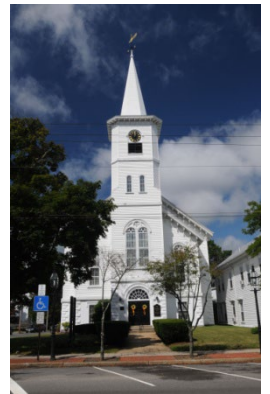


Central Square Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
71 Central Square
Bridgewater, MA 02324
cscucc.org

CSCC UCC
2023-24
Annual
Report

June 9

2024



These reports complete are pending approval of the Annual Meeting on June 9, 2024, and cover the fiscal year 7/1/23-6/30/24. Upon approval, with any edits and updated financial records through the end of the fiscal year, a final copy will be published for the record.

Annual Meeting

Annual Report 2023-24
Central Square Cong'l Church, UCC
71 Central Square
Bridgewater, MA 02324

Dear Members and Friends of CSCC,

It is with deep gratitude and joy that I present to you our annual report for the year 2023/2024. As we reflect on the past year, we are reminded of the faithfulness of God and the incredible journey we have shared as a church community.

Throughout this past year, we faced various challenges, yet we also experienced profound moments of growth, service, grace, and transformation. Together, we continue to navigate uncertain times with faith and hope. I am continually humbled by the resilience and commitment demonstrated by each member of our congregation to BE THE CHURCH in the world.

In this report, you will find an overview of our activities, ministry highlights, financial updates, and our vision for the future. It is my hope that as you read through these pages, you will be inspired by the stories of faith, love, and hope that have defined our journey together.

As we look ahead, let us continue to lean on God's grace, trusting in God's love for us. May we serve our community, proclaim the Good News, and grow as disciples of Christ.

Thank you for your continued support, dedication, and prayers as we serve God together.

Blessings,

Rev. Beth Stotts

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Central Square Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Bridgewater, MA 02324
Annual Meeting Minutes, February 12, 2023

Moderator Anne Malmquist called the meeting to order at 12:00noon, and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Clerk Diane Sheibley verified that a quorum was met.

Moderator – Anne Malmquist

Anne noted that this year, there will be a revamping and rewriting of the church governance documents. An email went out to all, and a USPS mailing will be going out this week. Next Sunday there will be a Q&A after church; please bring any questions. A quick overview of what is planned is moving from boards and committees to a team format. The goal is to have a congregational meeting in mid-March, to vote it in and implement as of July 1.

Pastor – Rev. Beth Stotts

Rev. Beth had a slide show on last year; she was struck by how much we've done. A special thanks to Paul Holmes and BTV for their ministry. She noted that she has also spent a lot of time making our church visible in the community.

Music – Julia Scott Carey

Julia noted that it was great to see the numbers coming back to the building [after COVID]. She reported that the junior choir members love singing, and we love to see them. The adult choir performed every Sunday. There have been a lot of guest artists, and they are always so happy to be here. There is a piano concert coming up in March [with Julia performing], and she is always thankful of all the ways to keep offering more music.

Video Evangelism – Paul Holmes

Paul reported that he has been working a lot on sound this year. BTV has been really good to the church, and we truly appreciate it. The numbers of viewers: a good solid 700 per week, and that's without the BTV numbers. Currently, the services are aired on YouTube, our Facebook page, BTV's Facebook page, and BTV Channel 9.

Treasurer – Dave Sheibley

The fiscal year ending 6-30-22 saw a net loss of \$63,812, versus a budgeted loss of \$42,135. There was some needed construction done during the year, although about 80% of the ceiling repairs in the sanctuary were covered by insurance. Fuel oil and electricity continue to go up in price. Most of the other budget items ended up about where we expected. The 40-for-40k program by the stewardship committee has brought in thousands of dollars this year. The fair brought in the most it ever has, about \$9,000, but the golf tournament never happened, so there was a hole in the fundraising there. The new thrift shop is doing really well and is a huge help. We need to find more ways to bring in money – all ideas are welcome!

Annual Report

A big shoutout to Jenne in the office for creating the annual report!

Board of Outreach, and Bridgewater Food Pantry – Bill O'Neil

The Food Pantry is still in need of food, and the demand is high. Regarding what to donate, “if you like to eat it, we want it.” Big shoutout to Steve and Connie Chandler for all of their help. Patrons can only get food once a month, but the Food Pantry has gift cards they can also give them. Jack [Melcher] makes sure that everybody who comes and needs food gets it.

Board of Trustees – Gordon Brailsford

Special thank you to Rich Sullivan, who does an outstanding job as Sexton. The town has assigned us \$200,000, but they require a deed restriction on the whole church, but they haven’t given us a copy of the deed restriction yet.

Church Fair Committee – Diane Sheibley

The fair did better than ever this year. Thanks to all who participated in every way, and a special shoutout to the crafters for their strong sales during the fair, as well as occasionally after worship, and at Christmas on the Common.

Board of Stewardship – Kathleen Mosher

After the stewardship campaign, the committee is working on various fundraising ideas. There is an Amazon wish list for people to gift the church needed supplies. They are working on having posters with a QR code for donations for outside events. If you have any ideas, bring them to us.

Women’s Guild & Fellowship – Jane O’Connell

The Women’s Guild had a good year of rummage sales, and giving money to the CSCC service project as well as operating budget. They are looking for more (younger) members.

History & Memorials Committee – Barbara Morey

The committee coordinated the sales of poinsettias at Christmas, and the lilies at Easter. The flowers decorated the altar, and then the ones that people didn’t want to bring home were delivered to shut-ins. The committee also keeps a record of those who have passed away. Last March, they went on a “field trip” to BSU, to see old, old records of CSCC, which they agreed are best kept at BSU. The undesignated memorial fund that they manage, with the little donations in memory of someone, is currently \$6600. H&M is looking for ideas on what to spend it on. Following a question, Barbara noted that larger bequest amounts are handled by the Trustees, and can be restricted or unrestricted based on the wishes of the giver.

