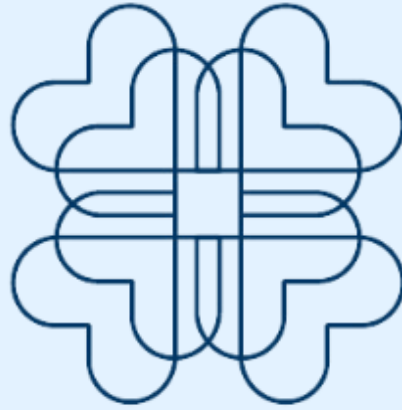




VILLAGE CHURCH

Congregational • United Church of Christ

Wellesley + Weston



2024 Impact Report
~ 227th Annual Meeting ~
March 16, 2025
Zoom and In Person

Our Church Covenant

We are banded together as a Christian Church
To maintain the worship of God,
To proclaim the gospel of Christ,
To develop in all people a consciousness of their relations and duties
To God and to each other, and
To inspire them with love for truth, passion for righteousness,
and enthusiasm for service.
To this end we pledge our loyalty to Christ and covenant with each other
To express His spirit in our individual and corporate life;
To live together as Christians
and to submit ourselves to the government of this Church,
working, giving, praying for its increase, its purity, its peace,
And seeking in every way to make it a power
For the building up of the kingdom of God.

Vision

Choose Love. Make it Real.

We are a covenant community
called to choose God's transforming love
and make it real in this beautiful and broken world.

Mission

With open hearts and minds, Wellesley Village Church
welcomes the curious, the seeker, and the sure at every stage of life.
Guided by the love of Jesus, our growing congregation shares in inspiring worship,
inclusive community, and intentional service.

We are continually transformed by following Jesus' example that
in giving we receive, in feeding we are fed,
and in loving, we are loved.

Our intergenerational ministries deepen our faith and compel our service.
We are called to pursue justice and joy for all people, and we care passionately about
God's creation and the shared health of our world.
Energized by the Holy Spirit, we joyfully live into our future together.

Values

*BELOVED: by God at every age and stage of life;
BELONG: we welcome, affirm, and connect;
BECOME: we question, learn, and grow;
BEFRIEND: the neighbor, the stranger, the earth;
BEHOLD: we worship, witness, and follow Jesus
BE real, vulnerable, and open to the love of God.*

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We celebrate all who have been Village Church members 50 years or more!

1944	Lois Ball	1967	Anne Kott	1971	Diane Bedrosian
1949	Joanne Woods	1967	Stephen Kott	1971	Ed Bedrosian
1952	Carolyn Pruyne	1967	Barbara Peirson	1971	Almeda Nicholson
1952	Pauline Ellms	1967	Charles Staples	1971	Dorothy Patton
1956	Robert Derderian	1968	Phyllis Gibson	1971	Elizabeth Seaborn
1959	Stephen Burtt	1969	Mike Barton	1972	Barbara Howland
1960	Ann Cunningham	1969	Wendy Barton	1973	George Howland
1961	Gretchen Morrison	1969	Gail Doorley	1973	Alan Rose
1961	Robert Morrison	1969	Thomas Doorley	1973	Janet Rose
1962	Ruth Breden	1969	Bobbie Hayes	1973	Linda Smith
1962	Wilfred Breden	1969	Casey Hayes	1973	Ron Smith
1962	Cynthia Miller	1969	Janis Luedke	1973	Marti Steeves
1964	Marjorie Mitchell	1969	Allison Sheffield	1974	Marilyn Hanson
1965	Elizabeth Bachman	1969	Dave Sheffield	1974	Darlene Howland
1965	Betty Lee Peterson	1970	Sally Hammerness	1974	Jan Hicinbothem
1966	James Loehlin	1971	Jeb Bachman		



*"I thank my God every time I remember you,
constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers
for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now."
~Philippians 1:3-5*

We Welcome Our 2024 Members



Kerstin Allen

Cheri Blauwet

Rose Marie Flores

Hyo Lee

Amy Lousararian

Mary Jane Gonzales Redd

Nicholas ("Nick") Reynolds

Kristine ("Kris") Salo

John Salo

John ("Jay") Staunton

Marga Vass

Blair Bean

Malora Gundy

Bill Gundy

Angela Pontrello

Jason Pontrello

Michelle Mikus

Confirmation Class of 2024

May 19, 2024



Jax Valo Choi-Undheim

Liam Jameson MacCormack

Graham Nathaniel Evans
(confirmed in the Catholic Church, April 30)

Katherine Elizabeth Morris

Bhavna Gabrielle Gopal

Sonja Josephine Tellander

Conor Williamson MacCormack

Oliver Robert Zinggeler

In Memoriam

Eternal God, we bless you for the great company of all those who have kept the faith, finished their race, and who now rest from their labor. We praise you for those dear to us, those who, through the fellowship of this church, have been fellow travelers with us on the pilgrim way. Especially we thank you for the lives and witness of those who, within the year just past, you have received into your eternal presence:

Ken Chaulk

Robert Cleverdon

Mabel Edwards

Jackie Griffiths

Charlotte Harrington

Martha Litle

Bob Morrison

Nancy Payne

Charlotte Sanner

Lois Woodward

We also wish to remember in prayer those many others who died this past year who are near and dear to the members of this congregation. May the Peace of Christ be with us all. Amen.

*I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord.
Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live,
and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.*

Professional Staff Reports

Senior Pastor

Rev. Dr. Sarah Sarchet Butter



“Energized by the Spirit, we JOYFULLY embrace our future!”

Beloved members of Village Church,

What a year! We faithfully accomplished so much together in 2024, notably: Completing the merger of Wellesley and Weston congregational churches to form one united Village Church in Wellesley and Weston and successfully concluding the Better Together Campaign to retire the mortgage on the historic Charles Street African Methodist Episcopal church building. Staff-wise, we welcomed the amazing Emilio Del Vecchio as our Facilities Manager, the benefits of which we experience daily across both campuses and the parsonage! We thanked Rev. Martha Schick, welcomed Rev. Carlos Aoun as our newest Pastoral Resident, and celebrated Megan Strouse’s gifts and growth as she became our 2nd year resident.

Summer included a feasibility study conducted by CCS on a potential campaign to fund HVAC replacement and other priorities. With input from all who participated in interviews and surveys, CCS recommended a \$4m campaign goal. The fall was full of faithful discernment at Council meetings and Congregational Hearings. Thank you to Moderator Joe Morray for his wise and careful leadership, and to Mark Lenci and Kathy Schleyer for their HVAC expertise, and to all in the congregation who participated with helpful questions and insightful comments. In October we made the big decision to move forward with “Empowering the Future,” boldly

choosing the geothermal option, along with continued greening of the Weston campus, support for Village Table and other outreach, an enhanced property reserve, and the seeding of a Children and Youth Ministries Reserve Fund. Our “test well” was successfully dug in December, and as 2025 unfolds, we will all be “digging deep” to make our commitments real.

Goals for the coming year include:

Engage our congregation’s transformational and joyful generosity in support of the “Empowering the Future” campaign.

Develop “next generation” leadership for the Wellesley and Weston congregations.

Deepen the understanding of Stewardship required for our beloved church; increase our capacity to fund our mission and ministry on an annual basis.

Work with HR to strengthen infrastructure (admin, development and accounting functions) to support the congregation’s mission and ministries.

Champion efforts toward membership growth in both Wellesley and Weston.

Support and encourage our talented staff and lay leaders and their dreams for ministry as together we engage in spiritual growth, beloved community, and enthusiastic service.

Keep Inspiring Worship at the heart of all we are and do!

It’s an honor to begin my 10th year as your Sr. Pastor. Thank you for being such faithful, joyful, loving members of Village Church in Wellesley and Weston. You are amazing!

In Christ,

Sarah

Rev. Dr. Sarah S. Butter, Sr. Pastor

Professional Staff Reports

Associate Pastor

Rev. Pam Emslie



"The search for God and the search for our deepest selves ends up being the same search."
~ Fr. Richard Rohr

Fr. Richard Rohr's belief that our search into the depth of our human heart brings us closer to God is evident in our High School Youth Group, in our new Young Adult Group, and in the small adult groups I help lead – Families Befriending Families and Conversations about Life and Death.

It is also discernable within me as I work three-quarter time this program year. The gift of an extra day off each week came about as I listened to and honored the depths of my heart calling for what I needed. My new work rhythm has made way for fresh creative energy and a bolder voice within me to follow and proclaim the Good News of our shared faith. I am grateful to Rev. Sarah Butter whose creative leadership helped shape this new way for me and for our Village Church Youth Programs. I am also grateful for Jade Hargrave who is now leading Middle School Youth Group and Confirmation this year. What a gift.

Letting go of leading Middle School Youth Group on Sunday mornings has allowed me to offer leadership after 9AM Worship: I often lead a group of worshippers in a twenty-minute time of reflection entitled Engaging Worship; once a month I co-lead a new Young Adult Group with youth group alum, Peter Hodge, from 10:30AM – 12:00PM in the Church Parlor. And soon, I will occasionally gather groups of Church School parents for a

time of worshipful conversation and fellowship. I am grateful for the flexibility to offer small group leadership on Sunday mornings.

Four years have gone by since we were separated during the two-year pandemic. It is with great joy that I can share with you the good news that our High School Youth Group knows itself well again and is now growing. There is a deep longing within our youth to search for their deepest selves and to connect with their peers in truth, meaning, and love. This has been true throughout my eighteen years leading the youth programs. But, the cost of the relentless social media machine that engages our youth, as well as the sustained external expectations to perform, continues to build and bring ever greater pressure, anxiety, and loneliness within the youth. When the youth step into their time together each week at the church, they fall into a place of rest, connection, and playful joy as God's love and forgiveness comes to life, within them and between them. In turn, this creates in them a heart to offer God's love and forgiveness to a weary world.



Professional Staff Reports



This is also true for our new Young Adult Group as they engage in conversation and find meaning and direction navigating their work world and developing relationships. Our Young Adult Group is comprised of youth group alum who work and live in the Boston area, as well as other young adults who have found their way to Village Church. The gifts these young adults offer to each other is so delicious and life-giving, this group is gathering a second time each month outside the church, and we just booked a two-day retreat to Craigville Retreat Center this March! Praise God.



My long tenure serving the youth at Village Church has offered me the wonderful opportunity to stay in touch with youth group alum years after graduating from high school. One of the highlights each year is our annual Holiday Youth Group Alum gathering in December. This year twenty-five youth alum gathered and fell back into the youth room couches and into meaningful conversation and reflection. It was wonderful to witness the delight they offered each other. During our time

together, it has become a tradition for each alum to write a card to our High School Youth Group, which the youth then read aloud to one another in the following weeks. What a beautiful and powerful exchange.



Our two "Conversations about Life and Death" groups, and the parent's gathering, as part of our Families Befriending Families ministry, have each grown closer in the sharing that has taken place over the last two or three years! The community that each group has created feels akin to the intimacy and vulnerability experienced in youth group.

The desire to draw closer to our deepest selves and to God in community is lifelong. No matter what age we are, God calls us together in truth and in love.

Praise be to God for these gifts shared at Village Church, and for these gifts shared in our Village Church Staff. What a team! Every day I give thanks to God for our church, for the presence of God's powerful Spirit among us, and for the collective call to follow Jesus' way together.

In faith,
Pam

Professional Staff Reports

Associate Pastor, Congregational Care & Engagement

Rev. Stacy Swain



Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Philippians 4:4

Worship continues to be a source of great joy and inspiration. I am grateful to be a regular preacher and liturgist at both the 9:00 Chapel worship service and the 10:00 Sanctuary worship service. I appreciate the planning that goes into both of these services and continue to be deeply moved by the love, skill, expertise and collaboration of my colleagues as week after week we partner with God and all of you in creating nourishing and meaningful worship.

“Blessed be the ties that bind our hearts in Christian Love.” As your Associate Pastor, I have the privilege of being the pastoral liaison to the Community, Service, Welcome and Worship Deacons. It is a joy to witness to and support the amazing work of these ministries and the leadership of their chairs as they embody our core values of **BeLoved, BeLong, BeHold, BeCome and BeFriend**. As the pastoral liaison to the deacons, I also am attending the monthly Council meetings to provide additional communication and coordination. In March of 2024, the Deacon Ministries and Council gathered on March 23 at Village Church in Wellesley for a time of celebration, orientation and planning for the year to come.

I also serve as pastoral liaison to the Memorial Path Churchyard Committee and worked with

that group in the dedication of the newly installed Revolutionary War Monument which took place on Sunday, September 29th.

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” John 15:12

Providing and coordinating pastoral care continues to be a deep blessing and major area of activity for me. This includes:

Visiting and providing pastoral care 1:1 with congregants.

Supporting The Befrienders’ Ministry along with co-leaders Susan Sullivan and Bev Lenci. With monthly meetings as a group and individual meetings with Befrienders, this ministry continues to flourish. On January 21, 2024, we recognized and blessed the Befrienders team during worship.

Shepherding the financial support of a grant from the Babson Webber Mustard Fund, as we provide grocery cards to people in the wider community who are struggling with financial hardships. I, along with the other pastors, meet with people who call or come to the church looking for assistance.

Bringing forward the prayers of the people in our weekly online newsletter as well as in our pastoral prayers and coordinating the distribution of the chancel flowers. I also want to lift up the ministry of Mary Schaefer who sends out handwritten cards on behalf of the church to those who are being lifted up in prayer each week.

Professional Staff Reports

“And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together.” Hebrews 10:24-25a

There are many, many ways that Village Church cares for each other with deep compassion and connection. We seek to foster a community where every person feels



beloved and experiences a deep sense of belonging.

Listed below are some of the offerings that have helped nurture the love and connection that is so alive in the congregation.

Weekly offerings:

The Village Church Walking Group walked almost every Monday this past year fostering community and enjoying the beauty of creation.

Monthly Offerings:

The Dads' group regularly met at a local restaurant and Village Church Moms' group met in various homes. Both provided opportunities for connection, support, and deepening joy.

Parenting group which met one Sunday evening a month is a place where parents who might be struggling can receive support, resources and encouragement.

Seniors Connect met monthly online for community and connection and to share in conversation about the

“wondering question” each month. Village members who live at North Hill gathered monthly for conversation and sharing.

Village members who live at Fox Hill began gathering monthly this fall as well.

The “Caring Connection” coordinated meals and rides for congregants as needed and provided remembrance bags for those who are grieving the death of a loved one.

Prayer Shawl and Baptismal Blanket Ministry continued to meet on zoom on Thursday mornings and added an in-person time on the first Sunday of the month after the 10:00 worship.

The Bread Baking Ministry lovingly gathered to bake the communion bread for our 9:00 services and our monthly time of communion during the 10:00 service.

