying for, administrating, and gaining conversion to a grant of the Paycheck Protection Plan monies.

Early in the year church security issues were discussed. We now have an intercom system for the locked back door. New keying options are still being investigated.

We now have a new insurance company that has given us better coverage for about the same cost. We have new fire extinguisher and elevator maintenance companies.

Building repairs were completed (repair of Parlor door area and new Fellowship doors).

Streaming requirements necessitated an upgrade to the Church's internet (thank you Sarah Whitfield) and the obtaining of needed video and audio equipment (thank you Brian Adams, Jim Nelon, Roger Whitney and Beth Whitney).

Covid 19 issues required work on ventilation (thank you Brian Adams and Roger Whitney).

The Trustees approved the new partnership with Feed Our Scholars.

Yard work was completed by all the Trustees in the spring and a group in the fall.

Humidity issues for the organ were addressed (thank you Lisa Hargreaves and Oscar Wallace).

The 2019 audit was completed at the end of January 2020 and the 2020 audit will be completed this January.

I would like to thank all the people who pitched in to help the Trustees throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,
Steve Whitfield
Acting Chair

CHURCH CLERK'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020

New Members

Tom Clement
Cindy Clement

Weddings

Harvey Rice and Martin O'Rourke

Baptisms

Cameron Brian McEntee

Deaths

Robert "Jib" Fowles
John Ross
Ken Sullivan
Barbara Sullivan
Leigh Campbell
Richard Kubler
Cora Tarbox
Betty Bradford

As of December 31, 2020, there were a total of 120 active members and associate members and 33 inactive members on the rolls. 1 person removed their membership.

Respectfully submitted in faith,
Deborah Spencer Olson

DIACONATE ANNUAL REPORT 2020

The Diaconate is responsible for the worship services of the church and the spiritual life of the congregation. To this end, the Diaconate members perform several functions on an on-going basis for the church including ensuring that flowers, ushers, greeters and communion servers are available. The Diaconate thanks each and every one of the members of the church who have assisted us with ushering, providing flowers, setting up for communion, and the many other ways members of the church help out each and every Sunday.

The Covid-19 pandemic defined much of what the Diaconate considered in 2020. The traditional Advent services – and most other seasonal planned events – were disrupted by the pandemic. In March, the Diaconate suspended many aspects of customary sanctuary worship including passing of the offering plate, singing and offering of prayers/joys/concerns by worshipers. The Diaconate began meeting weekly to reassess the church's procedures and activities in light of the pandemic.

We evaluated many different sources of advice to determine how we should move forward during the pandemic. The subsequent decisions resulted in several iterations of worship experience as the pandemic progressed, including moving initially to entirely virtual pre-recorded services. We interpreted the Maine CDC guidelines for safe in-person worship and incorporated those guidelines into usher and worship protocols. We then were able to offer hybrid services with limited seating in the sanctuary and live broadcasts via Zoom and Facebook Live for at-home worshippers. To deliver the live-streamed broadcasts from the sanctuary, the church upgraded its internet capabilities and purchased equipment to support the live streaming of services. After several months of live-streaming the services, we reverted to entirely pre-recorded virtual services, awaiting safer conditions before opening the sanctuary for in-person worship.

As we have traversed these different iterations of worship in 2020, we could not have done it without the gifts of time and talent so graciously offered by many in our congregation! Thank you to our musicians/soloists who offered the blessings of music, our scripture readers (live and pre-recorded), our Trustees for preparing the sanctuary for in-person worship, our audio/visual technicians, our in-person usher team, and all who made our services possible! The list is a long one and we are so very grateful for their ministry among us!

In April the Diaconate began brainstorming our virtual worship presence during and beyond the pandemic:

- What would we like to continue to do around recorded services/parts of service moving forward?
- How can we reach out to the community in new and creative ways?
- What elements of the service could we tailor to a virtual delivery?
- How can we apply virtual creative ideas to our outreach?

During 2020, we lost the leadership of our Diaconate co-chair John Ross to cancer. And in September, Linda Adams, Minister of Music, announced her resignation, effective June, 2021,

but later updated her departure date to end-of-year 2020. We formed a search committee chaired by Linda Wallace to write a job description and search for Linda's replacement.