Historical Church Building Committee – Barbara Morey

Committee members have been attending the town CPC meetings, the fourth Wednesday of every month. CSCC is always on the agenda. The deed restriction for our first grant is still with the Rhode Island consultant. Barbara has told the CPC that we need a yes or no on other future funds before we agree to a deed restriction on the building. Likely what would be in the deed restriction would be that we cannot sell the building, and that the building would need to be maintained to its original condition.

Central Closet Thrift Shop – Connie Chandler

Connie noted that the thrift shop has been a dream from last June, and opened last month [January]. It is a service to the community, a good way to repurpose items, and brings in funds for the church. It is open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 10-1. They have had a lot of shoppers and donors.

Approval of Annual Report – Anne Malmquist

Mark Sorgman motioned to accept the annual report. David Hanson seconded. The motion was approved.

Report of the Pastor

12 years ago, when I was searching for a church to serve, I was drawn to Central Square Congregational Church, UCC after reading the mission statement. In our mission statement, we are very clear about how we will be together and how we will serve. A church is useless if there is no mission and our mission is clear:

*We are a Christian community of people,
reaching out to our neighbors, at home and abroad,
sharing our faith and our resources.*

We are a Christian community of people:

We are a people journeying together to learn more about how God is speaking in our lives, and how we can live more faithfully. We study, we pray, we serve, we worship, and we engage in great fellowship together. This year we offered many special worship services including the Thanksgiving Ecumenical Service, baptisms, vow renewals, weddings, guest preachers, communion, summer outdoor worship, and our annual Easter Sunrise service at Hanson Farm. We have meaningful conversations when we meet “at the table” during breakfast Sundays. We contemplate how we best follow Jesus by joining Lenten and Advent Book studies, Bible studies, and discussion groups. And we gather together for weekly worship, both in-person and virtually (thanks to the incredible ministry of Paul Holmes) providing multiple avenues for our congregation to engage with God and worship together.

Reaching out to our neighbors at home and abroad:

Our outreach ministries continue to expand to meet the growing needs of our community. Through the Bridgewater Food Pantry housed at CSCC, homeless outreach, and partnerships with local organizations and non-profits, we have been able to extend God's love and compassion to those in need. Our church continually supports mission efforts through our special offerings and our emergency fund to meet the practical needs in our community and beyond.

Sharing our faith and our resources

Throughout the year, our church engaged in a variety of ministries aimed at sharing our faith within the congregation and beyond. Our choir and worship team continued to lead us in heartfelt worship, lifting our spirits and drawing us closer to God. We offered a variety of programs to help our members grow in their faith. Our youth and children's ministries have been active; providing a nurturing environment for young disciples to learn, grow, and develop their relationship with Jesus and each other. Our pastoral staff and care team has offered counseling, support, and care to those in need, providing a safe space for healing and restoration. And there isn't a day in the week when our building isn't being used by the community.

Looking ahead to the next year I am filled with hope and anticipation for what God has in store for us. As we seek to continue to live our mission, I am prayerfully considering our priorities for the next year.

****Deepening Discipleship**** I pray we will commit ourselves to providing opportunities for our members to grow deeper in their relationship with God through discipleship, study, and spiritual formation.

****Expanding Outreach**** I pray we will aim to broaden our impact in the community by expanding our outreach ministries and developing strategic partnerships with local organizations and churches.

****Strengthening Community**** I pray we will recognize the importance of fostering authentic community within our church family, and commit ourselves to continue to create spaces for fellowship, connection, and support.

****Investing in Youth**** I pray that we will see the importance of investing in the next generation, and we will commit ourselves to provide resources, programs, and support to help our youth grow in their faith and leadership skills.

****Embracing Innovation**** In a rapidly changing world, I pray we will embrace innovation and creativity in our ministry, seeking new ways to reach people with the love of God.

I believe that God has incredible things in store for our church community, and I am excited to journey together in faith as we continue to follow God's call.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the following individuals and groups:

CSCC Leadership Teams: Congregational Engagement, Community Engagement, Property & Finance, and Spiritual Engagement.

Other Teams: Kids Church Staff, Deacons, Food Pantry, Thrift Shop, Care Team, Women's Guild & Fellowship

Our Staff: Office Manager, Jenne Foronjy; Minister of Music, Julia Scott Carey; Sexton, Rich Sullivan; Director of Video Evangelism, Paul Holmes; Communications Coordinator, Diane Sheibley; Kids Church Director, Eric Stotts

Church officers: Moderator, Anne Malmquist; Treasurer, David Sheibley; Vice Treasurer, Larry Brown; Clerk, Diane Sheibley; Financial Secretary, Judy Pino

Our faithful congregation whose generosity and commitment makes our ministry possible.

Our denominational partners and supporters who stand with us in prayer and solidarity.

Our community partners and collaborators who join us in the work of building God's kin-dom on earth.

Thank you for your partnership, your prayers, and your support. Together and with God we are making a difference in the world! Thanks be to God!

Respectfully submitted by The Reverend Elizabeth Stotts

Report of the Minister of Music

2023 was a wonderful year in the musical life of the church. Our adult choir has performed an Anthem and Introit in every service between Labor Day and Memorial Day, with the exception of some holiday weekends. The adult choir continues to sing varied and challenging repertoire. They are able to learn music quickly and effectively, always presenting an expressive and meaningful performance. Some adult choir members have shared their gifts with us in solo performances as well. Brian Gilman has contributed several beautiful solos this year, and Peter Glass has joined us on trumpet, including performing some of his own amazing compositions.

We have also been extremely blessed with to have several children contributing to our church's music. Josephine Stotts has performed a vocal solo every month this year, and her confidence and musical expression has really blossomed. She has sometimes been joined by Savannah Wells, who in addition to singing, has also demonstrated her terrific flute skills for us. Cristianna Ciaramitaro has also shared her phenomenal vocal talents in our services.

Other regular guest artists in our community include the pianist and vocalist Bob Richards, who performs at least one powerful and moving solo a month, and jazz trumpet star Cameron Shave, who is always ready to give our services a special touch of excitement whenever he is in town.