Our monthly Lunch Bunch gathering of community and connection wrapped up in June of this year.

Special Offerings:

For our All-Saints Day Worship on November 3, letters of care and remembrance were sent to members of our congregation who had lost a loved one during the past year. Letters of care and remembrance to the families of members of Village Church who died in the past year. During our worship services that day, we lovingly and reverently read the names of members who died.

On Sunday November 24, we recognized our beloveds who have been members of Village Church of 50 years or more. We expressed our love and appreciation of their example of

Professional Staff Reports

steadfast love and deep faithfulness.

I want to thank Rev. Dr. Sarah Butter, our Senior Pastor, my colleagues on staff and you dear congregation for the ministry we have shared during this past year. To God be the glory.

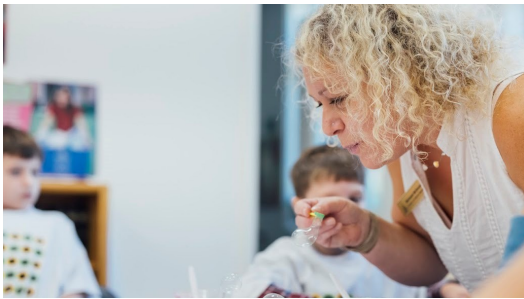
Thank you!

With joy,

Stacy

Director of Children's Ministry

Michaela McDonald



Hello Disciples of All Ages!

Jesus was talking with His disciples when they brought him the question: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?" (Matthew 18:1-6) Who did Jesus draw into the middle of them, but a child. Inviting us to lean into the simple faith, gifts, and presence that children bring. Jesus also said that they who welcome children in his name, welcome Jesus. Thank you, Village Church for always welcoming our children with warm hearts and eyes of love. For truly believing that we are better together - intergenerationally. We love beginning each service in the sanctuary as the full People of God, from youngest to oldest. Our playground welcomes children and

families, then to our Time With Young Disciples and finally off to Children's Church where we learn the stories of our faith and the stories of Jesus. Jesus shows us how to love our neighbor, to love ourselves, and to love God. Together, we wonder how that looks in our lives and to what action it calls us.

We continue to grow with wonderful new families joining our Children's Church community. We have annual and monthly opportunities for families to be in community with one another like Parent Coffee Fellowship, Bingo Night, Advent Workshop, and Gingerbread Decorating. Families Befriending families meets monthly, with parents gathering for conversation and kids gathering in the art studio where we are engaging in liturgical art: painting to express our thoughts, feelings and beliefs about God.

A special thank you to our Children's Church volunteers and Deacons, who journey with our children as they grow in faith. This year, in particular, you have been a steadfast presence in the classroom. Supporting and forwarding our mission of learning about God's giant love for each of us and the many ways we can shine that light in the world around us.

With joy!

Michaela



Professional Staff Reports



Professional Staff Reports

Director of Confirmation and Middle School Youth Group

Jade Hargrave

Beloved Members of Village Church,

Since I began leading the Confirmation and Middle School youth programs in September, my heart is full of gratitude for the ways our youth have engaged in faith, deepened their understanding of Christian community, and supported one another with curiosity and grace.

This fall in Confirmation, we embarked on a faith journey together. We discussed the role of Christian community and importance of friendship on a journey that will extend well past this program year into the rest of our lives. We explored the mysterious nature of faith, our understandings of “truth,” and the ways we see God working in our lives and in the world around us.

The Confirmands received their Confirmation Bibles and we began to dig in to the stories with a spirit of curiosity; telling each other the old, old stories in ways that are meaningful to youth. We played games like “Prophet or Superhero?”, explored Christian prayer practices, and for the budding young prophets in the community, offered a meal of locusts and honey to nourish and fortify their future ministries.

This fall in Middle School Youth Group, we explored the themes of peace, friendship, covenant, and life in Christian community. At each meeting, we reflect on Christ’s love and provide a space where youth can share, grow, and build lasting friendships. When in one meeting we wrote notes of appreciation to each other, it was clear that the middle schoolers have truly embraced the call from 1 Corinthians 16:14: *“Let all that you do be done*

in love.” This has been the heart of MSYG—growing in love, kindness, and gratitude for one another.

God’s Spirit of Grace moves in our midst to bless our youth and the ministries of our wonderful senior high school and adult advisors. I am deeply grateful for the dedication, love, and wisdom offered by: Dave Baker, James Berger, Kate Burton, Stacey Decembrele, Julien Grant, Pryor Gilbert, Taryn Reohr, Brooke Simko, Paul Stafford, Anna Turner, and Will Webster. I am blessed to partner with them in this important ministry.

As we move into 2025, I am eager to walk alongside our youth and advisors as we continue to grow in faith, explore God’s word, and experience the love and support of our Christian community.

With gratitude,
Jade Hargrave



Professional Staff Reports



Second Year Pastoral Resident

Megan Strouse

Dear Church,

As I reflect on this past year, I'm filled with awe at all we're doing as the body of Christ!

In early 2024, we celebrated the official union of the Weston and Wellesley churches and we're continuing our relational journey as one united Village Church. Two of our Bible Studies — on Wednesday mornings and Thursday evenings — explored beloved and lesser-known stories of over fifty women in the Bible. We appreciated their strength, admired their faith, and allowed scripture to speak into our lives.

In June, we celebrated Pride with the Southborough Safe Spaces "Voices Carry: Pride Empowers" photography show. With hundreds of photos displayed in our Sanctuary, we professed in word and in deed that all people are created in the divine image, knit together by the Spirit of Love. Over the summer, we nurtured the fruits of the Spirit — love, joy, peace, patience,



kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, trust, forgiveness, and humility — and continue to bear these gifts in our beloved community.

This fall, it's been a joy to serve as worship leader and primary pastor of Village Church in Weston. As I continue on my journey toward ordination, I'm grateful to for your encouragement and willingness to share your lives with me. You are a blessing. As this year unfolds, may we be filled with joy at God's Spirit among us, seek to follow in Christ's way of compassion and peace, and discern our role in the ever-expanding story of our faith.

Many blessings,
Megan Strouse

Professional Staff Reports

First Year Pastoral Resident

Rev. Carlos Aoun



The Grace of God be upon the Saints of Village Church.

*"Better is one day in your courts
than a thousand elsewhere;
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of
my God than dwell in the tents outside."*

(Psalm 84:10)

My first semester at Wellesley Village Church (WVC) has been a time of both receiving and giving an overflowing abundance of love.

After taking some time to settle in and understanding the various ministries at WVC, I was invited to lead the **"Thursday Evening Bible Study Group."** I chose to invite the group members to explore the Gospel of John, progressing linearly from chapter one through chapter twenty-one. Slowly, the Logos of God (*John 1:1*) is drawing many of us transcendentally. In knowing Jesus, we are witnessing the intersection of the horizontal and the divine, and discovering the meaning of Jesus' words: "That they may have life, and have it more abundantly" (*John 10:10*). What a blessing!

Growing in the knowledge of God can only be achieved through growing in the knowledge of oneself. If we are created "in the image and likeness" (*Genesis 1:26*) of God, our Spiritual Growth Group, **"Tuesdays With God,"** gathers to explore the "fearfully and wonderfully made" (*Psalms 139:14*) mystery that we are. In discovering who we are, God leads us to discover our oneness and togetherness in the embracing love of Jesus Christ, who unites us all in the Holy Spirit of love.

The month preceding the U.S. elections was a time of worry, uncertainty, and fear for many in our church and in society. Inspired by Jesus' words: "Do not worry... Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?" (*Matthew 6:25, 27*), I started two healing circle groups under the theme **"Post-Election Reflections and Healing Circle."** We focused on three main points inspired by the Gospel:

1. Non-Judgment
2. Forgiveness
3. Resurrection

One of the many testimonials from participants best summarizes the outcome of these sessions:

"Carlos challenged us to ponder topics of judgment, forgiveness, and resurrection. Despite our initial skepticism that we could be in any way changed or healed by these meetings, we found it to be a most valuable and provocative learning experience. Carlos met us where we were in our grief and skillfully led us to a place of revelation and understanding through the words of God. It was a powerful and moving experience for both John and me."

"The Fox Hills Village Monthly Meetings" with WVC congregants have proven to be eagerly awaited moments of blessing and sharing. The members requested a "less

Professional Staff Reports

religious” theme for our meetings, so we decided to explore everyday concerns relevant to the group’s age and interests. Although the approach is less structured, after a brief introduction by me and a prompt, the members are invited into a moderated conversation. This has proven to be both beneficial and uplifting for the group as a whole.

God’s Spirit is at work in Village Church. I am grateful and in awe, witnessing the love, longing, and joy that is flowing from the church to the community and from the congregation to the church. What a wonderful life-giving exchange!

May God continue to use me as His humble servant to spread the Love, radiate the Light, and pass the Peace of Christ to all whom life puts on my path.

In Christ we live,
Rev. Carlos Aoun

Director of Music

Dr Kevin J. McDonald



The music ministry of Wellesley Village Church prospered in 2024 providing meaningful and inspirational musical offerings to support the pastoral staff in

creating services that minister to and cultivate the spiritual life of our congregation.

Each week our Sanctuary Choir provides inspired music that touches the hearts and elevates the souls of our congregation. Our music reflects the scriptural messages each Sunday to bring the gospel to life in beautiful

and meaningful ways. Through our voices we communicate God’s message of love and make it real in the lives of others.

We choose love and make it real by arriving at church each Sunday at 8:30am to rehearse and prepare our service. The loyalty and dedication of our musicians to volunteer their time to contribute their gifts of music to communicate God’s love to others is deeply spiritual. The preparation through the week and the genuine personal; and musical offerings bring the service to life.

The art of making music with our Sanctuary Choir, Youth Choir, Wellesley Village Children’s Chorus, Kristjon Imperio, and instrumentalists allow us to fulfill the mission of the church by providing inspiring worship, creating community, accepting all, by giving to others, and being nourished by the very act of serving.

The music ministry upholds our values by loving all people from the tallest to the smallest, creating a place that is safe and welcoming for all, stretching ourselves and the congregation to grow, befriending all who come to worship, beholding the lessons taught by Jesus, and being real with one another and our God.

Dr. Kevin J. McDonald

Professional Staff Reports



2025 Leadership & Nominating Slate

Board, Committee and Ministry chairs are denoted.

CHURCH COUNCIL

<u>Moderator</u>	Candace Sutcliffe	<u>Councilors</u>	<u>Board Representatives</u>
<u>Vice Moderator</u>	John Hargrave	2026 Christina Oliver	Properties Mark Lenci, <i>ex officio</i>
<u>Immediate Past Moderator</u>	Joe Morray	2026 Cynthia Sibold, At Large	HR Alice Polley, <i>ex officio</i>
<u>Weston Steward (-6/2026)</u>	Paul Schendel	2026 Neil Simister, At Large	Finance Julien Grant/Emily Lord,
<u>Treasurer</u>	Mitch Coddington	2027 Dave Tolley, At Large	<i>ex officio</i>
<u>Vice Treasurer</u>	TBA	TBA, At Large	Historian Brad Harding (<i>non-voting</i>)
<u>Clerk</u>	Jim Mongiardo		
<u>Senior Pastor</u>	Sarah Sarchet Butter		

DEACON MINISTRIES

<u>Community Ministry Deacons</u>	<u>Weston Worship & Care</u>
2026 Diana Anderson, Co-Chair	2027 Cathy Liddell
2026 Natalie Colbert	2027 Jessica Schendel
2026 Amy Law	2028 Nancy Vazquez
2026 Ron Smith	
2026 Bob Froh	<u>Worship Ministry Deacons</u>
2026 Diana Blakeley	2026 Jen Beachell, Co-Chair
2027 Zoi Lazarakis, Co-Chair	2026 Susannah Hann
2026 Judy Woodrich	2026 Chuck Wood
2028 Diane Chaisson	2026 Carolyn Wood
2028 Bassem Samuel	2026 Kristin Zinggeler, Co-Chair
2028 Christine Samuel	2027 John Butter
<i>Stacy Swain, Pastoral Resource</i>	2027 Alex Zhong
<u>Service Ministry Deacons</u>	2027 Jenny Wardwell
2026 Lisa Weinstock	2028 Bev Lenci
2026 Deborah Brown	2028 Craig Stirrat
2026 Deryle House, Chair	2028 Athene Sirivallop
2026 Karen Bernardo	<i>Megan Strouse, Pastoral Resource</i>
2026 Sue Gibbons	
2026 Bill Chaisson	<u>Family Life:</u>
2027 Heather MacFarlane	<u>Children's Ministry</u>
2027 Susan Case	2025 Heather Kelly
2027 Suzanne Wintle	2025 Kate Ellmer
2028 Carol Yermal	2025 Elizabeth VanDahm
2028 Ron Anderson	2026 Veena Mathew
2028 Jessica Schendel	2027 Darlene Howland, Chair
2028 Malora Gundy	2027 Christina Mathews
<i>Megan Strouse & Stacy Swain,</i>	<i>Michaela McDonald, Pastoral</i>
<i>Pastoral Resource</i>	<i>Resource</i>
<u>Welcome Ministry Deacons</u>	
2026 Linda Smith	
2026 Tindley Gilbert	
2026 Judy Mongiardo, Co-Chair	
2027 Pam Snyder, Co-Chair	
2027 Heather Conway	
2027 Barbara Werner	
2027 Susan Griesmer	
2028 Jan Cree	
<i>Carlos Aoun & Stacy Swain,</i>	
<i>Pastoral Resources</i>	
<i>Christina Oliver, Council Resource</i>	

ADMINISTRATIVE BOARDS

<u>Board of Finance</u>	<u>Board of Properties</u>
2026 Julien Grant, Co-Chair	2026 Mark Lenci, Chair
2026 Douglas Baskett	2027 Phil Carens
2026 Emily Lordi, Co-Chair	2027 Brad Harding
2027 Chip Dendere	2027 Kathy Schleyer
2028 Amy Lousararian	2028 Ed Berger
2028 Mike Kellogg	2028 Jem Bayulgen
<i>Ex officio</i> TBA, Vice Treasurer	<i>Sarah Butter, Pastoral Resource</i>
<i>Ex officio</i> Mitch Coddington,	<i>Emilio DelVecchio, Staff</i>
Treasurer	<i>Resource</i>
<i>Ex officio</i> John Hargrave,	
Vice Moderator	
<i>Sarah Butter, Pastoral Resource</i>	
<u>Board of Human Resources</u>	<u>Board of Nominating</u>
2026 Jan Beaven	2026 Neil Simister, Chair
2026 Vivian Zhu	2026 Becky Georgenes
2026 Ken Sipe	2028 Sally Kellogg
2027 Alice Polley, Chair	<i>Ex officio</i> Joe Morray, Immediate
2027 Heather Sawitsky	Past Moderator
2028 Julie Thistlethwaite	<i>Sarah Butter, Pastoral Resource</i>
2028 Doug Wilkins	
<i>Ex officio</i> Candace Sutcliffe,	
Moderator	
<i>Sarah Butter, Pastoral Resource</i>	
<i>Meg Sweeting, Admin. Resource</i>	