Throughout 2020 the Diaconate continued in its role of visitation of church members as part of our spiritual care role in the congregation. With the guidance of Rev. Josh, members of the Diaconate visited – either personally or virtually – homebound members and others who may be in need of extra connection to the congregation.

Many thanks to all of the Diaconate members for their dedication to this church and for all of your hard work through the many meetings and special requirements during the pandemic this past year. Your willingness to pitch in and support the church revealed the depth of your Christian fellowship devoted to the furthering of the church's ministry.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Nelon, Chair, Diaconate

CHURCH IN SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT 2020

The Mission of the CIS committee according to the bylaws is as follows: Shall be responsible for bringing before the congregation issues of peace, justice and other social concerns in the community and the world. It will be the church's contact with CIS organizations of the wider church.

In January CIS sponsored a talk after church on January 5. The speaker, Leigh Ann Keichline, was from the Restorative Justice Program of the Midcoast. 15 church members attended this luncheon of soup and bread and conversation about this organization.

In February, CIS member Sue Lewis invited church members to the annual Haiti dinner. Sue participates in the Lincoln County Ecumenical Group for Haiti.

In March our church went virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic. CIS began monthly meetings using the ZOOM format.

In May our church held a Blood Drive in honor of Rich Kubler, one of our church members who was a firefighter and 9/11 First Responder who had been diagnosed with Liver Cancer believed to be linked to exposure at Ground Zero. CIS members facilitated this successful blood drive despite the COVID-19 pandemic and scheduled again for the year 2021.

As racial tensions increased in our nation, after the events around the death of George Floyd and the subsequent Black Lives Matter protests, CIS met several times virtually and researched and provided to the congregation a list of resources regarding Racial Injustice. They also felt it important that our church show they were still "open" by hanging the church's banner "God is Still Speaking" prominently on the front railing of our Church. Later in early fall this banner was hanging on our back deck outside of Fellowship hall.

Throughout the summer months, CIS continued to meet monthly virtually and discussed several books looking for a book to share with the congregation. Our hope was to find a book that would cross our divides and be something that no matter your political beliefs, begin to bridge those divides. In November, Love is the Way, Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times by Bishop Michael Curry was chosen. This book discussion event was scheduled for January 17, 2021. Members of St Philips congregation were also invited to join in.

In October the "Purple Ribbon" was once again displayed in our Fellowship Hall Window to bring awareness to the problems of Domestic Violence. CIS also encouraged church members to participate in the Bread for the World Offering of Letters by providing the internet link addresses of our Maine congressional leaders.

In December CIS provided information regarding a program to provide Heating Stoves for Navajo Indians. Members were asked for donations and CIS committed their remaining 2020 budget to this fund. An Anonymous donor would be matching funds.

Throughout the year members continued to promote the Noisy Offering, “Neighbors in Need”, “One Great Hour of Sharing”, “Strengthen the Church” and the “Christmas Fund” offerings.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kimberly Hatt

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2020

The year 2020 began with the committee working to reimagine the position of Sunday School teacher. A position previously held by Colleen Crowley. The number of participants had dwindled to only three or four girls, and at the last annual meeting, her job was a point of discussion. The budget called for eliminating it but d by the congregation. Following that, the committee began to plan changes for the fall. The planning started on an after school program to be offered at the church on early release days. Then the pandemic caused the closing of all in-person programming. Colleen seamlessly moved the Sunday school to on-line programs using Zoom.

In June, we told Colleen goodbye as she left the program. Her work with our children is much appreciated. Over the summer, the Sunday school children were presented with Bibles by the committee. They were delivered by a caravan of committee members and presented by Rev Fitterling.

In the Fall, we did not begin any new programming due to the covid-19 virus. Rev Josh Fitterling and Oscar Wallace picked up the Sunday school program over zoom in September. The class is learning about their Bibles, reading and discussing stories, using the dictionary and other resources at the end of the text. Without Colleen's leadership and examples, it is not clear what we would have imagined for the children this past fall.

The committee continues to hope for a more normal fall in 2021 and plans for an after school program.

Respectfully submitted,
Oscar Wallace, chair

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2020

The committee's focus this past year was not only to assist our Pastor in his position within the church but also his ever growing presence in the community of Wiscasset and the many organizations which he nurtures throughout the greater area of Down East.