We have had a number of guest artists visit our church from outside of our community. These guest artists are professional instrumentalists and singers who are artistic collaborators of mine, and many of them have performed on the world's finest opera and concert stages. Some of the guest artists who have returned multiple times to our church include soprano Sarah Vitale, mezzo-soprano Sarah Heltzel, and baritone James Dargan.

We have also hosted several special musical events this year, including a solo piano concert performed by me last spring, and a very exciting evening of opera arias this fall, featuring soprano Maryte Bizinkauskas.

One very moving event that occurred last spring was Lin Schuller's Celebration of Life, for which our choir was joined by a large number of guest singers who were friends and colleagues of Lin's. It was the most fitting and meaningful way to pay our respects to Lin's life and legacy — filling our church with the sound of voices praising God through the gift of song. Lin was my predecessor as the Minister of Music at the Central Square Congregational Church, UCC. I had the honor of knowing her and collaborating with her, and I learned so much through her leadership — how to use music as a form of spiritual expression, how to bring the community together through singing, and how to communicate the meaning in all the music we share with our congregation.

It has been a true joy for me to be the Minister of Music at this church. The adult and children's choirs are amazing to work with, and their performances and dedication are very inspiring. I love to plan the services and to think about the message which we are trying to convey in each service.

I will very much look forward to a wonderful 2024 and to the musical opportunities this new year will bring in our church!!

Respectfully, Julia Scott Carey

Report of the Church Moderator

CHURCH: n. The body of people who make the God of Jesus visible in the world
v. To make the God of Jesus visible in the world

This year we began to operate under our new constitution and governance policies. The teams are functioning, and church business is being conducted. It hasn't been a completely smooth transition, however things are getting done. Change is always challenging and sometimes messy, and we are working in the right direction.

We welcomed many new members this year and even more have expressed interest in officially joining our church community. Paul Holmes continues to help us share our worship and ministries with a wider virtual community. Julie Scott Carey continues to inspire us with transcendent musical experiences. Kids' Church is active and vibrant and the Bridgewater Food Pantry is nourishing bellies and souls.

As we look forward to the coming year, we will welcome some new officers and team members, with the fresh perspectives that different eyes bring. We welcome new approaches and new programs that will help us reach even more of the wider community and that will help us serve our own congregation. We are still facing some very serious financial challenges and we are looking for new and innovative ways to close our financial gaps while we continue our service and worship. As we navigate a world fraught with uncertainty and angst, our work and worship has never been more important.

I continue to be honored and humbled to be your church moderator. I am grateful, everyday, to be a part of this church community and I am excited about what our future will bring.

With God's grace,
Anne Malmquist
Church Moderator

Report of the Church Treasurer

Because the Annual Report is published before the June 30 end of the fiscal year, this was written May 15.

Fiscal year 2024 appears to be an improvement over the past four years, we should meet or exceed our budgeted amounts for giving and total income. However, we are still going to finish the year having taken almost \$40k from our dwindling investments to fund operations. The Church Fair continues to make a large contribution to the budget and the CSCC Thrift Shop revenue has surpassed expectations. Thank you to all who help with these and with other methods of fundraising! Expenses were mostly in line with budgeted amounts with no major expenses incurred thus far. However, one of the oil burners has been deemed unfixable by the insurance inspector so its replacement will be a fairly large expense before this fall.

Financial reports for this fiscal year to date are attached and the annual report on our website will be updated with final figures by mid-July.

Financial documents included:

Operating Budget vs Actual FY2024
Cash Balances as of June 30, 2024
Pass Through Fund Report FY 2024

Respectfully submitted,
David Sheibley
Church Treasurer

Central Square Congregational Church UCC
Operating Budget vs. Actual Report
July 2023 through May 2024

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>% Budget</u>
Income			
Pledges / Offerings			
Regular Pledges	115,322	125,000	92%
Unpledged Offerings	21,032	10,000	210%
Plate Offering	463	2,500	19%
Kid's Church	570	300	190%
Total Pledges / Offerings	<u>137,387</u>	<u>137,800</u>	<u>100%</u>
Special Collections			
MACUCC Fellowship Dues	<u>846</u>	<u>2,000</u>	42%
Total Special Collections	<u>846</u>	<u>2,000</u>	
Fundraisers/Events Revenue			
Church Fair	8,116	8,000	101%
Central Closet Thrift Shop	15,278	13,000	118%
Misc Fundraisers			
A Night at the Opera	810		
Candy Bars	<u>196</u>		
Total Misc Fundraisers	<u>1,006</u>	<u>5,000</u>	20%
Total Fundraisers/Events Revenue	<u>24,400</u>	<u>26,000</u>	<u>94%</u>
Facility Usage Income			
Non Profit Bldg Use	4,392	3,000	146%
Private Bldg Use	470	500	94%
Wedding Rentals	0	5,000	0%
Food Pantry Support	<u>1,100</u>	<u>1,200</u>	92%
Total Facility Usage Income	<u>5,962</u>	<u>9,700</u>	61%
Miscellaneous Income			
Bank Interest	103		
Misc Donations	30		
Women's Guild	<u>1,000</u>		
Total Miscellaneous Income	<u>1,133</u>	<u>1,000</u>	
Total Income	<u>169,728</u>	<u>176,500</u>	<u>96%</u>

Central Square Congregational Church UCC Operating Budget vs. Actual Report July 2023 through May 2024