OTHER

Church Historian

Brad Harding

Art Exhibit Coordinator

Cyndi Miller

2025 Leadership & Nominating Slate

STANDING COMMITTEES

(Appointed)		(Nominated/Elected)
<u>Churchyard Committee</u>		<u>Delegates Committee</u>
Brad Harding, Vice Chair	<u>Safe Church Committee</u>	2026 Christie Baskett
Joanne Ritsert	Brad Harding, Chair	2026 Douglas Baskett
Craig Stirrat, Chair	Alan Rose	2027 Jacquie Wheeler
Pam Stirrat	Jeff Prus	2027 Karin Lifter
John Snyder	Dave Secor	<i>Meg Sweeting,</i>
Matthew Hornung	<i>Sarah Butter, Pastoral Resource</i>	<i>Admin. Resource</i>
Kristin Zinggeler	<i>Meg Sweeting, Admin. Resource</i>	
<i>Stacy Swain, Pastoral Resource</i>		<u>Stewardship</u>
<i>Meg Sweeting,</i>	<u>Information Technology</u>	2026 Kim Fox
<i>Admin. Resource</i>	Leif Hille	2027 David Oliver
	Santa Wiryaman	2027 Cynthia Sibold, Chair
	Charles Kounakowitch	2027 Huw Gilbert
<u>Investment Committee</u>	Gavin Lordi	2027 Ted Bililies
Howard Appleby	Kristin Zinggeler	2028 Jack Salerno
Chris Bartel	<i>Chris Toppin,</i>	<i>Ex officio, John Hargrave,</i>
Mike Kellogg	<i>Admin. Resource</i>	Vice Moderator
Matt Pierce, Chair		<i>Sarah Butter,</i>
Mitch Coddington,		<i>Pastoral Resource</i>
<i>Board of Finance Liaison</i>		<i>Cynthia Sibold,</i>
		<i>Council Resource</i>
		<u>Pastoral Residency Committee</u>
		2026 Susan Sullivan
		2026 Priscilla Claman
		2026 Deb Harrow
		2026 Ann Skipper, Chair
		2027 Marisabel Lazarakis
		2027 Bobbie Surratt, Co-Chair
		2027 Dan Garrison
		2028 Amy Hille
		2028 Leif Hille
		2028 Kathy McGraw Bentley
		<i>Ex officio, Paul Schendel,</i>
		Weston Steward
		<i>Megan Strouse and Sarah Butter, Pastoral Resources</i>
		<i>Zach Roe, Admin. Resource</i>

Officer Reports

Moderator

Joseph P. Morray, Jr.



1. Executive Summary of Major Accomplishments During 2024

The year 2024 marked a season of growth, collaboration, and forward-thinking at Village Church. Central to our efforts was the bold step forward with the Empowering the Future capital campaign, which seeks to raise \$4 million over three years to address key infrastructure needs and strengthen our mission. The campaign underscores our commitment to sustainability and outreach, uniting the congregation in a shared vision for a robust future.

Among other accomplishments, we continued the integration of the Weston campus into the greater Village Church community. The Weston Church and its adjacent parsonage have undergone both physical and administrative transformations to align with our shared mission. Together, these efforts affirm our commitment to faithful stewardship and the vibrant life of the church.

2. Decision on Going Forward with Empowering the Future Capital Campaign

The Church Council officially approved the Empowering the Future campaign, an ambitious initiative to fund critical improvements, including a geothermal HVAC system, enhancements to the Weston campus, and upgrades to children and youth ministry and outreach. After careful evaluation, CCS was retained to conduct a feasibility study, confirming the congregation's readiness to support this vision. The campaign structure involves multiple phases, starting with leadership gifts and progressing to full congregational participation.

Key goals include:

- Replacement of the aging HVAC system with a sustainable geothermal alternative.
- Expanding Village Church's impact through facility upgrades.
- Growing financial resilience to empower ministry for future generations.

3. Selection of Geothermal for Wellesley HVAC Needs

The Church Council and HVAC Task Force invested significant time in evaluating heating and cooling solutions to replace the 25-year-old system. Two options were explored: gas furnace replacement with heat pumps and a geothermal system. After in-depth analysis, the congregation voted to recommend geothermal as a carbon-neutral solution, key elements have a 100-year lifespan.

Advantages of the geothermal system include:

Net-zero emissions, aligning with our environmental mission.

Long-term cost efficiency, supported by federal rebates under the Inflation

Officer Reports

Reduction Act and state incentives.

Strengthening Village Church's leadership role in sustainability.

Funding challenges were acknowledged, but the project's significance to the congregation's mission was paramount. A contract was signed with GreenerU to move forward, with drilling for test wells commencing in December 2024.

4. Integration of the Weston Campus

2024 saw significant strides in integrating the Weston campus into Village Church. The successful merger was followed by deliberate efforts to align operational, financial, and cultural practices between the two campuses. Key highlights include:

Interfaith Collaboration Center: Weston is now home to a thriving Interfaith Center. Under the leadership of Director Zachary Roe, the center fosters meaningful connections among diverse faith traditions.

Financial Integration: Separate budgets for Weston were maintained for 2024, while administrative systems were merged to enhance efficiency. Full integration into a unified budget is planned for 2025.

Cultural Integration: Efforts to bridge communities included joint events, shared ministries through the pastoral residency program, and collaborative leadership structures.

These steps signify a deepening of relationships between the campuses, underscoring shared values and mission.

5. Improvements and Greening of the Weston Church and Parsonage

The year included significant progress in greening the Weston campus and enhancing

the parsonage for pastoral residents.

Highlights include:

Weston Campus:

Gardening and power-washing upgrades improved the campus's exterior appeal.

Plans for solar panel installation on the sanctuary roof are under discussion, which would meet the site's electricity needs while promoting sustainability.

Parsonage Enhancements:

Following a comprehensive review, \$61,000 in upgrades were recommended, including air conditioning, kitchen modernization, and other habitability improvements. These changes reflect the importance of maintaining attractive and functional housing for pastoral residents.

These improvements reflect our commitment to environmental stewardship and to creating spaces that support our ministry effectively.

Conclusion

As we reflect on the past year, Village Church continues to be a vibrant and faithful community, boldly embracing opportunities to grow and serve. The Empowering the Future campaign and geothermal HVAC projects symbolize our dedication to sustainability and long-term ministry. The integration of the Weston campus and improvements there further reflect our commitment to unity and stewardship.

Together, we are writing the next chapter of our church's history, inspired by our mission to *choose love and make it real*. Let us move forward in faith, united in purpose and hope.

With faithful gratitude,

Joseph Morray, Jr, Moderator

Officer Reports

Clerk *Membership numbers adjusted
as result of mailing to all members (active and
inactive) to announce merger vote.*

Total Membership 1/1/23 1273

Received in Membership:

By Affirmation of Faith (Adults)	17
By Affirmation of Faith (Youth)	8
By Reaffirmation of Faith	0
By Letter of Transfer	1
By Re-activation	<u>0</u>

Total 26

Removed from Membership:

By Death	7
By Letter of Transfer	8
Moved to Inactive Status	29
By personal request (moved, etc.)	<u>14</u>

Total 58

Total Formal Members 12/31/23 1241

Participants

Active Formal Members	825
Active Non-Members	393
Non-Resident Members	<u>27</u>

Total Active Adults 1,241

Confirmed 15 y.o. to 25 y.o.	100
Children to 14 y.o. & unconfirmed	<u>69</u>

Total Young Adults & Children 169

Total Participants 12/31/24 1,410

Baptism:

Children	8
Adults (age 13 and older)	<u>2</u>

Total 10

Church School Enrollment

Infants/toddlers	15
Pre-K & Kindergarten	18
Grades 1-5	39

Total 72

Youth Program Enrollment

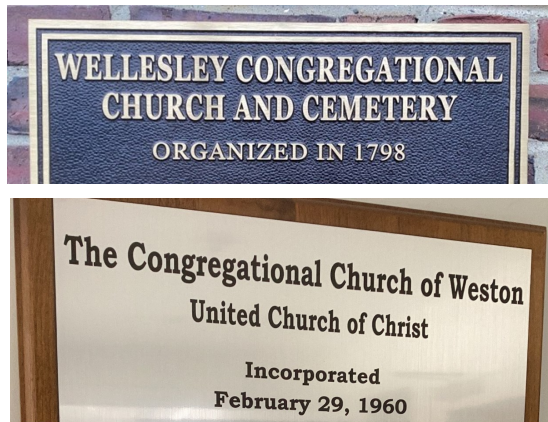
6th&7th Grade Fellowship	27
8th Grade Fellowship	
Confirmation (Grade 9)	10
Grades 10-12 (Senior High)	<u>46</u>

Total 83

Average Attendance at Worship Services:

2008	51 Sundays	289
2009	51 Sundays	286
2010	52 Sundays	275
2011	51 Sundays	262
2012	52 Sundays	268
2013	51 Sundays	274
2014	52 Sundays	279
2015	49 Sundays	257
2016	52 Sundays	241
2017	51 Sundays	235
2018	51 Sundays	245
2019	50 Sundays	258
2020	10 Sundays	175 (in person)
	42 Sundays	650 (online views)
2021	16 Sundays	148 (in person)
	52 Sundays	366 (online views)
2022	50 Sundays	123 (in person)
		141 (online views)
2023	53 Sundays	178 (in person)
	44 Sundays	173 (online views)
2024	52 Sundays	192 (in person)
	52 Sundays	188 (online views)

Officer Reports



Historian

Bradford Harding

There are two parts to this report, and the first can be headlined by three different years: 1960, 1798 and 2024.

These years are distinct and important because they mark new beginnings, unlike other years in the lives of two churches. In 1960, following meetings in homes of about two dozen residents eager for a church community close by, the Congregational Church of Weston was founded. In 1798, a similar start took place in West Needham; ten faithful men and women, after more than twenty years, were able to organize what became Village Church. And just this past year, 2024, both these churches, guided by a congregational desire to learn the future of their missions, both separately and together, and after months of prayer and research and work that still continues, joined together. Legally called a merger, it is truly a spiritual marriage, not different at all from what took place in each of their respective beginnings – good people honoring their own communities and still seeking to worship together and to serve others in God’s world.

All that has happened in 2024, really a year like no other since our two congregations were first established. The whole story is best described

by all the other pages in this “impact report.” Any dramatic detail, all the excitement and certainly what is most important, will show up on each page. This is a report that should be left out and available to read leisurely, and not just filed away for later reference.

One event within the year came in May, when the Village Church archives were moved to a much larger space. Keeping records organized is always a challenge. Keeping them easily available beats that. Now, both are a bit easier, and the future of placing them in digital format is more possible.

The second part of this report is about one typical task for the church historian. As this is written, a request has come which seems a bit eerie in these days of the conflagrations in California and the losses that have occurred for so many people there. Not long ago, a fire extensively damaged a home in nearby Holliston, and caused the loss of many family records, including the certificate of baptism for a child in 1948, at Village Church. A letter certifying the details of that baptism would help obtain a new birth certificate with the last name correctly spelled, and the “real ID”, now specified on the driver license. Would such a letter be possible? It is and the letter has been sent.

This story is a joy to include here. Village Church is fortunate to have records that are detailed and quite comprehensive. Over nearly three hundred years, even before 1798, they can trace the names of people and their spiritual lives, not just as individuals, but as parents and siblings and grandchildren. For many, they stretch from birth to death, and, as time goes on, they hold more and more memories of those buried in the churchyard. In some instances, there is information that can be found nowhere else, as in the case of family records being lost in a fire.

For a place of worship like Village Church in Wellesley and Weston, its history is kept most useful and pertinent by being complete enough to answer questions that will come to us in the future, which we cannot now even imagine.

Respectfully submitted,

Bradford Harding, Historian

Governance

Board of Human Resources

This year began with rapid personnel changes on the Board of HR. Many thanks to Diane Campbell and Vivien Zhu for their service to the Board as Co-Chairs until Diane resigned for health reasons and Vivien resigned the Co-Chair position when her circumstances changed. Julie Thistlethwaite joined the Board in Diane's vacated spot. The first few months were a bit of a scramble. Many thanks also to Candace Sutcliffe (Vice Moderator), Mitch Coddington (Treasurer), Emily Lordi and Julien Grant (Finance Co-Chairs) for their guidance along the way. Special thanks to John Snyder, former Chair of HR, for his legal advice and wordsmithing. It takes a village!

Many changes in church organization have an HR component. To fully effect the merger with The Congregational Church of Weston (CCW), new employment agreements were required for CCW employees, and Emilio Del Vecchio's (Properties Manager) job description needed some amending.

Rev. Pam Emslie cut back to $\frac{3}{4}$ time, and Jade Hargrave was hired part-time to lead Middle School Youth Group and Confirmation meaning new employment letters and job descriptions.

A part-time position was approved for a Development Coordinator which was then deferred over the summer so that a consultant could be retained to do a capital fund drive feasibility study. This Fall, the Development Coordinator's duties were added to Kristjon Imperio's duties to create a full-time position as Director of Worship and Development that formally began on

January 1, 2025. Of course, this too required a new employment letter and job description.

Annual performance reviews were completed over the summer months. Wellesley Congregational Church on both campuses is blessed with superbly talented and flexible employees who are a pleasure to work with.

On a purely administrative level, Juneteenth was approved as a recognized holiday, holiday pay was approved for limited part-time employees who cannot reschedule their hours in the same week as a holiday, a Remote and Hybrid Work Policy was written and approved, and the Employee Handbook was revised as necessary.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Polley, Chair

Board of Nominating

The Board of Nominating nominates Officers and members of the Deacon Ministries, Administrative Boards, and elected members of Standing Committees for election at each Annual Meeting of the Church. From Welcome Sunday through Annual Meeting, we match members with opportunities to use and discover their gifts, and to work in community to maintain and build the church and through it do God's work.

Our own lives teach us that church members are busy people, and so we are deeply thankful to the 22 people rotating off Ministries, Boards, and Committees, the 88 who continue to serve, and the 24 who will join at Annual Meeting. We thank, too, all those who said "not this time" but asked us to be in touch next nominating season.

I am grateful for the prayerful, cheerful hard work of my fellow board members, Becky Georgenes and Bev Lenci, and our pastoral

Governance

resource, Rev. Sarah Butter.