We conceived the concept of the Comment, Concern and Suggestion box which served as a form of communication for the congregation to express their views on any subject with complete anonymity. Due to Covid-19 the committee sent out over 100 comment cards with a self-addressed and stamped return envelope. This kept the congregation in communication with the church and also served the Council well when it was time for the annual review for Pastor Josh's compensation package. He was highly praised on all levels by you the congregation.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron Sanchez, Chair

Members: Ron Sanchez, Dan & Zoë Bigley, Joan Shea, Carol Peck

ORGAN SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT 2020

In a normal year, the Organ Society meets weekly on Wednesday mornings and offers programs on the fourth Wednesday of the month from Labor Day to Memorial Day. Switching to online meetings since March kept us in communication with a regular group of 8 to 10 members. Since this was not a normal year, we continued to meet weekly via Zoom during the summer which became a nice way to connect with each other. Monthly programs were suspended and will resume online in January 2021.

The Organ Society appreciates your support with our pie, cookie and wreath sales. The apple pie sale was a success again in 2020. We made and sold 20 pies in time for your Thanksgiving dinner. To replace our cookie sale, cranberry and pumpkin breads were made and sold along with the pies. Pine wreaths were decorated and our sales numbers exceeded last year. The ladies enjoy making these items for you and appreciate your support by purchasing these items. Every January, the Organ Society makes and pays a generous pledge to the church from the funds we have earned throughout the previous year.

The Organ Society continued to send cards and notes wishing congratulations, speedy recovery, and consolation. This program will move away from the Organ Society in 2021 and become a separate service for the congregation. If you know of someone who could use a message, please contact the church office.

All women of the church are welcome to participate in the Organ Society activities. Our aim is to provide social fellowship and educational programs to the women of the church. We look forward to the days when we can again join on a Wednesday for a morning gathering or a monthly program.

Respectfully Submitted,
Martha Speed

ORGAN SOCIETY TREASURER'S REPORT
2019

Checking Account

The First

Total Carried Forward	\$3,237.86	
Receipts	<u>2,153.51</u>	
		\$5,391.37
Disbursements	\$3,206.25	

Balance \$2,185.12

Investments

Camden National Bank

Larabee Fund Certificate of Deposit \$2,820.72
(Unusable Principal)

Bath Savings Institution

Savings Account \$80.24

The First

Varney Fund Certificate of Deposit \$3,660.79

Total Assets \$8,746.87

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2020

As with everything else, this has been a very different year for the CWS program.

We were in the midst of our Spring CWS Kit program when the pandemic shut everything down; this included the First Parish Congregational Church in Gorham, the depot church for Maine, where all our kits were to be taken to then be trucked to the CWS warehouse in Maryland. Thank you to everyone who had already donated kits and brought in items for the emergency clean-up buckets; they are being safely stored in the CWS closet until we are able to resume; with the exception of 22 masks that were on hand for the clean-up buckets which were donated to the Lincoln County EMA services when a request came out in April.

From that point on, our “meetings” when decisions had to be made were “reply all email” meetings.

We are very grateful for a \$500. donation from the Summerfest monies raised by donations.

We voted the following donations this year:

\$300 to CWS 2020 Hurricane Response Fund

\$300 to CWS Coronavirus Response Fund

\$100 to Town of Wiscasset Thanksgiving dinner fund

We are very excited that the Feed Our Scholars program is now housed at our church and so thankful for all the new volunteers who have begun receiving the food from Good Shepherd Food Bank, packing the food for the children, and delivering this food weekly to the school.

We also deeply appreciate all the donations that have continued during this difficult year: hats, mittens & scarves and homemade masks for the Wiscasset Elementary School children, toys for the Toys For Tots program, and redeemable cans & bottles for the Feed Our Scholars program.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Roby

STEWARDSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2020

In what has been a very challenging year on many fronts, the Stewardship Committee can report another successful campaign is “in the books.”

We concluded the 2020 campaign in January of 2020 by exceeding our goal of \$110,000.00. The leadership displayed by Josh was exceptional and with his guidance we received support of our ministries from approximately 60 Pledge Units.

The committee remained dormant from January into early October when co-chairs (Brad and Deane) met with Josh to plan our 2021 effort. Again, Josh provided excellent guidance and leadership and through a series of 4-5 Zoom meetings during October and early November a theme was developed (“Daring to Dream”), a goal of \$110,000.00 established, and an implementation plan finalized. With limited in-person worship, a drive-by Pledge Sunday took place in conjunction with the Organ Society’s Wreath and Pie Sale pick up on November 24.