Expense	Actual	Budget	% Budget
Senior Minister Expenses			
Payroll	39,531	39,702	100%
FICA Stipend	4,641	5,485	85%
Pension Fund	8,674	10,038	86%
Housing Allowance	27,077	32,000	85%
Professional Expenses	3,350	2,000	167%
Health & Dental Ins	24,675	25,951	95%
Life & Disability Ins	929	1,076	86%
Total Senior Minister Expenses	108,878	116,252	94%
Support Staff Expenses			
Pulpit Supply	500	500	100%
Sabbatical Budget (see 1103.30)	990	1,080	92%
Office Coordinator	12,631	13,260	95%
Minister of Music	15,130	16,391	92%
Sexton/Custodian	10,047	13,260	76%
Video Evangelism	1,000	1,000	100%
Sup. Staff FICA	2,804	3,283	85%
Workers' Comp Ins	1,123	1,200	94%
Total Support Staff Expenses	44,226	49,974	88%
Office Expenses			
Bank Service Charges			
Vanco Fees	378		
BCU Fees	85		
PayPal/Venmo Fees	289		
Credit/Charge Card Fees	31		
Bank Service Charges	783	600	131%
Internet & Computer Related Exp	2,621	2,100	125%
Office Supplies	880	400	220%
Payroll & Treasurer Supplies	691	950	73%
Postage & eDelivery	781	900	87%
Printing & Reproduction	1,979	2,150	92%
Telephone	1,971	1,800	110%
Total Office Expenses	9,708	8,900	109%

Central Square Congregational Church UCC Operating Budget vs. Actual Report July 2023 through May 2024

	Actual	Budget	% Budget
Church Building Costs			
Building Supplies	813	2,000	41%
Fire Alarm Monitoring Service	552	600	92%
Property & Liability Insurance	10,126	12,500	81%
Repairs & Maintenance	7,537	5,000	151%
Utilities			
Gas & Electric	6,342	5,500	115%
Fuel Oil	8,192	8,000	102%
Water & Sewer	469	500	94%
Total Utilities	15,003	14,000	107%
Total Church Building Costs	34,031	34,100	100%
Teams			
Spiritual Engagement Team	1,171		
Kid's Church	461		
Total Spiritual Engagement Team	1,632	925	176%
Congregational Engagement Team	34	925	4%
Community Engagement Team	926		
Breakfasts	318		
Total Community Engagement Team	1,244	925	134%
Property and Finance Team	242	925	26%
Community Engagement Reserve	1,683	1,875	90%
Total Teams	4,835	5,575	87%
Misc Expenses			
MACUCC Fellowship Dues	2,000	2,000	100%
Pilgrim Assn Fellowship Dues		200	0%
Total Expense	203,677	217,001	94%
Net Income (Loss)	(33,949)	(40,501)	84%
Transfer from Investments	44,797		
Adjusted Net Income (Loss)	10,848		

Central Square Congregational Church UCC Pass Through Fund Report July 2023 through May 2024

Other Income	
Memorials	335
Capital Campaign	760
Ministers Discretionary Income	1,804
Total Other Income	<u>2,899</u>
Direct Pass Thru Income	
Designated Outreach & Missions	
One Great Hour Sharing MA	393
Strengthen The Church MA	0
Neighbors In Need MA	283
Christmas Fund MA	277
Blanket Fund CWS	516
Heifer Project HPI	1,379
Total Designated Outreach & Missions	<u>2,848</u>
Staff Gifts	2,105
Total Direct Pass Thru Income	<u>4,953</u>
Total Non-budgeted Income	<u>7,852</u>
Other Expenses	
Flowers/Altar	59
Mission Youth Trip Transactions	3,310
Youth Group General	126
Total Other Expenses	<u>3,495</u>
Direct Pass Thru Expense	
Designated Outreach/Missions	
One Great Hour of Sharing MA	393
Strengthen The Church MA	0
Neighbors in Need MA	283
Christmas Fund MA	277
Blanket Fund CWS	516
Heifer Project HPI	1,379
Designated Outreach/Missions	<u>2,848</u>
Staff Gifts	2,105
Total Direct Pass Thru Expense	<u>4,953</u>
Non Budget Accounts	
Food Pantry Transactions	3,054
Sabbatical expenses	400
Ministers Discretionary Usage	2,050
Community Engagement Reserve Disbursements	600
Total Non Budget Accounts	<u>6,104</u>
Total Non-budgeted Expenses	<u>14,552</u>

Central Square Congregational Church UCC Bank Account Cash Balances As of May 31, 2024

Cash

BCU 95 Money Market	
Youth Group MM	802
Memorials MM	7,204
Music (Anderson)	3,987
Altar & Flowers MM	484
Memorials (Wood)	1,495
Deacons Fund	1,617
Women's Retreat MM	468
Mission Youth MM	418
Sr Pastor Sabbatical Reserve	6,515
Memorials Woods Grant	5,000
BCU 95 Money Market - Interest Income	951
Total BCU 95 Money Market	<u>28,942</u>
BCU 91 Operating Account	9,364
BCU 90 Ministers DA	77
BCU 00 Svgs for Outreach	
Food Pantry Outreach	9,794
General Outreach	2,178
Total BCU 00 Svgs for Outreach	<u>11,972</u>
BCU 92 Cap Imp/Mortgage Acct	1,114
PayPal	152
Venmo	20
Total Cash	<u><u>51,642</u></u>

Vanguard Investments

Endowments investment fund	
Balance, 6/30/23	190,835
Withdrawals	(10,000)
Gain (Loss)	22,708
Balance 5/31/24	<u>203,543</u>
Parsonage investment fund	
Balance, 6/30/23	50,347
Withdrawals	(34,797)
Gain (Loss)	4,699
Balance 5/31/24	<u>20,249</u>
Total investments	<u><u>223,792</u></u>

Report of the Office Manager

Beginning my second year with CSCC in July 2023, I once again worked with all our building rentals for the coming year, we took on some new Girl Scout troops as a couple had left and we maintained the same recovery groups as the previous year. Over this year we had some new groups that rented space with us, including Be; and HopeHealth Co of Attleboro. We also were able to rent space for a few gatherings (birthday parties, baptism celebrations, Friendsgiving). I feel confident that we may be able to rent space to even more people/groups this coming year. I had contracts signed, made sure they all had keys (and made sure they were returned!) and their meetings were scheduled in the calendars, physical, and digital.