Faithfully,

Neil Simister, Chair

Board of Properties

EMPOWERING THE FUTURE summarizes 2024. Many factors came together to enable our church to confidently move forward for the future.

- Emilio Del Vecchio, our Facilities Manager, has put operation of our facilities into overdrive. His positive impact cannot be overemphasized.
- The management of our three facilities – the Wellesley campus, the Weston church building, and the parsonage were combined after the formal merger with the Congregational Church of Weston.
- Most of the several hundred items requiring maintenance identified in 2022 in a professional firm’s evaluation of our three structures have been addressed. Items not corrected such as the Wellesley HVAC system will be addressed by the “Empowering the Future” capital campaign.
- The extensive work on the facilities was possible thanks to close work with the Board of Finance. 2024 was a “catch up” year for major maintenance so the properties reserve was tapped. Part of the capital campaign will replenish the property reserve.
- Some of the major facilities accomplishments include:
 - Thorough purging, reorganization, and updating of the rooms in the basement of the Wellesley church.
 - Extensive maintenance of the

exterior of the three church buildings (Wellesley, Weston, and the parsonage) and grounds maintenance.

Repairing the roof, gutters, eaves, and new shingles on the Weston church.

Extensive modernization of the parsonage infrastructure and modifications to improve the use of the house for two people/families. The parsonage is a key element that makes the Pastoral Residence Program financially viable.

Initial steps in updating the Wellesley commercial kitchen to enable more efficient meal production by Village Table. Village Table contributed financially to this to share the costs with our church. Additional equipment updates will hopefully be possible in the first half of 2025.

Upgrade of the T-Mobile equipment in the steeple to the latest generation of technology (no cost to the church – T-Mobile pays rent for the use of the steeple).

- In addition to work done by vendors and contractors, the Facilities Manager has personally done significantly more work on the facilities than we originally envisioned, saving the church tens of thousands of dollars.
- The church courageously decided to empower the future by replacing the Wellesley HVAC system with a geothermal HVAC system.

The first production 850 foot deep well has been drilled to verify geological conditions and determine the actual

Governance

thermal capacity of a single well.

This data will confirm the number and depth of the other wells.

Long lead time equipment has been ordered.

The remaining wells, probably 17, will be drilled in May. The church parking lot will be closed for the entire period, but the building will operate normally.

The Wellesley building will be closed from Memorial Day to Labor Day for construction. The church will operate from the Weston church.

The geothermal HVAC system will be in full operation by mid-October.

The properties team is honored and proud to represent the congregation in empowering the future. We are confident our congregation's actions now "take the baton" passed from the past 225 years of church members and we will pass it in very good condition to the future generations.

Mark Lenci, Chair

Board of Finance

2024 marked a historic event for Wellesley Village church – with the approval to merge with the Congregational Church of Weston occurring in February 2024. Following the merger, the Board of Properties reviewed all three properties that comprise the Wellesley and Weston campuses and, with the support of the Board of Finance, moved forward with significant improvements at all three locations. Urgent repairs to the Weston church roof and windows were approved. At the Wellesley location, window sills were repaired and plumbing / bathrooms were improved and on site laundry facilities were installed. At the parsonage in Weston the electrical service was upgraded from 100 amps to 200 amps

as well as other related electrical improvements like the installation of EV charging in the garage. The parsonage also had new appliances installed and a second washer and dryer installed in the basement. This intense focus on property investments resulted in 2024 properties spending of approx. \$311,000 vs a budget of \$180,000. Combined with a shortfall of approximately \$112,000 in income from giving, the new combined Village Church ended 2024 with a full year shortfall of \$166,864 (Weston and Wellesley combined).

The congregational giving pattern in 2024 was consistent with trends over the last few years, with a higher proportion of donations coming in the form of unpledged gifts and arriving in church accounts in the last month of the year. 25% of income from giving was non-pledged in 2024 compared to 24% in 2023 and 22% in 2022.

Despite a shortfall in the operating budget of approx. \$167,000 the value of net assets without donor restrictions grew approx. \$446,000 or \$279,000 net of the operating loss. Restricted assets (primarily the pastoral residency endowment) grew \$463,000 resulting in 2024 total net assets for the church of approx. \$11,458,000 vs. \$10,712,000 at the end of 2023 – an increase of over \$700,000. Those figures exclude funds raised for the *Empowering the Future Capital Campaign* which kicked off at the end of 2024.

The Board of Finance continues to monitor the overall financial health of Village Church, providing oversight to the investment of Church assets and ensuring that budgeting is conservative and prudent. We are confident that 2024 was a year in which the financial resources of the church were used in a

Governance

manner consistent with the values and mission articulated by the congregation.

Julien Grant, Co-Chair

Stewardship Committee

Stewardship at Village Church is a core aspect of our faith and community life. God has provided us with talents and resources that, through meaningful stewardship, allow us to further God's purpose in this beautiful and broken world. Good stewardship allows our church to live fully into our vision and mission, including support of community outreach partners, maintenance of our facilities, rich musical offerings, outstanding staff, and fellowship groups, all of which support our values as a Christian community.

In March 2024, the Stewardship Committee held a ½ day retreat. Drawing on direction from the SNECUCC, we met to establish our priorities and goals for the upcoming year. We began by answering the following questions: What is your most recent donation, and why did you make it? What was the most meaningful philanthropic gift you have made and why? The answers laid the foundation for a meaningful conversation that helped us articulate how we, as a committee, could live up to the church's values and optimize engagement in our committee work. Among many goals, two are ongoing: the committee recognizes the need to continually refine the stewardship process based on an ever-changing stewardship landscape and that it is essential to reinforce the joy of stewardship participation through the message that we receive in giving.

In 2024, due to your generosity, your income from stewardship giving raised \$1.41 million to support church operations. This fell slightly below the aggressive budget target. The stewardship committee faced unique

and temporary circumstances that may have influenced the shortfall, including the departure of the church accountant and the onboarding of a new accounting team, the migration of all stewardship data to the Breeze database, developing a job description for a part-time Development Director and dedicating committee resources to the *Empowering the Future Capital Campaign* Feasibility Study.

Early in 2025, recognizing the importance of fundraising as our primary source of income and observing the need for increasing the level of sophistication of stewardship planning, the Church Council approved the hiring of a part-time Director of Development to support the work of the stewardship committee.

Fortunately, Kristjon Imperio, our talented Organist and Assistant Music Director, is also a skilled administrator with experience in non-profit management. In November, Kristjon assumed the role of part-time Director of Development and has spent countless hours building infrastructure and processes to support the work of the stewardship committee.

I wish to thank the many members of our community for whom we owe our success: You, our stewards who, through your generosity, continually allow us to strive to fulfill God's purpose; the administrative staff, including Meg Sweeting, Christine Toppin, Sharon Funk and our accountants; Church Treasurer Mitch Coddington; Kristjon Imperio, Part-time Director of Development and our pastoral resource, Rev. Sarah Butter. God makes more of us together!

Respectfully submitted

Cynthia Sibold, Chair,

on behalf of the Stewardship Committee: Kathy McGraw Bentley, Dix Leeson Carolyn Wood, Kim Fox, David Oliver, Charlie Peck, Huw Gilbert, Ted Billes

Financial Reports

Village Church				
Statement of Financial Position				
December 31, 2024 and 2023				
		(Wellesley and Weston)		(Wellesley Only)
		<u>2024</u>		<u>2023</u>
Assets				
Cash and Cash Equivalents				
Operating Checking Accounts		\$282,438		\$367,402
Churchyard		309,544		245,628
Village Churchwomen		90,565		102,863
Better Together Campaign		0		506,643
Accounts Receivable		83,934		10,646
Prepaid Expenses		29,647		37,115
Investment Accounts				
Operating/Unrestricted		256,549		413,470
General Fund - Operating/Unrestricted		5,283,734		5,164,432
Pastoral Residency Fund		4,668,996		4,283,979
Board Designated Reserves		524,580		0
Lily Fund		145,606		172,078
Weston Outreach and Adult Education		121,491		0
Environmental Fund		0		31,296
Village Table		25,000		0
Empower the Future		32,600		0
Total Assets		\$11,854,684		\$11,335,552
Liabilities and Net Assets				
Current Liabilities				
Accounts Payable		\$2,741		\$28,121
Accrued Expenses		121,621		48,762
Advance Pledges		67,108		22,592
Advance Revenue Received		0		3,708
Better Together Campaign		0		506,643
Churchyard - Accounts Payable and Prepaid Income		0		12,923
Total Liabilities		191,470		622,749
Net Assets				
Unrestricted				
General/Unrestricted Fund - prior year balance forward		4,856,916		4,174,697
Board Designated Reserves		511,080		686,622
Weston General Fund		263,706		0
Other net assets without restrictions		(15,524)		0
Current Year Increase-Unrestricted Net Assets		272,414		682,220
Total - Without Donor Restrictions		5,888,592		5,543,539
With Donor Restrictions				
Pastoral Residency Fund		4,669,736		4,284,485
Lily Fund		139,147		161,486
Empower the Future		56,001		0
Environmental Fund		0		31,143
All Other Donor Restricted Net Assets		909,738		692,150
Total Donor Restricted Net Assets		5,774,622		5,169,264
Permanently Restricted Net Assets		0		0
Total Net Assets		11,663,214		10,712,803
Total Liabilities and Net Assets		\$11,854,684		\$11,335,552

Financial Reports

Village Church				
Statement of Operations - Unrestricted Activities - (Wellesley and Weston)				
For the Year Ended December 31, 2024				
		<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>
Income				
Pledged Income		\$1,147,224	\$1,235,900	(\$88,676)
Non-Pledged Income		367,209	348,000	19,209
Prior Year Pledge Income		(22,485)	20,000	(42,485)
Loose Collection		8,025	8,700	(675)
Income from Giving		1,499,973	1,612,600	(112,627)
Investment and Other Income				
Disbursement from Fiduciary (General Fund)		188,900	188,900	0
Disbursement from PRP Fund		158,400	158,400	0
Steeple Income		63,644	57,723	5,921
Use of Facilities		149,161	157,250	(8,089)
Investment Income - Dividends & Interest		18,123	13,000	5,123
Holiday and Special Offerings		3,140	7,800	(4,660)
Disbursement from Lily Fund investment		2,831	21,000	(18,169)
Investment and Other Income		584,199	604,073	(19,874)
Total Income		2,084,172	2,216,673	(132,501)
Expenses				
Human Resources		1,402,645	1,467,970	65,325
Service Ministry, discretionary		115,964	119,600	3,636
Service Ministry, SNEUCC		102,600	102,600	0
Properties		382,735	249,100	(133,635)
Office/Finance		145,233	147,705	2,472
Learning Ministry		19,544	40,000	20,456
Worship Ministry		29,340	35,650	6,310
IT Committee		35,925	25,500	(10,425)
Welcoming Ministry		4,018	6,250	2,232
Council		5,497	5,000	(497)
Community Ministry		4,395	6,000	1,605
Holiday and Special Offerings		3,140	7,800	4,660
Total Expenses		2,251,036	2,213,175	(37,861)
Net Operating Surplus (Shortfall)		(166,864)	3,498	(170,362)
Planned Giving and Bequests		0	0	0
Transfer from (to) property reserves		0	0	0
Net General Fund Earnings (after annual transfer)		439,278	0	439,278
Net Income (Expense) - Unrestricted		\$272,414	\$3,498	\$268,916

Financial Reports

Village Church				
Summary of 2024 Restricted Fund Activity				
	Balance			Balance
<u>Accounts</u>	<u>12/31/2023</u>	<u>Increases</u>	<u>Decreases</u>	<u>12/31/2024</u>
Board Designated Reserves				
Board of Finance	\$152,579	\$5,743	\$0	\$158,322
Property	144,380	260,112	(248,979)	155,513
General	389,664	13,174	(205,593)	197,245
Total Board Designated Reserves	686,623	279,029	(454,572)	511,080
Donor Restricted Net Assets				
Pastoral Residency Fund	4,284,485	384,867	384	4,669,736
Village Churchyard	243,351	57,719	8,473	309,543
Environmental Fund	31,143	621	(31,764)	-
Lily/Alban Fund	171,225	8,112	(40,190)	139,147
Village Table	43,214	80,464	(29,356)	94,322
Village Churchwomen	102,863	25,807	(38,225)	90,445
Village Church Trust	52,725	7,012	-	59,737
Music Related	139,578	-	(13,981)	125,597
Weston Outreach	-	80,692	-	80,692
Weston Adult Education	-	40,799	-	40,799
Center for Interfaith	-	13,497	-	13,497
Medical Doctors for Ukraine	12,145	-	(9,926)	2,219
C. E. Babson Fund	19,668	496	(248)	19,916
Memorial/Deacon Fund	29,867	3,431	(3,373)	29,925
Youth Programs	11,454	5,000	-	16,454
Empower the Future	-	166,162	(110,161)	56,001
Other Misc. Restricted Funds	27,546	4,020	(4,974)	26,592
Total Donor Restricted Funds	5,169,264	878,699	(273,341)	5,774,622
Total Restricted Funds	\$5,855,887	\$1,157,728	(\$727,913)	\$6,285,702

Financial Reports

Village Church				
Market Value of Fiduciary Funds (Unrestricted)				
December 31, 2024 and 2023				
		<u>2024</u>		<u>2023</u>
<u>Investments</u>				
Fidelity Gov't Cash Reserves		\$97,573		\$124,478
Fidelity Conservative Income Bond Fund		426,296		544,951
Fidelity Total Bond ETF		1,071,947		841,954
Vanguard Total Stock Market ETF		2,367,331		2,392,747
iShares MSCI Total International ETF		1,320,586		1,260,302
Total Investments - General Fund		5,283,733		5,164,432
Less: Village Church Trust funds		59,737		52,725
Total Unrestricted Funds		<u>\$5,223,996</u>		<u>\$5,111,707</u>
Market Value - Village Church Trust		<u>\$59,737</u>		<u>\$52,725</u>
Distributions to support Operations were \$188,900 in 2024 and \$183,100 in 2023.				
Wellesley Village Church				
Market Value of Fiduciary Funds (Pastoral Residency)				
December 31, 2024 and 2023				
		<u>2024</u>		<u>2023</u>
<u>Investments</u>				
Fidelity Gov't Cash Reserves		\$89,669		\$24,917
Fidelity Conservative Income Bond Fund		362,623		490,578
Fidelity Total Bond ETF		894,363		728,351
Vanguard Total Stock Market ETF		2,196,487		1,951,392
iShares MSCI Total International ETF		1,125,853		1,088,741
Total Investments - Pastoral Residency		<u>\$4,668,995</u>		<u>\$4,283,979</u>
Distributions for the Pastoral Residency program were \$158,400 in 2024 and \$153,800 in 2023.				