Pledges were received from a number of members and friends on that Sunday, and mailed pledges continued to arrive up through this date (January 12, 2021.) As of this date we have received \$109,705. which represents 99.7% of the goal. Josh reports that we might expect 2-3 more pledges to arrive, and expectations are that our goal will be exceeded again this year.

Thank you acknowledgments will be mailed this week, any “loose ends” will be tied up, and we look forward to resting in anticipation of the 2022 campaign.

Respectively Submitted

Brad Adler
Deane Attwood

Stewardship Co-Chairs 2021

SUMMERFEST ANNUAL REPORT 2020

For the first year in more than three decades Summerfest on the Common had to be cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions. However, thanks to an outpouring of support from our members and friends, and an ad hoc committee, our Summerfest mission continued. Thanks to committee work by Anne Harris, Nancy Roby, Linda Wallace, Jan Whitfield, and especially Pastor Josh, \$5,300 was awarded to 12 local outreach organizations and causes! With limited funds this year and our desire to have the greatest impact, organizations who received a gift last year were asked to “apply” by the end of September if they wished to receive Summerfest funding. We are happy to say that we were able to grant a gift to every organization that applied:

Elder Care Network – Wiscasset Green
FCCW Church World Service
FCCW Special Needs Fund
Feed Our Scholars/Set for Success
Habitat for Humanity / 7 Rivers
Healthy Kids
Lincoln County Dental
Mobius, Inc.
Midcoast Humane
New Hope for Women
Pilgrim Lodge – Camp Pride
Tedford Housing

Again, thank you everyone! The mission of Summerfest continued in a difficult year. We hope to gather once again on the Common for Summerfest 2021.

Beth Maxwell, Chair

NOMINATING 2021

Officers

President – Anne Harris	2022
Vice President – Jan Whitfield	2022
Clerk – Vacant	2022
Treasurer – Tom Kovarik	2022
Secretary – Beth Whitney	2023

Christian Education

1. Oscar Wallace	2022
2. Mary McKinney	2022
3. Angie Eddy	2022
4. Beth Whitney	2023
5. Libby Mooney	2023
6. Susan Atwood	2024

Trustees

1. Roger Whitney	2022
2. Lisa Hargreaves	2022
3. Steve Whitfield	2023
4. Deb Olson	2023 E
5. Oscar Wallace	2024
6. Bud Lewis	2024
7. Treasurer – Tom Kovarik , Ex Officio	

Church World Service

1. Betty Applin	2022
2. Ruth Gilbert	2022
3. Janet Hatch	2022
4. Nancy Roby	2024
5. Ginny Withee	2024
6. Janet Hatch	2024

Diaconate

1. Susan Kubler	2022
2. Sally Howe	2022
3. Allan Sylvester	2022
4. Tom Beane	2023 E
5. Linda Wallace	2023
6. Sarah Whitfield	2023
7. Misty Parker	2024
8. Jane Junkert	2024
9. Brad Adler	2024

Nominating

1. Pam Frenier	2022
2. Ginny Withee	2023
3. Linda Winterberg	2023 E
4. Betty Applin	2024

Stewardship

1. Deane Attwood	2022
2. David Lenz	2022
3. Becky Lenz	2022
4. Dewey Harris	2024

Church in Society

1. Kim Hatt	2022
2. Susan Atwood	2022
3. Tom Beane	2023
4. Sue Lewis	2023
5. George LaBar	2024
6. Beth Maxwell	2024

Hospitality

1. Beth Whitney	2023
2. Ron Sanchez	2023
3. Jan Whitfield	2023
4. Becky Lenz	2024
5. Emily Adler	2024

Pastoral Relations

1. Carol Peck	2022
2. Zoe Bigley	2022
3. Dan Bigley	2022
4. Joan Shea	2024
5. Tom Junkert	2024

Summerfest

1. Beth Maxwell	2022
2. Ann & Mark Light	2022

E = filling unexpired term, eligible for another term

Delegates

1. Libby Mooney	2022
2. Linda Wallace	2022

Respectfully submitted by the

Nominating Committee: Pam Frenier and
Ginny Withee

Organ Society

1. Martha Speed	2022
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Updated:
12/31/20