Being your Church Office Manager has been so rewarding, fun and an all-around lovely job. I am so happy to greet everyone, perform any tasks that everyone needs, and I really appreciate everyone being so kind and appreciative of the work I do. I continue to work with Rev. Beth on the weekly bulletins, maintain the office in different ways whether it's the office equipment, ordering supplies, answering phones and emails, and really, anything anyone asks of me. I enjoy helping out the Thrift Shop and Food Pantry when they need something like making signs or taking a to-go order. Drop by anytime to say hi, I always have some treats on my desk and a smile for you! I would like to thank everyone for dealing with the office hours varying a bit when I have classes as well. All in all, working here is an absolute pleasure and I'm thankful for the opportunity.

Membership as of December 31, 2023	129
Total new members	4
LOSS OF MEMBERS	
Death	6
Transferred out	
Resigned/withdrew	
Removed by Deacons	
OTHER STATISTICS	
Baptisms	0
Confirmations	6
Weddings	1
Funerals	6

Respectfully submitted by Jenne Foronjy

Report of the Spiritual Engagement Team

With the Covid-19 pandemic playing a less prominent role than in years past, worship and Kids' Church returned to more normalcy than in the past couple years.

Worship was in person every Sunday this year as well as additional services during Holy Week and Christmas. There was good lay participation throughout the year with ushering, greeting, and reading scripture, but more lay participation should be a focus going forward. There was lots of visible kids involvement and visibility in the form of ushering, acolyting, and serving communion.

Julia Scott Carey lead both the Choir and the Jr. Choir throughout the year and we had a number of high-quality guest performers come in to perform throughout the year.

We also implemented a new procedure for prayer requests so that people who were uncomfortable speaking up during 'celebrations and concerns' could write their prayer requests on a mustard-colored paper at the end of the aisle so they could be included in the Mustard Seed Prayer List insert in the weekly bulletin.

2023/2024 Statistics

4 new members

6 new youths were confirmed

2 weddings

8 Funerals

2 Baptisms

Rev. Beth and the Deacons changed the formatting of how confirmation is done this year, to better match the youths of 2023-2024, versus what has traditionally been done. Instead of multiple weeks of meeting for an hour at a time, this year the in-person portion was done as an intensive multi-hour worship/meeting. Communication on statements of faith, etc. were then done via email and text which allowed it both to be done at the convenience of Rev. Beth and the Deacons, as well as the convenience of the confirmands.

With the restructuring to a team format, we added a new Deacon, Anne Malmquist. Jae Stotts, is stepping down as a Deacon at the end of the year having completed her 3 year term and with her going off to college in the summer. Deb Sorgman continued to lead the Deacons and handle worship responsibilities alongside Rev. Beth. Eric Stotts stepped in as the Director of Kid's Church.

Kid's Church also returned to a degree of normalcy, with 26 kids attending at least once throughout the year. With that being said, attendance varied wildly from week to week from as little as 3 kids, to upwards of 15 during some weeks in December and May. Ashley Earp stepped in and was a full time teacher throughout the year alongside Eric Stotts. We also had assistance from Denise Molinari who ran the Advent programming and Krissy Cannizzo who ran the programming during Heifer.

For Advent, Kid's Church collected toys both from the congregation and the community for the Cardinal Spellman School, and had a Christmas tree in the back adorned with handmade ornaments that were made by the late Lin Schuller that were decorated by the kids.

Heifer continues to be a favorite event for both Kid's Church and the congregation. Between what was raised in church and at the Living Gift Market, the kids raise a total of \$1,330.

This money was able to purchase through Heifer International the following animals (with the remaining balance towards a Gift Card for "Gift Where Needed Most"):

Honey Bees \$30 (3)

Stove \$50 (2)

Hope Basket \$50 (3)

Heifer \$500

Water Buffalo \$250

Seeds \$60 (2)

Goat \$120

We also had 2 church sleepovers this year, something we had not done since before Covid. They were well attended with 9 and 12 kids attending respectively and were done at the tail end of February and April vacation.

With the assistance of Reverend Beth, The Spiritual Engagement Team also did a complete rewrite of our Child Protection Policy to conform with the church's current governance structure, as the previous version of the policy was over 3 years old.

Denise Molinari, Deb Sorgman, Eric Stotts, Spiritual Engagement Team Leaders

Report of the Property & Finance Team for 2023-2024

The Property & Finance Team of three elected members replaced the Board of Trustees last June as we adopted our new form of governance and a new constitution. Dave Hanson, Mark Sorgman and John Sharland accepted one-year terms. In the spirit of the new constitution, we divided up who would attend the monthly Cabinet meetings as our representative, each attending two meetings in a row. This has worked well. Dave took December and January, which are relatively slow months for a vegetable and small livestock farmer.

We met monthly throughout the 12-month period, dealing with lots of small things, maintenance-wise, and some big things. With the assistance of Dave Sheibley, leaving off where Gordon Brailsford had started, and with help from the MassSave commercial programs, all remaining light fixtures in the building were converted to LED. There are 5 hard wired smoke detectors in the sanctuary. One failed and because they were all 25 years old, it was decided to replace them all. This got expensive because staging needed to be brought in.

Two big things have put us in further financial peril, beyond the large deficit budget passed at last year's annual meeting. First, for all the right reasons, we abandoned the effort of receiving a grant or grants for the historical preservation of the building from the Community Preservation Act. We had to spend money up front to provide the estimates needed to preserve the building. That cost us \$110,000 from our reserves. We know of no feasible way, currently, to restore that money to our endowment. Second, we have been informed by the State of Massachusetts boiler inspector that our smaller boiler is in such bad condition that it has received its last operating permit renewal. It has to be replaced. We are getting three estimates for that now. We believe the cost will be in the \$15,000 range. Right here, right now, we ask for those who could, to provide a one time gift to the church that we can aggregate to pay for the new boiler. Your gift will be duly recognized on the Boiler Room door with a plaque.

A comprehensive list of fundraising ideas was created by a team that consisted of Lynn Pietras and Sandy Kuipers. This list was published in Steeple Sounds. Please take a look at the list and see if there is an idea that you would like to take the lead on.