Financial Reports

Village Church Statement of Operations - Wellesley and Weston Combined 2025 Budget and 2024 Actual

	2025 Budget	2024 Actual
Income		
Pledged Income	\$1,181,240	\$1,147,224
Non-Pledged Income	358,303	367,209
Prior Year Pledge Income	7,679	(22,485)
Loose Collection	5,000	8,025
Income from Giving	1,552,222	1,499,973
Investment and Other Income		
Disbursement from Fiduciary (Gen'l Endowment)	149,224	149,161
Disbursement from PRP Endowment	63,644	63,644
Steeple Income	18,123	18,123
Use of Facilities	195,000	188,900
Investment Income - Dividends & Interest	166,300	158,400
Holiday and Special Offerings	0	2,831
Disbursement from Lily Fund investment	0	3,140
Investment and Other Income	592,291	584,199
Total Income	2,144,513	2,084,172
Expenses		
Human Resources	1,465,840	1,402,645
Service Ministry, discretionary	107,226	115,964
Service Ministry, SNEUCC	107,226	102,600
Properties	254,316	382,735
Office/Finance	111,900	145,233
Learning Ministry	29,947	19,544
Worship Ministry	25,520	29,340
IT Committee	29,649	35,925
Welcoming Ministry	4,018	4,018
Council	3,545	4,395
Community Ministry	4,600	5,497
Holiday and Special Offerings	0	3,140
Total Expenses	2,143,787	2,251,036
Net Operating Surplus (Shortfall)	726	(166,864)
	0	0
Planned Giving and Bequests	0	0
Transfer from (to) property reserves	0	439,278
Net Income (Expense) - Unrestricted	\$726	\$272,414

Financial Reports

Village Church
Village Churchwomen
Statement of Operations
For the Year Ended December 31, 2024

Income

Directory	\$5,030
Rummage Sale	20,559
Lombard Fund Distribution	214
Interest Income	4
Total Income	<u>25,807</u>

Expenses

Outreach	13,000
Fund cabinetry for bell chior	16,000
Pledge to WVC	5,000
Scholarship Grant	2,000
Rummage sale	1,701
Directory	551
Hospitality	738
Gifts (musicians, speakers, etc.)	550
Total Expenses	<u>39,540</u>

Net Operating Income (Expense)	<u><u>(\$13,733)</u></u>
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Wellesley Village Church
Village Churchwomen
Reserve Fund Activity
For the Year Ended December 31, 2024

Investment Income	\$837
Less: Expenses	<u>(478)</u>
Net Increase in Reserve Funds	<u><u>\$1,315</u></u>

Financial Reports

Village Church		
Village Churchwomen		
Outreach		
For the Year Ended December 31, 2024		
<u>Healthcare</u>		
Metrowest Free Medical Program		\$1,500
Subtotal		1,500
<u>Hunger/Homeless/Housing</u>		
A Place to Turn		1,000
H.O.M.E.		1,000
Village Table		1,500
Wellesley Food Pantry		1,000
Chaplains on the Way		1,000
Family Promise Metrowest		1,500
Subtotal		7,000
<u>Seniors</u>		
Wellesley Council on Aging		1,000
Subtotal		1,000
<u>Youth</u>		
Hoops and Homework		1,500
Hamilton Garrett Music Academy		1,500
City Mission Society Coat Drive		500
Subtotal		3,500
Total Outreach		\$13,000

Financial Reports

Indemnification and Banking Authority Resolution

The Treasurer, Vice Treasurer of Wellesley Congregational Church ("Church"), and the Chair of the Investment Subcommittee of the Board of Finance are individually duly authorized for and on behalf of the Church to:

1. Designate from time to time one or more banks, trust companies or other banking institutions (any thereof being hereinafter referred to as a "bank"), to act as depository or depositories for the funds of the Church for and during such period as he/she may from time to time deem necessary or desirable in the interests of the Church and to open or close out from time to time accounts in any such depository so selected or reselected;
2. That they are further authorized and directed, in the name and on behalf of the Church, to take any and all action that they may deem necessary or advisable in order to establish bank accounts from time to time for the efficient conduct of the Church's business including instructions for the purchase, sale, or transfer of assets of the Church including bonds, mutual funds, and shares of common and preferred stock; and
3. That, if any depository requires a prescribed form of preamble, preambles, resolution or resolutions relating to such accounts or to any application, statement, instrument or other document connected therewith, each such preamble or resolution shall be deemed to be adopted by the Church, and the Clerk of the Church is authorized to certify the adoption of any such preamble or resolution as though it were presented to the Church at the time of adoption of this resolution, and to insert all such preambles and resolutions in the minute book of the Church Council immediately following this resolution.

This resolution shall take effect the date of the Annual Meeting (March 16, 2025), and shall remain in effect until the next Annual Meeting.

Deacon Ministries

Community Ministry

The mission of the Community Ministry is to embody the core values of *BELOVED*. Thanks to the wonderful guidance and leadership from Reverend Stacy Swain, we were able to accomplish that mission. We have continued to have both virtual and in person meetings again this year which has allowed everyone a chance to participate.

The Community Deacons organize Coffee Hour each week. It's been truly heartwarming to see so many other ministries step up and lend a hand this year! We also deliver chancel flowers each Sunday to members of the congregation identified by Stacy Swain, as well as lilies on Easter and poinsettias during Advent.

In September we hosted Welcome Sunday and have continued the tradition of celebrating birthdays each month with cake during coffee hour.

October saw us continue Fellowship Supper Groups spearheaded by Natalie Colbert and Judy Woodrich which is always met with great enthusiasm.

In November we hosted the Harvest Potluck Luncheon, again with the help of members from other ministries. As always, the event was a huge success. This all church gathering was very well attended by 200+ people who were delighted to be together in fellowship.

We continued to honor our graduating seniors on Youth Sunday. Working with Pam Emslie we gave the graduates Nalgene water bottles with a Wellesley Village Church Program logo on the bottle.

On behalf of the members of our Ministry: Diana Anderson, Diana Blakely, Natalie Colbert, Lucy Costa, Bob Froh, Amy Law, Zoi Lazarakis, Stephanie Peck, Ron Smith, Judy Woodrich, Joe Yang, Chris Taft and Stacy Swain

Adult Spiritual Formation

*Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ.*

2 Peter 3:18

One of our core values at Village Church is **Become - Question, Learn, Grow**. We are encouraged to do as Jesus first disciples did and that is to follow Jesus in a life of learning, growing and becoming ever more fully who God created us to be. We do this so that we may give the gift of ourselves ever more abundantly to God, each other and to the world.

Honest searching, candid questioning, and the fire of faith reside in equal measure at Village Church. Through Bible studies, book groups, visioning workshops, spiritual reflection groups, discernment discussions, and retreats, we explore our spiritual journeys as we deepen in faith together. What follows is an overview of Adult Spiritual Formation opportunities from this past year:

Weekly Bible Studies:

Holy Saturday Bible study was hosted by Rev. Stacy Swain as we read the Gospel resurrection accounts after turning our sanctuary chancel into a garden with the Easter blooms in preparation for Easter morning.

Wednesday morning Bible Study met weekly with discussion led by members of the group.

Thursday evening Bible Study was led by pastoral residents Megan Strouse in the spring of and Carlos Aoun in the fall.

Associate Pastor Stacy Swain led Tuesday morning Bible study in the Spring and Wednesday Lunchtime Bible Study in the fall.

Deacon Ministries

Other Weekly Opportunities:

“Engaging the Spirit” hosted by Tom Porter met weekly by zoom on Thursday mornings, using the daily devotionals published by the Center for Action and Contemplation.

This fall, Rev. Carlos Aoun started a weekly program entitled “Tuesdays with God: A Journey of Reflection and Renewal.”

The Chapel in Wellesley was open every week for Wednesdays at the Well – a meditative time of Labyrinth walking and prayer hosted by Rev. Stacy Swain. Cathy Lidell filled the space on the second Wednesday of the month with her gorgeous lute from 9:00-10:00.

Engaging Worship began this fall. Congregants are invited to gather with Rev. Pam Emslie after the 9:00 service to further deepen the worship experience. Rev. Carlos and others hosted a similar Engaging Worship reflection time after the 10:00 service when other after church offerings did not preclude it.

Monthly Opportunities:

Men's Book Group, coordinated by Ron Smith, met monthly on Saturday morning to discuss books chosen and presented by members.

Rev. Pam Emslie along with Dorothy Patton and Tom Walters led two monthly “Conversations about Life and Death” groups throughout this past year.

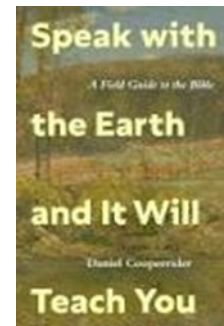
The Faith and Politics group continued their monthly discussions which were facilitated by Marc Kenton and Rev. Stacy Swain.

Special Offerings:

On May 28, Rabbi Sharon Brous spoke to us via Live Stream about her book “The Amen Effect” and inspired us with her wisdom and convictions.



Lenten Small groups explored Daniel Cooperrider's book “Speak with the Earth and It Will Teach You.” And on March 9 and 10, Rev. Cooperrider was with us in person leading a retreat on Saturday and worship on Sunday.



This year's Advent Devotional Booklet was more robust than ever, offering prose, poetry, photography and artwork from over 35 congregants.



Rev. Carlos convened a series entitled “Post Elections Reflections and Healing

Deacon Ministries

Circle” that created space to focus on Judgement, Forgiveness and Resurrection.

Joyfully submitted,

Stacy Swain, Associate Pastor

Service Ministry

The mission of the Service Ministry is to reach beyond our church community to help others in need, in line with our values and within our resources. Our goals for 2024 comprised running and expanding the reach of multiple initiatives, continuing to support our greater community through the Small Grants program, and creating volunteer opportunities.

Key 2024 initiatives:

Feeding Frenzy: More than 100 volunteers packed 16,000 ready-to-cook meals for Ukraine and food banks in Boston and Metro West.

Hoops & Homework: Members of our church donated backpacks fully loaded with school supplies to the 49 students enrolled in this after-school program.

The Diaper Project at A Place to Turn: Members of the church donated between 2,000 – 3,000 diapers.

Coat Boston: Our congregation collected 166 new winter coats for children in Boston and sent an unknown quantity directly to the organization.

Alternative Christmas: Fifteen organizations participated to build awareness, highlight volunteer opportunities, and collect donations.

Giving Tree: Members provided Christmas gifts for the 70 children enrolled in the Hoops & Homework program.

Small Grants Committee: Small Grants program awarded \$83,100 to 21 worthy organizations, representing 70% of grant applicants.

Village Church and Mrs. Ann Abernethy presented our 20th Reverend Dr. Bill Abernethy Award to Village Table for its efforts in providing freshly prepared meals to those communities dealing with food insecurity.

The Service Ministry was comprised of Lisa Weinstock & Deryle House, Co-chairs; Karen Bernardo, Deborah Brown, Diane Chaisson, Bill Chaisson, Sue Gibbons, Sue Case, Heather MacFarlane and Suzanne Wintle. Megan Strouse and Stacy Swain were our Pastoral Representatives.

Welcome Ministry

Our mission is to engage newcomers in the life of Village Church through radical welcome and to help those seeking a church home navigate the process of membership and connection.

Below is a summary of the Welcome Ministry’s efforts to extend welcome in 2024:

- Established a roster of volunteers to provide welcome to worship
- Provided welcomers at the churchyard and narthex entrances for 10:00am worship, as well as for special services (e.g., Christmas Eve)
- Extended outreach to visitors to invite them to Seekers orientation
- Held Seekers orientation sessions in the spring and fall for newcomers to meet pastors and lay members, hear about the life of our church, learn about the UCC, and build personal

Deacon Ministries

connections

- Hosted welcome parties in the spring and fall just before joining Sundays for those about to join, visitors, joiners from recent years, and church members to celebrate and build community
- Welcomed 10 new members in Spring of 2024
- Welcomed 6 new members in Fall of 2024
- Savored the end of summer with a fellowship ice cream social

Worked with other deacon ministries to identify opportunities for collaboration and support

We aim to help recent joiners and regular visitors find meaningful connections within WVC. We are pleased to report that many new members from recent years are participating in ministries and/or are part of the choir.

We would like to extend our thanks to Michaela McDonald for helping support the activity of the Welcome Ministry and to Megan Strouse for serving as our pastoral liaison.

Joyfully submitted,

Judy Mongiardo and Erinn Staley



Worship Ministry

The Worship Ministry seeks to unite, encourage, serve and connect participants in a loving manner at each touch point of the worship experience. We have been blessed by the wonderful leadership of Reverend Stacy Swain and Pastoral Resident Megan Strouse who embody the values that guide our mission. Our key roles involve (1) preparing and serving the elements for Communion (2) supporting Village Church's lay leadership in the Sacrament of Baptism (3) warmly welcoming late comers to worship while ensuring they feel situated, and a valued part of the service (4) performing assigned scripture readings in the service(s).

Outside of the Worship experience we feel blessed by the power of loving connection within our ministry team. We seek to grow spiritually through fellowship with each other and reflection on the messages learned through the worship experience. In 2024, the Worship Ministry team integrated "in-person" gatherings to deepen our personal relationships with each other. From home cooked team dinners, preparing meals for our teammates in need, celebrating Christmas with a team cookie exchange and consistently reaching out with a loving hand both inside and outside of the sanctuary, our team is always ready to serve.

In 2025 our goal is to further integrate with other ministry teams to create a cohesive body of love across our church family. We wish to thank the wonderful members of the Worship Ministry team including John Butter, Natalie Colbert, Susannah Hann, CeCe Hansen, Evelynne Jean-Francios, Sarah Schimmel, Jenny Wardwell, Carolyn Wood, Chuck Wood and Alex Zhong. A special note of gratitude to the Bread and Tech Ministry Teams. Their selfless

Special Ministries

service truly enhances the Ministry experience and joins everyone together in love.

Joyfully Submitted,

Jen Beachell and Kristin Zinggeler

Family Life Ministry

The sounds of joy can be heard in the upper floors of the church on Sunday mornings when the children gather with peers and teachers to learn the stories of the bible and engage in fun activities under the guidance of Michaela McDonald and her team of volunteers. Before she went out on leave in May and June, Michaela planned out all of the curriculum and put a strong team of leaders in place to run the program in her absence. A shout out of appreciation to Erinn Staley and John Goss for overseeing the Children's Church program during this time and to John Hargrave who made us all smile when he led the Time for Young Disciples. Heather Kelly also served as a TFYD guest speaker. Everyone enjoyed One Family Coffee Hour after church in the library hosted by Heather Conway.

Michaela ensures that the Family Worship room, adjacent to the sanctuary is stocked with snacks, toys, supplies and a supportive adult to help families with our youngest children during the 10:00am service. Darlene Howland coordinated the Preschool/Kindergarten group. Their classroom underwent a 2024 transformation with the addition of donated items including a puppet theater, giant dollhouse and a new cabinet stocked with a myriad of manipulatives, puzzles, dramatic play toys and building materials. The classroom was also outfitted with a television, so the children can listen to

worship music and watch age-appropriate moments from the service while eating snack. The camaraderie formed by the 1st—3rd and 4th-5th graders is joyous to witness as they race up the stairs to see what excitement Michaela and their teachers have in store each Sunday.

Our calendar was full of engaging family activities like the Easter Egg Hunt, Welcome Sunday games, Gingerbread House and Wreath making, singing with the youth choir at the 10am service, Palm Sunday parade and the Christmas Pageant to name a few. Church families receive a weekly email full of information, resources and inspiration from Michaela, Pam and Jade. The children of our church and their families are inspired each week by Michaela McDonald's Time for Young Disciples and we are blessed to have her faithful leadership of our Family Life programming.

Darlene J. Howland (she/her/hers), Chair

Churchyard Committee and Memorial Path

The Churchyard Committee continues to uphold its role as a gift to the congregation for providing a birth to life to death connection for Village Church members. Craig Stirrat gave the All Saints Day Witness 11/3/24 about the Memorial Path being an eternal resting place available to church members. The service was followed by a walk in the Memorial Path. Church members can go to the church website for complete information on the Memorial Path. The church website enables a church member to create a reservation for subscription. Meg Sweeting and Gerardo Ortiz are much appreciated in their contributions to day-to-day management of the Memorial Path. The Reverend Stacy Swain

Special Ministries

continues to provide spiritual guidance and compassionate pastoral expertise for the Memorial Path. The Memorial Path now has a total of 85 subscribers and 21 burials. There were no new burials in 2024. Multiple “new” engravings occurred from Spring to Fall.

Our committee (Craig Stirrat, Brad Harding, Joanne Ritsert, Pam Stirrat, and Matthew Hornung) look forward to new members joining the committee as liaisons from Deacons and Properties to provide their insights for the Memorial Path’s role in the life of our Village Church congregation. We encourage church members to walk in the Memorial Path to feel the “great cloud of witnesses” there.

Peace,

Craig Stirrat, Chair



Family Promise Metrowest

What do they do?

Family Promise Metrowest (FPM), based in Natick,

provides comprehensive support to working families who are homeless or on the brink of homelessness. They provide:

- temporary shelter for a small number of homeless families, and
- a program serving approximately 150 families that prevents homelessness before it happens, by helping families in housing distress to stay independently housed.

Members of Village Church lead the founding of FPM in 2008.

Why is this needed?

The MetroWest housing crisis for working families continues to worsen and the FPM intake phone line never stops ringing. FPM offers hope and dignity to parents with children who are working, yet find themselves in a precarious housing situation.

How do they do it?

Approaching families with judgement-free



kindness and dignity creates a caring environment where everyone involved, including families, volunteers, and staff, can learn, grow, and flourish. FPM provides tools and support that allow families to stabilize themselves financially and emotionally, and prepare themselves for a more promising and stable future. All families receive career, life skills, and other types of coaching as needed.

Special Ministries

How can volunteers help?

Critical to FPM's success is the depth and breadth of volunteers who help out, offering time and talent. Volunteers provide these services, and more:

- cooking/delivering meals
- administrative support
- child care, tutoring, and English conversation practice
- planning and staffing fundraising events
- driving to appointments
- job search support
- helping families move into new apartments
- services based on volunteer areas of professional expertise

Village Church Contacts: Kim Reohr and Diana Carroll

Information Technology (IT)

We strategically leverage technology to enhance the connectivity of our mission-driven church, expand our reach, and maximize our impact. Our focus remains on maintaining, upgrading, and improving our electronic and cloud-based



infrastructures, with an emphasis on prioritizing the security of church information. Our IT systems are designed to facilitate seamless connectivity and collaboration as we strive to make God's love real in this beautiful and broken world.

Ongoing IT Initiatives

Breeze Church Management System

We are continuing the integration of our systems with the new Breeze CMS. By moving

away from the costly and outdated ACS module finance database, we've transitioned to the Breeze cloud-based system. This platform is more cost-effective and works compatibly with QuickBooks and Bill.com, ensuring that all church finance records are neatly organized and accessible in one central location. This upgrade simplifies processes for both church staff and members.

Livestream Worship Services and Events

-Weekly Livestream: Both the 9:00 AM and 10:00 AM worship services are livestreamed every Sunday.

-Additional Livestreams: Memorial services and special events are streamed upon request.

Current Team:

Christine Toppin (Staff)

Santa Wiryaman (Camera Operations)

Gavin Lordi (Audio & Camera Backup)

Computer and Hardware Upgrades

As part of our commitment to maintaining efficiency and productivity, we assess and upgrade computer systems and office hardware as needed for our staff of 13. This includes regular updates to workstations, laptops, and other essential office equipment to ensure compatibility with current software and smooth daily operations.

Primary IT Staff: Christine Toppin: IT management, website administration, and livestream operations.

Meg Sweeting: Network printer support.

Sharon Funk: Church Management System (CMS) support.

Additional IT Resources:

PC Doctectives: Hardware and software support. **Shanahan Sound:** Audio-visual system expertise. **Theory One Design:** Design and consultation services.

As we continue to enhance our technological capabilities, our goal remains to provide a robust, secure, and user-friendly IT infrastructure to support the church's mission and vision.

Faithfully submitted, Chris Toppin

Special Ministries

Pastoral Residency Program

The Pastoral Residency Committee for 2024 began meeting the day after the Annual Meeting in February of 2024. Our year typically begins with a busy schedule of looking over applications of potential new Residents, scheduling first round interviews, then second round interviews and then of course praying and discerning who the next Pastoral Resident will be. This past spring we did follow that path and did perhaps more than our usual amount of discernment, prayer and discussion and we called Carlos Aoun to be our next Pastoral Resident to serve from August 2024 through June 2026.

Although the committee was excited about calling Carlos to this position, there were hurdles to overcome. Throughout the summer John Snyder along with help from Tom Porter, Julien Grant, Mitch Coddington, Meg Sweeting, Rev. Sarah Butter and the Southern New England Conference took the lead in helping Carlos obtain his Visa in order to work here at Village Church. Part of that process was celebrating Carlos' ordination at Village Church in May. Carlos is the first Pastoral Resident who came to us already ordained.

Once Carlos arrived, and moved into the parsonage, a committee was formed to spruce up the residence for both Pastoral Residents. This of course takes time and patience. It is an on-going project led by Paul Schendel from the Weston Campus with the help of Mark Lenci and Bobbie Suratt from this committee. At one point, members of the congregation were asked to donate various items to help furnish the parsonage so that the home will be well stocked now and for future residents. We are very grateful for the wonderful response. At this point, the parsonage has just about all that it needs right now. Thank you.

This year we have been gifted with the help of Zach Roe. Zach was hired last year by the Weston Campus to oversee the Interfaith aspect of their work. He has also helped the Pastoral Residency Committee refresh our Brochure and send out our mailings to the schools as we seek applicants for next year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Sullivan, Chair

Safe Church Committee

Safe Church Committee- Annual Report 2024

In January of this year, a meeting took place with members of the Wellesley Hills Congregational Church. Its purpose was to compare the scope of standards of safe practice in both churches and to share information about sources of information that would be available for churches during this calendar year. At the conclusion, there was a mutual agreement for those attending this meeting to stay in touch as would be appropriate.

The Safe Church Committee (SCC), was established in 2001, and it continues to exist as a sentinel, alert to physical conditions and practices in all the church facilities which keep everyone safe at all times. SCC also stays aware of resources designed to keep churches and members safe. Most frequently these come from our UCC Association, but we also get them from law enforcement agencies.

Never is there a guarantee against harmful events, however, Village Church, at both Wellesley and Weston, stays ready to address safety concerns as they develop, and prepared to respond to emergencies if and when they occur.

Members of this committee include, Jeff Prus, Alan Rose, Dave Secor and Brad Harding, who prepared this report on their behalf.

Special Ministries

Village Churchwomen

Village Churchwomen had a very successful year with growing participation for fellowship and community time at our quarterly gatherings.

March's meeting was a lovely lunch followed by a presentation by resident Megan Strouse entitled "Unless You Bless Me" which described her faith journey wrestling with God, the Church, and various expressions of the Christian faith.

In October we invited the women of St. Andrews to join us for a delicious gluten free luncheon prepared and served by our hospitality committee and Cindy Coddington, after which Cindy talked to us about the creation of her cookbook *Senza Glutine*.

December's program filled the Chapel where we enjoyed a lovely Christmas Concert provided by Celtic Harpist Shelley Otis followed by our annual Christmas Tea.

During 2024 monies derived from the 2023 Rummage Sale and donations by the congregation allowed us to give \$13,000 to outreach projects, \$5000 for our annual Church Pledge, and \$500 for coats for City Mission. Instead of giving small amounts to many organizations we gave larger amounts to fewer organizations where we felt it could make a difference.

In addition, we had a request and provided a scholarship to a church member pursuing a divinity degree.

We are honored to have received a large bequest from the estate of Pat Buxton. We used a portion to support the construction of cabinets for the bells and the purchase of music stands for the Bell Choir.

Bobbie Hayes leads our Knitting and Sewing Group, meeting weekly via Zoom to knit

baptismal blankets and prayer shawls.

We continue to underwrite the production of the church directory and prepare it for mailing. Thanks to the office staff for compiling and publishing the directory

We thank the Church staff and Clergy for their help and support throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Skipper Co-President



Love made Real... in the kitchen

We at Village Table Wellesley are approaching our 5 year anniversary of founding by Gary Arthur, a Village Church member. We are so proud of what was created, what we've built, and what we dream of for our future. We are grateful to Village Church for providing us a home kitchen and opening it to the greater community. We provide a place for people to serve others, give with dignity, and foster meaningful multigenerational relationships. We are looking forward to the year ahead where we will focus on our goals, nurture our vibrant team of volunteers, and make our impact on food insecurity.

Our 2024 Accomplishments

10,000 healthy, restaurant-quality meals to our partner organizations

3 new partner organizations

2024 Abernethy Award recipient, Village Church Service Ministry

2024 Pivot Award, Charles River Chamber of Commerce

2024 Dream Sharer's Award, Shannon Kelly, Village Church/Charles St AME

Special Ministries



Our 2025 Goal Highlights

Continue to grow our leadership team both in and out of the kitchen

Upgrade our kitchen equipment to meet the needs of our volume and processes

Focus on nurturing our culture and volunteers and on welcoming others to our team

We can't wait to get started! Know that you are welcome.

-Village Table Wellesley



Special Ministries

Center for Interfaith Collaboration

Zachary Roe, CIC Director



"No religion is an island. We are all involved with one another."

-Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

The Center for Interfaith Collaboration, conceived in 2023 and launched in 2024, represents an innovative partnership between Village Church in Weston and Wellesley Village Church. Under the leadership of our first Director, Zachary Roe, the Center advances our shared commitment to making God's love real through interreligious dialogue, understanding, and cooperation.

Through intentional practice of Village Church's values of Belonging and Befriending, the Center creates welcoming spaces where people of all faiths engage in meaningful conversations about challenging social issues, fostering trust across different backgrounds and beliefs. This work makes God's love real by breaking down barriers and building authentic relationships that transform our communities.

In our inaugural year, we've established a strong foundation. Our signature program, "Lessons Across Faith," brought together 35-40 participants from various faith traditions for weekly discussions throughout November. Using the book *My Neighbor's Faith: Stories of Interreligious Encounter, Growth, and Transformation* as a guide, these groups explored stories of interreligious encounter and transformation.

The CIC seeks to grow as a place where people of all faiths can learn from one another and work together toward a more harmonious society. Through these efforts, we're living out Village Church's mission of pursuing justice and joy for all people, making God's transforming love tangible in new and powerful ways.

Respectfully submitted,

Zach Roe, Director

Annual Meeting Minutes

Wellesley Village Church

2023 Annual Meeting

February 4, 2024

Minutes

Meeting Conducted in Person and Electronically through Zoom Video Conferencing

Welcome: At 11:35 AM, Moderator Kathy Schleyer brought to order in the Sanctuary a duly noticed Congregational Meeting. She asked Senior Pastor the Reverend Dr. Sarah Sarchet Butter to open the meeting in prayer.

Opening Prayer: Sarah welcomed everyone present with gratitude. She asked God to make us one congregation, to listen well and be faithful in our actions today.

Quorum: Kathy noted that there were more than twenty (20) members of the congregation present in the Sanctuary and declared a quorum

Agenda: Kathy continued saying that the agenda for this meeting consists of two proposals:

Amendment of our Bylaws to make explicit that remote attendance and voting at congregational meetings is permitted;

Approval of a merger with the Congregational Church of Weston (CCW)

The text of both proposed motions had been provided in the two most recent Village News editions. A letter had been sent to all members in January advising that if they did not have access to the Village News, they should call the office for information. In addition, the language of each motion would be displayed on a screen in the Chancel of the

Sanctuary in advance of a vote being taken.

She said that this is an historic moment. Brad Harding, Church Historian, informed her that in 1846 and 1847, Village Church “dismissed” Pastor, and 28 members left for the ultimate purpose of forming a new congregational church in Wellesley Hills. It was an amicable event in church life, with relatively little stress, but it changed, to a degree, the identity of Village Church, and it presented to the wider community a new understanding of both churches.

Not since then has there been an event in Wellesley Village Church (WVC) history that has had, by proportion, the same degree of importance. In the past one hundred seventy-seven (177) years, there has been nothing like the opportunity of life and mission as there is now before both CCW and WVC. The possibilities are many; the importance of it all is unusual, and arguably unique.

Motion No. 1 – Amendment of our Bylaws to permit explicitly remote attendance and voting at congregational meetings.

Kathy explained that the Massachusetts corporations statute was amended last year to explicitly permit hybrid meeting, a combination of in-person and remote, e.g. Zoom, type meetings as we are doing today. The statute requires that hybrid meetings of a corporation’s members be authorized by the corporation’s bylaws or by its board of directors, our Council. So that we have to do this just once, we’re asking to amend our Bylaws to permit members to attend and vote at congregational meetings remotely—via audiovisual conferencing. This will apply to this meeting and all future congregational meeting, including next week’s Annual Meeting.

The following Amendment to the Bylaws was

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moved:

MOVED, that Article XIV ("Meetings"), Section 5, be amended by adding the following two sentences at the end: "Remote member attendance at congregational meetings is permitted via Zoom or similar audiovisual remote conferencing means. Votes may be received in person or electronically, including via audiovisual remote conferencing participation."