Last but not least, a huge ongoing thank you to Rich Sullivan, our sexton, Steve Chandler, who fills in for Rich when needed, Dave Sheibley for essentially being the fourth person on the P & F team beyond his official role as treasurer, Larry Brown, assistant treasurer and Judy Pino, Financial Secretary. And of course, Gordon Brailsford, who has so often lent a hand to help with the responsibilities of this team, for many, many years and continues today.

David Hanson, John Sharland, Mark Sorgman, Property & Finance Team Leaders

Report of the Congregational Engagement Team

The Congregational Engagement Team encompasses all the ways and avenues that our congregation is engaged in worship, parish care, welcome and fellowship.

We, the team, met last summer with Rev. Beth. The elected team leaders: Ginny Young, Kathleen Mosher and Carol Chaffee were already involved in much of the life of the church. The commitment soon became overwhelming for Ginny and Kathleen, both of whom live outside of Bridgewater. Both Ginny and Kathleen were already deeply immersed in church fellowship activities as well as managing a busy lifestyle so they decided to step back, resign and continue to devote their time where their time was already devoted. I am grateful for their wisdom, self-care and devotion to our church.

The team itself works for the good of church, of course and has tried to provide new opportunities and new ways for our congregation to come together.

- Care Team – supports Rev. Beth in providing meals, visits, cards and a presence in the lives of our church community. The Soup and Share model have worked well for a small group to come together and make soup in our church kitchen, take some home and share some with other church members or friends in the community. The event has been on Saturday mornings during Thrift Store hours and has

a potential to grow over time in to a regular event. Anyone who wants to be “Chef for the Day” and lead of group is welcome. If you have a recipe of any kind that you want to share let’s talk.

- Fellowship – Connie Chandler and Ginny Young have done an extraordinary job in hosting coffee hours on non-breakfast Sundays, providing that second hour of worship in our fellowship hall. Connie and Ginny have devoted their time, talent and treasure to these times. Behind the scenes, also, there is a consistent group of volunteers that assist with the coffee hours and others are always welcome. The Congregational Engagement Team has included some funds from its budget for coffee hour supplies.
- Other – Marci Langevin and I were passionate about re-inventing our Christmas Caroling Model. We held a caroling event at the senior housing at Heritage Circle, Bridgewater and the event was well attended by the residents. Nina Gabel-Jorgensen and I had fun leading the carol sing, offering goodies made by Jenne Foronjy and Cass Travers, and also sharing our memories and traditions with one another. Unfortunately, Marci was sick at the time, but we will be making a plan for December 2024.
- Short term commitment opportunities – These really do exist!! With Rev. Beth’s forethought, we have sign-up sheets for ushers, greeters, liturgists and breakfast crew help. We have passed the sign-up sheets during worship, made them available before and after worship, etc. and the response has been good. Being ourselves, being Christians, it is so important to be present, to be welcoming, to be vulnerable to each other and to the newcomers that walk through our doors.
- Memorial Flowers – we had success with our memorial Poinsettias and Easter lilies this past year. We tried having the Poinsettias earlier in the month of December but they do require a lot of care and the Poinsettia is a very temperamental plant. Some more thought will be devoted to our memorial plants. I have found a local source that services other local churches with holiday plants.

The year, really 9 months, has really been a rebirth of how our church functions with this team model as opposed to a committee model. There are so many possibilities and so many opportunities to try new things and with success comes growth. We shall raise this “child” together as a team with God as our focus and Jesus Christ as our leader.

Carol Chaffee, Congregational Engagement Team Leader

Report of the Community Engagement Team

We were a newly formed team of three. We were trying to figure out our responsibilities, who we were as a team and which direction we were heading. Rev. Beth came to us with a plan to form a mixed generational group for a service trip, made up of people within and outside of our church. All things were in place to sign up people interested in traveling to Maine provided by a group called MATE. Unfortunately, not enough people signed up. As a result, the church did not participate in the Service Project. We need to rethink this mission and decide if we want to tackle it next year or sometime in the future.

We looked at the 5 for 5 offerings and knew they should be part of our team’s responsibilities. In October we tackled Neighbors in Need which supports Ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States.

In December the Christmas Fund was collected to care for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the UCC. We continued the 5 for 5 in March by collecting the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. This offering literally changes lives by providing clean water, food, medicines, shelter healthcare, education and so much more. May is the month for Strengthen the Church which is collected on Pentecost Sunday. This offering funds initiatives for leadership development, new churches, and youth ministry. The last of the five is collecting to support the UCC which helps the church in so many ways. One way is to provide a list of ministers and their profiles for churches searching for a new minister. One more offering beyond the 5 for 5 is Blanket Sunday. We asked Carol Chaffee to lead the Blanket Sunday collection by demonstrating how a blanket could be used to keep your body warm and also how to make a shelter to protect from the wind and rain to name a few. These are two ways blankets are so important to people who have so little.

In September on a cloudy, but dry Saturday Autumn Fest took place at the college. This gave our group an opportunity to tell who we are as a church and advertise all the events that took place during the Fall season. It was a very welcoming group of people that we met on the grounds of Bridgewater State University. Gloria Weinrebe, Angeleena Ciaramitaro, Diane Glass and Terry Reynolds talked about our church and passed out goodie bags to children and fliers with information about the church to teens and adults.

In November we welcomed to our church, Maryte Bizinkauskas, an opera singer from BSU. She is currently in the music department of the University. She agreed to help with a fund raiser called "A Night at the Opera with Maryte Bizinkauskas". Maryte entertained townspeople and members of the church with many beautiful songs. The second part of the evening Maryte invited one of her students to sing a solo and also sing a song with her. Following the performance a reception and raffle table was held. It was a wonderful evening enjoyed by all. Barbara Morey spearheaded this event and was assisted by Diane Glass.