The motion was seconded. There was no discussion.

Kathy advised that our Bylaws require a three-quarters affirmative vote of those members attending this meeting. Since the change will permit remote attendance, only those present in the Sanctuary at this time could vote. The vote was unanimous in favor and the Amendment passed.

Motion No. 2 – Merger of CCW and WVC.

Kathy called on Immediate Past Moderator John Snyder, Co-Chair of the WVC-CCW Task Force to discuss the proposed merger.

John, using slides, began by noting that we held a Village Church congregational hearing, an information session, on the merger on October 29, 2023. At that meeting the timeline of this proposed merger was reviewed:

2019 CCW – WVC partnership begins.

2019 - 2024 Shared participation in activities,

2020 - 2024 Second-year Pastoral Resident is lead pastor for CCW.

2020 - 2024 Pastoral Residents offered residence in the CCW Parsonage.

June 2022 Covenant of Understanding

approved by the CCW and WVC Councils. This Covenant expresses some fundamental points that are found in the Memorandum of Understanding, which is one of the documents laying out the two congregations' commitments to each other.

Nov. 2022 The WVC-CCW Task Force was formed and began work. Task Force members included from WVC Joe Morray, Vice Moderator, Jim Mongiardo, Clerk and John. CCW members included Paul Schendel, Moderator, and Chris Paquin, Past Moderator. CCW Professional staff members included first the Rev. Megan Berkowitz and now the Rev. Martha Schick, serving during their second year as WVC Pastoral Residents.

Jan. 2023 CCW and WVC Church Councils approved moving forward with preparing a merger proposal.

Feb. 2023 CCW and WVC Church annual meetings approved moving forward with preparing a merger proposal.

Jan. 2024 WVC Church and CCW Councils approved Agreement of Merger and Memorandum of Understanding.

Feb. 4, 2024 Approval of the merger is on the agenda for CCW's annual meeting this afternoon.

John discussed some of the benefits of the proposed combination. These included housing for Pastoral Residents near both the Wellesley and Weston campuses. This will permit for an expanded Pastoral Residents candidate pool because housing is included in the compensation package. Further, WVC members will have new opportunities to be

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involved with the multi-faith outreach center and its programs.

Joe Morray continued the presentation. He began by discussing the financial impact of the merger. In part because the financial compensation of the second-year Pastoral Resident is paid by Village Church, CCW has run a balanced or surplus budget for the last few years and last month surpassed its 2024 pledge goal. The budget included expenses associated with the operation and maintenance of CCW's two properties. In addition, CCW receives rental income from the Wellesley Community Children's Center and from other worshipping congregations using its space. The two CCW properties have a combined assessments of approximately \$3.5 million. Since CCW and WVC will continue to be separate legal entities until the merger closes, each congregation has prepared a separate 2024 budget and has conducted or is conducting a separate stewardship campaign. If and when the merger closes, our two budgets and our two sets of accounts will be reconciled and combined.

Who will be responsible for the two additional properties after the merger? Joe advised that WVC's new Facilities Manager, Emilio DelVecchio, was hired with these two additional properties included as part of his responsibilities. Brad Harding, also serving as the sexton for CCW, will remain in that position.

There are approximately \$480,000 CCW Endowment funds which will be moved to the WVC Endowment funds when the merger is completed.

Joe then discussed the due diligence and other work the Task Force has done:

Inventory of CCW leases, contracts, insurance policies, vendors, employees, accounts, etc., found in the schedules to the Agreement of Merger.

Phase 1 environmental assessment of the CCW church building and parsonage properties.

Title search for both properties.

Arranging for the purchase of title insurance for both properties.

This is an opportunity for WVC, as a leading congregation in the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ (SNECUCC) and in the United Church of Christ (UCC) as a whole, to aid the cause of stemming the tide of churches in distress by keeping a UCC worshipping congregation alive and thriving in our neighboring town of Weston.

He concluded by noting that the Interfaith Center is something else CCW brings to the table. CCW is in the process of hiring an executive director with seed funding from a long-unused WVC Alban Fund grant. In summation, in this case $1 + 1 = 3$.

John then discussed the motion to approve the merger. He said that the text has been in the last two Village News editions. It includes three sub-parts:

The "meat" of the motion – approve the Agreement of Merger and the Memorandum of Understanding. Links to those documents were in the piece about this meeting that appeared in the last two editions of the Village News.

The template/form for Articles of Merger that will be filed with the Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth calls for signature

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by the “president.” This confirms that our Moderator is the functional equivalent of a president.

This authorizes Village Church’s officers to take whatever action might be necessary to consummate the merger—sign the Agreement of Merger and the Articles of Merger, take whatever action is required to transfer accounts, etc.

Kathy then asked for a motion. The following was moved:

“(i) To approve the merger of the Congregational Church of Weston, a Massachusetts non-profit religious corporation (“CCW”), with and into Wellesley Congregational Church, a Massachusetts non-profit religious corporation (“Village Church”), as the surviving corporation in the merger, in accordance with the Massachusetts non-profit corporation statute, and to adopt the Agreement of Merger and the Memorandum of Understanding for the merger in substantially the same form as the two documents are included in a link provided in the January 25 and February 1, 2024, Weekly Village News; and

(ii) to confirm that the Moderator, Treasurer, and Clerk of the Village Church have duties functionally equivalent to a president, treasurer, and secretary under the Massachusetts corporations statutes; and

(iii) that such officers, jointly and severally, be and hereby are authorized to approve the final version of the Agreement of Merger and the Memorandum of Understanding, the text of which shall be substantially the same as the documents linked to the Weekly Village News

referred to above, and to execute and deliver the Agreement of Merger, Memorandum of Understanding, Articles of Merger, and any and all other documents, and to take such other actions, as may be necessary or advisable to consummate the merger.”

The motion was seconded. Discussion followed. Sarah commented that five years ago this journey began. CCW was a strong congregation, but it is expensive to have a full-time pastor. WVC has five full time pastors. If we partnered together, perhaps we could find a new way to avoid CCW having to close. We had a vision but needed a plan. Many people along the way contributed to that plan. She said that there is a UCC church closing approximately every week. We had the potential to write a different story. A question was asked as to the name of the merged entity. John responded saying that the legal name of WVC is “Wellesley Congregational Church”. That name will continue to be the legal name of the merged entity. For many years, the Wellesley Congregational Church has been known as (e.g. d/b/a) the “Wellesley Village Church”. The “Village Church” will be used for both campuses. The WVC current Wellesley campus will be known as “Village Church in Wellesley”. The current CCW campus will be known as “Village Church in Weston”. There were no further questions or discussion.

Kathy then explained how the vote would be conducted. All non-members had moved to the South Transept or rear of the Sanctuary and had not voted on the first matter of business nor would they vote on this second motion. All members will be asked to write their names on index cards which had been given to them upon entrance to the meeting. The vote would be by show of hands in the Sanctuary. If the vote is for approval of the

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merger, all the index cards would be collected from those voting in favor of the motion to give an accurate count. For those attending remotely, she instructed them to go into the Zoom “chat” feature and type their name or names and the word “yes,” “no,” or “abstain.” If they are unable or uncomfortable with using the chat feature, raise their hand again and we will record their vote. If the Zoom screen says something other than their name, they will need to identify themselves.

For the vote on the merger, Massachusetts corporations law requires an affirmative vote of two-thirds of all our members. Failing that, we can file a detailed petition with the Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth seeking approval of the merger based on the votes that are cast today.

Kathy then took the vote. One hundred and ninety-eight (198) unanimously voted in favor of the merger which passed.

Kathy then thanked the members of the Task Force, John, Joe, Jim and particularly Moderator Paul Schendel and Chris Paquin from CCW and Rev. Martha and Rev. Megan Berkowitz before her. She thanked Sarah for her vision in instigating and shepherding and supporting from day one the process that got us to this decision point today. In addition, she thanked everyone else who has assisted in and supported this effort, including our Finance and Properties Boards.

Brad Harding was present at the meeting which led to the founding of the Congregational Church of Weston. It took place in his parents’ living room. Along with them, he became a “charter” member. It is amazing to see how we have come full circle from creation of a congregation to a merger of churches. Our excitement now about the growing relationship between CCW and WVC

is beyond measure. Its potential for both congregations stretches the wonderful presence for the entire UCC.

She concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance, their patience, their understanding, and their approval of this wonderful opportunity to continue making our Christian love real.

Closing prayer: Martha gave thanks for the many years of the combined effort to be more together than apart. This is the first step in the new chapter of the Village Church in Wellesley and Weston. We are overflowing with thanks. We then sang the Doxology.

Adjournment at 12:30pm.

Faithfully,

Jim Mongiardo, Clerk

Wellesley Village Church

Congregational Meeting

May 12, 2024

Minutes

Meeting Conducted in Person and Electronically through Zoom Video Conferencing

Welcome: At 11:25 AM, Moderator Joe Morray brought to order in the Chapel a duly noticed Congregational Meeting. He said the purpose of the meeting was to call our next Pastoral Resident, Carlos Aoun. He noted that while we will be saying good-bye to second year Pastoral Resident the Rev. Martha Schick, we are beginning a new chapter with a new person bringing new experiences to our Pastoral Residency program. He then declared a quorum for the meeting.

The calling our next Pastoral Resident continues the rotational model, one pastoral resident called each year to serve for a two-year term. Joe asked Susan Sullivan, Chair of the Pastoral Residency Oversight Committee

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(PROC), to present the next candidate in this rotational model for consideration.

Susan first thanked the other members of PROC for their active participation in the search process. She said that PROC was recommending Carolos Aoun for the position of Pastoral Resident beginning in August. Carlos will bring a deep faith and easy manner to the Pastoral Residency program. He now lives in Lebanon, is married and they have five adult children. He was a professional photographer before being called into the ministry. During Covid, he was quarantined in Brookline where he became familiar with the United Church of Christ. He was taken into care by the Old South Church and has been approved for ordination. Assuming a positive vote to be our next Pastoral Resident, he will be ordained at our Church on May 26. He was introduced to the Congregation on Sunday, April 21.

Discussion followed. Tom Porter advised that he is working with John Snyder to obtain a visa for Carlos. He had both a breakfast and later a lunch with Carlos and was impressed. Carlos reads the Bible every morning in three languages. Carlos also teaches both Shiite and Sunni Muslims in Lebanon. In response to a question about immigration status, John Snyder responded that an immigration attorney has been retained. Upon becoming a Pastoral Resident and being ordained, Carlos will be entitled to a Religious Worker R-1 visa. That visa will also permit his wife through an R-2 visa to join Carlos in the United States. The immigration attorney felt that the R-1 visa could be obtained quickly permitting Carlos to be able to start as a Pastoral Resident in August. Alice Polley commented that she is a member of the Metropolitan Boston Association Committee on Ministry. She has known Carlos for three years. He is for real and a fabulous person.

Joe asked for a motion to call Carlos Aoun as a Pastoral Resident beginning in August 2024. The motion was made and seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried unanimously. After applause, Joe declared the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Mongiardo, clerk

Congregational Meeting

November 17, 2024

Minutes

Meeting Conducted in Person and Electronically through Zoom Video Conferencing

Welcome: At 11:41 AM, Moderator Joe Morray brought to order in the Sanctuary a duly noticed Congregational meeting. He called on Senior Pastor Sarah Sarchet Butter to lead the Congregation in an opening prayer. Sarah said that Jesus loved the people around him. Look around at the people present for this love. She prayed that the Holy Spirit be poured out among us at this meeting as we seek to be with You in all things.

Joe said that the members attending this meeting included those who were present through Zoom. He declared a quorum present (over 20 members) and appointed Jim Mongiardo as Parliamentarian. He advised that the meeting would be conducted according to Roberts Rules of Order. He said that this meeting followed a month and a half of discussions at informational gatherings and a hearing concerning the Empowering the Future of Our Church Capital Appeal. After reviewing the Mission Statement of the Wellesley Congregational Church, he said that the plan for the meeting was to vote on two motions. The first would be whether to have an Empowering the Future of Our Church Capital Appeal which would require a simple majority vote in favor to pass. If the Capital Appeal motion passed, then there would be a second vote on which technology to use for replacing the HVAC system. This second motion would require a three quarters (75%) majority to pass.

He continued by reviewing the Empowering the Future of Our Church Capital Appeal five categories. These included creating a fund for children and youth ministries, replacing and

Congregational Meeting Minutes

modernizing the HVAC system, expanding community outreach through ministries such as Village Table, securing the Property Reserve and greening the Weston Campus (solar insulated roof). His review continued with draft Capital Appeal drivers for a \$4 million campaign. The differences were noted on amounts available with the selection of either a heat pump/natural gas or geothermal HVAC replacement modernization. The numbers he advised were place holders and would be adjusted as appropriate. The only fixed numbers were the HVAC system replacement provided that a commitment was made by December 1, 2024. After that the HVAC replacement alternatives numbers were subject to rebidding and were expected to increase.

After the first motion was projected on a screen in the Chancel, Joe read the first motion under consideration as follows:

Motion to Approve Capital Appeal

Whereas, we, the members of the Wellesley Congregational Church (Village Church), wish to Empower the Future of Our Church through the creation of a restricted fund for children and youth ministries; replace and modernize the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system (HVAC) in Wellesley; expand community outreach including Village Table; secure the Property Reserve; provide for the greening of the Village Church in Weston campus with an insulated roof and solar panels; and provide for more energy efficient lighting;

Whereas, there have been many members of the Church who have helped us as a whole in discerning where the Holy Spirit is leading us. This included essential work done by the following groups: the Energy/Sustainability Committee, HVAC Task Force, HVAC Financing Task Force, the Board of Properties, and the Board of Finance; and,

Whereas, upon approval of this Capital Appeal, a separate congregational vote will be taken on the HVAC alternative and the target

allocations for each of the six components of Empowering the Future of Our Church.

Now, therefore, desiring to move forward to Empower the Future of our Church through the creation of a restricted fund for children and youth ministries; replace and modernize the HVAC system in Wellesley; expand community outreach including Village Table; secure the Property Reserve; provide for the greening of the Village Church in Weston campus with an insulated roof and solar panels; and provide for more energy efficient lighting; the Village Church approves the following:

A Capital Appeal beginning in 2025 with a goal of four million dollars (\$4,000,000).

Joe continued saying that this motion required a simple majority of the members present and voting to pass. The motion was made, seconded and discussion began.