December was the busiest month. It began with Christmas on the Common. As families wandered around the common enjoying the vendors our doors were open so people could use the restrooms. While in the building, they had an opportunity to come and shop the tables of the Church Fair Crafters and Jewelry. The children had an opportunity to use markers to decorate white pumpkins creating a snowman. The pumpkins were donated by Dave Hanson. Warmth in Cold Places is another event that church members always look forward to. People donated socks, mittens, hats, scarves, sweatshirts, sweaters and warm jackets for Warmth in Cold Places. On December 18th, a rainy, windy Monday, the group from the church set out for Taunton carrying all the clothing donated by you. Surprisingly the weather did not keep people away. The recipients, about 30 people, were very grateful as well as caring to one another. They wanted to make sure others received their share.

In the month of January, the children in the Kid's Church began preparing for the Heifer project by making crafts to sell at the Living Gift Market in February. Food was made at home with children helping parents creating rabbit cookies, chicken treats etc. all to be sold at the Living Gift Market. These activities were led by Krissy Cannizzo, Eric Stotts and parents. The children were able to raise over \$1330 which was sent to Heifer Project to purchase 3 bee hives, 2 biogas stoves (runs on methane gas), 3 hope baskets (rabbits and a flock of chicks), 1 heifer, 1 water buffalo, 2 seed packs (fruit and vegetable seedlings and saplings), and 1 goat, all of which will be given to various families in need. The families receiving animals will be trained in their care and feeding.

As part of our responsibilities, we watch over the following groups ready to assist where needed. We are responsible for aiding the breakfast program, the Women's Guild & Fellowship, the Bridgewater Food Pantry, and Heifer Project.

Future Plans

Speaking of Heifer Project, watch for the traveling cows. You may find one on your lawn next winter. The cows Faith, Hope, and Charity are returning.

A Harry Potter fundraiser is being considered for next year. We must first receive approval from the Warner Bros. Consumer Products Group before we can move forward with planning the event.

The team is planning on opening the doors of the church for the July 4th parade attendees and allow them access to the bathrooms. Water will be available.

The team will revisit the idea of participating in a Service Project.

We are sad to say goodbye to Krissy Cannizzo as she will no longer be a member of the team. She will still be working with us for she will continue with Heifer Project. Krissy, thank you for all your knowledge and your imagination.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Glass, Krissy Cannizzo, and Terry Reynolds, Community Engagement Team Leaders

Report of the Bridgewater Food Pantry 2023

Number of client visits: 3422

Households 1363

Adults 1973

Children 891

Seniors 558

Bags distributed 11307

Donations received \$17,643

Expenses \$30,219

Food Pantry operating account reduced by \$12,576 in 2022

The number of patrons utilizing the pantry has increased by 50% over the previous year.

Number of bags distributed increased by 101% over the previous year.

During the year, the food pantry purchased 2 new refrigerators from GW Toma to help keep up with the volume of food needed to support the increased need.

We have built an incredible volunteer team that includes Pat Conn, John Shalignowitz, Bill O'Neil, Steve & Connie Chandler, Tom Aiello, Steve Wilson and our 2 interpreters Carlos Perez and Donna Noblin.

We continue to receive tremendous support from the local community. Here are some but not all of the people/organizations that have donated:

"It Takes A Village"

Thank you to the following 2023 Donors

Ahern, Michael & Heather
Aldi's (Raynham)
Amazon
Auglis Way
Bernier's Liquors
Black Hat Brewery
Bluestone Bank
Bridgewater Academy Lions Club
Bridgewater Badgers
Bridgewater Bandits
Bridgewater Cares
Bridgewater Chiropractic
Bridgewater Correctional Farm
Bridgewater Food Pantry Volunteers
Bridgewater Girl Scouts
Bridgewater Public Library
Bridgewater Residents
Bridgewater Rotary Club
Bridgewater Public School System
Callahan Construction
Central Square Congregational Church
Christina Brown
CSCC Women's Guild & Fellowship
Dunkin (Bridgewater)
Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service
Eastern Bank
First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church
Goddard Foundation
Greater Boston Food Bank
Hanson Farm
Harbor One Bank
High Pond Estates Residents
Home Depot (Bridgewater)

Jack Phaneuf
Kappa Delta Phi (BSU)
Keches Law Group
Lepage Distribution
Magnolia Drive Residents
Merrimack Valley Credit Union (Bridgewater)
North Easton Savings Bank
Ousamequin Club
Outreach Nutritional Meals (Pembroke)
Restoration Coffee (Bridgewater)
Roche Brothers (Bridgewater)
Seven Eleven (Winter Place)
Stone Meadow Residents
Stop & Shop (Halifax)
Theory Wellness
Trinity Episcopal Church
United States Postal Service (Bridgewater)

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Melcher
Food Pantry Director

Report of the Church Fair Committee

Friday, Nov. 3, 2023 : 6:30pm-8:30pm (Pie Night!) * Saturday, Nov. 4, 2023 : 9:00am – 1:00pm
Turkey Dinner Takeout: Sunday, November 12
Christmas on the Common event: December 3

The 2023 fair included: a baked goods table; a candy table; raffle baskets; soups (8 different kinds donated in crockpots by volunteers) and walking tacos for lunch; church crafters; jewelry table; attic treasures; the harvest table, and pie night. Attic treasures was located on a limited basis in the Fireplace Room on Friday evening, and then moved out to the front lawn for Saturday, except for their Christmas merchandise (that stayed in the Fireplace Room). Thankfully the weather cooperated! It's great having it outside. The harvest table was in the Fellowship Hall Friday night for Pie Night, and set up outside on Saturday.

Because attic treasures and the harvest table were outside on Saturday, the crafters were able to take up a generous amount of room in the fellowship hall, along with baked goods, candy, jewelry, and raffle items. Volunteers made cookies, pies, and candy for the fair; made craft items; donated or procured gift baskets and gift items; worked selling raffle tickets and food. There was a volunteer or two who coordinated each of the special tables and the lunch service.

We were an approved community service opportunity for Bridgewater-Raynham High School students, and had several students working various shifts on Friday evening and Saturday (most of them all day).

The fair committee also hosted a turkey dinner takeout event again, where people could pre-order turkey dinners-for-two. It was catered by Boston Tavern Middleboro, and we added donated desserts, and was held on the weekend following the fair (11/12). Distribution was once again done in the library parking lot.

The turkey dinner takeout price was \$40 per dinner-for-two. We had 54 takeout meals purchased. An anonymous angel stepped up once again and paid the Boston Tavern bill, so the church was able to keep every dollar it took in from those who ordered dinners.

Thank you to all who helped as none of this would be possible without the many volunteers who donate their time, talent, and financial support. **The Friday/Saturday fair plus the turkey takeout brought in \$7,305.** Crafters and the jewelry table also sold items during the Bridgewater Business Association's Christmas on the Common, held December 3. The BBA did not utilize the fellowship hall for vendors as they have in recent years, so our folks could use the entire space. (Our bathrooms were also open to the public for use during the event.) The crafters took in, on this day alone, an additional \$644, and the jewelry table took in \$103, **bringing the total brought in by the Fair Committee to \$8,052.** It was budgeted at \$8,000.

Denise Molinari, Carla Jackson, Diane Sheibley, Co-chairs

Report of the Women's Guild and Fellowship

The Women's Guild and fellowship is a lovely group of dedicated women who meet on the first Wednesday of the month from October through May for friendship, programs, service and refreshments. Some are church members and some are from the community. We are all here to share in fellowship, enjoy enlightening and fun programs, raise money, and donate to those who are less fortunate.

Our programs for the year included a Pot Luck Supper, Line Dancing, a Christmas Communion Service, Conservation/Green Living, an auction, a picture travelogue of Japan, learning about Elder Law, and a banquet. We put on two rummage sales making over \$4,000. They are a lot of hard work, and we could use some "younger" help.

We gave money to the following organizations: Sunshine Farm, Doctors Without Borders, Wandering Heart, L Street Mission, Maui Fire Disaster, Lewiston/Auburn Area Response Fund, Teen Challenge, Penelope's Place, Operation Santa, Dress A Girl, World Central Kitchen, Salvation Army and the Church.

We also collect money each month for our Angel Fund which is used to help individual people after a fire, medical emergency or other difficult situation. We also bring in items each month for various donations such as the Bridgewater Food Pantry, boxes of things to send to US Military Service people, towels to the Bridgewater Journey Houses, and items for Church World Service. We send out many beautiful, hand made cards to our members, church people, the Brockton VA hospital and others for various reasons. We updated our Constitution and By-Laws in October 2023. We remember those no longer with us, Marge Doniger and Barbara Alden.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane O'Connell and Barbara Morey, Co-Presidents

Report of the Director of Video Evangelism

To Our Friends at Central Square Congregational Church

Annual Report

June 6, 2024

Dear Friends,

We send you Greetings and Gratitude as we celebrate another successful year for CSCC, and a continued partnership with BTV. Paul Holmes and I always feel welcomed and appreciate the wonderful programming recorded and provided by the Central Square Community.

We continue to receive positive feedback from our viewers, who enjoy the professional and welcoming presentation of Sunday services, on YouTube, Facebook, and Channel 9. Please know that your positive messages and music reach an appreciative audience, including many who are homebound or have relocated to new homes, and are still able to remain connected to their religious community.

We are privileged to work with Julia Scott Carey and her tremendous lineup of professional performers, and we have expanded programming, which now includes special music presentations and concerts, along with the weekly services. In total we have aired approximately 20 additional hours of Central Square Programming in the last 12 months.

During the past 12 months, The Booth Video YouTube Channel featured 3544 devices watching, which typically includes approximately 10,000 viewers.

Paul and I are always grateful for the opportunity to bring the Good News to Bridgewater and beyond. We look forward to additional projects, partnership, and fellowship.

We wish you all the best for your annual celebration and look forward to the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Jeff Fowler

Station Manager

BTV Access Corp

Paul Holmes

Director of Video Evangelism

CSCCUCC/BTV Access Corp

Report of the Sexton

I am glad to report that our beloved Church is still standing after more than 150 years of service to the local community. While there are some bruises and blemishes outside and inside the building it remains a bastion of love, joy and God's presence.

As Sexton I have continued to keep the building as clean and tidy as possible each day. While I have not done any major refurbishing projects this past year I have continued to touch up areas with paint, putty, screws, nails, electrical wiring etc. as needed.

At the suggestion of our Treasurer, Dave Sheibley, I researched and proposed a change to the Church trash collection vendor from the Win Waste Industries company to the Marchand Environmental Company. In addition to a monetary savings, our new vendor picks up recycling materials as well. I continue to support and assist internal and external groups in setting up the fellowship hall and other meeting rooms with table and chairs when needed. I work closely with the Church Office Manager to address building issues and other general requests as required. I would like to thank the members of the Property & Finance and the Church Staff Teams for their continued support.

A special thanks to Gordon Brailsford, Steve Chandler and John Sharland for their hands-on assistance whenever I need it.

Respectfully,
Rich Sullivan, Sexton

Report of the Central Closet Thrift Shop

The Thrift Shop started July 2023 with a bang! We closed for the first two weeks!

We have been successful in raising \$12,466 from July 2023 to date. In addition to generated income, donations of items were made to various charities as well. These include Warmth in Cold Places, CSCC Women's Guild, My Brother's Keeper, The Bridgewater Raynham school system and other area schools, Salvation Army, Keeping Pace with Multiples, and Gifts to Give.

Many volunteers participated in sorting, pricing and displaying the various donations received. We are grateful for those volunteers but are always open for new volunteers to help. Any time is appreciated from an hour to the entire time the shop is open on Wednesday and Saturday. No experience is necessary. In order to realize continued success, please spread the word to family and friends that our thrift shop is a great place to shop, raise church revenue, and serve our community as a resource for quality items at reasonable prices.

We are always working towards improving the Thrift Store and look forward to any new ideas and continued success. Come join us, we have much fun!

Submitted,

Connie Chandler, Sandy Kuipers, Jane O'Connell, Lynn Pietras and Gail Wright.