A question was raised about the fund for Children and Youth Ministries which was \$472,000, if the geothermal HVAC replacement option was selected or \$750,000, if the heat pump/natural gas HVAC replacement option was selected. Joe advised that this category was intended to be an initial investment with no present plan for use of these monies. The fund was intended to insure the future of these important ministries. Sarah continued saying that the creation of this fund was just a start. The hope was to build it to about \$2 million inviting planned gifts as one mechanism to grow it. An additional question was raised about the campaign consultant charges. Sarah responded that these were the charges of CCS which had conducted the survey to determine the feasibility of this Capital Appeal and would be working with us to plan and implement the Capital Appeal.

Joe then noted that discussion had ended and conducted the vote. It was unanimous in favor with two abstentions. The first motion to approve the Empowering the Future of Our Church Capital Appeal passed.

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The meeting continued with Joe reviewing the two HVAC replacement options. The heat pump/natural gas alternative used natural gas for the heating system supplemented by heat pumps which reduced the amount of natural gas, a fossil fuel, needed for heating. For cooling, there is no use of natural gas, only electricity. For the geothermal alternative, heating and cooling are driven by wells which provide a constant temperature of about 55 degrees Fahrenheit as a starting point. Only electricity is used for this system. Either option was a significant improvement over the current oil burner heating system with respect to emissions. While there always will be emissions with the heat pump/natural gas alternative, it was possible to get to zero emissions with the geothermal alternative if the electricity being purchased from Wellesley attains its goal of zero emissions. Not including financing costs (about \$200,000 more for geothermal), the respective costs of the two alternatives was the same because of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) rebates (about \$1,900,000 for geothermal) and greater Mass Save rebates (about \$600,000 more for geothermal). The IRA rebates would be paid about 12 to 18 months after the project was completed.

Discussion followed. Kathy Schleyer reviewed the risk of obtaining the IRA rebates given the results of the recent election. She advised that members of the HVAC Task Force concerning selection of the HVAC alternative had a recent discussion with a rebate specialist at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, LLP, a major law firm. The specialist confirmed that nothing had changed from the previous advice of CapinCrouse, LLP, our tax advisors. If the geothermal project was started this year before the change in administrations, there was no precedent for retroactively rescinding a tax benefit. With a favorable vote to proceed with the geothermal alternative, the plan was to sign the contract with GreenerU with the fixed costs by December 1, place the order for the long lead time equipment which must be specifically manufactured for our project and dig a test well sometime in December. This

timeline should ensure receipt of the IRA rebates even if there is a future change in the law.

Mary Gard noted that heat pumps last 15 to 20 years while geothermal equipment last much longer, up to 50 years. This means we would need to repeat this discussion in about 20 years with the heat pump/natural gas alternative but not for an additional 20 years with the geothermal alternative. She further advised that Wellesley Power & Light believed that it could attain zero emissions by 2030, significantly ahead of its previous estimates. This means that by 2030, there will be zero emissions from the geothermal alternative. She concluded by saying that operation costs would be much less with geothermal given the expectation that natural gas prices would double in the next 10 years.

Chipo Dendere then spoke on behalf of the Board of Finance. She said that the role of the Board of Finance is to be conservative with the funds of the Church. The Board had reservations about geothermal given the amount that is estimated to be needed to be borrowed before receipt of the IRA rebates. This funding challenge the Board believes will have impact on other areas of the Church and the Board recommended that the heat pump/natural gas alternative be selected.

Through Zoom, Doug Baskett asked about timing for the two alternatives. Mark Lenci responded saying that if we start immediately and place orders for the Roof Top Units (RTUs) which would have to be custom built for either alternative, it is anticipated that the heat pump/natural gas alternative would be in completed by the early summer of 2025. The geothermal alternative is expected to be completed by October 2025 with the building being closed during the summer with Church activities being moved to the Weston campus during this period. Leif Hille, through Zoom, asked about long-term operating costs. Mark responded saying that they would be significantly lower for geothermal because no natural gas is being purchased and the seven RTUs for the heat pump/natural gas

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alternative would be located on the roof exposed to the elements and last about 20 to 25 years while the geothermal units components would be split between the roof and present boiler room reducing exposure of critical components to the elements and lasting 45 to 50 years. Doug Baskett continued through Zoom, saying that if the geothermal replacement HVAC system is completed next year, we should be grandfathered in and fully covered even if the IRA was repealed.

A question was raised about why Wellesley elected not to use a geothermal heating/cooling system for the high school when it was replaced. Kathy responded that the new high school was built on the parking lot leaving only enough space for wells for administrative building coverage. For the two recent built new schools in Wellesley, Hunnewell and Hardy, geothermal heating/cooling was examined but determined to be too costly to install. This was prior to enactment of the IRA. In addition, Hunnewell was located on a flood plain which is not desirable for a geothermal well.

Jacquie Wheeler asked about the number of wells to be bored for the geothermal HVAC alternative. Joe responded. The plan was to bore 18 wells subject to the test well to be bored in December. This test well would provide input about the water table and depth to bedrock which may impact this number. Judy Mongiardo then discussed the fears of not getting the IRA rebates. In the past we had moved forward in faith. In 1998 we wanted to help Pathway to Possibilities find housing in Wellesley and, when one became available on Cross Street, made its purchase possible. Similarly, when Family Promise was being organized, we gave a gift of \$50,000 from the Moving Forward in Faith service component which was instrumental in the opening of this new network to address homelessness. Today, Family Promise has a multi-million-dollar budget. Our experience in this Church is that God makes a way when there does not seem to be a way.

A question was asked about the

internal construction needed for the geothermal alternative. Mark advised that the major ducting needed to the HVAC system is already in place and cannot be further expanded. We would continue to use the combination of HVAC and fin tubes for heating. Unlike homes, there was a need to mix fresh air from the outside in a building our size. The geothermal system will have a modern new control system for efficiency. With respect to the boring of the test well, the driveway was expected to be closed for two days. The boring sound is limited to a diesel engine running and the capture of possible water slurry. The plan, irrespective of which alternative was selected, was to close the Wellesley campus when the HVAC replacement system was being installed with Church activities being moved to the Weston campus.

Shannon Smith, through Zoom, asked about the impact of the geothermal alternative on the other missions which are part of Empowering the Future of Our Church Capital Appeal. Joe advised that the geothermal alternative would need significant cash expenditures to install within the year timeframe. For other parts of the Capital Appeal, we can wait for the IRA rebates or borrow funds as part of managing cash flow. Kathy continued saying that in past Capital Appeals, members have been generous and paid their pledges early helping with cashflows. For either alternative, there would be a period before all the pledges are received.

Julien Grant commented that either of the two alternatives were better than burning oil for heat. The Capital Appeal should be examined broadly beyond the HVAC alternatives since there are other parts. Given the added borrowing costs of the geothermal alternative, he believed that we could do good things for the environment as well as fund the other components of Empowering the Future of Our Church Capital Appeal by choosing the heat pump/natural gas HVAC alternative.

Scotia Hille expected that fossil fuels would be phased out during her lifetime. She

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did not believe choosing the heat pump/gas HVAC alternative was a good investment. She continued, we should be making the choice now, not having the same conversation 30 years from now when the heat pump/gas alternative, if selected, would need to be replaced.

Shannon Kelly was concerned about the risk being taken for other priorities if the IRA rebates do not come through. Jim Mongiardo was the next member recognized. He relied on his experience in the Church for his assessment. In 1997 he was Chair of a Capital Appeal to raise \$2 million. An existing conditions study was completed which concluded that the heating, electrical and plumbing systems all needed to be replaced at a cost of \$4.5 million. After much discernment, the Congregation decided on a \$10 million campaign. Instead of just fixing what was broken, the Moving Forward in Faith Capital Appeal included making the Church handicap accessible, making the classrooms safe (two means of exit) and including a new space next to the Sanctuary for coffee hour and other uses. We are all the beneficiaries of that decision. The Moving Forward in Faith Capital Appeal raised \$8.9 million, gave in outreach grants about \$1 million, and there was about \$1 million in financing costs, leaving the Church short about \$3 million. Another Capital Appeal followed which paid off the two mortgages, the \$3 million shortfall. He concluded by saying that part of our mission was to care passionately about God's creation and the shared health of our world. The natural gas/heat pump alternative only fixed what needed to be replaced. The geothermal alternative lived our mission. This was important for our well-being as a Church for not only ourselves but also in attracting new members. We have been a leader with the Charles Street Initiative and the merger with the Congregational Church of Weston. We should continue to be a leader with the geothermal HVAC installation.

A motion was made to call the question. It was seconded. Joe conferred with the Parliamentarian and then advised that

this was a priority motion to end discussion followed by an immediate vote. On the motion itself to call the question, there would be no discussion. This motion needed a two-thirds majority to carry. Joe conducted the vote, and it did not pass. Discussion continued.

Erinn Staley said that Church was the people. We preach the good news of Jesus. Her concern about the geothermal alternative was the opportunity cost associated with its financing; She believed that there would be other things which we cannot do. We could vote for either choice but had to recognize our stewardship responsibilities in connection with our vote. Phyllis Gibson said she has been a member since 1967. If we decide on the geothermal alternative, it does not mean we are cutting other programs already in the budget. Geothermal was the future. We should not be afraid of the future. John Snyder then commented on the cash flows numbers projected for the geothermal alternative. Those projections conclude that approximately \$5 million would be needed for the geothermal project by September 2025 when it was expected to be completed.

Kathy continued the discussion. She wanted to recognize all the people working on this HVAC replacement project for many years. She recognized the members of the Energy/Sustainability Committee which began the development of a long-term plan almost a decade ago. This Committee had a bigger vision and a longer viewpoint than simply replacing an aging HVAC system. Last year, as Moderator she recognized that action needed to be taken on the HVAC system. There was no simple solution. The HVAC Task Force was able to negotiate favorable fixed pricing for either alternative if a commitment was made by December 1. Not including financing costs, the heat pump/natural gas alternative would cost approximately \$2 million. With recent fine tuning on geothermal planning and with the IRA rebates, the cost of the geothermal alternative was the same. A HVAC Finance Task Force was appointed to propose

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financing alternatives for either alternative. We now have a short window to ensure receipt of the geothermal IRA rebates by active initiation of the project this year and completion within 12 months. She supported the geothermal alternative.

Before consideration of the next motion, Joe asked for a show of sentiment by the Congregation as to whether to pursue the heat pump/ natural gas or geothermal HVAC replacement. By show of hands, he concluded that there appeared to be support of least three-quarters (75%) of the members present for the geothermal alternative.

The second motion was projected on a screen in the Chancel. Joe then read the second motion under consideration as follows:

Motion to Approve Geothermal HVAC Alternative

Whereas, we, the members of the Wellesley Congregational Church (Village Church), have approved a Capital Appeal beginning in 2025 with a goal of four million dollars (\$4,000,000) to Empower the Future of Our Church through the creation of a restricted fund for children and youth ministries; replace and modernize the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system (HVAC) in Wellesley; expand community outreach including Village Table; secure the Property Reserve; provide for the greening of the Village Church in Weston campus with an insulated roof and solar panels; and provide for more energy efficient lighting; and,

Whereas, our mission adopted in 2022 states in part..."We are called to pursue justice and joy for all people, and we care passionately about God's creation and the shared health of our world."; and,

Whereas, we believe that we best live this mission through the selection of a geothermal HVAC replacement alternative.

Now, therefore, desiring to move forward to Empower the Future of Our

Church through the creation of a restricted fund for children and youth ministries; replace and modernize the HVAC system in Wellesley with a geothermal replacement alternative; expand community outreach including Village Table; secure the Property Reserve; provide for the greening of the Village Church in Weston campus with an insulated roof and solar panels; and to provide for more energy efficient lighting; the Village Church approves the following allocation of funds goals for this Capital Appeal:

\$2,493,000 to be used for construction of the geothermal HVAC replacement alternative.

\$472,000 to be used for the creation of a restricted fund for children and youth ministries.

\$300,000 expand community outreach including Village Table and the greening of the Village Church in Weston campus with an insulated roof and solar panels.

\$400,000 to secure the Property Reserve.

\$170,000 to provide for more energy efficient lighting.

\$190,000 for a campaign consultant.

The priority shall be funding for the HVAC replacement construction. The flow of funds shall be monitored by the Board of Finance which shall make recommendations on allocations and the timing of any funding for any of the six goals to Church Council for its approval.

Village Church further approves construction for the geothermal HVAC replacement alternative beginning in December 2024 in advance of completion of the Empowering the Future of Our Church Capital Appeal. It is understood that cash flows may require at some point borrowing from Church's

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fiduciary funds and/or borrowing from outside sources for such construction. Upon recommendation by the Board of Finance and approval by Church Council, the Bylaws requirements of Article VII, Section 3, subsection H for a separate congregational vote to approve such borrowing is hereby waved during construction of the geothermal HVAC replacement alternative.

Joe continued saying that this motion requires a favorable vote of three-quarters (75%) of the members present and voting to pass. The motion was made and seconded. Joe then thanked the congregation for the thoughtful deliberation at this meeting. He then called the vote asking members to stand when voting. The final tally was 79 in favor, 21 opposed with 2 abstentions. Joe declared that the motion had passed.

Sarah then asked for a round of applause for Joe whose tireless leadership resulted in the decisions made at this meeting. She said we all stand as faith members of this Church. She then offered a closing prayer giving thanks for the work being done by our Church. She asked that we be sent forth with an appreciation that we can do more together than we can do apart, energized by the Holy Spirit. With God, everything is possible.

Joe asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was made, seconded and unanimously passed. The meeting adjourned at 1:57pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Mongiardo, clerk



Village Church Staff

The Rev. Dr. Sarah Sarchet Butter — Senior Pastor, since 2015

The Rev. Pamela H. Emslie — Associate Pastor, since 2006

The Rev. Stacy Swain— Associate Pastor, since 2022

Megan Strouse—Pastoral Resident, since 2023

The Rev. Carlos Aoun—Pastoral Resident, since 2024

Michaela F. McDonald — Director of Children’s Ministries, since 2006

Dr. Kevin J. McDonald — Director of Music & Youth Music, since 2005

Kristjon Imperio — Director of Worship and Development, since 2021

Mingyeong Son —Chapel Worship Lead Musician, since 2024

Meg Sweeting — Church Administrator, since 2018

Christine A. Toppin — Communication & Worship Support Coordinator, since 2016

Sharon Funk — Database Support, since 2019

Jade Hargrave—Director of Confirmation and Middle School Ministry, since 2022

Zach Roe—Interfaith Collaboration Director, since 2024

Emilio Del Vecchio, Facilities Manager, since 2024

Gerardo Ortiz — Sexton, since 2001

Gladys Murillo—Sexton, since 2017

Brad Harding— Weston On-site Facilities Manager, since 2024

Ana Paula Fabbiam—Cleaner, Weston since 2024

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wellesleyvillagechurch.org



Wellesley Congregational Church

Founded 1798